

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: Stansted Airport Campaign
Author: CMT

Summary

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide a brief summary of the expenditure commitments to date in relation to the SERAS report and to report progress and work still to be undertaken.

Background

- 2 The Committee received a progress report on airport-related expenditure at its November meeting and requested a report on progress to date and work still to be undertaken for its next meeting.
- 3 The Council approved its response to the initial consultation at the Extraordinary Meeting on 28 November.
- 4 The Secretary of State for transport announced in November 2002 that, because of the outcome of the judicial review, the Government would be issuing a further consultation paper on air transport in the New Year. This has not yet been published. A further four months consultation period is expected following the publication of this document. The Government's White Paper is therefore not expected before late Autumn 2003.

Programme of Work

- 5 Following the November Council meeting, Group Leaders discussed progress and a possible future programme of work with the Council's Public Affairs consultants. This programme is now being costed and will be considered by Group Leaders on 16 January. The outcome of this discussion and the financial implications will be reported orally to the meeting.
- 6 Members will recall that the Council also agreed on 28 November to work closely with the Stop Stansted Expansion Campaign (SSE) and approved expenditure of £15,000 to support specific projects. Members will recall that an earmarked reserve of £25,000 has been established to support work with SSE, and the £15,000 cost will be met from this sum. Close liaison with SSE is continuing.

Financial Implications

- 7 The cumulative summary of expenditure commitments to date in relation to the SERAS report is as follows. Page 1

	£
Cost of referendum	27,000
Contribution to technical studies commissioned jointly with Essex and Herts County Councils	12,000
Public Affairs advice September 2002 – end January 2003	60,000
Contribution to work of SSE	15,000
Printing and administrative costs (excluding staff time)	9,900
Total	123,900

RECOMMENDED that the Committee:

- 1 Notes expenditure commitments to date in relation to the SERAS report;
- 2 Considers the possible future programme and associated expenditure in the light of information to be provided following the meeting of Group Leaders on 16 January.

Committee: Resources

Date: 23 January 2003

Agenda Item No: 6

Title: Review of Polling districts and polling places

Author: Peter Snow (01799) 510431

Report to follow.

Committee: RESOURCES

Date: 23 JANUARY 2003

Agenda Item No: 7

Title: CORPORATE PERFORMANCE LEGAL AND MONITORING SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW - FINAL REPORT

Author: Michael Perry (01799) 510416

Members Councillors R. Copping, D. Miller and R. Stone

Summary

- 1 This report details the findings of the Corporate Performance Legal and Monitoring Services Best Value Review and proposes an improvement plan which Scrutiny 2 Committee approved at its meeting on 4 December 2002 for submission to this Committee.

Scope of report

- 2 The review considered whether legal services (including land charges), internal audit, the monitoring officer and corporate performance meet customer expectations and whether they could be provided more effectively and efficiently.
- 3 The review of internal audit coincided with negotiations to enter into a partnership arrangement initially with Epping Forest District Council but later with Stevenage Borough Council. A full report was prepared for this Committee on 11 September 2002 when it was resolved that the partnership with Stevenage Borough Council be approved. The partnership is now under way and performance is being monitored.

Brief description of the services

- 4 Legal Services support other departments within the Council, in particular Planning, Environmental Health, Housing, Office Services, Benefit Fraud, Community and Leisure, and the Council as a whole. In addition Legal Services provide services to the public. More details of these services can be obtained from the background papers. The cost of the service to the Council for the year 2001/2 was £356626 gross, £343926 net. This included £47695 for the PFI project however.
- 5 The Monitoring Officer has responsibility for ensuring the Council does not act in a way which may be unlawful and is also responsible for probity issues. Since the new ethical code came into effect he also acts as Monitoring Officer for Town and Parish Councils within the District. Regulations will be published shortly requiring Monitoring Officers to investigate certain complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by Councillors of the District, Town and Parish Councils. There is no separate record kept for the

cost of providing these services, nor is there a budget item for monitoring services.

What we are currently achieving

- 6 Legal Services are keeping as much work as possible “in house”. In the first 8 months of the current financial year Legal Services have instituted 23 benefit fraud prosecutions, have carried out one planning injunction, two enforcement Public Inquiries, 3 possession actions on grounds of nuisance and 4 prosecutions for Environmental Health. This type of work has traditionally been outsourced. The estimated additional costs had this work been outsourced would have been £38951.
- 7 Monitoring Services – training has been provided for District, Town and Parish Councillors by way of workshops with regard to the new Code of Conduct.

What we have done in this review

- 8 Legal Services:-
 - a. Challenged whether it will be able to meet the requirements of its clients, whether it is the most cost efficient means of providing that support, whether it has effective systems and procedures and whether the Land Charge Service can be improved.
 - b. Compared the provision of the service with Maldon District Council with regard to both service delivery and costs and with North Kesteven District Council by data comparison.
 - c. Consulted with Members, managers, officers and outside solicitors
 - d. Competed with outside solicitors in the provision of legal services
- 9 Monitoring Services:-
 - a. Compared the provision of the service with Maldon District
 - b. Consulted with Members of the Standards Committee, District, Town and Parish Councillors upon the role the Monitoring Officer should perform in the future.
- 10 Corporate performance:-
 - a. Examined how the Council wanted to address the government’s modernising agenda
 - b. Compared the Council’s current approach with other authorities in the Daventry Group and beyond
 - c. Consulted with Members, managers and officers

Answers to the fundamental questions

- 11 At its meeting on 21 March 2002 this Committee approved terms of reference for the Best Value review which included fundamental general and specific questions regarding the services to be reviewed. The responses of the Member Reference Group to these are as follows:-

General Questions
Question What is the Council wanting to achieve in the future in relation to these services?

- Response
- a) Legal Services – An improved service at a lower cost with less reliance on outside lawyers.
 - b) Monitoring Services – To provide guidance to members of the Council, Towns and Parishes on issues concerning the Code of Conduct and Members’ interests and to provide information regarding these issues to those considering standing for election.
 - c) Corporate Performance – To improve the performance of the Council and generally (within limits) to make resources available for that purpose.

Question Does the Council have a statutory duty to provide all these services?

Response

- a) Legal Services – There is no statutory requirement for the majority of legal services to be carried out in house.
- b) Monitoring Services – The Council have a statutory duty to appoint one of its officers as monitoring officer.
- c) Corporate Performance – the Council has a statutory duty to ensure continuous improvement in its delivery of services.

Question If not, should the Council cease to provide the service and if so what is the likely impact?

Response

- a) Legal Services – As a support service the impact of not having an in-house Legal Services Team is that all legal work for the Council and its various departments would need to be out-sourced. There would be little or no continuity of advice or service. There would also not be the facility for members and officers to access legal advice instantly on an ad hoc basis as exists at present. This would impinge on the speed of service delivery by client departments as they await advice from outside sources and increase costs. Further, unless specialist firms in local authority law were engaged (specialist firms being higher charging) access to specialised advice within the local authority sphere of legal work would be lost.
- b) Monitoring Services - Not applicable. There is a statutory duty to provide this function.
- c) Corporate Performance - Not applicable. There is a statutory duty to ensure continuous improvement.

Question If the services are to be continued, are there better alternative ways to deliver the service either in-house, by outsourcing or in partnership?

Response

- a) Legal Services –The conclusion drawn by the Member Reference Group was that a further advocate should be employed to reduce expenditure on external representation. The benchmarking exercise carried out as part of the review provided overwhelming evidence that this would be of benefit. In terms of hourly rates for its fee earners this authority is cheaper than private practice by a considerable margin and compares very favourably with other local authorities. However when comparing the costs of legal services per head of population this authority is significantly more expensive. The sole reason for this is the amount of spend on external legal fees. The Member Reference Group agreed that there would always be the unforeseen case where outside assistance would be necessary which could not be budgeted for (examples would be a major planning appeal, a judicial review or in some cases

foreseeable but non-recurring expenses such as the Local Plan Inquiry). However, the majority of legal work which has been outsourced in the past is predictable and can and should be budgeted for rather than be a drain on reserves. The Group were of the view that the budget figure of £25000 for external legal services ought to be sufficient to cover the need for such services save for the exceptional items referred to above. The Member Reference Group therefore recommend that an additional litigation and planning lawyer be appointed to the Legal Services Team to achieve this goal. A job description has been prepared and approved by CMT and the Member Reference Group and has been evaluated at PO 5 - 8. A copy may be inspected with the background papers

- b) Monitoring Services – The statutory requirement is to appoint the monitoring officer from the Council’s staff. Outsourcing and partnership working are not therefore options for this service.
- c) Corporate Performance – There was a degree of support for the development and implementation of the Community Strategy which will involve working in partnership with others.

