

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF ICT AND E-GOVERNMENT SCRUTINY STANDING PANEL
HELD ON THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2005
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2
AT 7.30 - 9.30 PM**

Members Present: F Maclaine (Chairman), Mrs D Borton, M Colling, Mrs D Collins, Mrs P K Rush and Mrs M Sartin

Other members present: S Metcalfe and C Whitbread

Apologies for Absence: M Cohen

Officers Present A Scott (Head of Information, Communications and Technology), V Evans (Customer Services Manager, ICT) and S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

13. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

No substitutes had been appointed.

14. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were made.

15. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

The current position with the work programme was noted.

16. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The notes of the meetings held on 18 July and 8 August were noted.

17. MEMBER CONNECTIVITY SCHEME

The Panel received a presentation from Simon Hill, Research and Democratic Services, Project Manager of the Member Connectivity Scheme, on the proposals to connect members to the Council's network.

The Panel noted the proposed scheme and the proposals to pay members an additional sum to purchase and maintain their own computers. It was also noted that it was intended that this sum would be paid to those had signed up to the scheme quarterly and in the first year, those who had signed up by December 2005 would receive all the first years payment in January 2006.

It was noted that the implementation phase for the scheme would be the period January to March 2006 with new members in May being connected on election. All councillor would be connected by March 2007.

Under the scheme members would be required to have a computer that could connect to the Internet via broadband and an email address for notification.

A full presentation on the scheme would be made to members prior to Council on 27 September 2005

The Panel considered that there was the need to have graduated training to take account of the varying levels of experience of the members expressed through their competency questionnaires and that these should be structured sessions using the council's IT Training Suite.

The Panel also considered that these courses should form part of the annual Member Training Programme.

Recommended:

- (1) That appropriate training sessions for members be arranged on the use and connection to the Council's systems;
- (2) That these courses should form part of the annual Member Training Programme

18. E-PROCUREMENT

The Panel noted the need to address a procurement strategy under the Improvement Plan. They considered a proposed report to the Cabinet on E-procurement and made the following observations on that report.

- (1) The Panel suggested the addition of the words 'where they provide best value' to the end of recommendation (1) of the report (relating to the proposed recommendations made by the National e-Procurement Project (NePP));
- (2) The Panel's view was that it is premature to consider the appointment of a Procurement Analyst at this time. This was on the basis of:
 - (i) The benefits of entering into the EMP were as yet unknown and should be implemented to ascertain areas in which further analysis might be required;
 - (ii) From a review by officers, it was considered that the large number of 'procurements' through the system would be of low value in terms of the council's overall turnover but high volume and staff time intensive.

The Panel are therefore suggested that this appointment be deferred at this time but that it be considered again for the 2007/08 budget (after EMP implementation).

19. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- (a) Members Connectivity Scheme; and
- (b) E-procurement report and recommendations.

20. FUTURE MEETINGS

Agreed that a date for the next meeting would be arranged in November 2005.