

# **Report to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel**



## SCRUTINY

 Epping Forest District Council

**Date of meeting: 20 March 2012**

**Portfolio: Planning & Technology**

**Subject: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Update**

**Responsible Officer: David Newton (01992 564580).**

**Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To note the findings within the recent Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) benchmarking report for the financial year 2010/2011 and;**
- (2) To note the progress on ICT projects for 2011/2012.**

### **Executive Summary:**

ICT have again taken part in the UK SOCITM benchmarking exercise. This year the SOCITM report has analysed Key Performance Indicators (**KPI's**) from only 17 Councils in the UK, 10 less than last year. Only 2 other District Council took part in the survey this year and although this Authority performed well against much larger Authorities, if this trend continues, it is debatable whether a meaningful comparison will be possible in future years. The results are broken down into 3 main categories:

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

This exercise has enabled 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 another very good performance.

Work on projects within the Business Plan for 2011/2012 is still on-going 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:**

Members' could ask for further detailed information on any of the schemes summarised on the following pages.

**Report:**

## **1. SOCITM report.**

A summary of the major points contained within this comprehensive report are listed below. The final version of this report is available in the Member's room.

## **2. Performance.**

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

- a) Core applications availability was weighted at 95, well above the median of 75.
- b) The EFDC network experienced zero downtime for the entire year.
- c) Internet availability was 100%.
- d) Website availability was 100%.
- e) Good procurement practices and a very competitive market due to the current economic climate has again resulted in EFDC having the cheapest hardware costs, despite no longer being a member of the Essex on Line Partnership (EOLP).
- f) The Total Cost of Ownership (**TCO**) of PC's was just above the median. However, it was only possible to compare this figure against the much larger Authorities.
- g) The cost of telephone calls was again identified as high. A recent tender and resulting contract awarded to BT will see these costs drop dramatically in the future. However, there is still a high maintenance charge for the old telephony equipment currently in place. A project to replace this obsolete switch with a digital Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) system is on-going. An update is provided later in this report.
- h) Remote and home working accessibility results show that although 33% of staff have remote access to the EFDC network, very few staff have official home working arrangements.
- i) EFDC still have a low ratio of users to printers. Currently, EFDC have an average of just over 3 staff per printer, compared to the median of 6.5. To address this issue, ICT no longer replace printers unless there is a valid business case to do so.
- j) The server virtualisation project has been completed over a year ago. Virtualised servers are far cheaper and easier to maintain and EFDC has the highest percentage of virtualised servers of all participants in the survey.
- k) The average cost per ICT employee was the lowest of the other comparable Authorities.

## **3. Resourcing**

The Capital Budget was the lowest and Revenue Budget was the highest of comparable Authorities. The Revenue figure was inflated largely due to the desktop replacement programme carried out during this period. The completion of this project and other cost cutting exercises will address this issue in the following years.

## **4. Management**

The ICT Management **Governance** results were good and above the median. However, **Management Practices** were below the median, mainly due to the lack of satisfaction surveys carried out during this period. Satisfaction surveys will be issued to staff during the next financial year.

## 5. 2011/2012 Action Plan Update

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

- a) Staged conversion from GroupWise to Outlook email solution. – All staff now have full access to Microsoft Outlook for both their email and calendar requirements.
- b) Mobile working. – (Enable staff to work off-site by accessing emails and documents using mobile technology). – Access to Email and Calendar can now be delivered securely to either Council owned or personal mobile phones.
- c) I@W (Information at Work) Environment and Street Scene – The continued rollout of the Corporate Document Management solution.
- d) Investigate open-source software and cloud solutions - Open source is fully functional software at very low cost. An Open Source solution is currently being used to develop the new EFDC website. Cloud technology also has the potential to offer cheaper solutions.
- e) Full systems review – This Authority has a wide range of diverse systems which require continued evaluation.
- f) Full systems contracts review – Ensure best value for money from all systems.
- g) BACS upgrade – Implementation of a high security web based payment collection system.
- h) Major Academy (Revenue & Benefits) upgrade – this new 'efficiency version' is aimed at rationalising the current system to improve ease of use and productivity.

## 6. Combine Environmental and Street Scene Systems/Gazetteer

**Project description;** This project will combine both separate applications into a single instance and then link this to the single Local Property Gazetteer (LPG) reducing duplication of work.

**Situation Report;** All data cleansing has taken place and new cases are being added to the new instance. Unfortunately, this project will not be fully completed on schedule due to the inability of the supplier to provide a resource to transfer the historical data.

## 7. 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;** The supplier for the Wireless DR connection to Parsonage Court has been appointed and work is currently underway. Following a number of DR exercises, it has become apparent that focus should be towards improving communications and to prioritise the replacement of the obsolete analogue telephone switch for a digital VOIP solution.

## **8. Telephony upgrade (VOIP) Converged network.**

**Project description;** Replace the obsolete switch with new digital solution capable of meeting the additional functionality required by Directorates.

**Situation Report;** The existing telephone switch is now obsolete and will be unsupported from the end of 2013. ICT have begun evaluating a number of solutions and the process is still on-going. A report to Cabinet will be presented in the new financial year. The complexity and different technologies available as solutions, along with the recent resignation of the Network Support Analyst, mean that it will not be possible to complete this project on schedule.

## **9. Internet / Intranet replacement**

**Project description;** Create in-house solutions developed using low cost open-source software.

**Situation Report;** The Intranet solution is now live. The website solution has been demonstrated to Members' and is currently being implemented, with an expected live date of July 2012.

## **10. Anite Housing (Leasehold Module).**

**Project description;** To activate the leasehold module within the Housing system to facilitate automation of maintenance charges for flats etc.

**Situation Report;** This project has been put on hold due to resourcing issues within the Housing Directorate.

## **11. Upgrade to Microsoft Office 2010.**

**Project description;** The version of Office currently available is 2003. The licences to upgrade to 2010 have already been purchased prior to the termination of the Microsoft Enterprise agreement.

**Situation Report;** Due to a number of projects over running it has not been possible to rollout this upgrade. The upgrade will now be included in the business plan for 2012/2013.

## **12. ICT Strategy.**

**Project description;** The existing ICT strategy is out of date. Both the SOCITM survey and audit reports recommend this be updated.

**Situation Report;** The document is now approaching its final iteration and should be available from the next financial year.

## **13. Support implementation of the West Essex shared crime and anti-social behaviour mapping and analysis system.**

**Situation Report:** This project has been dropped by the West Essex partnership due to the funding being withdrawn.

**Resource Implications:**

The SOCITM report again indicates that ICT have achieved a good balance between service and cost, offering continued 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:**

None

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None

**Background Papers:**

The SOCITM report 2010/2011 is available in the Members Room

ICT Business Plan 2011/12 – 2012/13.

**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**