

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: Forward Programme
Author: Philip O'Dell (01799) 510670

Summary

- 1 This report provides Members with details of the know reports that are to come before this Committee during the year. It recommends that the Committee note the programme and advise of any further reports that it would wish to receive.

Background

- 2 The Quality of Life Plan requires each Committee to consider, at the beginning of the new Committee year, a forward programme of the reports that it requires to come before it during the year.

Forward Programme

- 3 **Tuesday 31 August**
Approval of Final Accounts 2003/04

Thursday 23 September

Budgetary Control 2004/05
Financial Strategy and Service Planning Process
Capital Programme
Treasury Management Policy
Integration of former Contract Services

Thursday 18 November

Budgetary Control 2004/05
Financial Strategy and Service Planning Process
Resources Committee Budget 2005/06
Capital Programme
Integration of former Contract Services

Thursday 27 January

Budgetary Control 2004/05
Financial Strategy and Service Planning Process
Resources Committee Budget 2005/06
Capital Programme

Thursday 3 February

Recommended Budget 2005/06
Prudential Indicators

Thursday 31 March
Budgetary Control 2004/05

RECOMMENDED that the Resources Committee notes the forward plan for the current civic year and gives details of any other issues it wishes to receive reports on

Background Papers: Service Plan for Financial Services

Committee: Resources Committee
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: Financial Strategy and Service Planning Process
Authors: Philip O'Dell 01799-510670

Summary

- 1 This report examines the financial and policy context of the Council's medium term plans for services and proposes:
 - a) A four year financial strategy for the General Fund
 - b) A new approach for prioritisation of General Fund services
 - c) A move towards devolved financial management at officer level

Background

- 2 This Council, like most others, has traditionally prepared budgets on an annual and mainly incremental basis. This has involved adding projected pay awards and inflation to budgets, having a budget 'growth' or 'bid' stream, a review of fees and charges, and some form of 'cuts' or 'budget review' exercise to balance the budget back to acceptable Council Tax levels and/or any Government set spending limits.
- 3 Whilst the approach outlined in paragraph two has some merit, it also has several fundamental weaknesses and the Council's overall budget now needs to join the Quality of Life Corporate Plan in covering a longer timescale. Doing so will give the following benefits:
 - a) Improved planning of services
 - b) Greater clarity for managers and staff, with scope for innovation and flexibility
 - c) Reduction in the time and stress of the detailed and prolonged annual budget process, and avoiding final discussions on relatively small sums of money
 - d) Greater fairness and longer time span regarding any necessary budget reductions required

- e) Consistency with the Government's encouragement of a multi-year approach to council budgets.
 - f) Improvement in prioritisation and therefore Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scoring. The recent CPA inspection highlighted weaknesses in the Council's approach to prioritisation.
 - g) More certainty and stability in local taxation levels, including the ability to communicate them more clearly to stakeholders
 - h) Perhaps paradoxically, greater flexibility to respond to pressures for increased spending, as these pressures will be competing against known and clear priorities and resources
- 4 To compliment this multi-year approach to financial planning, a revised approach to Service Planning is required. If the proposals for prioritisation of services contained in this report are agreed, a revised Service Planning process and timescale will be prepared for the September meeting of this Committee.
- 5 A recent Member Workshop on Service and Financial Planning looked at ways to improve Uttlesford's approach. During a lively debate there was consensus on the need for improved prioritisation and longer term planning of the Council's services and finances.

Financial Context-Provisional Outturn 2003/04 and Budget Variations 2004/05

- 6 Provisional outturn figures for net General Fund expenditure are still in course of preparation and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.
- 7 The 2004/05 financial year is less than three months old, and no significant budget variations are yet apparent. However, the report elsewhere on this Agenda entitled Capacity for improvement in Development Services and the use of Planning Delivery Grant indicates a significant part-year and full year effect, if approved. The relevant full year figures will be included in the financial projections contained later in this report. The only other variation worth noting at the moment is that the local government pay award looks likely to be agreed at 2.75%, some 0.25 % or £15,000 less than budgeted for in the General Fund. This has not yet been reflected in the figures presented in this report.
- 8 It is proposed that detailed budgetary control reports will be taken to all Committees from September onwards.

National and local financial issues

- 9 The following is a brief summary of the national and local context of the Council's financial strategy
- a. The Local Government Funding Review continues, with the earliest possible implementation date being the 2006/07 financial year.
 - b. The Government's Annual Spending Review is due for publication in June, and will contain some early messages on local government funding prospects.

A key element of the Government's assumptions is likely to be that public sector bodies can make considerable savings via improved procurement practices.

c. Government Grant and Business Rate announcements for 2005/06 are likely in December. The Council meeting on 10 February 2004 agreed budget forecasts for 2005/06 and beyond with an assumed 2% increase in Government funding, and these assumptions have been maintained in the figures in this report.

d. More details are awaited of the Business Rate Retention Scheme proposed by the Government to allow councils to retain some of the additional business rates from new developments in their areas. The Scheme is due to start in April 2005 and a report will be brought to this Committee in due course.

e. The Government is making it clear that Council Tax increases should be in low digit levels, and 3% is being talked about as a possible capping level prior to what could be a General Election year.

f. The local government pay award looks likely to be 2.75% this year and 2.95% for the following two years.

g. Inflation as measured by the Retail Price Index (RPI) is currently at 2.5%, although the Government now focuses on the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) which is currently 1.2%. The main difference between the two indices is that the CPI excludes housing and Council Tax costs. The largest element of the Council's cost base is staffing, which is still basically aligned to RPI regarding pay awards, but we do need to consider whether CPI would be a better way to budget for other increases in costs.

h. The Council has eliminated the Pension Deficit up to and including the 2007/08 financial year Pension Deficit Reserve of £300,000 plus annual contributions of £50,000 to cope with any deficit then in existence. This means that a reserve of £450,000 will be available by 31 March 2008, although the level of the deficit likely at that stage is unknown.

i. The Band D Council Tax level for 2004/05 is £116.82, the lowest in Essex. However, like many Councils, Uttlesford continues to suffer from the 'gearing' problem, where increases in Council spending increase the Council Tax level in a disproportionate manner. Basically, because all new spending is unmatched by increases in central government support, each new £1 of spending adds £2.30 to the Council Tax. Not surprisingly, this is difficult to explain and justify to the public.

j. The Council has General Fund Balances of £1.2 million. These represent the ultimate 'buffer' against financial hardship and cash flow problems.

k. The Council has several reserves earmarked for specific purposes, together with the Financial Management Reserve, which is really the general reserve available to fund policy initiatives and urgent requirements. This reserve is a key determinant of medium term financial sustainability and is projected to stand at approximately £150,000 at 31 March 2005, assuming the

proposed changes in Planning staffing occur on 1st October 2004. The proposed funding for Programme Management of the Quality of Life Corporate Plan, covered by a report elsewhere on this agenda would reduce the level of the Financial Management Reserve by a further £76,000 to approximately £73,000.

l. The currently projected Council Tax increase for 2005/06 is 8.75% and for 2006/07 is 7.75%, both based on the figures agreed as forecasts at the Council meeting on 10 February 2004 and assuming that the extra funding for the Planning service is agreed at this meeting.

m. The Council Tax Base for the next two financial years has already been increased based on likely figures, but this can now be extended to a four-year view and updated. Basically, every 300 new properties with a band D average would reduce Council Tax by 1%, although over time population increases also drive up the Council's costs.

n. Work is progressing on whether the £80,000 pa transfer from the former Contract Services Organisation to the General Fund can continue, or whether some of this sum will now need to return to the Housing Revenue Account.

o. The Review of The Quality of Life Corporate Plan continues. All specific sums identified in the Plan are contained in the budget. Any new sums required will need to be quantified and prioritised as part of the forthcoming Service and Financial planning process. A report elsewhere on this agenda looks at staffing issues regarding the implementation of the Plan. The sums involved have not been included in the projections contained in this report.

p. The Council restructuring at officer level resulted in an ongoing annual General Fund saving of approximately £80,000. This has not been incorporated into the revised projections contained in this report, pending decisions on its future use. The Chief Executive's report to the Council on 20 April 2004 proposed that all Members of the Council should be consulted on the use of this money it is proposed that the following examples of possible usage are provided via correspondence with all Members:

- 1) Devolution of £2000 to each Member of the Council for them to allocate
- 2) A possible starting point for area budgeting, with £20,000 allocated to each of four areas of the District
- 3) Retention of the £80,000 to keep Council tax levels down by approximately 2.5%
- 4) Other ideas contributing to the Council's Quality of Life initiatives. This could include specific schemes or a recognition of the probable ongoing cost of the Quality of Life Programme Management arrangements highlighted in a report elsewhere on this agenda.

q. The Council needs to actively consider its plans under the Power of Well-Being legislation.

r. Interest on balances continues to be a key and difficult figure to estimate, although attempts at greater accuracy will be attempted in the coming months.

s. Work continues on meeting the targets set in the Public Service Agreement with the County Council. The agreement is based on meeting 12 targets, with 11 the responsibility of the County Council and 1 is down to this Council. Our target is all about Cost Efficiency and to date we are on target. The rewards from this exercise are 2.5% of our 01/02 budget which equates to £160K. The targets will be assessed at the end of 04/05 and assuming all targets are met the money will be paid as £80K in 05/06 and £80K in 06/07. This sum is reduced on a sliding scale if we do not meet targets. Because of the remaining uncertainty, these sums have not been included in the financial projections shown in this report, although if received it will be new money, with no corresponding increase in costs. The targets and figures beyond 200/07 are not yet known.

t. The projections shown in this report make no allowance for changes to the Council's current Capital Programme.

Developing a four year budget strategy

10 The following are the key steps in developing a four year budget approach and improving the annual budget process within that longer time frame:

- Agree a multi-year spending plan in total terms, including local taxation and Government support

- Turn that into multi-year targets for services

- Develop criteria to assess new spending pressures. The term 'spending pressures' will now be used instead of 'growth' or 'bids' to illustrate that new spending does not necessarily result in increased overall spending for the Council, and that efficiencies can often be identified and recycled to cover such costs.

- Have an appropriate mechanism to identify possible savings that can be recycled into the overall plan

- Consider our fees and charges in a more structured way

- Look at external funding, partnerships and outsourcing in a more systematic way

11 Details of a proposed approach to each of the points in paragraph 10 are given below.

Agreeing a multi-year spending plan

12 The Council meeting on 10 February 2004 set indicative Council Tax increases of 5% and 4% respectively for the financial years 2005/06 and 2006/07. These figures have been updated to 8.75% and 7.75% respectively based on the Planning services staffing changes proposed on this agenda. It is proposed that the timescale covered by these projections of Council Tax

levels is extended to four years to cover up to and including the 2008/09 financial year and is rolled on each year at this time to give a four year view.

