

Committee: E-Government Task Group
Date: 15 January 2004
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: Progress Report – 2003/04 IT Programme
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Summary

- 1 This report provides a brief update on the progress of the various projects within the 2003/04 IT Programme. It also recommends that £10,000 is vired from the Essex Online budget to the General budget, to fund further development of the website, and a further £5,170 is spent participating in a change of address project with Colchester and Braintree Councils.

Progress to Date

- 2 Several IT projects are currently in progress, including a number specifically relating to e-Government. A summary of each of these projects is included in the attached appendix.
- 3 The main focus of work since the last progress report has been directed towards the development of the new website. The website has been built using Microsoft Content Management software, along with specialist database design and interrogation software. The new website is currently available to Members and staff for comment and feedback, with a live date set for the week commencing 12 January 2004. Some significant development work needs to be completed before this date, most notably around the site search engine, transfer of databases from the old system & integration into the new system, and the 'hit counter', which records the number of visitors to the site. A verbal update on progress will be given at the meeting.
- 4 Developments are still on target to have 60% of Council services available electronically by 31 March 2004. Even so, to achieve this target, further substantial development will be required in the remaining three months of the year. It is understood, from research carried out by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, that the local authority average by the 31 March 2004 will be 66%.
- 5 The Council continues to actively participate in the Essex Online Partnership (EOLP), and is leading a study into the registration and authentication of online transactions. However, there have been relatively few tangible

outcomes from the various EOLP projects taking place during the current financial year. As a consequence around £16,000 of the £30,000 budget will not be spent. Instead, it is proposed to allocate the remainder of the budget to the following projects:

- a. Change of Address service - Although not strictly an EOLP-sponsored project, the Council is proposing to work with Colchester Borough Council and Braintree District Council to register with the online Change of Address service. The service has been developed by Moving Technologies Ltd (MTL), which is 25% owned by Royal Mail. The need to deal efficiently with changes of address is regarded by the Government as a key online service development area. The MTL service enables home movers to advise organisations of their change of address via a one-stop service interface. Home movers would access the service from the Council's website, the iammoving.com website or the website of any of the other participating organisations. These include utility companies, banks, TV licensing, Royal Mail, DVLA, the UK Passport Agency and around 40 local authorities. The partnership has negotiated a set-up fee of £5,170 per council, which is a discount of 73% on the normal cost. It is proposed to pilot the service for twelve months and re-assess its value at the end of this period. In subsequent years the cost would be £1,400, plus a charge per transaction.
- b. Development of online Revenue services – Web developers would be engaged to develop the following online functionality:
 - Business Rates – The ability for any member of the public to view the rateable value of any commercial property in the district, together with the current annual charge.
 - Business Rates – The ability for any business rate taxpayer to view their account details.
 - Council Tax – The ability for any member of the public to view the Council Tax band of any domestic property in the district, together with the gross amount payable.
 - Council Tax – The ability for any Council Tax payer to view their account details.

The development would include an element of user authentication to ensure that personal information can only be viewed by the relevant taxpayer. The development will cost £12,000 and in order to be able to meet the cost in the current financial year it is proposed to vire £10,000 to the E-Services Development (General) capital budget.

Recommended that

- 1 The Council register with the Change of Address service developed by Moving Technologies Ltd for a twelve month period, for a sum of £5,170.

- 2 The sum of £10,000 be vired from the Essex Online capital budget to the E-Services Development (General) capital budget, in accordance with Financial Regulation FF3.

Background Papers: None

Appendix

Progress Report – IT Projects 2003/04

Project	Progress at 31 December 2003	Next Steps	Budget Position	
			Budget £	To Date £
E-Payments	Credit & debit card payment facilities now available on website. Payment facilities already installed in cash offices, TIC & on Intranet (for telephone payments).	Intranet and website payment options to be extended to a wider range of services	2002/3 Project	2002/3 Project
E-Services Development	Content Management installed & new website built ~ currently available to Members & staff for feedback. Some technical work still in progress. Work on phase one of a Life long learning area complete ~ has been developed with funding from the Uttlesford LLL. Various electronic forms are being added to the website.	New website to go live w/c 12 January 2004. Will include first phase of two new areas currently under development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism website. • Museum website. 	40,000	21,200
Disaster Recovery Infrastructure	Centralised back-up system installed and fully operational. Tape library device moved into Lodge House for added resilience.	Project completed, although improvements to the computer room electricity supply are required to prevent down time following power cuts.	40,000	41,200
Intranet Development	A Citrix 'Nfuse' server installed to facilitate home-working.	Home working pilot to be completed. Intranet to be rebuilt within Content Management system, once website development has been completed.	17,000	2,300
E-Services – GIS Online	Installation of E-GGP software scheduled for 14 & 15 January 2004.	Initially, Planning GIS data to be available online.	25,000	22,920
National E- Government Projects, incl	NLPG ~ LLPG brought up to date and linked to national hub (by IDEA	Links to National Planning Portal to be established.	32,500	28,860

NLPG	deadline of November 2003). Ordnance Survey (OS) Positional Accuracy Improvement Programme ~ Corrections made to overlays subject to base OS map changes.			
Essex Online (EOL) Projects	Uttlesford leading study into registration and authentication. UDC has been invited to participate in pathfinder project to review local government transaction levels. Secondment of Senior Development Officer to EOL partnership has ceased. UDC to connect to	Essextranet to be installed w/c 5 January 2004. Uttlesford facilitating discussions on an html based E-Forms solution for Essex. Feasibility of adopting EOL's ATP (automated telephone payment) solution to be investigated.	30,000	14,200
Replacement Financial Information System	Torex Ltd selected following extensive tendering process. Torex also selected by procurement partners, Stevenage BC, resulting in a discounted price. Hardware ordered.	Hardware and software installation to commence in early January 2004. Phase One of project due for completion by 30 June 2004.	220,000	0
Completion of upgrade to operating system and messaging platforms	Project plan agreed. Upgrade to Windows 2000 being carried out in test environment.	Completion of test upgrade prior to live conversion. Remaining Win 2000 & Citrix XP licences to be purchased.	29,170	0
Upgrade to Housing system	Project postponed until 2004/05. Supplier has postponed all customer upgrades due to problems with the new release.	Project re-scheduled for mid 2004/05.	67,990	0
Replacement server programme	A number of older servers have been replaced (and used to build a test network environment).	Further servers to be replaced as necessary.	15,000	6,500