Specific Question	Questions
Response	Will the Legal Services Team be able to provide sufficient support to meet the future requirements of client departments? Legal Services is under-staffed. Consequently it is unlikely that the team will be able to meet all of the needs of client departments in-house. Those needs which cannot be met in-house will either go unmet or be outsourced. If another solicitor were appointed to assist with litigation and planning it would not usually be necessary to outsource work of a standard nature.
Question	Is the Legal Services Team the most cost effective means of supplying that support?
Response	Legal Services is able to supply support to client departments in house cheaper and more effectively than outside sources, including the Essex Advocacy Partnership.
Question	Does the Legal Services Team have effective systems and procedures?
Response	Currently the Service does not have a computerised case management system. Members of the Member Reference Group attended a demonstration of a case management system and were impressed with what such a system could offer. Further evaluation is planned to enable a system to be introduced.
Question	Whether Land Charge Services can be improved by alternative methods of collecting information for replying to formal land charge search enquiries?
Response	At present there is a greater risk in alternative methods of information gathering. However now that the Planning Department has been relocated at Saffron Walden there will be scope to investigate this option further.
Question	What opportunities are there for an Internal Audit Partnership to improve service delivery?
Response	A partnership has now been entered into with Stevenage

Question	Borough Council for the provision of Internal Audit Services What role should the Monitoring Officer provide in future to the Council, the Standards Committee and Town and Parish Councils?
Response	Aside from the statutory functions of the post the need for further guidance on members' interest (perhaps in the form of most commonly asked questions and their answers) and information for those considering seeking election to the Council or a Town or Parish Council were identified. Officers and Members provided workshops for prospective Councillors in November.
Question	How does the Council want to address the requirements of the government's modernising agenda e.g. Best Value, corporate performance and community strategy?
Response	The Member Reference Group wishes to see the Council recognised as at least a striving council moving on to high performing. It recognised the necessity of acting in a corporate manner to achieve this status and believes that the creation of the post of Performance Manager to perform the functions set out in the job description at Appendix 2 will be required to enable the Council to achieve this aim.
Question	How do other similar sized authorities approach the supply of legal and monitoring officer services and corporate support?
Response	This has been dealt with in the benchmarking data contained in this report.

- 12 During the Challenge Event held on 5 June 2002 it was suggested that the appointment of a procurement officer may be of benefit in reducing costs of purchases. At the meeting of Scrutiny 2 Committee on 9 October 2002 Members requested evidence of the potential benefits. The Member Reference Group considered that this should take the form of case studies to show how savings had been achieved in other authorities.
- 13 Enquiries of the Daventry Group and other authorities have revealed that few district councils have procurement officers. Of the seven district councils that responded to enquiries regarding procurement officers only 2 have such posts. Three Rivers District Council have recently appointed a procurement officer following a Best Value Review on procurement. They helpfully supplied a summary of what they perceive the advantages of a procurement officer to be but were unable to supply any evidence of savings achieved. A copy of the summary can be inspected in the Background Papers. South Holland District Council have also recently appointed a procurement officer. It is too soon for that Council to say what savings may be achieved by that post and they were unable to provide any case studies from other authorities which informed the decision to make an appointment.
- 14 In the absence of evidence that savings would be generated the Member Reference Group and Scrutiny 2 Committee felt it would not be prudent to recommend pursuing the appointment of a procurement officer at this stage. The Council is participating in an Essex-wide exercise currently underway to examine the potential for a Procurement Agency in Essex.

- 15 Benchmarking was undertaken to enable the question “How does the Council wish to address the requirements of the government’s modernising agenda” to be addressed.
- 16 6 members of the Daventry Group replied to the enquiries regarding the position of a policy officer. The results are summarised in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 17 The Member Reference Group and Scrutiny 2 Committee considered that this Council would be unable to meet the requirements of the modernising agenda within the resources currently available. There is a need for someone to formulate, drive forward, co-ordinate and monitor corporate policy and performance. At its meeting on 16 October 2002 the Member Reference Group requested CMT to prepare a job description setting out what CMT saw as the role of a policy officer. CMT responded with a job description for a Performance Manager, which title was felt to more accurately reflect the responsibilities CMT would wish such an officer to undertake. This was approved by the Member Reference Group on 6 November 2002 and varied slightly by Scrutiny 2 Committee at its meeting on 4 December 2002. A copy prior to amendment is attached at Appendix 2. The amended version is attached to a report on Corporate Staffing which appears elsewhere on this agenda. The proposed post is currently undergoing evaluation.
- 18 It was the view of the Member Reference Group that such a post is necessary to enable the Council to achieve improvements in corporate performance by adopting a corporate approach and also to deal with the government’s modernising agenda.

Improvement Plan

- 19 As a result of the review the Member Reference Group and Scrutiny 2 Committee propose the following Improvement Plan:-

Objective/Implications	Action	Target Date	Budget Implications
1 Reduce dependence on outsourced legal services in order to improve the service to client departments by increased availability to in-house advice and to reduce expenditure by the Council.	1(a) Employ a litigation/planning lawyer	1(a) May 2003	Post being evaluated but estimated at PO 5 – 8 (£26943 - £28827). Projected savings on annual spend on external legal representation £56650
	1(b) Where there is lack of in-house expertise to undertake work (e.g. compliance with EU	1(b) EU procurement for the Housing Department by 31 st May 2003. Other projects as	Zero impact initially as the work would be outsourced in any event. Thereafter the ability to

	procurement requirements for contract renewals currently required by the Housing Department) to seek to work on projects in partnership enabling officers to gain the experience to handle future projects	and when the need arises			handle the work in-house would eliminate the need for external legal spend on such items. As these are not regularly occurring matters however it is not possible to express these savings in budgetary terms.
2 Improve case handling management systems to enhance service delivery by running standard procedures, time recording and improved management control systems	2(a) Subject to evaluation, costings and availability of funds, introduce a computerised case management system	2(a)	31 st	March	As yet IT have been unable to identify resources to evaluate any systems or obtain costings.
	2(b) Pending 2(a) above to revise and introduce file recording and time recording systems to improve management control and cost recovery	2(b)	31 st	March	Within existing budget
	2(c) Pending 2(a) above to introduce standard procedures for routine work	2(c)	31 st	March	Within existing budget
3. To promote a corporate approach to the services offered by and the policies of the Council to ensure that the Council is perceived as being at least a striving authority to obtain the benefits and greater freedoms available	3. Employ a Performance Manager to carry out the functions referred to in Appendix 2 as amended by Scrutiny 2 Committee – see separate report on Corporate Staffing elsewhere in this agenda.	3.	30 th	April 2003	Post being evaluated but estimated at PO 5 - 8

Consultation

As agreed by the Member Reference Group Heads of Service (other than the author of this report) were consulted upon the contents of the proposed Improvement Plan by way of questionnaire. The consultation document is available for inspection with the background papers. A summary of the questions and responses is set out at Appendix 3.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee approves the Improvement Plan.

Background Papers – Best Value Review File (Michael Perry's File)
Report to Resources Committee 11 September 2002 on Internal
Audit Partnership with Stevenage Borough Council
Reports to Scrutiny 2 Committee 3 July 2002 and 4 December
2002

APPENDIX 1
(Summary of benchmarking on corporate performance)

South Holland District Council	Policy and performance team comprising Head of Service (SP 42 – 46), Senior Performance and Policy Officer (SP 32 – 41) and 2 Performance and Policy Officers (SP 27 – 31). Department covers:-
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BV co-ordination 2. Writing the BVPP and summary 3. Performance Management 4. CPA consultation 5. Responding to government consultation 6. Miscellaneous policy issues <p>The team may take over the responsibility for the Community Strategy but this is not within its remit at the moment.</p>
South Northants District Council	A policy officer on grade 5 (£23700 - £27483) responsible for:-
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate policy development 2. Best Value 3. Co-ordinating consultation 4. Isp support 5. Community safety 6. Complaints 7. Management of two officers responsible for performance management, research and information
Stratford District Council	Has a policy officer on scale PO 1 – 4 and a number of officers throughout the authority who deal with various policy issues
Tewksbury District Council	Head of Performance and Scrutiny and his assistant are responsible for policy, performance and scrutiny issues
West Oxon District Council	Previously had a policy officer but the post holder was promoted and the responsibilities were distributed to other officers or retained by the Chief Executive who was however given additional support. The authority also has a Head of Audit and Performance Review Officer

APPENDIX 2
Draft Job Description for a Performance Manager

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Performance Manager
[Click here to type your post number]

Post Number:

Service:[Click here to enter your BC
[Click here to type your section]

Section:

Reporting to: [Click here to enter who you report to]
[Click here to enter location]

Located:

Responsible for: [Click here to enter if you are responsible for staff]

OVERALL PURPOSE OF JOB

(summary in no more than two or three sentences)

1. To advise on the implications of Government and local policy initiatives and support managers in planning and implementing change.
2. To coordinate performance management activities across the Council.
3. To coordinate the Council's procurement activities and pursue specific projects as required.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To coordinate preparation for and follow-up of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and any inspections for the Council.
2. To assist managers in ensuring service plans meet Government and local priorities.
3. To ensure performance is monitored and that timely reports are made to CMT and members.
4. To produce the Council's best value performance plan.
5. To provide support and advice on best value reviews.
6. To ensure that the Council's procurement strategy is implemented in relation to the review and securing of all services.
7. To provide advice and support for officers and members in identifying and pursuing options for service provision.

