

**IT WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN on 27 FEBRUARY 2008 at 7.30 pm**

Present:- Councillor S Howell (Chairman).
Councillors K R Artus and J E Hudson.

Officers in attendance:- M Cox , P Evans, M Frost, S Martin and
A Webb.

ITWG33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Lemon.

ITWG34 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 12 December 2007 and 16 January 2008 were received and confirmed by the Chairman as correct records.

ITWG35 BUSINESS ARISING

i) Minute ITWG25 - Broad Oak Consultants

Adrian Webb, Acting Chief Financial Officer, reported progress on the purchase of the new blade server. He was waiting for the results of the blade server analysis which would be followed by the tender process. Two suppliers, Dell and HP were being considered and officers would report to the next meeting on the preferred option.

ii) Minute ITWG24 – E- Benefits

Simon Martin, the Head of Corporate Support and Revenue Services, reported that the posts within the section had been held open and recruitment was now taking place. He hoped that there would be an opportunity to revisit the use of this package and would report back to the group later in the year.

ITWG36 WEBSITE UPDATE

Michael Frost the Website Development Officer, updated the group on progress with the new website. He showed the final design of the homepage which had taken account of the comments made at the last meeting. The designer had nearly finished the templates and these would then be forwarded to the implementation team. It was expected that the site would go live by the end of March.

Councillor Artus asked how the website would be monitored in the future in terms of the extent of use, the number of failed completions and to identify 'hotspots'. Michael Frost said that it was planned to use Google analytics, which was a free service and provided very comprehensive statistics. He also

confirmed that he would continue to be responsible for maintaining the site and updating the information for the relevant departments.

Members asked further detailed questions about the site, particularly in relation to access to council minutes and the identification of key council staff and contact details.

It was confirmed that the Working Group members would have an opportunity to test the site before it went live.

ITWG37

ORGANISATIONAL RE-ENGINEERING TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Paula Evans, the Organisational Re-engineering and Change Manager, gave an update of current reviews being undertaken by the OR Team.

A summary report had been prepared for Democratic Services which would be considered by SMB, following which a final report with recommendations would be prepared. The Chairman asked for details at the next meeting.

The review of the print room was waiting for recommendations from an external supplier regarding possible scenarios for its future use. The opportunity for partnership working with other local authorities was still being explored and further developments would be reported to the next meeting.

In answer to members' questions, Paula Evens said that the print room was probably working at around 60/70% capacity. A decision had to be made as to whether it should be aiming to obtain work from outside the organisation. The Chairman asked for figures on how much it currently cost to run the print room and how much it would cost for all the Council's printing to be done externally.

In terms of the mail room review a meeting was to be held with the Regional Director of TNT to discuss a number of issues, including the mail delivery times. The full extent of the anticipated savings was still not being achieved and there might need to be a further drive to prevent usage of first class postage and unnecessary deliveries.

The planning review was concentrating on the 'as is' element and was currently compiling the process maps. Bench marking visits had been made to other similar authorities that used the Ocella system. The next stage would be to look at the 'to be' options but this might be delayed because of resourcing issues for planning officers and the impact of the imminent G2 application.

Members thanked the Organisational Re-engineering and Change Manager for her report.

ITWG38

HOME AND MOBILE WORKING INITIATIVE

Members were advised that the Corporate Plan contained an objective of exploring the potential for home and mobile working and considered a report on the opportunities that officers had so far identified.

All the council's posts had been looked at and had been categorised into three areas :- i) Those posts that did not lend themselves to home or mobile working because they needed to be office based ii) those posts that lent themselves to periods of casual and planned home or mobile working, based upon adhoc and planned periods of working away from the office. iii) Those posts that lent themselves to home or mobile working because the work activity was rarely or never office based.

It was noted that a significant amount of home and mobile working activity already occurred but there appeared to be opportunities to extend this as long as it was properly managed and the benefits in terms of releasing office space were realised. It was suggested that the next steps should be to take advantage of home and mobile working opportunities as and when they arose through management initiatives or activities such as organisational reengineering reviews and to encourage managers and staff to change how services were delivered.

The Chairman said that although he could see the advantages of increased mobile working he had concerns with the aspects of home working. He did not consider that it would automatically increase productivity and that an office presence and interaction with colleagues was often important. Officers' sited cases of where this had worked well, particularly with jobs that were process based which could be properly managed.

The Working Group noted the report.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.