13 To make practical progress on this issue we need to ignore the current review of local government funding and focus on the four key determinants of an overall 'top line' spending figure for the Council in the years ahead

- i. The needs of services and the Council's Quality of Life Plan
- ii. The realistic ability to reduce spending/increase income
- iii. Acceptable levels of Council Tax
- iv. Any capping levels set by Government

14 Again ignoring the possible changes to the local government funding regime, it is easiest to start with the last two factors on the list given above. The Government is warning against high Council Tax increases in the future and is looking for something around the 3% mark as a maximum next year as public disquiet with Council Tax increases continues. On this basis, it may be prudent to target Council Tax maximum increases of only 3-5% over each of the next four years. This approach will give some scope for increased investment in services, but will also set the Council a robust target for improved efficiency and promote the mentality of recycling costs to develop services. Frankly, any Council Tax rise much above 3-5% in the coming years, assuming Council Tax remains, will attract Government interest and increasing public criticism, accepting that much depends on the levels set by the County, Fire and Police Authorities.

15 Making the starting assumptions on Council Tax levels outlined in the previous paragraph gives the basis for a new four year projection of possible total Council spending and really starts the debate about service priorities, new spending demands and the need for efficiencies. The table below shows four year projections, including the proposed increase in Planning service spending, and assumptions about inflation and rises in fees and charges income, under scenarios of 3%, 4% and 5% increases in Council Tax. No additional sums have been provided for new spending pressures, so anything added would increase the level of budget reductions required. To illustrate what the table is saying, with a 3% Council Tax rise each year, savings of £75,000 would be required in year one, and a further £153,000 in year 2. The scenarios shown indicate the effect of even Council Tax increases over four years. In practice, numerous scenarios exist if Council Tax increase levels vary between years.

| <u>Tax rise</u> | Savings Required (£000) | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 |
| 3% each year | 75 | 153 | 267 | 376 |
| 4% each year | 39 | 79 | 151 | 215 |
| 5% each year | 3 | 14 | 32 | 49 |

16 Of course, the Council will not be formally committed to staying within the overall spending limits and Council Tax levels, as each year is formally

confirmed via budget setting at the February Council and may need to vary from that planned due to, for example, significant changes in Central Government funding.

- 17 The figures in paragraph 15 do however indicate that the main emphasis will be on budget reductions to make the Council Tax level acceptable and to fund other new spending pressures over a four year period.
- 18 Adopting the approach outlined above at estimating total spending allows us to move to the next stages shown in paragraph 10.

Turning the overall spending figure into a target for individual services

- 19 This is one of the most difficult elements of the new approach being proposed, as it involves clarifying the Council's priorities and non-priorities in financial terms. Traditional incremental approaches to budgeting only do this at the margins, via agreeing growth and cuts, not looking at the totality of existing budgets. An improved approach to this also requires consideration of some of the other factors outlined in paragraph six covering criteria for new spending proposals, mechanisms to identify savings for recycling, an overall approach to fees and charges, and a systematic look at partnership and outsourcing possibilities. Making decisions on how to allocate the Council's overall spending is difficult for Members because of the potential effect on service users and other stakeholders.
- 20 Having acknowledged the difficulties, it is important to say that lack of prioritisation was a theme which the CPA inspection placed great emphasis on. Authorities having made significant steps on prioritisation tend to have performed well in CPA. Colchester Borough Council have recently received CPA praise because of their approach to prioritisation which has shifted £500,000 pa from low to high priority services over the last few years.
- 21 This Council had a brief look at whole budget prioritisation on an informal basis during the development of the Quality of Life Corporate Plan. A grid prioritising services based on Member, Senior Officer, and Focus Group views was prepared. This was not progressed because of the focus on the Quality of Life Plan and the difficulties of making the difficult decisions required in the middle of a budget process. Zero-based budgeting, a technique where the budgets of individual services are examined from first principles, was instead highlighted in the Quality of Life Plan as a key priority. Although this remains the case, and is examined by a report elsewhere on this agenda, the real first step regarding priorities involves the decisions and process being proposed in this more strategic report.
- 22 It is now proposed that a four-year plan is developed showing broad spending levels on groups of General Fund services using some form of categorisation. The term 'service' for these purposes means a distinct heading in the Council's Budget Book, making Sports Development rather than the whole Leisure Service the focus, for example. The terms used below are somewhat emotive and may need refining, and along with the details contained are merely put down as a starting point for the debate which needs to happen:

- A High Priority Services, where the Council wishes over time to enhance services, through investment of additional resources if necessary. These services would receive both annual inflation increases and additional funding where a clear case was made for initiatives and developments improving the quantity and quality of services and a direct contribution to the Quality of Life Plan was established. Such services would normally be excluded from budget reduction exercises and would be allowed to recycle any efficiencies or increased income into their own activities. However, periodic checks would be made on the cost/quality matrix to ensure that services were not of high quality only because they had excess resources. Monitoring of performance would be based on high-level performance indicators, with a requirement for only a slimmed down Service Plan. These services would only be considered for partnership or outsourcing (if currently in-house) if there were clear service enhancement reasons, rather than financial ones. An enhanced scheme of budget brought-forward and carried-forward will be developed, aimed at allowing managers to respond more flexibly across financial years to achieve the Council's objectives for their services.
- B Medium Priority Services, where the Council wishes over time to maintain current service levels. These services would normally receive only inflation-based increases unless the statutory based costs were shown to rise, stakeholder needs had changed considerably, or some contribution to the Quality of Life Plan was established. Such services would face an annual review of efficiency and income, and could make a bid for 50% recycling of any sums raised, with the remainder going into corporate needs. The annual efficiency review would consider partnership or outsourcing opportunities aimed at reducing costs or helping to maintain current service levels. Monitoring of performance would be based on more detailed performance indicators, with a full Service Plan required, including, if appropriate, justification for a reclassification to the High Priority category. These services would be the second group subjected to Zero-Based budgeting, probably during the 2005/06 financial year. Some degree of budget brought-forward and carried forward will exist for these services.
- C Lower Priority Services, where the Council wishes over time to reduce spending on service levels. The norm, whilst sustainable, would be for these services to have their net cost frozen at the starting level. These services would be the first subjected to Zero-Based Budgeting, undertaken during the current financial year to establish a baseline position for 2005/06. These services would need to justify in detail why inflation increases were needed, with exemplifications of the effect on stakeholders of no such increases. Pay awards for any staff in the service would of course be implemented, but these would normally have to be funded from reductions in non-staffing budgets. There would be an annual review of efficiency, with up to 25% of any savings or increased income being retained in the service. The Council will look in an active fashion at outsourcing or partnership to reduce the net cost of the service and may consider cessation of the service or a retreat to a core only service if that is possible. Monitoring of performance would be via high-level performance indicators and there would only be a requirement for a basic Service Plan. Budget brought-forward and carried-forward will only be considered in unusual circumstances.

- 23 The difficult part of this exercise is deciding which services come within each category. It is suggested that this exercise takes place over the next three months. Other issues include:
- a) How consultation is used to determine the categorisation. It also needs to be clear whether the categories eventually agreed represent the Council's political priorities, or are an expression of the need to invest in a service that is currently struggling or are in some way an area of concern. There will also be some Council services that are of high priority at certain times, but where this does not mean that the Council will wish to invest significant additional sums. Examples of this could be Emergency Planning and Elections.
 - b) Consideration of what the multi-year spending target for each service is, bearing in mind the uncertainties of Government funding and other issues. It could be, for example, that High Priority services are 'guaranteed' 95% of their year 1 funding in year two, so as to allow forward planning.
 - c) The role of Best Value Reviews, and how improvements they identify are to be funded in, for example, Lower Priority services
 - d) The realisation amongst Manager and staff that clearer financial frameworks and greater flexibilities, although presumably welcome, will also put the onus on them to be creative regarding resources issues, and any need to make savings.
 - e) The effect on current recipients of services which look unlikely to receive further investment.
 - f) The effect on staff morale of being in the medium or lower priority category rather than the high category.
 - g) The treatment of regulatory services and support services, which may have little public appeal but which are important in other ways.
 - h) The treatment of cross-cutting corporate savings, such as procurement economies.
 - i) The need to be flexible so as to respond to changing circumstances, but within an overall discipline. Virement powers will be reviewed to assist this, along with specific investment reserves to allow services to pump-prime modernisation initiatives they cannot self fund, with repayment into the Council's corporate funds over a specified period.
 - j) The need to look at enhancing the flexible use of staffing budgets so as to solve short term problems and to allow long term planning.
 - j) The need to develop financial skills within the Council. Although this Council has a good track record of financial management, this has largely been exercised by the central finance function together with key service managers and staff who have shown a commitment to this aspect of their role. Financial

management needs to support the revised managerial arrangements in the Council via development of skills amongst the recently formed Joint Management Team, and possible below that as well. Training is shortly to be provided for all staff involved, and this will include making best use of the Council's new Financial Management System which goes live in July. Member training on financial management is also required.

k) The need for clear communication with Members, staff, and other stakeholders of the overall financial picture as the proposed process unfolds. Local government finance is often criticised for its complexity and the tendency for the 'goalposts' to move, with figures (eg savings required to balance the budget) changing from one month to the next. In reality, the reasons for these changes are usually straightforward, but often poorly communicated. It is intended that a 'Budget Bulletin' will be issued to Members and staff on a regular basis to allow tracking, in overall terms, of the Council's financial position. All Members of the Council will be issued with a specific 'Council Budget' folder to enable them to keep all their budget papers in, and regular updates will be issued. These initiatives will complement the formal budget reports to Committees. The starting point, as of this meeting, is a projected Council Tax increase of 8.75% for 2005/06, and movements in this figure, as well as projections for the following three years will be tracked along with other key figures in the coming months.

l) Consideration of a scheme of incentives for staff to identify potential savings within their own services and across the Council. These incentives could benefit their service or them as individuals or groups.

- 24 Housing Revenue Account Services do not require prioritisation against General Fund services because they have their own separate funding source. However, the discipline of some of the mechanisms proposed, such as Service Planning, Zero-based budgeting and efficiency reviews should be retained.

Towards devolved financial management

- 25 Many of the proposals outlined in this report are arguing for what has been defined in local government and elsewhere as 'devolved financial management'. This Council has a good track record of financial management, but in the main this is based on the traditional approach of a central finance function monitoring budgets and identifying potential solutions to financial problems on an ad hoc basis. Although there are several managers and staff within services who take their financial role seriously, the picture is inconsistent. Some budgets are not therefore being maximised in the pursuit of the Council's objectives. Although this leads to financial strength at a corporate level, via underspends, it does not lead to the improvements in the services provided to the public. Devolved financial management has as its underlying premise that managers who run the day to day services are in the best position to determine immediate and longer term resource allocation priorities, in line with overall Council policies. In practice, this means all resources, not just financial ones, but human, asset and other resources. This does not just happen by telling managers that they have such responsibilities, nor telling staff that they are empowered. It requires the development of a

complete framework, comprising training, clear and flexible rules, good information systems, role clarification, incentives and cultural change. This framework is currently being put into place, with a key first step being the development of the Joint Management Team of staff to third tier level. Under any scenario however, good financial management is a high priority, and this aspect of the overall plan to change the Council in the way outlined here will be initiated in July via training and discussion on roles and responsibilities in financial management.

