

ICT and e-Government Scrutiny Standing Panel



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 23 January 2006

Portfolio: ICT and Support Services – Cllr S Metcalfe

Subject: e-Government

Officer contact for further information: Adrian Scott – Head of ICT

Committee Secretary: S G Hill Ext 4249

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To agree the IEG 5 Government Return that was submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on 19th December 2005 (Appendix 1).

To note the Council's progress in delivering the requirements of BVPI 157 and the priority service outcomes as reported in the IEG return.

Report

1. Central Government started the e-Government initiative in October 2001. The main focus for this initiative is to use modern information and communication technology (ICT) to improve the quality, efficiency and accessibility of public services.
2. Central Government, in order to monitor progress with the e-Government initiative and assess the required level of capital grants to support it, has placed a duty on all local authorities to produce an annual IEG Government return that sets the Council's current status for electronically enabling 100% of all interactions with the Public by March 2006. The return process is completed electronically online in a prescribed format.
3. The IEG Government return has in the past been the mechanism that allowed all local authorities to gain access to Central Government funding by way of the IEG capital grant. These grants have now come to an end and the IEG return is now the method used by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) for monitoring the ongoing progress and outcomes of e-Government projects being undertaken by Local Authorities.
4. The two major elements of the IEG return are firstly the Best Value Performance Indicator 157 (percentage of e-enabled interactions) this has a prescribed list of interactions; know as the Local Government Service List (LGSL). This list was formulated by the ODPM and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The LGSL contains all interactions that Central Government believe that Local Authorities should or could deliver electronically. The LGSL contains over 1000 interactions but many are not applicable to a District Council and these have been removed from the local list. The number of interactions now measured under BVPI157 total 554. The Council has, as of the 19th December 2005, electronically enabled 86% of these. The remaining 14% (78 interactions) are currently being addressed and plans are in place to enable the majority of these by the 31st March 2006 deadline. A list of these interactions is attached as appendix 2.

5. The second major element of monitoring is the “Priority Service Outcomes” for e-Government. This is a list of some 78 e-Government priorities that are focused on direct outcomes. This list, again, sets out how Central Government sees e-Government being implemented in Local Authorities. This list is broken down into 3 categories; Required, Good and Excellent. The ODPM expects Local Authorities to deliver all the “required” and “good” categories by December 2005. Many Local Authorities have complained at the late introduction of “priority outcomes” (September 2004) and many do not believe at this late stage in the initiative that 78 new targets can be accommodated into their current e-Government plans. Members will see from the return that the Council has made some progress in addressing many of these priority outcomes. However, further consideration is being given to the benefits of achieving all of these targets.
6. The current IEG Government return is attached as appendix 1. This includes the Council current progress with “Priority Service Outcomes” and the BVPI 157 performance indicator.
7. The current e-Government Strategy is attached as appendix 3 for information.

Appendix 2 – BVPI 157 – Interactions to be electronically enabled by 31/3/2006

Section/Function	Interaction Description	Type of Electronic Interaction
Multiple occupancy homes	Homes in multiple occupancy - register	Applications for services
Multiple occupancy homes	Safety inspection - homes in multiple occupation	Applications for services
Parking	On street parking enforcement - wheel clamps - car removal	Applications for services
Refuse	Household waste - special collections for large items	Applications for services
Council tax benefit	Appeals	Applications for services
Council tax benefit	Backdating	Applications for services
Council tax benefit	Current claim	Applications for services
Council tax benefit	New claim	Applications for services
Council tax benefit	Overpayments	Applications for services
Generic processes	Sale of sundry items and publications	Applications for services
Housing benefit	Backdating claims	Applications for services
Housing benefit	Current claim	Applications for services
Housing benefit	Fraud investigation	Applications for services
Housing benefit	New claim	Applications for services
Housing benefit	Overpayments	Applications for services
Housing benefit	Renewal	Applications for services
Council lettings and housing allocations service	Housing allocations - registering for a council property	Applications for services
Council run sheltered housing	Council tenants	Applications for services
Council run sheltered housing	Housing association tenants	Applications for services
Housing advice	Homelessness	Applications for services
Right to buy	Home ownership service - right to buy	Applications for services
Right to buy	Home ownership service - right to buy	"Providing access to community, professional or business networks"
Parks and open spaces	General information	Applications for services
Parks and open spaces	Horticultural standards	Applications for services
Advice to business and community	Business security grants	Applications for services
Advice to business and community	Media and publicity protocols	Applications for services
Advice to business and community	Property enquiries	Applications for services
Advice to business and community	Security services	Applications for services
Planning, building control and town centre management	Building control	Applications for services