8. To progress individual projects as assigned by CMT in collaboration with relevant colleagues such as a local service agreement with Essex County Council.
9. To represent the Council at relevant external meetings.
10. To keep informed about latest Government developments and good practice advice and advise officers and members accordingly.
11. Maintain records and data as required

If you have any problems completing this form please contact Personnel

PERSON SPECIFICATION/SELECTION CRITERIA

The following person specification lists the criteria that have been agreed for the person we are seeking to recruit. These criteria will be used for both the short listing of applications and at the interview stage. **It will help your application, therefore, if you can provide information on the application form of your experience ability to meet the criteria** either through your previous employment, social activities or in the home.

1 Knowledge

- a) Understanding of current issues for local government

2 Skills

- a) Analytical skills
- b) Influencing skills
- c) Numeracy and presentation of data
- d) Organisational skills
- e) Ability to work with people at all levels

3 Experience

- a) Experience of working across different disciplines

4 Qualifications/Training

- a) Degree or equivalent professional qualification

5 Circumstances

[Click here to enter your details]

Effective date 1.1.00/ Date last reviewed: [Click here to enter date]

Please sign this job description below when you are satisfied with its contents

Postholder's name (please print)	Postholder's signature	Line manager/ supervisor	Head of service	Director/Chief Officer
Date	Date	Date	Date	Date

Effective date

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE LEGAL AND MONITORING SERVICES BEST
VALUE REVIEW 2002/03

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. Legal services should recruit a litigation and planning lawyer to ensure that as much contentious and planning related work as possible is carried out in-house

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Four consultees strongly agreed. Four agreed.

2. Recognising that matters will arise where legal services lack the expertise to undertake certain tasks, that in such circumstances wherever possible the work should be outsourced on a partnership working basis to enable expertise to be developed for future similar projects.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Three consultees strongly agreed, four agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed

3. Subject to evaluation, costings and availability of funds legal services should introduce a computerised case management system

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Five consultees agreed, three neither agreed nor disagreed. One consultee stated that IT are currently understaffed and it may be inappropriate to introduce new systems until this issue has been resolved.

4. In the event that Members approve the improvement plan to incorporate the recommendation at 2 above it will be some time before such a system can be introduced. In the interim it is proposed that
- a. Legal services should revise and introduce manual file and time recording systems to enable the some of objectives sought to be achieved by the introduction of a computerised case management system to be provided (whilst recognising that such systems will fall significantly short of what is desirable)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Four consultees agreed, four neither agreed nor disagreed. One consultee stated that an in-house time recording system is being developed which may be capable of being used until a case management system is introduced.

- b. Legal services should work towards introducing standard procedures for routine work to optimise the use of available resources

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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One consultee strongly agreed, six agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed.

5. The Council should employ a Performance Manager to carry out the functions referred to in the job description appended to the draft report as Appendix 2 to [this report]

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Five consultees strongly agreed, three consultees agreed. One consultee however expressed concern that the scale of the work required was grossly understated and that any appointee should have sufficient authority, status and grading to make SMT and CMT take notice.

6. The employment of a Procurement Officer should not be considered further at this time and the procurement element of the Performance Manager's role (assuming the employment of such an officer) be monitored to ascertain whether the expansion of that role (by either recruiting an assistant or a dedicated officer) would be of benefit to the Council

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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Five consultees agreed, two neither agreed nor disagreed, one disagreed being concerned that a Performance manager would lack the necessary expertise in procurement which is a specialist area.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: Housing Benefits Verification Framework
Author: Mike Brean (01799) 510330

Report to follow.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: The New Tax Credits and Pension Credits
Author: Mike Brean (01799) 510330

Report to follow.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 10
Title: IT Programme 2003/04
Author: John Mercer (01799) 510421

Summary

- 1 This report provides details of a number of IT projects and seeks approval for a proposed 2003/04 IT programme. The report also recommends that the sum of £146,170 be included in the draft Capital Programme, to supplement specific e-Government related grant.

Proposed Development Programme

- 2 Set out in Appendix One is a proposed IT Programme for 2003/04 totalling £430,000 along with a list of possible alternative projects totalling a further £184,280. Set out as Appendix Two are brief details of each of these projects, including summary costs and benefits. The projects have been divided into three groups:

- (a) e-government developments – Specific projects contributing towards achieving the Government target of having all local services available electronically by 2005.
- (b) User defined developments – Projects requested by service departments relating to both new developments and the modernisation of existing applications.
- (c) Core IT technical developments – Projects required to update the IT infrastructure, in order to cope with growing and increasingly complex use of IT within the Council.

3 Capital funding for IT projects of approximately £150,000 has been approved in previous years and it is suggested that a similar sum be set aside for developments in 2003/04. This would enable a programme of £430,000 to be funded, as follows:

IEG Funding note 1	£200,000
Uttlesford Funding – General Fund	146,170
Verification Framework note 2	15,840
Uttlesford Funding – HRA (already approved in Jan 2002)	67,990
	£430,000

Note 1 – Refers to monies due from the Government's Modernising Fund, specifically to fund e-government related developments. It follows the successful submission of an Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) statement in October 2002.

Note 2 – Refers to specific Government grant to support the implementation of the anti-fraud benefit verification regime.

4 Even with this level of funding, there will still be a considerable shortfall between the total list of potential projects and what can be achieved. It has therefore been necessary to identify priorities. The following criteria have been used:

- a. High Priority Projects
 - i) E-Government projects. There is a requirement to spend the £200,000 IEG funding on e-government related developments and associated infrastructure improvements.
 - ii) Unavoidable projects, such as the Housing iWorld upgrade.
- b. Low Priority
 - i) Projects requiring a high level of on-going support by the IT Section. Staff resources are very stretched and this has to be recognised as a significant constraint.
 - ii) Projects with high annual support charges, as revenue funding is also constrained.

- 5 In consultation with Service Managers projects have been prioritised on a scale between 1 (high priority) and 5 (low priority). The priority rating for each project is shown in Appendix One.
- 6 It should be noted that it might be possible to fund some of the reserve programme by:
 - a. Investigating the possibility of jointly purchasing the Financial Management System with another local authority, resulting in potential savings in project costs.
 - b. Securing additional funding for national e-government initiatives. For example, there may be additional funding available for the National Land Information Service (NLIS) project.

If such savings or additional funding is forthcoming one or more of the unfunded projects could be added to the programme. However, this would need to be the subject of a further report setting out how the on-going financial and staffing implications would be addressed.

Revenue Cost Implications

- 7 The on-going revenue consequences of the proposed programme are also set out in Appendix One. Most of the items in the suggested programme have few or no net revenue budget implications. Even so, there would be additional revenue costs of £19,510 per annum, to be financed as follows:

Growth items included in draft revenue estimates	£11,700
Verification Framework Funding	7,810
	<u>£19,510</u>

Conclusions

- 8 A copy of this report is being considered by the Member E-Government Task group on 22 January 2003 and its views will be orally reported at this meeting.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 In addition to the specific Government Grant of £200,000 in 2003/04, a sum of £146,170 be included in the draft Capital Programme for 2003/04.
- 2 Subject to any comments of the E-Government Task Group, the programme set out in Appendix One be approved.

Background Papers: IEG2 Statement.