- 26 The development of devolved financial management is not a criticism of the way finance has worked in this Council in the past, but is a logical progression based on the increasing resource demands on the Council. There are many well-designed mechanisms already in place, such as earmarked reserves, flexible virement rules, and a sensible approach to the treatment of staff turnover savings in a Council of this size. However, all of these need to be better understood and used.
- 27 Two cautious notes need to be struck. The first is that this process will take time to develop. It is probably an 18 month process to transform our approach, although many benefits should be apparent before then. A second caution is that core financial management and financial strength must not be sacrificed during the process.

RECOMMENDED that this Committee:

- 1 Approve the six point plan contained in paragraph 10 as the basis of developing a four year budget strategy
- 2 Note the initial four year budget reduction projections contained in paragraph 14 and target a Council Tax increase of no more than 5% per annum over the next 4 years, subject to any major changes in external funding and other factors, with additional spending pressures being met by further efficiencies where possible
- 3 Agree the principles of service categorisation outlined in paragraph 22 and appoint a working group of Members and officers to develop the details of each category and suggested allocation of all services to each category, with proposals to be brought back to this Committee on 23 September. It is suggested that the Chairman of Resources is the Chairman of this working group.
- 4 Endorse the proposed move towards devolved financial management at officer level

Background Papers: Council Budget Book and reports to Resources Committee

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 6
Title: Zero-Based Budgeting
Author: Philip O'Dell (01799-510670)

Summary

- 1 This report proposes an approach to Zero-Based Budgeting of the Council's services on a phased basis, with the aim of making decisions on appropriate resource allocation in line with the Council's priorities. This report needs to be read in conjunction with the report elsewhere on this agenda entitled Financial Strategy and Service Planning Process.

Background

- 2 Zero-based budgeting is a financial technique that involves justifying the need for a service or activity and any associated budgets. It involves building up, if justified, a budget from a nil or zero base to determine the real level of spending necessary to achieve a desire aim. This may result in the budget being deleted, reduced or increased.
- 3 Most budgets in councils are built up on an incremental basis, with inflation and other likely variations being added or subtracted from the existing budget to arrive at the budget for the year ahead. Although this is can be a realistic and practical way to budget over a 2-3 year period, it often fails to recognise wider changes in an activity and involves no significant challenge of the majority of a budget, with debate instead focussed on marginal cuts or increases.
- 4 The Council's Quality of Life Corporate Plan stated the Council's desire to implement zero-based budgeting to identify potential under or over-resourced services as a part of an overall attempt to improve prioritisation.

Proposed Approach

- 5 Work has been undertaken to identify an appropriate process to implement Zero-Based Budgeting in the Council. It has to be recognised that such a process can be very time consuming. This was the case with a similar initiative called Priority –Based Budgeting, undertaken in the Council in the mid-late 1990's.
- 6 With increased corporate activity and demands on management and staff, a simple yet challenging approach to Zero-Based Budgeting is desirable. Such

a process, involving minimum form filling and bureaucracy is proposed to focus on 3 main issues:

- Why have any activity or service at all?
- If there is a need for the activity, how do we build up any staffing structure from first principles?
- What justification is there for any other costs to be incurred?

- 7 The basic outline given in paragraph 6 will of course cover the statutory elements of services, the scope for partnership or outsourcing, a very simple benchmarking exercise involving other councils, and the scope for income generation.
- 8 It is proposed that a Member and officer working party meets just three times to analyse and challenge information provided by officers from within the service being examined. The review of each service should take no more than two months.
- 9 Union and staff representation and consultation will be a key factor in each review undertaken.
- 10 It is proposed that Zero-Based Budgeting is first undertaken for any services identified as 'Low' Priority during the process proposed in the Financial and Service Planning report contained elsewhere on this agenda. With that process itself happening over the next three months, Zero-Based Budgeting will commence in October and will effectively replace the normal budget reduction exercises that dominate the Council's budget process.
- 11 It is proposed to run a Member Workshop to explain the proposed process via use of a case study approach. Members will then be asked to take part in working groups looking at each service being reviewed. A similar introductory event will be held for officers.

RECOMMENDED that this Committee agree the broad process and timetable for Zero-Based Budgeting outlined in this report.

Background Papers :Quality of Life Corporate Plan and Zero-Based Budgeting files.

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 7
Title: Contract Services Integration
Author: Nick Harris (01799) 510313

Summary

- 1 As part of the restructuring of the Council's senior management, the Contract Services that until June 1 were a self - contained unit managed by the Contract Services Manager within the Resources Directorate have been split up and management responsibility for the individual activities transferred to the relevant Executive Manager. Management responsibilities are now as follows:
- Building Maintenance Executive Manager – Housing
 - Street Cleansing Executive Manager – Environment
 - Recycling Collection -do-
 - Vehicle Maintenance -do-
 - Maintenance Taskforce -do-
- 2 The purpose of this report is to outline to this Committee the issues that Officers will be considering in the coming months to ensure that the Council maximises the financial and efficiency benefits offered by the restructuring whilst at the same time providing effective mechanisms and controls that will maintain confidence in the quality of services provided.

Background

- 3 The current structure of the Council's Contract Services reflects the requirements of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) legislation. This legislation was introduced progressively during the 1980s and 1990s to ensure that if Councils wished to provide certain services in house they would have to expose them to competition from the private sector usually by means of a tendering exercise. Furthermore, if successful in this process, each service had to demonstrate a better than break-even financial performance every year, a requirement that was designed to discourage Councils from submitting unrealistically low tenders as a means of retaining work in house. The CCT legislation more or less forced Council's to create a client/contractor split within their organisational structures. The Government retained a range of measures to deal with a loss making service including enforced closure.
- 4 CCT legislation was repealed in 2000 but Uttlesford has retained the management and financial structures and procedures that it put place some years ago. Whilst these arrangements have delivered effective direct

services, the senior management restructuring provides the opportunity to review them.

5 To progress this work the Principal Accountant has been requested to investigate possible changes to the current arrangements and systems. In this work he will consult and agree recommendations for the way forward with the following officers:

- Executive Manager – Finance
- Executive Manager – Housing
- Executive Manager – Environment
- Repairs Manager
- Services Officer

6 A project brief has been agreed as follows

- Investigate the implications of integration on the trading surplus in terms of likely level of surplus and legally available mechanisms to keep the surplus within the General Fund. This to include the effects of Single Status and other changes to staffing structures and numbers.
- Develop a benchmarking model to take the place of competitive tendering. Prepare the necessary guidance notes and train all involved.
- Put in place new arrangements regarding invoicing aimed at streamlining procedures.
- Ensure proper financial information exists to allow continued competitive bids to be made for work outside the Council.
- Provide the two Executive Managers and their staff taking over or continuing to manage former contract services with relevant financial information to allow monitoring and control of continues commercial approaches.

A target date of 1 October for completion of the project has been agreed and it is intended that report recommending future accounting and other arrangements be brought to this Committee's meeting on 18 November. However, because of the importance of the financial surplus issue to the Council's overall financial strategy, this issue will be progressed and reported on at this Committee's meeting on 23 September.

RECOMMENDED that Members agree the terms of reference proposed for this project

Background Papers: None

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: Amendments to Financial Regulations
Author: Philip O'Dell (01799) 510670

Summary and proposals

- 1 The Council officer restructuring that was implemented on 1 June 2004 requires amendment to the Council's Financial Regulations to reflect the new titles of Executive Managers and the Executive Management Team. It is proposed that these new terms replace the previous terms of Chief Officer and Chief Officer's Management Team where these appear in the Financial Regulations. The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) is now the Council's Chief Financial Officer.
- 2 The Financial Regulations are due for wider review within the next year. However, one change that is proposed now is to give the Executive Manager (Customer Services) authority to write-off bad debts in respect of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits up to a limit of £5,000 per case. This authority currently lies with the Chief Financial Officer, but it makes greater administrative sense to transfer the authority to an Executive Officer who knows the relevant issues in each case yet is sufficiently independent to make a decision on merit.
- 3 The Financial Regulations form part of the Council's Constitution and the proposed amendments will therefore require approval by the Council.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee proposes that the Council meeting on 20 July 2004 agrees the changes to Financial Regulations contained in this report.

Background Papers: Reports on Council Restructuring

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: Tenders for Provision of Banking and Insurance Services
Author: Nick Harris (01799) 510313

Summary

- 1 The contracts for Banking and Insurance Services expire on 31 March 2005. The purpose of this report is to outline to Members the processes that will be undertaken to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the continuity and possible enhancement of these services at the most economically advantageous cost to the Council.

Background

Banking

- 2 The Council's current arrangements with Barclays were put in place in March 1998 and reflected the practices and technologies that existed at that time. Officers are in the very preliminary stages of considering two different options for the future:
 - Obtaining future service provision for the Council on its own behalf. It is likely that specialist consultants would be engaged to assist in this process. It is envisaged that a contract of three to four years with an optional extension period of a further two years would be appropriate.
 - Working in partnership with Essex County Council through the Essex Procurement Agency. The degree of involvement that Uttlesford would have in the process is described as Passive or Active. Passive involvement would require little input from this Council but there would be little say in the process; Uttlesford would however benefit from the economies of scale that it is presumed would be available to the County Council. Active involvement would enable Uttlesford to have an input into the specification and evaluation of the contract although it is not certain at this stage what this would mean in reality. There is an expectation by the County Council that those districts actively involved will be part of a user group. Since this proposal has been received only recently the Executive Manager – Finance will update Members at the meeting with any further information obtained. It is not known which other members of the Essex Procurement Agency will decide to take up the invitation – it seems that having a contract that expires after 31 March 2005 may not exclude Councils from the process. The Procurement Agency has asked for responses by 18 June but is prepared to extend the deadline until after this meeting for Uttlesford.

Insurance

- 3 The Council is nearing the end of a five year Long Term Agreement (LTA) with Zurich Municipal, one of the major insurers in the local authority sector. In return for this commitment the Council receives a number of discounts on premium costs. The LTA was entered into following an extensive tendering exercise and covers almost all of the Council's risks for which it has insurance.
- 4 To assist the Council in the tendering exercise five years ago, specialist consultants were engaged and it is proposed that a similar approach is adopted this time. A preliminary discussion with a suitable consultant has been arranged for later this month. It is intended that a review of the risks insured, including self-insurance possibilities, and the level of excesses will also be part of this work.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the progress made to date and gives a view as to whether officers should investigate further the possibility of collaborating with Essex County Council in the provision of banking services.