Appendix 2 - Continued		
Section/Function	Interaction Description	Type of Electronic Interaction
Planning, building control and town centre management	Conservation and urban design planning - allotments	Applications for services
Planning, building control and town centre management	Conservation and urban design planning – building and landscape design services	Applications for services
Planning, building control and town centre management	Conservation and urban design planning - conservation advice	Applications for services
Planning, building control and town centre management	Conservation and urban design planning - tree preservation orders	Applications for services
Planning, building control and town centre management	Planning - residential	Applications for services
Planning, building control and town centre management	Planning business	Applications for services
Planning, building control and town centre management	Sites and special projects policy	Applications for services
Planning, building control and town centre management	Town centre management - CCTV	Applications for services
Democracy	Elections - electoral register	Applications for services
Democracy	Elections - proxy votes	Applications for services
Procurement	Tenders	Procurement
Business licences and street trading	Licence - acupuncturist	Applications for services
Business licences and street trading	Licence - caravan site	Applications for services
Business licences and street trading	Licence - pet shop	Applications for services
Business licences and street trading	Licence - riding establishment	Applications for services
Business licences and street trading	Licence - street collection	Applications for services
Business licences and street trading	Licence - street collection	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Business licences and street trading	Licence - tattooists, ear-piercing and electrolysis	Applications for services
Environmental health	Environmental health training	Applications for services
Environmental health	Pollution control - air	Applications for services
Environmental health	Pollution control - Part B authorisation	Applications for services
Environmental health	Public health - cooling tower notification	Applications for services
Health and safety	Dangerous structures and public safety	Applications for services
Health and safety	Health and safety at work - advice and training	Applications for services
Health and safety	Health and safety at work - regulation and inspection	Applications for services

Appendix 2 - Continued		
Section/Function	Interaction Description	Type of Electronic Interaction
Health and safety	Home safety	Applications for services
Health and safety	Major emergency incident	Applications for services
Parking	Pavements	Regulation (such as issuing licences)
Roads, highways and pavements	Road safety - driver training	Regulation (such as issuing licences)
Council lettings and housing allocations service	Mutual council home exchange	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Improvements, repairs and regeneration	Home improvements - housing renovation grant for a private property	Providing benefits & grants
Improvements, repairs and regeneration	Housing repairs - emergency out of hours repairs	Providing benefits & grants
Generic processes	Generic change of circumstances form	Regulation (such as issuing licences)
Legal services	Legal advice	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Arts centres	General arts information (inc. location, events)	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Parks and open spaces	Sports pitches/courts	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Physical activity and sports	Activities for older people	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Physical activity and sports	Coaching courses and schools	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Physical activity and sports	General information and booking	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Physical activity and sports	Sports facilities	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Physical activity and sports	Sports grants	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Physical activity and sports	Young people's drop-in activities	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Physical activity and sports	Young people's organised activities	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Advice to business and community	Business security grants	"Booking venues, resources & courses"
Advice to business and community	Health and safety - occupational health services	Providing benefits & grants
Countryside	Educational packs	Regulation (such as issuing licences)
Countryside	General information (location, facilities etc.)	Regulation (such as issuing licences)
Planning, building control and town centre management	Planning - residential	Regulation (such as issuing licences)
Planning, building control and town centre management	Planning business	Regulation (such as issuing licences)
Democracy	Elections - electoral nominations	Regulation (such as issuing licences)
Tourism	Town twinning	Providing benefits & grants

