

Report to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 12 March 2013

Portfolio: Finance & Technology

Subject: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Update

Responsible Officer: David Newton (01992 564580).

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the progress on ICT projects for 2012/2013.

Executive Summary:

Work on projects within the Business Plan for 2012/2013 is still on-going and this report gives an update of progress to-date. The majority of projects are progressing well and are still broadly in line with 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. 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; Although priority on this project has switched to the telephone switch replacement below, racks have now been installed into the DR room in preparation for the installation of the servers in 2014/2015.

2. Telephony upgrade (VOIP) Converged network.

Project description; Replace the obsolete telephone switch with a 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. The Invitation to Quote (**ITQ**) for the replacement of the switch was published on 11th January 2013 by the Essex Procurement Hub on behalf of Epping Forest using the Government Procurement Service (**GPS**). The closing date for expressions of interest was the 13th February. 5 suppliers responded and their quotes are currently being evaluated. The successful supplier will be selected towards the end of March, allowing implementation to start at the beginning of the new financial year.

3. Website Replacement.

Project description; Replace the obsolete third party system with an in-house solution developed using internal resources and low cost open-source software.

Situation Report; The new website went live in July 2012. Feedback has been positive and the new site has opened up additional channels for the public to communicate with the Council, such as Twitter. This new platform is very flexible and has allowed many improvements which would not have been possible previously. Already a mobile platform has been made available to allow smartphone users easier access. Future developments will include the ability to use on-line mapping and the use of smart forms, which will allow users to report and monitor the progress of their issues themselves.

4. Upgrade to Microsoft Office 2010.

Project description; The standard version of Office currently available to staff is Office 2003. The licences to upgrade to 2010 have already been purchased prior to the termination of the Microsoft Enterprise agreement. . Staff will benefit from the additional functionality available from this release of the Office suite

Situation Report; Unfortunately, due to software integration issues with some of the core systems, it has been necessary to upgrade these before implementation of the Office Suite upgrade can commence. It is anticipated that this exercise will now be concluded by July 2013.

5. Mobile Working.

Project description; – To enable staff to work off-site by accessing emails and documents using mobile technology.

Situation Report; Access to Email and Calendar entries can now be delivered securely to either Council owned or personal mobile phones. In addition, Planning have been trialling a number of mobile units and their feedback/experiences are currently being evaluated. It is envisaged that a corporate working group will be formed in the new financial year to co-ordinate the technical solutions available with users requirements.

6. Email

a) Archiving.

Project description; Increase email storage capacity and improve search facilities within archived emails.

Situation Report; With the increasing reliance of emails within the working environment, it is becoming essential that they are retained for longer periods of time. Currently it is only possible to store between 6-12 months of emails for a typical user. A Cloud based email archiving solution has recently been implemented allowing emails to be stored and interrogated for up to 10 years. Final configuration is currently taking place and the system will go live following guidance from the Data Management Working Party and user training.

b) Large file attachments.

Project description; To enable large documents to be sent and received electronically.

Situation Report; Currently, email attachments are limited in size to prevent the system from being slowed down whilst processing these large files, As partnership working and information sharing becomes more prevalent this limit is now inadequate. Consequently, a new system has now been implemented which allows large files to be sent and received without impacting on the email system.

Resource Implications:

The proposed ICT Work Programme and resource requirements are presented to Cabinet each year.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

ICT Business Plan 2012/2013 – 2013/2014

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? **None**

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**