Background Papers: None

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Committee: | Resources |
| Date: | 24 June 2004 |
| Agenda Item No: | 10 |
| Title: | Dunmow Offices Member/Officer Working Group |
| Contact: | David Demery (01799) 510520 |

Summary

- 1 This report follows on from the resolutions of the Resources Committee of 22 January 2004, it deals with the outcome of the consultant's study into the options for the future use of the Dunmow site. It concludes with recommendations as to the way forward. Members' guidance is sought on progressing the matters now highlighted.

Background

- 2 The consultant's report has been circulated to all Members and a hard copy which includes all appendices has been placed in the Members' Room for perusal.

The consultant's report key conclusions:

- (i) No alternative location has been found to accommodate the voluntary sector.
- (ii) Access into the site from Haslers Lane is impractical because of land ownership issues.
- (iii) Land assembly through including neighbouring plots would take time and be a distraction without the compensation of significant benefit.
- (iv) Mothballing the site would not make economic sense
- (v) Dunmow is not ready for significant retail development and in any event the Council offices site would not be appropriate for that purpose.
- (vi) Residential development would provide the most significant economic opportunity
- (vii) The potential for future retail development will remain within the Council's control through its retained land ownership within the eastern sector development.
- (viii) Access to services review is not far enough advanced to inform the discussion on the nature and extent of Uttlesford presence in Great Dunmow.

Further developments

- (i) Members should be aware that the voluntary sector will begin taking occupation of the former planning office from 1 July on a temporary basis.
- (ii) Officers have assumed the UDC commitment/presence in Dunmow will be no less than present.
- (iii) The working group in reviewing the consultant's report noted there were no specific references to parking need although there was an acknowledgement that this topic required specialist involvement and was beyond the terms of reference of the consultant appointment.

Further matters for members' consideration

- (i) Securing the funding for the relocation of the depot.
- (ii) Securing the funding for the refurbishment cost of the High Street listed building
- (iii) The long term support to the voluntary sector, there being no immediate alternative accommodation available.

Commentary

3 Without trying to over simplify it would seem that the issues that need to be confronted fall into four areas as follows:

- (i) The depot land – its future use, the relocation of the depot and associated funding.
- (ii) The scope of Uttlesford District Council's service commitment to Dunmow as delivered through the High Street listed building. The refurbishment costs so as to use the building to its maximum potential.
- (iii) The Uttlesford District Council long term commitment to provide accommodation to the voluntary sector which will in turn provide the

Voluntary Sector with an opportunity to raise funds to refurbish their accommodation to better suit their needs.

- (iv) The extent to which the above maybe compromised by a possible greater overriding need to provide public car parking. Note: officers have undertaken an unscientific survey of the use of the main car park and have concluded that it is currently used at near capacity. There will be increase capacity with the completion of the eastern sector related car park extension, however, this extra capacity maybe required to support current growth.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 Officers investigate the practicalities of using the front offices for both the voluntary sector centre and to meet the Council's own requirements for a base in Dunmow.
- 2 Should the front offices be unable to accommodate the voluntary sector centre along with the council's own requirements, the rear offices should be retained, and a longer term lease offered to the voluntary sector.
- 3 Officers undertake a full analysis of the future car parking needs of Dunmow.
- 4 Sale of the depot site for residential development should be subject to the outcome of the analysis of Dunmow's car parking needs, and how they can be met.

Background Papers: Council minutes
Consultant's report

Committee: RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Date: 24 JUNE 2004
Agenda Item No: 11
Title: Business Improvement Districts
Author: Ian Orton (01799) 510 402

Summary

- 1 This report seeks authority to consult with local businesses in Great Dunmow about the concept of establishing a Business Improvement District.

Background

- 2 Business Improvement Districts are a partnership between local councils and local businesses to provide additional services or improvements to an area. The improvements are funded by a combination of a levy additional to business rates, a contribution from the local council (s) and other matched fund options.

- 3 An initial proposal would be developed with local businesses, the proposal would outline the benefits and the potential cost to ratepayers. All ratepayers in a proposed Business Improvement District area would vote on the proposal in a ballot. A majority vote would be required to go ahead with the Business Improvement District. The Government first introduced the concept of Business Improvement Districts in 2001. The Local Government Act 2003 describes the legislative framework and the detail was issued in guidance notes also in 2003. The final consultation on the ballot arrangements is on-going at present.
- 4 This report recommends that officers consult with local businesses in Great Dunmow to ascertain what additional services or improvements are required within the area. The method of consultation would include questionnaire, visits, working with existing representatives of local businesses and a working breakfast. Great Dunmow is suggested as the first Business Improvement District within Uttlesford, if successful the concept could be extended to other communities within the district.
- 5 Any proposals that emerged from the consultation would be costed and a Report brought back to Resources Committee for consideration. Business Improvement Districts are a government initiative to assist funding partnerships to provide additional services or improvements to an area.
- 6 If successful a Business Improvement District would require the support of an officer team from Policy, Planning, Revenues and Economic Development but the staffing costs would be charged to the Business Improvement District project.

RECOMMENDED that:

- 1 Officers consult with local businesses in Great Dunmow to explore the concept of establishing a Business Improvement District.
- 2 That a report is brought back to Resources Committee 18th November 2004 to consider options arising from the consultation exercise.

Background Papers: Capital Files 2004/05 – 2005/06-

Committee: RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Date: 24 JUNE 2004
Agenda Item No: 12
Title: CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004 - 2005
Author: Ian Orton (01799) 510 402

Summary

- 1 This report provides an update on three projects within the Quality of Life Corporate Plan that are linked to the 2004/05 Capital Programme.
- 2 The report also seeks authority to include two additional items within the 2004/05 Capital Programme.

Background

- 3 The Extraordinary Resources Committee on 3 February 2004 agreed the Capital Programme for 2004/05. However three projects were included in the programme that required feasibility studies before funding for these projects could be released. It was agreed that an update on these projects would come back to Resources Committee within three months.
- 4 The three relevant projects within the Quality of Life Plan are:
 - Cycle Track Saffron Walden to Audley End £25,000
 - Linking Green Lanes £10,000
 - Cinema Provision at Council Offices £80,000
- 5 Feasibility studies have been carried out on all three projects:

Cycle Track Saffron Walden to Audley End

This project has been discussed with Essex County Council and with representatives of the local parish council. Essex CC are prepared to include the project as one of the Uttlesford new cycle tracks for 2005/06. If agreed project that would be carried out by Essex CC and partners during 05/06 and 06/07. The exact route of the cycle track will be the subject of more discussions with the local communities who will be affected by the route. There is £25,000 in the Capital Programme for 2004/05 and £25,000 in the

draft Capital Programme for 2005/06. As there will be no spend in 2004/05 the report suggests that the £25,000 for 2004/05 is deleted from the programme. However the £25,000 for 2005/06 should be retained as it is hoped this project will get under way during 2005/06. The suggestion that the cycle track becomes a partnership between the County Council and

Uttlesford District will be considered by the Transport & Highways Committee on 21 June 2004.

Linking Green Lanes

This project has a sum of £10,000 allocated in 2004/05 and £10,000 in 2005/06. Discussions are being held with Essex County Council to identify which routes could assist from additional funding to give them green lane status. This process will not be completed within 2004/05 and therefore it is recommended that the £10,000 is deleted from the 2004/05. However as with the cycle track it is hoped that the project will get under way next year and therefore the £10,000 in 2005/06 is retained. This was also considered by Transport & Highways Committee on 21 June 2004.

Cinema Provision at Council Offices

Project P21.1 within the Quality of Life Corporate Plan seeks to Develop the Saffron Walden Council Chamber to offer public cinema on regular days throughout the month. The idea of a public cinema within Saffron Walden came from the Young Peoples Forum that was held on 15 October 2003. To help deliver the project £80,000 was included in the 2004/05 Capital Programme. However officers indicated that the project would require a comprehensive feasibility study before Capital Fundings was released.

The feasibility included a technical assessment of the Saffron Walden Council Chamber, a meeting with the Young Persons Forum and discussions with independent cinema facilitators in the area. As a result of the feasibility study it emerged that the Council could be converted to show presentations rather than films and that young people wanted a facility much more like a conventional cinema. However as a result of the publicity around the concept of a cinema within the Council Chamber the Council has been approached by the Chair of Governors of Saffron Walden High School who suggested a partnership approach towards cinema provision.

Saffron Walden High School are developing a range of new buildings within the campus and one of these new buildings could provide a cinema facility. Officers have met with the Chair of Governors and spoken to cinema suppliers. Although it is early days yet a concept of the Council contributing to the refurbishment of the new multi hall to provide comfortable seats and black out facilities in return for a local cinema provision is worth exploring. As the new buildings will not be completed until September 2005 these are on going discussions. Members may wish to authorise officers to continue these discussions and consider the allocation of any major capital sums towards the Saffron Walden High School project from the 2005/06 Capital Programme. A report on the feasibility of the project will go to Community & Leisure Committee on 2 November 2004 with a request for any financial support to be considered by Resources Committee on 27 January 2005. This course of action was agreed by Community & Leisure Committee on 25 May 2004.

- 6 As part of the feasibility study a more imaginative use of audio-visual presentations within the Council Chamber was considered. The cost of a comprehensive system linked to presentations (not a cinema) is around

£18,000 and the report recommends that Resources Committee are informed that the £80,000 Capital Funding for the Cinema will not be spent in 2004/05 but Community and Leisure Committee support a spend of up to £18,000 to introduce an audio-visual package into the Council Chamber. This will enhance presentations within the Chamber for training & development and also contribute to some of the registrar related functions such as marriage or renewing of vows.

7 Since the production of the 2004/05 Capital Programme the Performance Management system of the authority has been re-assessed to improve the CPA score of the authority. The present method of collecting the data is manual and time consuming. The Performance Manager has been asked to recommend an electronic system that allows intranet access throughout the authority, is easy to interpret, is linked to appraisals and fully tested and can be used with IDeA and ODPM databases. Such a system will cost £16,000 (including training) and this reports recommends that such a system is purchased out of the current underspends in the 2004/05 Capital Programme. The authority is required to introduce an electronic data gathering system as part of meeting the 31st December 2005 e government deadline and such a purchase will be part of the e government strategy within the authority. The project has been discussed with the Executive Programme Manager – Access to Services and the Lead Member of the IEG Project Team.

