IT WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 5.00 pm on 12 JUNE 2006

Present: Councillor R F Freeman - Chairman
             Councillors R M Lemon and A R Thawley.

Officers in attendance: M Brean, V Harvey, M Jimmick, A Webb and N Whitman.

Also present: Dr Stephen Willoughby from Saffire Website.

ITWG1   **PRESENTATION ON SAFFIRE WEBSITE**

Dr Stephen Willoughby from Saffire Website gave the group a presentation on the work achieved by Saffire Website over the last three years. He explained that Saffire were a community network scheme that allowed members to share skills and services.

There were 374 registered members across the district and joining was easy. At the heart was the members network link with pages for different services.

The discussion forum was open to ideas and discussions. The community radio had started on Saffire Website and it had now gone off onto an independent project.

The 'Virtual Skip' had been successful. Instead of throwing items away members could offer them free of charge, or for a small fee. The aim was to avoid the amount of waste and encourage re-use.

The 'Skills Exchange' was based around doing a favour for someone and banking the time for a favour in return. For example somebody had given language lessons in exchange for gardening work.

The 'Lift Share' had little activity at present, but was expected to take off with the forthcoming government initiative.

The 'Small Business Network' allowed local companies a business to business network.

ITWG2   **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Artus.

ITWG3   **SAFFIRE WEBSITE FUNDING**

The Head of IT asked Members if they wished to endorse a three year contract and interim funding, as the three year contract would not start until 31 March 2006 to align the new contract with the council financial year. He said that since the original proposal three years ago the website had achieved its set goals.

Councillor Thawley said the website needed more publicising to gain further members. It was suggested the website featured in Uttlesford Life.

Councillor Lemon felt unsure of the quality of the website and asked if the money could be better spent. He queried the amount of hits and the locations of the members. The Head of IT said the Uttlesford website did not offer a similar service and was catering for a need in the market. It would be possible to look into a contract for one year and to set targets for Saffire Website to meet.

The Chairman was concerned that a commitment of the taxpayer to an expenditure of around £20k over three years should not be made without a clear indication of the benefits to the community.

> AGREED

> 1. That Members would make individual enquiries of the public concerning Saffire.

> 2. That The Executive Manager (Customer Services) would produce a list of targets which Saffire should be required to achieve should the requested funding be made available.

> 3. To defer the decision and have the item return to the next meeting of the IT Working Group with further information.

ITWG4   **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 4 April 2006 and 15 May 2006 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

ITWG5   **MATTERS ARISING**

ITWG52 – Exchange (Email Resilience)

The Head of IT reported the Exchange was going ahead.

ITWG6   **TELEPHONY**

The Head of IT had prepared a report with Geoff Rick of Icosys Computers and Communications Limited to provide details on the progress of the procurement of the new telephony system.

Two options were presented in the report. A corporate telephony package would involve a competitive tender process and would cost £250,000 of the capital to purchase a system that would operate in a similar way to the current telephony package. This would offer little opportunity to reduce or reallocate the existing annual spend.

A managed telephony service would involve annual revenue costs with minimal capital outlay. Ownership of the system would remain with the leasing company, therefore upgrades would be at little or no cost.

The report discussed a number of advantages and disadvantages of the packages and outlined three additional extras that could be included in the MTS package. There was no existing budget for these extras, but it was felt that one or more would enhance the service.

Call Recording would have a cost of £18,228 per annum, it would have the ability to record calls, both for staff training and to record abusive calls. Members did not see this as beneficial as UDC rarely received abusive calls and it was also comparatively costly for the benefits involved. If it was decided Call Recording was needed it would be added at a later date.

A Wall Board held a cost of £1,582 per annum. This was a wall mounted display board showing a variety of information relating to telephone contact centre call handling. Members viewed it as essential for the new contact centre to have a wall board from the very start. It was hoped that savings would come from efficiencies.

A Ticker Tape Wall Board would be mounted on the wall and would prompt key information. This would have a cost of £1,020 per annum. Members viewed this as a possibility, but not a necessity. It was thought the ticker tape could be located in the reception and used as a promotional tool.

It was agreed that a plasma screen would be a better investment than a ticker tape system and this would be investigated

Councillor Thawley asked for an update on Voiceover IP. The Head of IT said every remote site would have one, Dunmow and Newport depot inclusive. This could be implemented at no extra cost.

RESOLVED that

1. That the facility for call recording would NOT be included in the package at this stage.

2. Members approved the proposal for OGC to provide a managed telecommunications service (MTS) to Uttlesford District Council.

3. That the option of installing a plasma screen instead of a wall board in Reception be explored.

4. Members sought to purchase a suitable display (wall board or plasma screen) as to the additional items as outlined in paragraph 14 of the report.

ITWG7   **INTEGRATED CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT (ICM)**

The Executive Manager (Customer Services) provided a report detailing the progress of the ICM project.

The CRM supplier, Northgate had built and supplied two servers. Electoral registration details had now been loaded onto the new servers.

The plastic payment card provider had been selected for the new ways to pay and cards were due to be issued to all cash paying customers on 4 August 2006.

The Chairman expressed a concern that we make every effort to acquaint the public well in advance with these proposed changes. He was assured that this was in hand, and would involve the issuing of posters and, nearer the time, press releases.

The building work for the new customer service centre was due to start 1 August 2006, with completion due in November 2006. The enhancements to Dunmow CIC would start on 9 September 2006 and would be due to finish on 6 October 2006.

ICM had featured in 'Utterings' and now regularly appeared on agendas at team meetings.

Phase one of the organisational re-engineering programme started in revenues, benefits, cashiers and anti-fraud on 24 April 2006. Phase two would cover housing services processes, phases three and four would be development and environmental services. The support services functions would commence thereafter. The whole organisational re-engineering process was expected to take 30 months.

The human resources JMT sub group were due to meet to agree the job description for customer service staff and a generic job description for back office administration.

Members were pleased with the progress. It was suggested that Customer Champion, Councillor Peter Wilcock be asked to join the IT Working Group.

> RESOLVED that Members note the progress and Councillor Peter Wilcock would be asked to join the IT Working Group.

ITWG8   **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY 2006-11**

The Executive Manager (Customer Services) presented the group with a report containing the information and communications technology strategy for 2006-11.

Comments received from the meeting held on 4 April 2006 were noted and incorporated in the final version of the document. The strategy took into account the Cabinet Office Transformational Government Implementation Plan, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister report covering socially excluded groups and the Local Government Association report 'Putting the customer first: lesson from business'.

Councillor Thawley drew attention to page 13 of the strategy and asked whether the application form for benefits needed expert help, or if it could be handled in the contact centre. The Head of IT said this form could be completed in the customer contact centre and should take 23 minutes from start to finish.

Members were pleased with the revised document and it was

RESOLVED that the working group approve the strategy.

The meeting ended at 6.25pm.