Appendix One

Suggested IT Programme 2003/04

	Proposed Programme		Reserve Programme		Priority
	Project Cost	Net Annual Cost	Project Cost	Net Annual Cost	
<u>E-Government Projects</u>	£	£	£	£	
1. E-Services Development - General	40,000	2,000			1
2. E-Services Development – GIS Online	25,000	3,500			2
3. Intranet Development	17,000	3,200			2
4. Essex Online Partnership Projects	30,000	1,000			1
5. National E-Government Projects	20,000	1,000			1
6. Web Casting of Council Meetings			0	21,600	4
7. E-Procurement			20,000	1,600	4
8. Uttlesford Extranet			50,000	17,700	5
	132,000	10,700	70,000	40,900	
<u>User Requests</u>					
9. Legal Services – Case Management System			20,000	1,800	5
10. Upgrade to Housing System	67,990	0			1
11. Replacement Financial Management System	130,000	0			2
12. Funding for miscellaneous projects			10,000	1,000	3
13. Housing Benefits – Verification Framework	15,840	7,810			2
14. Contract Services – Replacement DSO system			23,000	0	3
15. Extension of wide area network to sheltered units			34,000	16,440	3
	213,830	7,810	87,000	19,240	
<u>Technical Infrastructure Improvements</u>					
16. Networked Test Environment			27,280	0	4
17. Completion of upgrade to operating system & messaging platforms	29,170	0			2
18. Upgrade to disaster recovery infrastructure	40,000	1,000			1
19. Replacement Server Programme	15,000	0			3
	84,170	1,000	27,280	0	
Total Programme Cost	430,000	19,510	184,280	60,140	

Appendix Two - Proposed E-Government Projects

1. E-Services Development - General

Project Description – Further development of online services. The project will help achieve compliance with national e-government targets (primarily, that all services should be available electronically by 2005). Development is likely to be in the following areas:-

- Creation of web pages for the remaining core service areas, including community & leisure and democratic services.
- Integration of Housing & Revenues applications with website.
- Creation of a Museum website, as part of National Grid for Learning.
- Creation of a Tourism website, probably in conjunction with the East of England Tourist Board.

It is anticipated that the work will be carried out partly in house and partly by specialist web developers.

As online services become more widely used the infrastructure will need to be enhanced to cope with the additional demand. Consequently, the budget includes provision for an additional web server and firewall.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

Professional web development services		£20,000
Additional hardware & software		
Web Server & software	3,260	
Stonegate Firewall	7,900	
Web Development Software	3,000	
		<hr/>
		14,160
Implementation Services		2,500
Contingency		3,340
		<hr/>
		£40,000

Annual Costs

Additional firewall support charges, including Managed Service	£2,000
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Benefits

1. Provides citizens with an additional means of accessing Council services and which are available outside of normal office hours.
2. Enables services to be joined up in ways that make sense to citizens, for example, by mirroring common 'life events' (such as moving house or leaving school) and by providing seamless links between different tiers of government.
3. Reduces the opportunity for delay and error when processing requests for service, as online transactions will be linked directly to back office processes. Will lead to long-term efficiency improvements.
4. Provides an easy way of extending access to the democratic process.

2. E-Services Development – GIS

Project Description – Specific online development to provide public access to information held on the corporate GIS system, including digital maps, map overlays and associated data.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

eGGP licences note 1	£ 12,500
Services	
Installation & customisation	3,900
Training	800
Hardware – server	4,000
Contingency note 2	3,800
	<hr/>
	£ 25,000

Note 1 - Cost would increase to £20,000 for 100 concurrent users.

Note 2 - Likely to be additional charges from Ordnance Survey

Annual Charges

eGGP annual maintenance charges	3,500
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Anticipated Benefits

1. Provides direct public access to the wealth of information held on the GIS system, including:
 - a. 60,000 Planning applications, dating back to 1948.
 - b. Planning constraint data, including 5,500 Tree Preservation Orders, 3,600 listed buildings and 1,900 archaeological sites.
 - c. Other data sets, including land charges & grounds maintenance.
2. Online provision of information would reduce number of queries directed at planning staff, although it is impossible to quantify the impact at this stage.
3. Would provide opportunities to publish data from other organisations, such as Essex County Council, local utilities etc.

3. Intranet Development

Project Description – Further development of the Council's Intranet system, including:

- Installation of query handling software to assist staff in problem solving when dealing with citizens face-to-face (for example, at Community Information Centre (CICs)) and via the telephone. The development would build upon the LEAP (life events) pathfinder work carried out by a partnership of London Boroughs.
- Automation of a range of administrative tasks, such as processing starters' & leavers' documentation, internal procurement etc.
- Re-design and modernisation of the Intranet, including single sign-on to Council systems.
- Development of remote access facilities for staff, building upon the work being undertaken with Members.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

Query Handling & related Software (estimate only)	£10,000
Citrix, Siteminder & ACE security / authentication software	7,000
	<hr/>
	£17,000

Annual Costs

Software Support Charges	500
BT Anytime Accounts for Remote Workers 15 x 12 x £15pm	2,700
	<hr/>
	3,200

Anticipated Benefits

1. An increased percentage of public enquiries would be dealt with at the initial point of contact, enabling an enhanced service to be provided at CICs.
2. Would provide remote access facilities for housing repair and environmental services staff after the existing Cable & Wireless Service is withdrawn.
3. Would enable tele-working to be piloted, initially in the Revenues & Benefits Section. This initiative forms part of an approved Best Value Review Improvement Plan.
4. Would provide secure extranet facilities for the Uttlesford / Stevenage Audit Partnership and, potentially, other suitable partnerships.
5. Would simplify login arrangements for staff and enable the Intranet to be a more effective focal point for communications with staff.

4. Essex Online Partnership Projects

Project Description – Provision for the financial implications of participating in the Essex Online Partnership. The partnership, which is made up of representatives from all Essex authorities, has been formed to help progress the development of joined-up services within the county. It has identified the following projects:

e-Forms	Secure Network
CRM Strategy	Project Review
Broadband Strategy	Electoral Registration Systems
Change of Address	Wired Communities

Summary Costs

Project Costs - £30,000

This is a provision for participation in Essex Online projects. Although it is too early to anticipate where exactly expenditure will be required, it may include the following:

- e-Forms – Each participating authority will be required to purchase Adobe forms development software, approximate cost £10,000.
- Change of Address – Participating authorities may need to link to www.ihavemoved.com, the national change of address service. The approximate cost for this service is £8,000, plus ad hoc development work.

All costs incurred are likely to be the result of joint negotiation with other Essex authorities.

Annual Costs – cannot be determined at this stage. Assumed to be £1,000 per annum for budgetary purposes.

Benefits

1. Successful partnerships attract additional Government funding of up to £2,000,000. To obtain this funding however it will be necessary for the Essex Online partnership to demonstrate tangible results. The active participation of all Essex authorities is therefore vital.
 2. The objectives of the Essex Online partnership are:
 - a. To support and expedite the meeting of Best Value Performance Indicator 157.
 - b. To facilitate the creation of integrated solutions to customers' needs and expectations.
 - c. To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our individual organisations by working together and sharing our valuable, often unique, skills and resources.
 - d. To present socially inclusive, integrated, accessible and higher quality local services to Essex citizens and local businesses.
-

5. Provision for future national projects

Project Description: A contingency sum for future central government-led projects that may require local development. Possible projects include:

- The National Local Authorities Secure Electoral Register (NLIS) – accreditation to level 3.
- Participation in the national LASER (local authority secure electoral registers) project.
- GIS – Ordnance Survey positional accuracy improvement programme.
- The National Land Use Database and
- The National Change of Residence Service.

Summary Costs

Project Costs - £20,000

This is a contingency sum only. Although it is too early to anticipate where exactly expenditure will be required it may include the following:

- NLIS – cost of linking existing land charges application to the NLIS & making it compatible with the NLPG. £8,000
- Software to comply with Ordnance Survey positional accuracy improvement programme (estimate). 5,000

Annual Costs - Cannot be determined at this stage. Assumed to be £1,000 per annum for budgetary purposes.

Benefits

1. Dependent upon the projects to be funded. However, generally, these national projects are intended to improve and simplify citizens' dealings with government. For example, the National Change of Residence service will enable a citizen to notify government once of a change of address, with the information being forwarded electronically to all relevant agencies. The LASER project will provide a platform for future e-voting initiatives.
 2. Local progress with national projects may help to attract future funding.
-

6. Web Casting of Council Meetings

Project Description: The live broadcast, via the Internet, of Council meetings.

Summary Costs: Charges are on an annual basis of £21,600 for a full year. Shorter subscription periods are available.

Benefits

1. Enables citizens to be involved in the local democratic process without the need to attend meetings.
 2. Enables meetings to be broadcast 'live' and / or recorded for viewing at a later date.
 3. Software enables citizens to give feedback whilst a meeting is taking place.
-

7. E-Procurement

Project Description: Installation of software to enable goods and services to be ordered and paid for electronically, directly from suppliers. Will also enable suppliers to submit resulting invoices to the Council for payment electronically.