8 RECOMMENDED that:

- 1 Note that the Cycle Track Project will not get underway in 2004/05 and delete £25,000 from the current year's Capital Programme but retain £25,000 in the draft 2005/06 Capital Programme
- 2 Note that the Green Lanes Project will not commence in 2004/05 and delete £10,000 from the current year's Capital Programme but retain £10,000 in the draft 2005/06 Capital Programme
- 3 Agree £18,000 from the 2004/05 Capital Programme for the introduction of Audio Visual package into the Council Chamber
- 4 Agree £15,000 from the 2004/05 Capital Programme for the installation of an electronic data gathering system to collect and monitor performance and appraisal data throughout the authority.

Background Papers: Capital Files 2004/05 – 2005/06-

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 13
Title: Capacity for Improvement in Development Services and the use of Planning Delivery Grant
Author: John Mitchell (01799) 510450

Summary

- 1 The attached report has been considered by the Development Control Committee on 7 June and the Environment Committee on 8 June 2004. Both Committees have endorsed and added to the recommendation.
- 2 The resolution of the Development Control Committee is:

that the Development Control Committee endorses the recommendation of the report to the Environment Committee and further recommends the appointment of an additional customer care officer. The Committee urges that the Environment Committee and the Resources Committee deal with this matter with expedience in view of the urgency of the situation.
- 3 The resolution of the Environment Committee is that:
 1. the Resources Committee be requested to increase the establishment of staff as set out in the minimum interim scenario in para 15 and appendix. C;
 2. the appointment of an additional Customer Care Officer be approved as requested by the Development Control meeting held on 7 June 1004;
 3. the Validus Consulting be appointed to further implement the Planning Best Value Review and the Resources Committee be requested to approve the use of £38,250 from Planning Consultancy Reserve to finance consultants to work on the Service Improvement Plan;
 4. the Planning Delivery Grant for 2004/05 be apportioned as above & as set out in Appendix D;
 5. a further report regarding longer term resourcing of planning issues be considered as part of the budget setting process
 6. a further report on economic planning including the impact of Best Value Review be submitted by the end of this year.

Background

- 4 The relevant report and appendices are attached. By way of further information the additional customer care officer post suggested by the Development Control Committee is likely to be evaluated at Scale 5, which is the equivalent of £18, 582 plus on costs of 18% plus 3% set aside for a pay rise: in total this would amount to £22,584.

RECOMMENDATION that the resolution of the Environment Committee as set out in para 3 of this report be endorsed by this Committee

Background Papers: Reports to Environment Committee and Development Control Committee. Planning Delivery Grant files and Budget papers

Committee: Environment

Date: 8th June 2004

Agenda Item No:

Title: Capacity for Improvement in Development Services and the use of Planning Delivery Grant

Author: John Mitchell (01799) 510450

Summary

- 1 The Strategic Planning Member Reference Group was established at the Annual Council Meeting and held its first meeting, with the Chief Executive, the Director of Community Services and the relevant Executive Managers, on 19th May. Some of the strategic issues arising from that meeting are discussed in this report, but a further report will be put forward, probably as part of the budget setting process later this year. This report sets out proposed solutions to address issues of capacity of services within Development Services, particularly the Planning Service, to deliver day-to-day service requirements in the face of increasing workloads. These are both reactive (eg determining planning applications) and planned (eg new planning policy, known major infrastructure projects).
- 2 Failure to achieve basic statutory service delivery will mean that there is no capacity to take on the additional requirements arising from either the Quality of Life Corporate Plan or the proposed restructuring. It is concluded that resources are necessary now to support and develop the third tier and below. The report also set out how this year's Planning Delivery Grant of £219,000 can be used to help in the short term and to develop staff in the longer term.

Background

- 3 From 1st April 2003 the planning service underwent a substantial restructuring at the instruction of the previous Council resulting in the loss of a tier of management and a saving of some £80,000. The creation of the post of the Head of Planning and Building Surveying (now Executive Manager, Development Services) in 2001 was justified as a replacement for the posts of the Heads of both Development Control and Policy and the restructuring took place against the assumption that there was a Director who would lead on the major strategic planning issues. Clearly that resource will no longer be available and the function will descend on the Executive Manager, Development Services (EMDS) and the Planning Policy Manager. The leadership and management skills of the Team Leaders in DC have developed rapidly and now to fulfil their potential they require support at senior level, as a minimum, as detailed in the report below. The Planning

Policy and Conservation Manager also requires support at senior level as detailed below to meet the known workload and to assist with the postholder's development. Until this support is available the EMDS's "hands on" role in DC and Policy will continue, to the detriment of the postholder's ability to contribute fully to corporate management.

- 4 Following the restructuring consultants were appointed to undertake, late last year, a Best Value review which identified some major areas of long standing poor service, and proposes practical, costed and measured methods of improvement over time. Considerable effort is required to make this work and the EMDS has a key role in this. Progress has stalled with regard to the reprocessing of Development Control following the unexpected retirement of a key member of staff, as well as the ramifications of the overall restructuring proposals, but is about to recommence. Implementation of all other elements continues however.

Development Control

- 5 In 2003-4 the planning service was under ODPM standards to improve performance on speed of handling major applications. The Service was thoroughly examined in January/February 2004 by consultants appointed by ODPM and is being monitored: indeed performance has worsened on handling major applications primarily because all such applications are determined by the Development Control Committee and most require s106 agreements, which are time-consuming. (In all other respects however it is improving significantly despite a reduction in staff and an increase in workload) One of the outcomes of that analysis was the lack of capacity in the department to deal with anticipated workloads – the ODPM's Consultants advise that the average caseload per officer should be 150 per annum. This is also a recommendation of the March 2004 LGA publication "Delivering Excellence in Planning". This recommended optimum caseload was not known at the time of the Best Value Review. The average caseload per Officer is over 300, and even at full establishment it would still be 254. Despite the use of consultants to handle basic planning applications this is not a sustainable level of performance and is giving rise to complaints from the public about delays and also to complaints from staff about excessive workload and stress. To deliver excellence 6 new case officers and one clerical assistant are required to reach the recommended caseload at a net additional cost of £240,957. It is unlikely that such resources will be made available, nor that the staff could be recruited. In order to assist with building capacity in the longer term it is recommended that an element of Planning Delivery Grant is earmarked to train technical and administrative staff to qualify as planning officers. Depending on existing qualifications this would cost around £1,100 per member of staff per annum for up to 6 years. Three members of staff have expressed an interest in so doing and this would cost at maximum £19,800, funded entirely from this year's grant.
- 6 The DC service was restructured on the expectation of handling 1700 applications per year. Last year over 2,200 applications were received and there is no sign of a slowdown. Administrative staffing has reduced over time up to 2001 with full time staff being replaced by part time staff. It is considered necessary to increase administrative staffing by 1fte to make up

the deficit and to accommodate the increased workload, particularly as effective administration is a key element of good development control. This will also assist with the key elements of customer care required by the BV review. The shortfall has, for over a year, been taken up by contract and agency staff. Permanent recruitment would also assist in covering for staff studying for a planning qualification.

- 7 Despite market supplements it has taken some 9 months to fill two vacancies for planning officers, and while a new Officer started in May there is still one vacancy for which we are recruiting. Despite the use of consultants to take on basic applications our performance lags behind other Essex Authorities although it is improving. The EMDS's close involvement with the development control service remains an imperative. It is also expected by Members. There is no capacity in the Development Control service that would enable the EMDS to have less involvement. To create the capacity, and to help absorb the EMDS's role in the DC process, the Team Leaders require support in the form of 2 senior planning officers as a minimum, together with the continued use of consultants. It is anticipated that there will be more interest in Senior Planning Officer posts.
- 8 There is a further issue. The allocation of Planning Delivery Grant is based largely on DC performance. Failure to improve or to meet BV targets will result in no grant. There is therefore a link between performance and financial reward, a state of affairs that has not existed before.

Planning Policy and Conservation

- 9 On the policy side the Planning Service has to bring the local plan through to adoption which will occupy staff until Christmas, as well as respond to and participate in the regional issues that could have significant implications for the district. GoEast also expect us to start preparing the new-style development plans this year. We also have to prepare for the airport expansion applications which will involve considerable pre-application work until the first application is submitted next March. EMDS will continue to play a key role in all these matters. There is no capacity in the policy section to take on further work.
- 10 Two key areas of work arising from the QOLCP have been delegated to the Development Service: these are economic development and transport. Economic development was originally to form part of the brief of the then Business Development Manager while the Plan envisages a transport co-ordinator sponsored by a major employer to take on transport issues. Thus the service is being asked to take on, with existing resources, two high profile issues originally proposed to be assigned to two new members of staff. The service is already accommodating an increasing workload of transport issues, particularly those arising from the Highways LSA. This is already at the expense of the DC service because half of the functions of the DC/Policy Liaison Officer was supposed to be processing major applications. This work has, with the exception of the airport, passed to DC staff. All of the planning work carried out by the Director of Community Services will fall on EMDS, the Policy and Conservation Manager and the policy staff. There is not the capacity in Planning Services to take on the extra work involved in Parking,

Economic Development and Tourism without an increase in staff resources. Long term needs indicate that a further staff resource is necessary to meet current anticipated planning policy workload issues, irrespective of the additional requirements of the QOLCP and restructuring.

Building Surveying

- 11 Ernie Spencer, Head of Building Surveying, has good contacts with the business community and can help with economic development. But he has a key job to perform in continuing to run a first class service that brings in revenue to the Council and works in partnership with the private sector and other local authorities. The service also steers the Uttlesford Access Group and is responsible for street naming and numbering. The Partnerships require staff to work overtime. Energy management is located within the Building Surveying Service: a further member of staff is required to develop the service in line with the QOLCP: this has been agreed by members provided it can be demonstrated to be self-financing and work is progressing on this. Additional work cannot impede the key areas of service delivery.

Engineering

- 12 The Engineering Service comprises one officer. The work includes flood prevention, as well as input into projects such as drainage issues (including surveys of private sewerage works associated with local authority housing), car park layouts and ad hoc projects. Changes in the way the Environment Agency responds to consultations on planning applications were introduced from 1st April 2004. This delegates considerable responsibility to the Engineering Service, including the assessment of flood prevention schemes, which will require significant input, the extent of which will become apparent over time. However, the scope for additional work above and beyond day-to-day duties falling on the service is negligible.

Officer Comments

- 13 There is not the capacity within the Service as it stands to handle existing and forecast workloads. This is irrespective of the additional functions falling into the Development Service arising from the QOLCP and the overall restructuring. The imperative priority should be the appointment of new, and the development of existing, staff to deliver our basic statutory services so as to build capacity to implement the QOLCP.
- 14 Unless there is a commitment to additional staffing in Planning Services then there will be no chance of meeting Best Value Targets. This will result in no planning delivery grant. Members need to be aware that if resources are not forthcoming the service will not improve to an extent deemed reasonable by ODPM, notwithstanding the implementation of the BV review, and we will not receive DC performance related Planning Delivery Grant.
- 15 As a consequence the **minimum (interim)** requirement for additional staff is considered to be two senior officers and a clerical officer in Development

Control, one senior planning officer in Planning Policy and a new officer in Building Surveying to assist with energy management. Coupled with the continued employment of consultants this would enable a reasonable distribution of planning applications to DC staff, and provide additional capacity in planning policy to help accommodate the loss of the expertise of the Director of Community Services while pushing ahead with the requirements of the QOLCP.

