

Report to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting: 9 December 2010

Portfolio: Legal & Estates

Subject: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Update

Responsible Officer: David Newton (01992 564580).

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the findings within the recent Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) draft benchmarking report for the financial year 2009/2010 and;**
- (2) To note the progress on ICT projects for 2010/2011.**

Executive Summary:

ICT have taken part for the first time, in the UK SOCITM benchmarking exercise. The SOCITM report analyses Key Performance Indicators (**KPI's**) from 27 Councils in the UK and breaks results down into 3 main categories:

- a) Performance
- b) Resourcing
- c) Management

This exercise has been extremely beneficial to ICT, enabling us to identify areas of good practice and to include those which need to be developed into the ICT Business Plan. The overall results indicate a very good performance against other comparable Local Authorities.

Work on projects within the Business Plan for 2010/2011 is still ongoing and this report also gives an update of progress to-date. The majority of projects are progressing well and are still in line with the expectations.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The terms of reference of the panel include – ‘to monitor and review progress on the implementation of all major ICT systems’.

Other Options for Action:

None.

Report:

1. SOCITM report.

A summary of the major points contained within this comprehensive report are listed below. The final version of the report is due to be published in January 2011;

2. Performance.

The report identified many interesting statistics and a number of the key points are summarised below.

- a) Core applications experienced no unscheduled downtime.
- b) Major EFDC network downtime was limited to 1.5 hours for the entire year.
- c) Internet availability was 100%.
- d) Website availability was also good.
- e) EFDC benefited from the cheapest hardware costs, thanks to the Essex wide procurement negotiations carried out by the Essex On Line Partnership (EOLP).
- f) The Total Cost of Ownership (**TCO**) of PC's was the lowest of all comparable participants.
- g) The report highlights the high level of password resets. The implementation this year of the self service password reset system, has seen the number of these calls to the ICT helpdesk, drop by 30%, allowing better use of helpdesk resources.
- h) Voice communication costs are highlighted as expensive. This is due to the high maintenance charge for the old telephony equipment we currently have in place. A project to replace this and improve performance and cost is to be included within next year's ICT Business Plan.
- i) Remote and home working accessibility was highlighted as an issue. Technically, it has been possible to support remote working for some time, but Corporate policies and procedures are not currently in place to allow progress.
- j) EFDC have a low ratio of users to printers. This issue is being addressed, with ICT involved in the networking and rollout of multi functional devices (**MFD's**) which are replacing desktop printers.

3. Resourcing

Revenue budget expenditure and the overall cost of ICT was in-line with comparable Authorities. The ICT Capital expenditure was above average, but this figure was inflated by the Virtualisation project carried out during this period.

4. Management

The Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework, already adopted by ICT, is the most prevalent methodology adopted by ICT departments. Management practices and security and data handling were identified as above average. Business continuity was classified as below average, but a project to address this issue is already ongoing.

5. 2010/2011 Action Plan Update

Good progress has been made and the following projects are now completed;

- a) Server Virtualisation
- b) Cash Receipting System
- c) Self Service Password reset
- d) Training room upgrade
- e) LDF implementation

6. Electronic Records & Document Management System (ERDMS)

Project description; This system allows documents to be held and shared across Directorates electronically, reducing costs, enabling monitoring and reducing storage space.

Situation Report; Information @ Work (**I@W**), the Corporate ERDMS system, is due to go live throughout the Housing Directorate on 25th November 2010 and has also gone live in Local Land Charges earlier this year.

7. GroupWise to Outlook conversion.

Project description; This conversion is necessary to allow integration from the email system directly into core applications, for example I@W.

Situation Report; This project will be entering the final phase of testing in December 2010

8. Green ICT.

Project description; This project aims to use ICT to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council

Situation Report; ICT are currently evaluating automated PC power down software, with the Council's Environmental Co-ordinator.

9. Desktop upgrade

Project description; This upgrade will replace all 5 year old PC's/Laptops with more flexible and cheaper thin client technology.

Situation Report; The tendering process for thin client terminals is underway.

10. Mobile working.

Project description; The use of a Blackberry style mobile solution is being investigated to allow staff to access emails and documentation off-site.

Situation Report; The servers are due to be implemented during December 2010

11. Disaster recovery (DR)

Project description; This project will improve the ability of the Council to recover from a major disaster, by storing data at a remote site and also enabling the decommissioning of the old computer suite and removing associated overheads.

Situation Report; An EFDC site has been identified by the Councils Emergency Planning Officer, as a suitable location for DR. Network connection cost options are being evaluated. A further update will be provided once all the information is available

12. Zubed

Project description; This is a shared crime mapping and analysis system that ICT have agreed to host and support on behalf of the West Essex Community Safety Partnership.

Situation Report; ICT are currently awaiting evaluation data from the system supplier

13. Gazetteer development.

Project description; This project will combine all the individual property databases into a single Local Property Gazetteer (**LPG**) reducing duplication and ultimately assisting in the linking of these systems.

Situation Report; The Housing element of the project has been completed. The Environmental & Street Scene (**ESS**) merge is still progressing but is proving problematical. The completion date of December 2010 is likely to slip.

14. Wide Area Network (WAN) upgrade.

Project description; This network links the Civic Offices to satellite offices and enables staff to access centrally based applications. There is an opportunity to completely restructure the infrastructure to increase line speeds, improve reliability and reduce costs

Situation Report; The Buying Solutions tender did not produce the amount of savings anticipated. However, in association with the EOLP, ICT are now also investigating the possibility of using the schools network as part of the Government recommended Public Sector Network (**PSN**) which is due to replace the GCSx network in the next few years.

Resource Implications:

The SOCITM reports indicates that ICT have achieved a good balance between service and cost, offering good value for money and with major expenditure and performance elements either average or better.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Power down software will further reduce power consumption

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

The draft SOCITM report is available in the Members Room

ICT Business Plan 2010/11 – 2011/12.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

All projects are assessed on an individual basis and a risk capture sheet is contained within the current ICT Business Plan.

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? **No**

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? **No**

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group? **No**