Appendix 3

Epping Forest District Council - e-Government Strategy

1. The Council established this strategy in January 2002 with its submission of IEG1. This was modified slightly by IEG2 in October 2002 and restated by IEG3 in October 2003. IEG4 and subsequent returns have not required a strategic statement, but the Council has made some technical changes to this strategy to reflect current IT best practice.
2. The Council's e-Government strategy is broken down into two main themes as follows:

Customer Contact theme

The Council will enable all their customers to access services in a way that gives a more convenient and flexible service but in doing so allows the Council to work more effectively and become more efficient.

This is being achieved by:

- Allowing all customers online access to their relevant personal or business information, including money they owe, or their current position in relation to grant, benefit, licence or other regulatory applications. This will cover access by the Council suppliers to procurement information and online access to procurement opportunities.
- Providing an on-line payments facility that allows both personal and business payments to be made for a wide range of Council services
- Allow customers to apply for all relevant Council services online, where the legally possible. This will include applications for grants, benefits, licences and other regulatory services.
- Allow customers to book and pay for facilities, resources and events on-line.
- Allow customers to access and participate in the democratic decision making function of the Council. This will include full online access to the complete democratic decision making process.

The main enabling technology for the customer theme is web and telephone based "self service" applications and the use of a corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

Business theme

The Council will reengineer its back office functions and related processes to ensure the efficient delivery of the Customer theme.

The business theme is being achieved by:

- Implementing a dedicated corporate Customer Contact Centre (CCC) The CCC will have access to all relevant customer information via modern IT solutions from both internal Council services and other relevant Government agencies. This new business unit will facilitate all initial contact with customers of the Council. Currently over 80% of contact with the Council is made via the telephone and therefore the CCC will be making full use of all the other strands of the customer contact theme when facilitating customers via the telephone or face to face.

- Streamlining the Council's back office functions to fully accommodate the CCC and consider a "joined up" approach to the back office service both internally and with other Essex Local Authorities
- Introducing a corporate approach to procurement
- Introducing a comprehensive e-Government training programme to ensure that all staff are able to make effective use of the new ICT environment
- Considering the introduction of Home Working to allow for a more flexible approach to the recruitment and retention of staff and the releasing of office accommodation

The enabling technology for this theme will include the following key corporate components:

- A single corporate approach to the management, use and control of corporate ICT infrastructure (Voice and data networks, personal computers, mobile computing, mobile telephony, remote working, printers and related applications)
- A strategic corporate approach to back office systems. Back office systems relate to the specialist application used by Council staff to administrate and manage a specific business area or generic business function i.e. Council Tax, Financial Management, Planning, Housing, Benefits, ERDMS, GIS, CMS etc.
- A Content Management System (CMS). This manages and control what is commonly known as the Council's website.
- The integration of all back office systems, at the appropriate level, into a corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The CRM effectively provides a single view of all customers of the Council and the related information (correspondence, contact, billing etc). Access to the CRM maybe granted to Members and other government agencies, with appropriate restrictions in place.
- A corporate Land and Property Management system that supports the National Land Inquiry System (NLIS) and the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG)
- A Geographical Information System (GIS) to allow all relevant information to be accurately visualised. This currently relates to mainly property based information.
- An Electronic Records and Document Management System (ERDMS) to allow for a single corporate records system for the whole Council. This system is critical for both the CCC and in addressing the expected growth in access to information generated by new rights under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- A Committee Management System to manage the complete democratic decision making process. To include the provision of electronic access to Members in support of their District Councillor duties.
- An e-Procurement/Purchasing system to manage the current manual process and to facilitate new methods of procurement. These include e-Tendering and e-Auctions