- 16 The **ideal** solution - one which would give the opportunity to provide an **excellent service** - would be to abandon the use of consultants and have all staff employed in-house, ie a further 4 planning officers. Against this must be balanced the likelihood of actually getting any new staff – experience suggests this will not be possible. Consequently the optimum way forward, as an interim measure, would be to appoint new staff at senior level as detailed as the minimum interim requirement above, together with the continued use of consultants. This would enable a speedy reaction if there were to be a downturn in workload, as well as giving the opportunity later in the year to reassess the position should the workload continue at its current rate.
- 17 Implementation of the best value review will help with some procedural issues and will speed up systems in the office so far as DC is concerned. There are major improvements to customer care that will result. The review is being implemented in all other respects. But the BV review did not take into account the ODPM recommendation for 150 applications per case officer: this was only received **after** the BV review was completed and the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) approved by Members. The review could not have anticipated this. Moreover the BV Review identified a need for further resources in any event. Progress on the implementation of the Review will be reported to Scrutiny 2 in July.
- 18 The planning service needs support now. Staff are working at levels of work that are unsustainable. The possibility of fixed term and temporary posts has been investigated but in the current employment market it is unlikely that these will prove attractive. It has been impossible to attract even agency staff to help with planning applications. The continued use of Planning Delivery Grant to finance consultants will continue to meet short term needs but without the additional permanent resource of senior staff it will not have a lasting effect on improvement, nor will it create capacity.
- 19 To this end Officers have approached the Consultants who carried out the Best Value Review with a view to implementing elements of the SIP and developing the skills and capacity of staff within the service. This would be a six month programme with the following objectives:
- Ensuring delivery of the SIP and providing the impetus drive for continuous improvement
 - Transferring project management skills and methodologies to start to build a culture of continuous improvement
 - Ensuring successful implementation of the revised processes, procedures and management control systems
 - Implementing a management skills development programme to support effective use of new processes, procedures and systems

- Producing a master schedule to relate forecast workloads to resource requirements
- Reviewing current skills and developing personal development planning

The cost would be £38,250 plus VAT and the project would take some 6 months. It is proposed to use the Planning Consultancy Reserve which is an earmarked reserve with an available balance of £40,000. Officers recommend that the Consultants be appointed.

20 To overcome recruitment difficulties staff have opened up the current planning officer vacancy to all comers, with a view to providing day release training. This works out cheaper than paying salary at the higher end of the career grade (the difference funding the training), but the depth of experience within the office to provide coaching and training is insufficient to expand the principle. An appointment is anticipated shortly.

21 Funding and costs

A full breakdown of funding is set out in appendices B, C and D.

22 The 'Ideal' scenario shown in Appendix B would have an ongoing cost per annum to the General Fund of £240,957, representing a 6.8% increase in the Council Tax . The Council funded part-year effect of this option would cost £120,480, and would effectively come from reserves, with no effect on this year's Council Tax level.

23 The 'Minimum' interim scenario shown in Appendix C would have an ongoing cost per annum to the General Fund of £111,445, representing a 3.1% increase in the Council Tax. The Council funded part-year effect of this option would cost £55,724 and would again come from reserves , with no effect on this year's Council Tax level.

24 Both of the scenarios given assume £15,000 per annum additional income from charging for services and increased charges for documents sold.

25 The two scenarios have differing affects on the usage and balance remaining on the Planning Delivery Grant. Although the 'Ideal' option will cost more in market supplements for new staff, it will eliminate the need for £80,000 to be spent on consultants. This will mean that at 31st March 2007 there should be an available balance of approximately £96,000 to invest in further service improvements.

26 Planning Delivery Grant

The total award is £216,460. Some £45,485 is also carried forward from last year. It is proposed to apportion its use as follows, the costs being set out in appendix D:

- Existing Market Supplement
- IT Costs

- Temporary Enforcement Officer
- New Staff Market Supplements
- Staff and Member Training - Contribution to Earmarked Reserve
- IT Equipment
- Consultants to handle planning applications

27 The ideal solution would not require expenditure on consultants to handle planning applications. As Appendix D shows this would be used for guaranteeing market supplements and continued appointment of the trainee enforcement officer.

CONCLUSION

28 The Planning element of Development Services is under considerable pressure arising from an increase in demands and workload. It requires substantial investment to bring the establishment to a level that would enable the provision of an excellent service. The report shows the costs of bringing the service up to this level. It is recognised that this may not be feasible in the short term hence a minimum interim option is suggested, with a further review to be considered through the budget process later in the year.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 the Resources Committee is recommended to increase the establishment of staff as set out in the minimum interim scenario in para 15 and appendix C
- 2 Validus Consulting are appointed to further implement the Planning Best Value Review and that Resources Committee are recommended to agree the use of £38,250 from the Planning Consultancy Reserve to finance consultants to work on the Service Improvement Plan
- 3 Planning Delivery Grant for 2004/5 is apportioned as above and as set out in Appendix D
- 4 That a further report regarding longer term resourcing of planning issues be considered as part of the budget setting process

Background Papers: Report into UDC Planning Services by Lynda Addison Associates, Feb 2004; "Delivering Excellence in Planning" March 2004, LGA

Appendices:

- A Key facts about the planning service
- B Costs of ideal solution
- C Costs of minimum interim solution
- D Use of Planning Delivery Grant

Appendix A: The Planning Service: key facts

Planning staff in Development Control:

- 2 team leaders (one working a 9 day fortnight)
- 4 full time planning officers
- 1 part time planning officer (on day release)
- 1 vacant planning officer post (interviews under way at time of writing)
- TOTAL establishment of case officers inc team leaders: 8.5
- ACTUAL establishment of case officers: 7.5
- 3 full time clerical staff
- 3 part time clerical staff (2 fte)
- 1 full time technician
- 2 part time technicians (1fte)
- 2 enforcement officers (one on day release)
- 1 trainee enforcement officer
- 1 clerical assistant/pa to EMDS and team leaders

Workload in DC 1/4/03 – 31/3/04 (1/4/02 – 31/3/03)

- 2165 planning applications (1792) – 21% increase
- 86 appeals
- 233 enforcement complaints (214)

Applications per case officer in post: 333

Applications per case officer if at full establishment: 254

Applications handled by consultants: 420

Recommended caseload per case officer (ODPM) 150

No. of case officers required at ODPM standards to handle 2154 applications: 14.5 fte

Shortfall over establishment: 6 fte

There are currently two vacancies in the Planning Information Desk, one as a result of the retirement of the postholder's husband, Richard Secker.

Performance against BV targets:

Major applications in 13 weeks – 25% (target 60%)

Minor applications in 8 weeks – 55% (target 65%)

All other applications in 8 weeks – 75% (target 80%)

Overall 8 week performance – 70% in 8 weeks (59% 2002/3)

Planning Policy and Conservation: Key Facts

Staff in Policy and Conservation

- 1 Planning Policy Manager
- 1 Planning Policy/DC Liaison Officer
- 1 part time senior planning officer
- 1 planning officer
- 1 conservation officer
- 1 landscape officer
- 1 technician

Workload for forthcoming year and beyond

- Local Plan to progress to adoption by February 2005
- Implementation of new planning policy legislation from June 2004
- Input into regional planning issues including EIP of RSS in February 2005
- Delivery of ODPM sustainable communities by bidding for sustainable communities funding, management of studies and identification of the way forward
- Implementation of 25mppa airport development planning permission
- Preliminary work on and processing Application for expansion of airport to maximum use of 1 runway
- Preliminary work on application for application for 2nd runway anticipated in 2005/6
- Transport issues inc implementation of highways LSA
- Conservation and landscape input into development control as well as proactive work
- Continued development of GIS
- Economic development

Building Surveying: key facts

Staff in Building Surveying

- Head of Building Surveying
- Principal Building Surveyor
- 2 Senior Building Surveyors (one inc. energy management)
- 3 Building Surveyors
- 1 Assistant Building Surveyor
- 3 clerical/admin assistants (one part time)
- 1 project officer (access issues)
- 1 technical assistant

Workload in Building Surveying

- 996 applications received (similar numbers received over the last 3 years)
- 1161 projects under construction with a value of £32.9m
- 94% of applications dealt with in 5 weeks
- Uttlesford fee income £358,354
- Partnership work income £22,983
- Consultancy work income £60,885

Committee: Executive Management Team
Date: 15 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 14
Title: Executive Programme Office
Author: John Mercer (01799) 510421
Sarah McLagan (01799) 510560

Summary

- 1 This report provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Programme Managers, (EPMs) and makes a recommendation for establishing a framework within which corporate projects can be managed, monitored and delivered.
- 2 The report also highlights the main issues faced by the establishment of the new roles, including the need for programme office assistance, estimated to cost £25,000, to support the work of the EPMs and their various project managers, and the requirement to fund a number of key feasibility studies for projects within the Quality of Life Programme, estimated to cost £60,000, and.

Background

- 3 The roles of EPM were established as part of the management restructuring that came into effect from 1 June 2004. Two posts were created:
 - a) An EPM with responsibility for delivering a programme of projects around the theme of 'improving access to services'. This theme includes a wide range of projects falling under the general umbrella of E-Government.
 - b) An EPM with responsibility for delivering a programme of projects around the general theme of 'enhancing the quality of life of residents and visitors to the district'. This programme includes a number of potentially very large projects, such as the creation of a country park and the establishment of a cultural industries centre.

A list of the projects included in each programme and their Project Team requirements are attached as an appendix.

- 4 It should be noted that the remaining projects and activities within the Corporate Plan will be managed by staff within service departments, as part of their normal duties.
- 5 The precise role of an EPM is still developing. However, listed below are examples of the broad roles and responsibilities that will apply:

- i. Gaining & maintaining the commitment of all parties connected with a project.
 - ii. Taking decisions on programme issues.
 - iii. Managing the expectations of project stakeholders.
 - iv. Owning and solving any problems or issues that occur.
 - v. Managing the overall programme budget.
 - vi. Strategic thinking and development, including influencing programme development and prioritisation.
 - vii. Working with project managers on scheduling and budgets
- 6 Above all else, the EPMs will be responsible for driving forward their programme of projects and ensuring that the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan are fulfilled.
- 7 Wherever possible, opportunities to work on the various projects will be opened up to staff across the Council. These opportunities will include project management, specialist and general assistance roles. These project 'team members' will be appointed on a combination of long & short-term secondments and 'dedicated time' (i.e. a fixed number of hours per week or per month) depending upon the requirements of the projects. The attached appendix provides information on the likely mix of appointments into the projects within the two programmes. In addition to providing the resources for delivering the Corporate Plan, staff will have opportunities to develop new skills, stretch themselves in unfamiliar and possibly more senior roles and help develop their careers. Training programmes will be developed to support staff in their project team roles.
- 8 It will be vital to the success of projects that a sense of belonging to a team is created amongst those working on projects. A number of initiatives for engendering team spirit will be implemented, including holding team meetings, organising team activities etc.