Summary Costs

Project Cost

Implementation and Licensing costs	£11,000
Hardware	4,000
Contingency	5,000
	<hr/>
	£ 20,000

Annual Cost

Software support charges	£1,600
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Benefits

1. Reductions in administration costs of ordering goods and services and processing subsequent purchase invoices.
 2. Reduced delivery periods for orders.
 3. Opportunities for suppliers to reduce overheads when transacting with the Council.
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8. Uttlesford Extranet

Project Description: The creation of an Extranet within the Uttlesford district accessible by local organisations including the district council, town and parish councils and local voluntary groups. The project would include the further development of the Committee Management system (CMIS) to enable local councils to include details of their own meetings, Members etc on their own web site.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

Development of CMIS application	£5,000
Hardware (PCs, routers, printers, servers etc)	15,000
Software (Office 2000, Citrix client, Exchange etc)	6,630
Siteminder / ACE security / authentication software	£ 3,000
Training note 1	5,250
Comms connections	3,000
Temporary Project Officer	10,000
Contingency	2,120
	<hr/>
	£50,000

Note 1 – Assumes that 15 local councils would participate in the project.

Annual Costs

Internet access (BT anytime service, or equivalent)	2,700
IT Support Charges (the project would require permanent part-time support)	15,000
	<hr/>
	£17,700

Benefits

1. Would facilitate the rapid dissemination and exchange of information for a range of local services, such as planning development control and environmental protection.
2. Would provide information services and chat room facilities for local councillors and volunteers.
3. The project would pilot many of the technical and non-technical issues that will need to be addressed when developing the countywide Essex Extranet.

Proposed User-Requested Projects

9. Legal Section – Case Management System

Project Description – Purchase and installation of a time, task and document management system, for use within the Legal Section. The system would include elements of workflow, for example, automating elements of standard processes, such as debt collection and possession cases.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

Application software (6 user licence) note1	£3,000
MS SQL Server	1,420
Installation & Training Services	6,200
Hardware, including software, back-up device etc	5,000
Contingency	4,380
	<hr/>
	£20,000

Note 1 – Other solutions are potentially more expensive, particularly if document management is to be incorporated into the solution.

Annual Charges

Annual licence fee	£ 1,800
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Benefits

1. Would improve case handling (and thus enhance service delivery) by running standard procedures, time recording and improved management control systems.
2. Would provide information for recharge purposes

10. Upgrade of Housing System

Project Description – Upgrade of the SX3 integrated housing system to iWorld. This is an enforced upgrade by the supplier. The costs, timings etc have been the subject of considerable negotiation between the supplier and the local authority user group.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

i-World Licence	£ 21,640
Sx3 migration costs	32,350
Hardware Upgrade	4,000
Bespoke work to interfaces & Contingency	10,000
	<hr/>
	£ 67,990

Annual Charges

No additional charges are anticipated.

Benefits

1. Ensures that the Council's systems are supported and comply with all current housing legislation, particularly in respect of housing allocations.
2. Provides a platform for the introduction of housing related e-government developments.

11. Replacement Financial Management Systems

Project Description - To upgrade or replace the existing Radius financial management, creditors, debtors and bank reconciliation applications. These systems are very old (acquired in 1993) and are running on an old, unsupported version of Unix.

Summary Costs – the estimate is based upon a quotation from an existing supplier – tenders in accordance with the EEC Services Directive will be required. It should also be noted that it is intended to try and reduce costs by buying a new system in partnership with another Council.

Project Costs

Hardware, including a replacement Windows 2000 server	£10,000
Applications Software	44,690
Business Objects (reporting tool)	4,790
Implementation Services	49,110
Contingency, including integration with other applications	21,410
	<hr/>
	130,000

Annual Costs

Software maintenance charges	11,910
Business Objects (reporting tool)	1,280
Less: Savings in existing revenue costs: Unix Software Charges note 1	-1,500

Lease Charges note 1	-4,500
Existing support charges	-7,190
Net	£ 0

Note 1 – Relates to Unix Superserver – FIMS is the last system still on the Superserver & therefore it can be decommissioned once the new system is live. However, there will be short-term timing differences that will need funding.

Benefits

- a. Improved functionality, for example e-billing, where invoices can be emailed directly from the system to debtors.
- b. More user friendly.
- c. Improved year-end processing.
- d. Closer integration with PC products, such as MS Office.
- e. Web, document imaging and email enabled.
- f. Improved data analysis / modelling capability.
- g. Euro compliant.

12. Funding for miscellaneous projects

Project Description: To provide funding for a range of minor, user requested projects with demonstrable service and efficiency benefits. Examples of projects that were funded under this heading in 2002/03 were:

- Extension of wide area network (WAN) to Museum Laboratory.
- Provision of fast data links and extension of WAN to T.I.C.
- Acquisition of hardware to provide environmental services staff with remote access to central systems.

Summary of costs

Project Costs - Sum of £10,000 to fund minor projects – allocation of funds to be determined by Corporate Management Team.

Annual Costs – To be determined – unlikely to be significant.

Benefits

Dependent upon the project. However, it is expected that in each case relatively minor expenditure will lead to a significant improvement in efficiency.

13. Housing Benefits - Verification Framework (VF)

Project Description – Installation of software to manage the increased workload created by the anti-fraud verification regime. The project includes the purchase and installation of an additional document imaging scanner (to deal with the increased volumes of documentation resulting from VF) and hardware and software for three additional staff. A report on the introduction of VF is to be submitted to the Resources Committee in the near future.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

PCs x 3	£ 2,700
Office 2000 / Exchange 5.5 / Citrix Metaframe / Word 97	1,330
Additional DIP scanner, including Kofax software	5,500
ICLipse additional users	1,980
ICLipse Implementation Services	£1,000
First Software VF Module	2,500
Fox IT Implementation Charges	830
	<hr/>
	£15,840

Annual Costs

ICLipse Support Charges	190
First Software Support Charges	630
Extension to Fox IT FM Contract note 1	6,990
	<hr/>
	£ 7,810

Note 1 – The First Software application is supported under a Managed Service contract by Fox IT, hence the additional support costs for the new module.

The project costs will be met by VF Set Up grant, whilst the support charges will be met by VF on-going grant and income from WIBS subsidy.

Benefits

1. Helps cope with the extra workload, and resultant paperwork, known to be associated with the introduction of VF.
2. Provides ICT facilities for proposed new Revenues staff.

14. Contract Services – Replacement DSO management system

Project Description – The purchase and installation of a replacement stores / DSO management system. The existing system is rather old and whilst still supported, the original suppliers have ceased trading and its long-term future is uncertain. The project would include the installation of broadband into the depot and the creation of links to the Council's wide area network (WAN).

Summary Costs

Project Costs

DSO System (estimate)	£10,000
Hardware – server etc	5,000
Broadband connection charges, including routers	1,800
Suppliers charges for creation of import / export files	3,000
Siteminder / ACE security software	1,000
Contingency	2,200
	<hr/>
	£23,000

Annual Costs

Annual software support charges	1,500
Broadband rental	400
	<hr/>
	£ 1,900

Benefits

1. A replacement system could be supported by the IT Section, enabling some savings to be made on the existing £3,000 pa support fees.
 2. By electronically transmitting works order and invoice files between the stores and central housing systems, significant efficiency savings could be achieved. At present works orders generated by the housing system have to be re-keyed manually into the Contract Services' stores system, whilst invoices generated by the stores system have to be re-keyed manually into the central housing system.
 3. By providing Contract Services with access to the WAN, communications with the rest of the Council will be improved.
-

15. Extension of wide area network to sheltered units

Project Description – Provision of networked access to Council systems, including email and Internet, for all sheltered housing officers.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

BT Installation of ISDN at each sheltered unit	£ 3,780
PCs and printers (small HP laserjet)	17,290
Network Hardware	1,140
Software (Office 2000)	3,800
Additional Siteminder / RCA licences	3,000
Training	2,000
Contingency	2,990
	<hr/>
	£34,000

Annual Costs

BT line charges	10,790
BT Anytime (fixed charge for unlimited usage)	3,650
Consumables	2,000
	<hr/>
	£16,440

Benefits

1. Would simplify and speed up communication between Housing Section and sheltered housing officers (SHOs). All communications are currently either by telephone or post.
 2. Would provide SHOs with access to the Council's central computer systems, as well as email and the Internet.
 3. Could be extended at a latter stage to provide general Internet access from communal areas for residents.
-

Proposed Technical Infrastructure Projects

16. Networked Test Environment

Summary of project – Installation of a separate network in order to test new applications, releases, bug fixes etc, and to replicate problems / devise solutions, before working in a live environment. The project would consist of the installation of a Windows 2000 network, a Citrix thin client environment and an applications server on which test versions of applications would be installed.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

Network, Print & Application Servers	9,000
3 x Windows 2000 Server (5 clients)	2,080
Backup software and tape device	2,970
Citrix Metaframe Server	£ 8,850
Workstations & Printer	2,560
Network Configuration	1,820
	<hr/>
	27,280

Annual Charges - Nil

Benefits

1. Helps to ensure that new applications, upgrades etc are more successful when installed in a live environment.
2. Reduces disruption to users.
3. Minimises downtime for online services.
4. Aids problem identification and resolution.
5. Provides a safe environment in which users can test new applications, upgrades etc, without effecting live system.
6. Provides an environment to test disaster recovery procedures, in particular, to ensure that applications and data can be restored from back-up tapes.

