

**IT WORKING PARTY held at 6.00 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN on 31 AUGUST 2000**

Present:- Councillor R A Merrion - Chairman.  
Councillors R W L Stone and A R Thawley.

Officers in attendance:- Mrs J Allen, Mrs M Cox and J K Mercer.

**IT5 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs D Cornell.

**IT6 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2000 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the second line of the second paragraph of Minute IT2(i) to read:

"Councillor Merrion asked whether business calls to the Council could be made from these lines".

**IT7 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute IT2(i) Newsletter and Questionnaire**

The Working Party discussed the issue raised by the Chairman about making business calls to the Council on the second telephone line. It was agreed that only calls to the Council should be made on that line and that would be included in the guidance notes.

**IT8 DEMONSTRATION OF THE OCELLA SYSTEM**

The Working Party received a demonstration of the main facilities on the Ocella system.

**IT9 MEMBERS' HOME COMPUTING**

The Working Group was informed of progress in developing IT services for Members. The system had now gone live and the notepads were being distributed to the Members. The initial training was nearing completion and Members would shortly be consulted individually about the need for further training. Most of the telephone lines had been installed and the outstanding problems were being resolved.

Members then discussed the proposed guidance notes. There were queries under Section 2 in respect of the installation of additional software. The original intention had been to keep the notebooks as clean as possible to avoid unnecessary support costs. However, Councillor Thawley said that he had some additional software which would be helpful in his constituency work. Some of the software was political information supplied by his party. Members considered that there should be guidelines on the type of work for which the Members' computers should be used. Members agreed that this matter needed further

thought and should be discussed within the political groups and perhaps advice sought from the Local Government Association.

It was apparent that Members would require considerable support during the first few months of the service. The IT Section's resources were not able to cope with the additional workload. However, when the project was first agreed, a revenue budget of £20,000 had been set aside for ongoing support. It was therefore proposed to engage a contract worker for the period 1 October 2000 - 31 March 2001. This person would provide appropriate support to Members and also be available to carry out general duties within the IT Section. This appointment would take the project through to the end of the financial year. At that time it would be possible to determine what, if any, longer term support would be required. Members agreed that the provision of a support service for Members was essential and it was

RECOMMENDED that an agency worker be appointed for a six month period commencing 1 October 2000.

## IT10 INFORMATION AGE GOVERNMENT - TARGETS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Government Strategy for Modernising the Public Sector included the rapid development of electronic service delivery, and a target had been set of 100% electronic service delivery capacity by 2005. The paper "Implementing E-Government; Guidelines for Local Government", proposed that each Council set its own electronic service delivery targets, as far as practicable consistent with that goal. The Central Government Liaison Group had now issued further guidance in the form of a paper titled "Information Age Government - Targets for Local Governments". The paper reiterated many of the Government's existing modernising themes. It also advised that there would be formal consultation on two Best Value Performance Indicators which would provide a nationally consistent framework for measuring progress towards e-government. The paper also recommended that in advance of the Best Value indicators, local authorities should develop their own targets and performance measures. Members commented that although the targets might be relatively easy to set, measurement of them would be more difficult insofar as determining which elements of the service were capable of being delivered electronically. A toolkit was being developed by the IDeA to assist local authorities to develop local indicators and would give advice on what constituted electronic delivery. The mechanism for developing the indicators would need to be considered once the toolkit was available.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 the Council develop local performance indicators for electronic service delivery to take effect from 2001/02,
- 2 the mechanism for developing the indicators be determined at a future meeting once the IDeA toolkit was available.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.