Programme Management Culture / Delivery Process

- 9 All projects, both those within the EPMs' programmes and others, will be managed using the widely recognised PRINCE 2 project management methodology. This methodology will ensure that projects are properly managed, problems are spotted and corrected early, and controls are maintained over deadlines and budgets. It should be noted that the Council is already required to use PRINCE2 for the management of Government-funded projects, where it is now often a condition of funding approval.
- 10 The EPMs will develop a project management 'toolkit' which will provide a streamlined framework within which all projects, whether in the EPM programme or not, will be managed. The toolkit will include:

- a. An explanation of the key stages of a project, the tasks to be carried out, the reporting arrangements etc.
 - b. Flow diagrams to guide users through the project management process and the documents to be used.
 - c. A glossary of terms to assist users with the terms used in project management, particularly those used within the PRINCE 2 methodology.
 - d. Online templates for all required project documentation, with instructions on their completion.
- 11 It is proposed to involve as many staff as possible in the development of the toolkit, in order to identify the important documentation (avoiding unnecessary form-filling), to establish understandable, jargon-free guidance and to develop simple-to-use templates.
- 12 As part of the toolkit approach, each project will consist of a number of key stages, the extent of which will depend upon the scale and complexity of the project. These stages are:
- a. Identification of the key outcomes and expectations of Members and other stakeholders.
 - b. Preparation of a feasibility study ~ this will determine whether the required outcomes are achievable; what options are available for delivering the required outcomes; and recommendations regarding the option to pursue. A feasibility study may be carried out in-house, but may also require specialist skills that will need to be bought-in. Paragraph 18 deals with the funding issues created by this approach.
 - c. Initiation of the project ~ A 'Project Initiation Document ('PID') will need to be prepared. This key document describes the project, its objectives, the business case, the resources needed, how the project will be managed and the controls to be applied (e.g. the reports to be produced, board meetings to be held etc). It will provide a detailed project plan for the first three months of the project, along with indicative timings for the remainder of the project. The PID will need to be approved by Members, key stakeholders and, where appropriate, the relevant policy committees.
 - d. Analysis ~ Production of a detailed requirements specification. This will form the basis for any tenders that may be required.
 - e. Design and development ~ the 'doing' phase of the project where the work is carried out in order to meet the agreed project requirements.
 - f. Acceptance ~ sign off by Members of the completed project.
 - g. Implementation ~ the 'go live' and handover of the product(s) to those charged with its on-going operation.

Outstanding Issues

- 13 The development of the EPM roles affords an opportunity to create a culture within which projects are effectively managed and delivered. This requires commitment across the whole Council and the creation of a delivery framework to support it. However, there are a number of outstanding issues that first need to be addressed.
- 14 **Project Management Framework** – The scale and number of projects within the programmes are such that a formal and efficient management and control structure is essential. A number of possible options were considered for establishing a framework. In most cases they led to potentially very complicated reporting arrangements, with confusion between the roles and responsibilities of those overseeing the EPMs' projects and the Quality of Life Themes. It was therefore necessary to find a model that simplified reporting arrangements and minimised the number of potential meetings. For this reason the following model is proposed:
- i. A Theme Board to be established for each of the nine themes in the Corporate Plan Quality of Life Plan. It is proposed that the Theme Boards would replace the less formal theme meetings presently being arranged for each Corporate Plan theme.
 - ii. The Theme Boards to be chaired by each Theme Lead Member.
 - iii. Four or five Members to sit on each of the boards, drawn from the Activity Lead Members within the relevant theme.
 - iv. The Boards would ultimately be responsible to the relevant policy committee for any major policy decisions and the relevant scrutiny committee for reporting progress.
 - v. The Boards to meet on regular basis to:
 - a. Agree the terms of reference for each activity / project.
 - b. Monitor the progress of the projects and ensure that they are delivered on time, within budget and in accordance with the original terms of reference.
 - c. Sign-off projects once satisfied that the approved objectives have been met.
 - vi. The Boards to be serviced by the Theme Lead Officer. The role of the lead officer being to:
 - a. Arrange Board meetings.
 - b. Collate progress information for Board meetings.

- c. Invite Activity Lead Officers to meetings, as appropriate.
- vii. EPMs to report directly to Theme Boards. The role of the Theme Lead Officer will exclude projects and activities falling within the EPMs programmes.
- 15 Some of the larger projects will have need for standalone project boards (task groups). Current examples include Bridge End Gardens, Decriminalisation, eGovernment, the Museum Resource Centre, and the Best Value reviews. For accountability and consistency, it is suggested that in future years standalone project boards report to the relevant Theme Board, rather than directly to a policy committee.
- 16 The proposals above have implications for the structure of the Corporate Plan. The review of the Corporate Plan, which is due to take place in the near future, is an ideal opportunity to reflect the above proposals. In particular, officer responsibility for projects within the EPMs programmes should be transferred to the relevant EPM and a small number of projects transferred from one theme to another in order to rationalise responsibilities and reporting arrangements.
- 17 **Organisational** ~ As previously stated, the EPMs have no permanent staffing. However, it is usual practice for programme managers to be supported by a Programme Support Office. The role of the office is to:
- a. Prepare for Theme Board meetings, including writing progress reports etc.
 - b. Prepare, maintain and deliver the standards and procedures.
 - c. Keep track of budgets.
 - d. Keep project plans up to date.
 - e. Keep track of programme risks and issues & ensure they are being addressed.
 - f. Write requests for changes to the projects requiring Project Board approval.
 - g. Inform EPMs, on an exception basis, of outstanding issues.
 - h. Keep programme office documentation up-to-date.
- 18 Also, the Programme Office assists Project Managers to prepare project stage plans and reports, help with project documentation management and keep track of changes to project briefs.
- 19 Without programme office support, much of the administrative and support work will fall on the EPMs personally. This is an inefficient use of their time and will effect their ability to deliver the key objectives of their roles. It is considered therefore that, as a minimum, a full-time equivalent post of

Programme Assistant, at an estimated cost of £25,000 (£16,000 in 2004/05) should be created. It is suggested that this post is created on a temporary basis, funded from reserves, and permission sought for a permanent appointment from 2005/06 onwards.

20 **Financial** ~ The Access to Services programme is reasonably well resourced, with identified funding of £780,000 in 2004/05. However, no such funding exists for the Quality of Life theme, with only £115,000 (capital programme) earmarked for specific pieces of work. An immediate priority is the need to fund feasibility studies relating to a number of potentially far-reaching projects. These projects are:

- a. A 12-year programme to create a network of safe cycle routes & quiet lanes.
- b. The development of a cultural industries centre.
- c. The development of a public transport smart card scheme.
- d. The introduction of leisure card scheme.

21 It is estimated that the studies will cost around £60,000 in the current year. Without this funding, opportunities to progress these projects will be limited. Funding for feasibility studies in future years will need to be incorporated into the budget setting process. However, for the projects listed above, the funding will need to be secured from reserves.

22 It should also be noted that no funding exists to back-fill vacancies in service departments created by the secondment of staff to projects. In future years, appropriate funding can be sought for inclusion in the Capital Programme. However, in 2004/05, any back-filling requirements will need to be funded from reserves.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 The roles and responsibilities of the Executive Programme Managers, and their respective programmes, be noted.
- 2 The project management framework, as outlined in paragraphs 14 - 16 be adopted and be incorporated into the Corporate Plan review.
- 3 A temporary Programme Assistant post be created, at an estimated cost of £16,000 in 2004/05, to be funded from reserves.
- 4 Funding of £60,000 be drawn from reserves to fund feasibility studies in connection with the 'Improving the Quality of Life' theme of the Corporate Plan.

Background Papers: Quality of Life Corporate Plan.

Appendix – Programme of Projects and Project Team Requirements

Key

- 1 = Advocacy Role – EPM.
 2 = Stakeholder Involvement
 3 = Lead Officer (in-house) - Dedicated time within current job responsibilities
 4 = Technical in-house advice e.g. Finance, IT
 5 = Other Specialist e.g. private sector
 6 = New posts, or longer-term secondments, reporting to EPM
 7 = Secondment Short-term (probably part-time) or Extended/Dedicated Project Manager

Programme One – Access to Services

Projects for completion within 2004/05

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| L4.4 - Development of an E-Government Strategy | By 30/6/04 | Strategy Study | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| L4.5 – Develop & implement a more attractively designed, faster and up-to-date website. | By 31/3/04 | Initial launch | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| L4.6 – Development of improved communications with those without access to the Council via the Internet. | By 31/12/04 | BV Review | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| L4.7 – Develop an email list of contacts across the district to supply information, seeks views & consult on key issues. | By 31/12/04 | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| L7.9 – Secure the electronic delivery of all legally permissible interactions: ~ Environmental services (licensing, trade waste and street care & cleansing). ~ Housing Services, including mutual exchange register, repair reporter, access to rent a/c information etc. ~ Council Tax & Business Rate services ~ banding, account details etc. ~ Housing Benefit ~ entitlement checker, application form etc. ~ Online booking system for sports courses, arts & cultural events. ~ Online discussion, feedback & complaint facilities. ~ Maintained public web pages for all Members. ~ Maintained websites for Parish Councils. ~ Maintained websites for local voluntary organisations. | 90% of services online by 31/3/05 | Phased project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| L7.10 – Increase the percentage of telephone calls answered within 15 seconds. | 95% by 31/3/05 | Phased Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| I1.2 – Develop a 'service quality initiative' designed to standardise the First Point of Contact services to an agreed quality standard. | By 30/9/04 | BV Review | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| I1.3 – Remove all barriers to delivering equal access to services & to secure full compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. | By 31/12/04 | Full project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| I1.4 - Maximise the effective use of information and communication technology to deliver improved customer access to services (e-Government strategy). ~ Access to Services Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > CRM ~ Phase One > Document Imaging. > Workflow ~ Phase One (DWP Housing Benefits project) ~ National Infrastructure Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > NLPG > Planning Portal > National priority services ~ Essex Online projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Broadband. > Essexextranet. > Reg'n & authentication. > Essex Portal. > Other projects. ~ Key technical Infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Financial management system. > E-Procurement > Replacement housing system. | By 31/3/05 | Phased projects | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| I1.5 – Develop effective & on-going learning and development for all First Point of Contact staff. | From 30/9/04. | BV Review | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| I1.6 – Develop a corporate complaints system that will accommodate the effective response to ombudsman, elected members, MPs / MEPs and public complaints / enquiries. | By 30/4/04 | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| I1.7 – Create a culture of welcoming complaints as a mechanism for improving services and providing effective & timely feedback systems. | Started by 31/5/04. | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | |
| I1.8 – Use community information to improve understanding of customer's needs & the need to change service delivery methods. | Subject to BV review | BV Review | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| I1.9 - Effectively market service access by considering the marketing mix. | By 31/12/04. | BV Review | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| P11.8 – Promote the availability of broadband (ADSL etc) technology to all of Uttlesford | 40% covered by 31/12/04 | Phased Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| P17.3 – Develop an online accommodation & conference booking system | By 30/9/04 | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| I2.1 – Develop First Point of Contact services to integrate with other agencies' services. | By 31/12/05 | BV Review | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| I2.2 – Create First Point of Contact hubs in each of the most populated centres in the district & develop mobile facilities linked to other agencies. | By 31/10/03 | BV Review | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| To achieve full compliance with the access to information requirements of the Freedom of Information Act | By 1/1/05. | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Develop & promote a one stop shop web environment to assist people to located training opportunities quickly | By 31/3/04 | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

