

**Committee:** IT Working Group

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010

**Title:** General Update

**Author:** Nicola Wittman, ICT Manager  
01799 510413

**Agenda Item**

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Item for  
Information

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### Summary

1. This report is to advise Members of the current position with regards to staffing and highlights progress on some of the key projects.

### Recommendations

2. The report is noted.

### Background Papers

None

### Situation

3. The 2 year fixed term contract post to cover the EDRM project was filled in late November which brings the staffing numbers up to full quota
4. The finance system supplier has now fixed a number of security issues with the ordering system and the testing of that upgrade is now underway. The system will commence use on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 in line with the new financial year.
5. The large uninterrupted power supply (UPS) in the computer room was serviced and it was identified that the batteries needed replacing. The cost of replacement batteries was almost as much as a replacement UPS. A new UPS was successfully installed and tested in a week. The new system has much more functionality than the old one and priority based shutdown routines are currently being established.
6. We were in discussions with Chelmsford Borough Council to house a number of blade servers in their data centre and for them to store a number in our server room, however Chelmsford have backed out of the project. We are now in the process of moving the blades to Walden Place and once up and running will speak to other authorities regarding housing their backups there.
7. Two members of staff undertook the Information Technology Library version 3 (ITIL 3) foundation course with exam and passed. ITIL is a set of best practice guidance for IT service management and is owned by OGC (Office of Government Commerce). This qualification demonstrates professionalism within the service and along with a similar qualification in 'Green ICT' should enable the council to offer services to other councils and businesses.

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8. Over the last couple of months a group within ICT have been attending demos of service desk systems. The new system had to be ITIL compliant. The system has now been chosen and the successful company was House on the Hill. The initial system was installed week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> December. There is a lot of work building the processes but the plan is to have the system live on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.
9. The council survived a virus attack from a new strain of virus. This virus was at the time of attacking us an unknown variant of the QBOT virus which seeks out and forwards on user name and password details. We worked closely with Kaspersky (our anti virus company) to identify, test and eradicate the virus.
10. Twenty one traditional servers have now been migrated onto 6 blade servers. This milestone means we are now halfway through the conversion project.
11. The new backup solution was purchased and installed at the end of November. Work is currently being undertaken at Walden Place which is the sheltered unit which will hold the backup server and will act as our disaster recovery centre in the event of a major disaster affecting the Saffron Walden offices. At this point in time the new backup server is located in the Lodge House.
12. The planned deployment of the Blackberry devices to staff and councilors was achieved on time and within budget. As expected a number of new requests for Blackberrys have come forward as staff and councilors see the benefit of using them. Requests are being monitored and challenged to ensure the need and return on investment is sufficient to merit the financial outlay.
13. The three air conditioning units in the server room used a coolant which was banned from use from 31 December 2009 as it contributed to ozone depletion. It was also identified that by having replacement units which could be individually controlled there was an opportunity to save money on electricity costs as at least one unit could be turned off during the colder winter months. The complete replacement was achieved within 5 working days.
14. The replacement to the Hi Path telephone system for the UConnect customer services is being built in test. Some prices for the cabling works at Newport Depot have been obtained however further prices are still awaited.
15. GovConnect contacted the council in October as they wanted to undertake a reassessment against the current Code of Connection (CoCo) version 3.2 which we gained accreditation to in May 2009. They gave us a fortnight to complete the document and they undertook the assessment during December. We were informed, just prior to Christmas that we had passed the reassessment. This process took at least 10 man days to complete which again was unscheduled and dropped on the council out of the blue.

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16. In November we were also sent the new code of connection (version 4.1) which the council must be compliant with by May 2010. 10 man days have already been spent attempting to understand the new requirements. The main areas of concern are again home working. The 'recommended' control from CoCo 3.2 has now become a 'must' in the new CoCo 4.1, we will continue to try and fight this and have employed a CoCo consultant to assist the council with its submission. If however we lose the argument we will need to review all home working arrangements with the potential cost being in the region of £50,000
17. As part of the CoCo project we have also had to install a data server supplied by the DWP. We have spent a number of weeks working with them on the configuration and testing and this server is now live.
18. Work has started on the PCI (Payment Card Industry) Data Security Standard. This is a standard being forced upon us by the banks and is turning into another CoCo type of project. We have a small ICT team working their way through the document at the moment. This has the potential to be expensive and we have no budget to cover the cost.
19. On the EDRM project a significant amount of back scanning in Planning has already taken place with pre-application enquiries for 2009 having been scanned as well as all of the on-going daily scanning for Revenues and Benefits and some of Planning. The scanning of Building Surveying files will commence, on a trial basis, on 4 January 2010. This will see all areas that currently scan now having the work done by the EDRM team.
20. An initial meeting between the EDRM team, Housing and Northgate (the EDRM software suppliers) has taken place in preparation to start scanning within the Housing Service. This will be the first new area to be included in the project. In preparation the EDRM team has commenced back scanning all of the Housing property files and housing application forms.
21. Within the Planning Service meetings are also currently taking place to introduce workflow into the EDRM process to further automate core functions. Workflow will be rolled out to other EDRM areas once working effectively in Planning.
22. ICT staff have carried out a large piece of work on ICT Disaster Recovery plans and one outcome from this is that the council has signed up to moving our Email to "cloud computing". This basically means that a company called Mimecast will manage our email off site whilst also communicating with our email servers located in the server room. This means that if the Saffron Walden council offices are destroyed we have no loss of email service. Mimecast are also going to be holding our email archiving as the solution we presently have in place needs replacing. All the data is kept in the UK and transmitted via secure links.