17. Completion of upgrade to operating system and messaging platforms

Project Description: Completion of the partially funded 2002/03 project to upgrade, over a period of two years, existing Windows NT, Exchange 5.5 and Citrix Metaframe 1.8 platforms to latest versions. By 31 March 2003, phase 1 will have been completed, comprising the upgrade of two Citrix servers to latest version and the creation of a Windows 2000 'primary domain'. Phase 2 will consist of upgrades to the remaining Citrix servers and an upgrade of the Exchange messaging system to the latest release.

Summary costs

Project Costs

Software & Licences	26,180
Training	2,990
	<hr/>
	£29,170

Annual Costs - none

Benefits

1. Increased reliability and reduced down time, particularly for email services.
 2. Software version supported by Microsoft.
 3. Be able to take advantage of the advanced features of Windows 2000, Citrix XP & Exchange 2000.
-

18. Upgraded Disaster Recovery Infrastructure

Project Description – The centralisation of systems backups, using an automated tape-based back-up device. All 35 servers are currently backed-up individually. As the number of servers is increasing rapidly, so too is the time taken to manage the back-up process.

Other Options Evaluated – A number of other options have been considered, but were dismissed on cost grounds, including:

- Centralised Tape Drive – All servers are backed-up to a large drive device, which can handle 30 tapes at a time. The device automatically handles tape detention periods, indexing etc. This solution has been costed at £65,000
- Storage Area Network – This is the ideal solution. Data storage is consolidated onto one centralised device, resulting in fast backups and restores. For archiving and disaster recovery purposes, the centralised device is backed-up to a centralised tape device, preferably in another building. Because this is the full solution, it is also very costly, estimated at £156,000.

Summary Costs

Project Costs

Backup Software	£ 12,000
Networking	2,000
Hardware – Tape drives & Servers	20,000
Training	1,000
Implementation & commissioning	5,000
	<hr/>
	£ 40,000

Annual Costs

Software Support Charges	1,000
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Benefits

1. Automates the daily administration of back-ups, saving time and minimising the risk of error. There are also considerable concerns about the reliability of existing back-up arrangements.
 2. Reduces the time requirements for backing up individual servers. Some applications are taking all night to back-up. This may soon interfere with daytime systems usage and the effectiveness & availability of online services. The proposed solution will reduce the time taken to back-up servers.
-

19. Replacement Server Programme

Project Description – A number of the Council's servers are now several years old. It is proposed to create a rolling replacement programme to ensure continuity of service. Likely replacements in the first year would include the GIS and Printer Servers.

Summary Costs

Project Costs – A provision of £15,000, sufficient to replace 3 servers in the forthcoming year.

Annual Costs – None

Benefits

1. Minimises down-time and risk of data loss.
2. Would enable the Council to take advantage of the improved specification of new machines. For example, it would be possible to purchase replacement servers with RAID storage, which aids recovery in the event of serious hardware failure.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 11
Title: Capital Programme 2003/04
Author: Mike Dellow (01799) 510310

Report to follow.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 12
Title: Resources Committee Budgets and Service Plans 2003/04
Author: Nick Harris (01799) 510313

Report to follow.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 13
Title: Budget Strategy 2003/04 – Summary General Fund Position
Author: Mike Dellow (01799) 510310

Report to follow.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 14
Title: Staffing Update
Author: Carole Hughes (01799) 510407

Summary

- 1 The table below shows each vacancy that has arisen since the last date of the table prepared for Resources Committee. It shows the date the vacancy arose, the job title, the relevant Service and the decision taken. The decision taken section refers to whether the vacancy was to be advertised and recruited to and on what basis or whether it is frozen.

Date	Job Title	Service	Decision
11/11/02	Secretary to Dir of Resources	Resources	To advertise and recruit on a permanent basis
11/11/02	Local Plan Inquiry Programme Officer	Planning	To advertise and recruit on a temporary basis (temporary need)
18/11/02	Services Officer	Environmental Health	To advertise and recruit on a permanent basis
25/11/02	Clerical Assistant	Planning	Ditto
23/12/02	Senior Benefits Officer	Revenues	To advertise and recruit on a temporary basis (maternity leave)
6/1/03	Housing Officer	Housing	To advertise and recruit on a permanent basis
6/1/03	Tenant Participation Officer	Housing	Ditto
6/1/03	Rent Collector	Housing	Temp fixed term 1 year (diminishing need)
6/1/03	Payments Administrator	Finance	To advertise and recruit on a permanent basis
6/1/03	Groundsperson/ General Operative	DSO	Ditto
6/1/03	HGV Driver/General Operative	DSO	Ditto

Background Papers: Resources Committee Meetings
 Vacancy recruiting forms

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Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 16
Title: Corporate Staffing
Author: Elizabeth Forbes (01799) 510400

Summary

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present proposals for changes to corporate staffing as a result of identified needs and the forthcoming retirement of a key senior officer.

Background

- 2 A temporary post of Policy Officer was created in 2000 in response to the pressure arising from Government initiatives and to help improve corporate working within the Council as well as our work with external organisations and the public. The core role of the post related to key corporate work including best value, performance management and community strategy.
- 3 The postholder was recruited on a fixed term secondment from another authority. The arrangement came to an end in March 2002 after members decided in November 2001 not to make the post permanent. The position now needs to be reviewed in the light of more recent Government and local developments and other staff changes.
- 4 In recent years Government expectations and requirements of local authorities have emphasised community leadership and accountability, customer service, performance management and the quality of corporate governance. This is evidenced through the requirements to implement the best value process, improve performance management, introduce new political management arrangements, prepare community strategies and consult with and inform the public. This means that local authorities must now operate in a more coherent corporate fashion, rather than as a series of discrete services. It also means cooperating with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory organisations for the benefit of Uttlesford's residents. The key corporate tasks may be broadly summarised into the following groups: best value, performance management and CPA, community strategy, community involvement and communications.

- 5 Considerable progress has been made in Uttlesford towards meeting this 'modernising agenda' and the role of the Policy Officer assisted this process both by supporting and enabling service managers and directors to address the requirements of performance management and best value in particular and directly by producing the best value plans and summaries and by undertaking much of the early work on the community strategy. The contribution to this agenda made by the Policy Officer post was recognised by the best value inspectorate, the District Audit and the IDeA, all of whom commented on the very limited corporate capacity that the Authority had even with that officer.

Current Position

- 6 The Government has now introduced the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime under which the overall performance of every authority is to be assessed and made public. Authorities are to be classified as excellent, good, fair, weak or poor. The classification of an authority has implications for the level of freedom and financial flexibility with which it can operate. There are a number of factors which contribute to the classification and these include in substantial measure the leadership, direction, prioritisation and corporate capacity of the organisation. Judgements are made on both the current performance of services provided and on the capacity to improve. In best value inspections to date, this authority has not succeeded in achieving a positive assessment of capacity to improve.
- 7 In addition to the pressures of the CPA, authorities are required to undertake planning and performance management at a corporate level. This includes the preparation of both the Best Value Performance Plan and the Community Strategy as well as the continuing programme of best value reviews and monitoring and giving advice on data collection. These are substantial tasks and without adequate corporate staffing, coherence is lost and there is the danger of diverting the attention of other officers from their core tasks to an extent which would impact negatively on the delivery of services to the public.
- 8 In 2002 the BVPP was produced by using the groundwork prepared by the Policy Officer before his departure and members of management team bringing elements together across the organisation. Support for the work on the Community Strategy has been provided on an ad hoc basis by the Community Development Manager from the Community & Leisure section. The need for some corporate staffing is even more critical now as we face these continuing pressures.
- 9 These issues were considered as part of the BV review on corporate performance, legal and monitoring services. The report from that review is presented elsewhere on this committee's agenda and it includes a proposal to appoint a Performance Manager. The member reference group for the review felt that there is a need for someone to formulate, drive forward, co-ordinate and monitor corporate policy and performance. The Group saw such a post as

necessary to enable the Council to achieve improvements in corporate performance by adopting a corporate approach and also to deal with the government's modernising agenda. This proposal was endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee.

- 10 A further factor which prompts the review of corporate staffing is the decision of the Assistant Chief Executive to retire in May 2003. This post has encompassed a wide range of corporate support and management functions and the implications of this change need to be considered together with the proposal for the Performance Manager as recommended by the Best Value review.
- 11 The role of the Assistant Chief Executive currently covers a number of elements including:
- Acting as the Council's Monitoring Officer
 - Line Manager for Democratic & Legal Services
 - Member of Corporate Management Team
 - Advice to members and officers on procedures and protocols
 - Lead officer for Scrutiny Committee 2
- 12 A further strand which has been a priority of members for some time is the improvement of the Council's communications. As a result of a Best Value review in 2000 a Communications Strategy was agreed and an action plan was approved by Resources Committee in September 2001. Progress on implementing this has been limited because of lack of corporate staffing capacity. The impact in the last six months of additional media and communications pressures surrounding the SERAS report has exacerbated this situation. Increased partnership with the Primary Care Trust in relation to communications has been explored and some joint initiatives have been achieved, for example sharing and cross-referencing of information in the Council Page and the PCT newsletter. There is scope to develop this further. It is suggested that there is a need to enhance staffing capacity in order to achieve the Council's objectives of improving communications.

Proposals

- 13 The Council has recognised the need to address these issues of corporate capacity and the list of priorities approved by the Council on 22 October includes preparing the Council for CPA, increasing corporate capacity and improving communications. The Council has also shown commitment to developing the Community Strategy and ensuring that best value requirements are met to the benefit of the Council. The proposals now presented take into account the priorities expressed by the Council.
- 14 As the Council's needs have changed it is not proposed to replace the Assistant Chief Executive on a like for like basis but to re-configure corporate staffing as follows. This represents a package of measures which together should strengthen the corporate capacity of the organisation with modest

resource implications. These have been pitched at a modest level and it is considered that the position should be further reviewed in twelve months time.

1. Establish new posts of Performance Manager and part-time Assistant

The post of Performance Manager is largely as recommended by the Best Value review with changes made by the Scrutiny Committee. The proposed outline job description is attached. The post has now been evaluated as a senior PO grade. This post will be key in ensuring a strong corporate approach to performance management and preparing the Council for the CPA process. This is a substantial post and the best value reference group expressed some concern about workload. There are also considerable record-keeping and organisational requirements associated with this work and for these reasons it is proposed there should be a part-time assistant for this position. A proposed job description is attached.

2. Appoint the Head of Legal Services as Monitoring Officer

This appointment is a personal one and must be made by the Council. This Committee may wish to recommend this appointment to the Council. It is proposed that if this appointment is confirmed, the Head of Legal Services be awarded an additional increment to recognise the additional responsibility of this position

3. Refine role of Committee & Communications Manager

This post will be expected to provide advice and support for members on procedural matters such as the drafting of motions, procedure rules and proportionality. This is broadly consistent with the current purpose of the post. Some further workload pressures will be created however and some re-alignment of administrative functions is being considered to address this pressure. It is proposed that this post should report to the Head of Legal Services. (It currently reports to the Assistant Chief Executive.) An additional post is also proposed to increase the capacity in relation to communications.

4 Establish a part-time post of Publications Officer

This post would enable the Committee & Communications Manager still to be responsible for general media contact and press releases but would give responsibility for producing the Council's corporate publications and the regular Council Page to a specialist. This post could develop links with other agencies, including the PCT, and develop further the external face of the Council. An outline job description is attached and it is expected that the post will be at Scale 6.

5 Formalise the role of the Community Development Manager in relation to community planning.

This should result in more regular professional support for this work at a level which is realistic for this Council at present. This will include supporting the work of Uttlesford Futures and the development and implementation of the community strategy.

- 15 In addition to these specific proposals, there may well be need for additional training for both officers and members, and potentially the use of external advisers, particularly in relation to preparations for CPA. It is recommended that arrangements be made as necessary, funded from reserves. It is considered that these costs may be up to £15,000.

Financial Implications

- 16 The current cost of the Assistant Chief Executive post, with on-costs and travel is £60,000. The expected cost of the proposed staffing changes, including on-costs and travel is as follows.

	£
Performance Manager	42,000
Part-time assistant	10,000
Monitoring Officer	
Additional increment	1,000
Part-time Publications Officer	11,500
Total	64,500

- 17 Members will note from the above that the net revenue budget requirement to fund these changes would therefore be £4,500. However, it is suggested that it would be highly beneficial to recruit the Performance Manager and Assistant as soon as possible and there would therefore be a short period of additional funding required. This is likely to be of the order of £10,000, depending on the timing of appointments.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 the posts of Performance Manager and assistant be established as from the date of this meeting and recruited as soon as possible;
- 2 the appointment of the Head of Legal Services as the Council's Monitoring Officer be recommended to Council to take effect from 1 May 2003 with the postholder receiving an additional increment;
- 3 the post of Publications Officer be established and recruited from 1 April 2003;
- 4 one-off expenditure for training or external advice be funded from the Management of Change Reserves up to a total maximum sum of £15,000.

Background Papers: None.

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Performance Manager
[Click here to type your post number]

Post Number:

Service:[Click here to enter your BC
[Click here to type your section]

Section:

Reporting to: Chief Executive

Located: SW

Responsible for: Performance Assistant

OVERALL PURPOSE OF JOB

(summary in no more than two or three sentences)

- 1 To advise on the implications of Government and local policy initiatives and support managers in planning and implementing change.
- 2 To coordinate performance management activities across the Council.
- 3 To coordinate the Council's procurement activities and pursue specific projects as required.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 To plan and coordinate the Council's preparation for and follow-up of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and any inspections for the Council.
- 2 To identify areas for specific attention and develop action plans to address specific challenges or weaknesses.
- 3 To work with managers to ensure service plans meet Government and local priorities.
- 4 To ensure performance is monitored and that timely reports are made to CMT and members.
- 5 To produce the Council's best value performance plan.
- 6 To continue to develop the Council's approach to best value and ensure that reviews are undertaken consistently with the Council's policies.
- 7 To provide support and advice to members on the effective development of scrutiny and act as lead officer for scrutiny committees.
- 8 To identify needs for and ensure provision of relevant training and external advice.
- 9 To ensure that the Council's procurement strategy is implemented in relation to the review and securing of all services.

- 10 To provide advice and support for officers and members in identifying and pursuing options for service provision.
- 11 To support the corporate management of the Authority and manage individual projects as agreed.
- 12 To represent the Council at relevant external meetings.
- 13 To keep informed about latest Government developments and good practice advice and advise officers and members accordingly.
- 14 Ensure that relevant records and data are maintained as required.
- 15 To undertake such other duties as may be required consistent with this job description.

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Performance Assistant
[Click here to type your post number]

Post Number:

Service:[Click here to enter your BC
[Click here to type your section]

Section:

Reporting to: Performance Manager

Located: SW

Responsible for: None

OVERALL PURPOSE OF JOB

(summary in no more than two or three sentences)

- 1 To support the work of the Performance Manager.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 To collate and present data and other information.
- 2 To maintain accurate and orderly records and datasets.
- 3 To monitor and progress chase information for plans, projects and reports.
- 4 To research information within the Council and from external sources.
- 5 To plan schedules and make arrangements for meetings, workshops and visits by external inspectors/advisers.
- 6 To undertake such other duties as may be required consistent with this job description.

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Publications Officer
[Click here to type your post number]

Post Number:

Service: Democratic & Legal Services
[Click here to type your section]

Section:

Reporting to: Committee & Communications Manager

Located: SW

Responsible for: None

OVERALL PURPOSE OF JOB

(summary in no more than two or three sentences)

- 1 To produce specified publications for the Council.
- 2 To contribute to the coordination of communications across the Council.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 To produce the Council's corporate publications, including liaising with local businesses to generate advertising income where appropriate.
- 2 To produce the monthly Council Page and/or periodic Council newspaper as may be determined.
- 3 To assist the Committee & Communications Manager in the preparation of press releases and other material as required.
- 4 To contribute to the development of the Council's image and its corporate communications.
- 5 To maximise opportunities for fruitful partnership arrangements in external publications by working with other local organisations.
- 6 To assist with internal communications as required.
- 7 To work within the resources available.
- 8 To undertake such other duties as may be required consistent with this job description.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 17
Title: First Aid Allowance
Author: Carole C W Hughes (01799) 510407

Summary

- 1 Members are asked to approve the attached terms of reference for the payment of a First Aid Allowance, (Appendix 1) and to retrospectively approve the increase in the First Aid Allowance from £80 to £120 per year.
- 2 Members are asked to approve that the allowance is linked to future pay awards with the first increase occurring 1 April 2003.
- 3 Members are asked to agree and establish that the allowance being non contractual is non pensionable. Members are also asked to agree that any current anomalies where the allowance has been treated as pensionable are dealt with as per the attached terms of reference as each first aider is re-certified.

Background

- 4 The current Head of Personnel, joined Uttlesford in November 2000. During the first few months of her appointment Single Status meetings began and the agenda that had been agreed before her arrival was progressed.
- 5 One of the first issues taken to resolution was the First Aid Allowance. In November 2000 the allowance stood at £80 per year. Other similar authorities paid a sum of £10.00 per month / £120 per year.
- 6 It was agreed during Single Status meetings that the legislative requirement to have qualified first aiders should be reflected in an increase to the allowance and the sum of £120 per year paid by others was viewed as a suitable amount. The Head of Personnel sought and gained agreement from the Corporate Management Team for the increase and in April 2001 arranged for the sum to be paid through payroll to the relevant qualified first aiders.
- 7 Although there was a resource implication it was not progressed by the new Head of Personnel in the correct manner and, unfortunately she did not progress the matter through to the relevant Committee and extends her apologies to Members for this oversight. The oversight has been brought to light due to the development of the attached Terms of Reference.
- 8 Some employees in receipt of the allowance have received it or currently receive it as a pensionable allowance. This occurred in the distant past for an

unknown set of reasons and it is recommended to Members that they agree the practice ceases over the forthcoming three years and the allowance is confirmed as non pensionable.

First Aid at Work: The Legal Requirements

9 The following information in italics is extracted from the Health and Safety Executive document *First Aid at Work: Your questions answered*.

‘The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 require you to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable first aid to be given to your employees if they are injured or become ill at work.

Due to the requirements of Health and Safety legislation the organisation is required to have qualified first aiders on duty when the office is open. The qualification has to be re-certified every three years. The Health and Safety Executive recommend the following number of first aiders

Category of risk	Numbers employed at any location	Suggested number of first-aid personnel
Lower risk <i>eg shops and offices, libraries</i>	<i>Fewer than 50</i>	<i>At least one appointed person</i>
	<i>50-100</i>	<i>At least one first aider</i>
	<i>More than 100</i>	<i>One additional first aider for every 100 employed</i>

An appointed person is someone you choose to:

- take charge when someone is injured or falls ill, including calling an ambulance if required;*
- look after the first-aid equipment, eg restocking the first-aid box.*

A first aider is someone who has undergone a training course in administering first aid at work and holds a current first aid at work certificate ‘

10 There are currently 6 first aiders within the Council costing £720 per annum. If the next pay award increase is applied the sums will increase to £10.35, £124.20 and £745.20.

Terms of Reference.

11 The purpose of the Terms of Reference is to state to current and future first aiders: the rate of the allowance, eligibility, the role of a first aider, how the allowance will be paid and how entitlement to it may change during absence.

It is recommended that:

- 1 Members retrospectively approve the increase in the First Aid Allowance to £10.00 per month.
- 2 Members agree the Allowance is not pensionable and any current practice which allows payment ceases as the allowance is non contractual and as each first aider re-certifies over the next three years the allowance becomes non pensionable.
- 3 Members agree that the allowance be increased yearly in line with pay awards beginning 1.4.03.

Background Papers: Single Status meetings
Health and Safety Executive literature.

FIRST AID ALLOWANCE

Terms of Reference

This document will be operational from 1 February 2003, and existing conditions for any First Aiders will remain in force until the expiry of their existing First Aid certification; upon renewal of certification the new conditions outlined below will come into effect.

1 THE ALLOWANCE

1.1 Current Rate

The current rate for employees who perform an authorised First Aid function for UDC is as follows:

£10 per month for a full-time employee

£10 per month pro rata proportionate to their hours of work, for any part-time employees.

This amount is not pensionable, as being a First Aider is a voluntary, rather than a contractual duty.

From April 2003, this amount will be increased in line with future pay awards.

1.2 Eligibility

The First Aid Allowance is paid to employees who hold a First Aid at Work Certificate, and who have agreed and are authorised to undertake the role of First Aider for the council in order to fulfil the requirements of The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992. A common-sense approach will be taken to selection and inclusion of applicants on the First Aid register, in accordance with the agreed criteria, and the budget.

2 THE ROLE OF FIRST AIDER

All staff in receipt of a First Aid Allowance must maintain an up-to-date First Aid Certificate. The First Aid Certificate is gained or renewed through attendance on the four-day formal certification course; an alternative method of renewal is the 2 day requalifying course. Certification/requalifying will be paid for by the Council, and organised by the First Aid Co-ordinator, on the Council's behalf.

The First Aid Allowance is paid to employees in recognition of their performance of a necessary function, and therefore they must be available and in attendance at work.

3 HOLIDAYS

First Aid staff are requested to liaise with all other First Aiders prior to booking their annual holidays (which must be done through their line managers in the normal way) in order to avoid, if at all possible, all First Aid staff being absent from work simultaneously; however, if this does arise, liaison with the First Aid Co-ordinator will ensure that alternative arrangements may be made if necessary. In the same way, for a/l of even short duration, it would be helpful if you would inform the Co-ordinator.

4 LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE/MATERNITY OR OTHER LONGER ABSENCE OR LEAVE

In the following cases:

- A First Aider who is absent from work due to sickness for three weeks and no return-to-work date is anticipated by the GP within two weeks;
- A First Aider who, for any other reason, anticipates being absent for more than four consecutive weeks;

payment of the First Aid Allowance will cease, until return to work under the normal contractual arrangements of the person concerned.

In either of these events the manager with supervisory responsibility for the employee concerned will be responsible for notification in writing without delay, to both Personnel Services and Payroll, of the relevant date for cessation of the allowance. Notification should be within the first four weeks of the employee's absence from work, and payment will cease from week five of continuous absence in the circumstances described above. It would also be helpful if the supervisor would, at the same time, notify the First Aid Co-ordinator of the absence of the First Aider, so that alternative arrangements may be made.

5 PART-TIME WORK

If an existing First Aider wishes to reduce his/her hours, but remain on the First Aid list, s/he may do so providing that another First Aider can be found to undertake the other part of the 'duty'. If a partner for the part-time First Aider cannot be found, it may be necessary to replace the part-time First Aider with a new full-time First Aider; upon replacement, the payments and upkeep of the First Aid Certificate will lapse.

6 CAPABILITY

Should a volunteer First Aider prove to be incapable of performing the necessary action in an emergency the situation will be reviewed, and a decision taken as to his/her continuing suitability for retention on the First Aid Register.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Principles

- 1 Minimum possible cost to the Council, whilst meeting the H&SAW Act requirements.
- 2 Maintenance wherever possible of the correct ratio of First Aiders to employees per site.
- 3 Priority will be given, (if necessary) to someone with relevant skills and/or experience.
- 4 Availability to undertake the duties and any agreed training/in-house training meetings, as required.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 18
Title: Work Based Trainee Performance Awards
Author: Carole C W Hughes (01799) 510407

Summary

- 1 Members are asked to consider increasing the Work Based Trainee (WBT/s) performance award each year in line with the pay award commencing 1 April 2003.

Background

- 2 Internal Services Sub Committee on 7 February 2001 approved that a performance award be paid to Work Based Trainees (formerly called Youth Trainees). Members agreed that an award of £40 be paid after 6 months satisfactory performance increasing to £50 per week after a further 6 months satisfactory performance.
- 3 During the above meeting Members also resolved that the Council offer 2 work based trainee placements.
- 4 If the yearly increase in line with pay awards is agreed by Members the £40 and £50 performance awards as of 1 April 2003 will become £41.40 and £51.75 respectively.

RECOMMENDED to Members that the Work Based Trainee performance award is increased in line with future pay awards commencing 1 April 2003.

Background Papers: Minute Book 2000/01 –4 , page 468.

Committee: Resources
Date: 23 January 2003
Agenda Item No: 19
Title: Contract Services Estimates 2003/04
Author: Nick Harris (01799) 510313