Projects for completion – 2005/06

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| L4.5 – Develop & implement a more attractively designed, faster and up-to-date website. | By 31/3/04 | Info on all services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| L4.8 – Through the E-Government strategy, incorporate improved seamless working with non-governmental organisations, including links to their websites: ~ E-Innovations project to link up services with Citizens Advice Bureaux. ~ Other projects, to be identified. | By 30 June 2005 | Full project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| L7.9 – Secure the electronic delivery of all legally permissible interactions: ~ Trade waste. ~ Links to national planning portal & planning casework service. ~ Online access to Museum catalogues. ~ Online access to local history recorders' records. ~ Online renewal of concessionary fare passes. ~ Booking for leisure centre facilities. ~ E-enablement of councillor surgeries & home visits. ~ Shared community databases. | 100% online by 31/12/05 | Phased Projects | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| I1.4 - Maximise the effective use of information and communication technology to deliver improved customer access to services (e-Government strategy). ~ Access to Services Projects > CRM ~ Phase Two > Workflow ~ Phase Two (Corporate roll-out) ~ National Infrastructure Projects: > NLIS. > Gov'n Gateway > National Priority Services ~ Essex Online Projects > Other projects (to be agreed by partnership). ~ Key technical Infrastructure projects: > Financial management system. > E-Procurement. > Replacement housing system | By 31/3/06 | Phased Projects | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| L7.10 – Increase the percentage of telephone calls answered within 15 seconds. | 98% by 31/3/06 | Phased Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| I2.1 – Develop First Point of Contact services to integrate with other agencies' services. | By 31/12/05 | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| P11.8 – Promote the availability of broadband (ADSL etc) technology to Uttlesford | 60% covered by 31/12/05 | Phased Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| I2.2 – Create First Point of Contact hubs in each of the most populated centres in the district & develop mobile facilities linked to other agencies. | By 31/12/05. | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Development of new access channels, such as Digital TV, SMS (text) messaging, public access terminals etc. | By 31/3/06 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

Programme Two - Quality of Life

Projects for completion - 2004/05

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| I3.2 – Undertake an evaluation for developing an Essex Credit Union | By 31/3/04 | Feasible? | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| P9.3 – Design & Implement a 12 year programme to create a network of safe cycle routes and quiet lanes | Start from 30/5/04 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| | | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| C4.4 – Evaluate options for the development of an integrated primary care facility with lifelong, learning, community facilities and First Point of Contact for County District and Parish Council Services in Stansted | By 30/6/04 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| C4.5 – Subject to C4.4 (above) to develop a project plan for the new centre in Stansted | By 30/6/04 | Project Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| P9.4 – Create an effective Cycle track between Saffron Walden and Audley End | By 30/6/04 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| | | Full Project | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | |
| P21.2 – Work with partners to develop a Cultural Industries Centre in Uttlesford to provide incubator accommodation for aspiring artists (all media), exhibition and performing arts space | Project plan in place by 31/07/04 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | | Full Project | | ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | ? | ? |
| C2.1 – Undertake a joint evaluation of the entire public sector CCTV facilities in Uttlesford | By 30/9/04 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Decriminalisation | By 1/10/04 | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| P21.1 – Develop the SW Council Chamber to offer public cinema on regular days throughout the month | Operational by 31/12/04 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| C2.2 – Subject to C2.1 above, develop a project plan to centralise all public sector CCTV provision into a single control room | By 31/12/04 | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Museum Resource Centre | By 31/1/05 | Submit Lottery Bid | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| P8.2 – Investigate the use of a "smart card scheme" acceptable on all public transport | By 31/3/05 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| P7.4 – Develop jointly with Town & Parish Councils an integrated transport plan for SW, GD, SM and Thaxted | GD – 31/3/05 SW – 31/3/06 SM&Th – 31/3/07 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |
| P8.3 – Actively encourage the supply of buses of a size appropriate to the number of users, accessible by disabled people and with routes designed to encourage business and recreational users to use public transport | By 31/3/05 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |
| P8.4 – Actively encourage the availability of Mini-Hopper/Community Transport/Village mini buses and for the provision of "night buses" to improve access to entertainment and cultural activities | By 31/3/05 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |
| P8.5 – Actively encourage the extension of the Post bus, Tesco bus and school bus provision to improve public transport provision in the District | By 31/3/05 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |

Projects for completion – 2005/06

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Bridge End Gardens | By 30/4/05 | Full Project | | | | | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| C2.5 – Review all community based enforcement services delivered by the Council to evaluate the benefits of creating a generic “Community Warden” team | By 30/9/05 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | | Full Project | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| P16.5 – Conduct a private sector housing stock condition survey for Uttlesford | By 31/3/06 | Feasible? | | ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | | Full Project | | ? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| P20.4 – Introduce an Uttlesford Leisure Card Scheme | By 31/3/06 | Feasible? | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| I3.3 – Subject to I3.2 (above), develop an Essex Credit Union | By 31/3/06 | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| P8.6 – Actively encourage development of effective public transport hubs and public transport integration (buses with trains) | By 31/3/06 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |
| P8.7 – Actively encourage the installation of telematics at bus stops on all of the main strategic routes in the District | By 31/3/06 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |
| P8.8 – Actively encourage the development of a guaranteed quality and frequent hub service with village links | By 31/3/06 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |
| P13.5 – To encourage and support the development of “Village Shops” / Cooperatives | Ongoing | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |
| P7.4 – Develop jointly with Town & Parish Councils an integrated transport plan for SW, GD, SM and Thaxted | GD – 31/3/05 SW – 31/3/06 SM&Th – 31/3/07 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |

Projects for completion – 2006/07

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| P17.5 – Link the Green lanes in the District with existing long distant footpaths, way marked footpaths, bridleways and quiet country roads to make short and longer circular walks and publicised to residents and tourists | By 30/6/06 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| P19.3 – Develop a unique Country Park and Study/Activity Centre | By 31/3/07 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| P7.4 – Develop jointly with Town & Parish Councils an integrated transport plan for SW, GD, SM and Thaxted | GD – 31/3/05 SW – 31/3/06 SM&Th – 31/3/07 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |

Projects for completion – 2007/08

| Project | Time Scales | Phases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| P17.6 – Complete two rural Route Network pilot studies of greenways and quiet country lanes | By 30/6/07 | Feasible? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| | | Full Project | | | | | | | |

Committee: Resources Committee
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 13
Title: E-Government Strategy
Author: John Mercer (01799) 510421

Summary

- 1 This report introduces the attached draft E-Government Strategy for Uttlesford. The Strategy provides details of how the Council will set about meeting the various e-Government related deadlines and priorities set by central Government. It also proposes a framework within which information technology will be used to improve both the quality and accessibility of services within Uttlesford. The report recommends that the draft Strategy is approved.

Background

- 2 The Government has set a target that, by 31 December 2005, 100% of all council services should be capable of being delivered electronically ('the 2005 deadline'). In so doing, it is encouraging councils to make full use of the potential for electronic service delivery to improve the responsiveness and quality of services. It acknowledges that new technology should not replace personal contact, but it should make it better supported.
- 3 E-Government is not a single project, rather a series of interconnected projects contributing to the 2005 target and the wider Government objectives. The Council's progress in implementing e-Government is being assessed through the Best Value Performance Indicator, BVPI 157 and a series of mandatory national priority outcomes (see paragraph 4 below).
- 4 A draft E-Government Strategy for Uttlesford is attached to this report. It sets out how the Council will use technology to underpin service improvements and help address some of the biggest challenges facing the Council. It also sets out how the Council will meet the various mandatory national E-Government targets and outcomes as set out in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) paper published on 30 April 2004 (titled 'defining e-government outcomes for 2005 to support the delivery of priority services') and listed in Appendix Two of the Strategy. The Strategy also takes account of guidance issued by the ODPM and others, on implementing e-government, including the National Strategy for Local e-Government', issued in November 2002.
- 5 The initial draft of the Strategy was submitted to the E-Government Task Group in October 2004. The attached version has been updated to take account of the Quality of Life Corporate Plan targets that impact upon the e-

Government programme (attached as appendix one to the Strategy) and the aforementioned national priority outcomes. The Strategy adopts the ODPM's 'traffic light' system for displaying the current status of the various projects and activities listed in the tables within the document. Regular updates of the tables, showing current progress, will be submitted to the Task Group in the period leading up to the 2005 deadline.

- 6 IEG (Implementing Electronic Government) Funding of £350,000 has been provided by the ODPM in 2004/05 to help meet the 2005 deadline. A further £150,000 is to be provided for 2005/06. However, release of next year's funding will be conditional upon the Council making satisfactory progress towards meeting the national priority outcomes. Failure to do so could result in the ODPM withholding, or in exceptional circumstances recovering, some or all of the funding.
- 7 Further e-Government related funding has been secured through successful bids to the ODPM's E-Innovations Fund and Department of Works & Pensions Performance Standards Fund. The remaining capital funding requirements of the programme can be met from the Council's own resources. Consequently, the available funding will be sufficient to enable the Council to meet the 2005 deadline and fulfil the Government's priority outcomes.
- 8 The work programme is however very large. Consequently temporary staff are being employed, funded from the various project budgets, to drive the programme forwards. However, as more and more IT systems are deployed within the Council, the requirement for additional on-going IT support will increase. A report regarding the various options for this on-going support will be submitted to Members in due course.
- 9 This second draft of the Strategy was submitted to the E-Government Task Group on 25 May 2004. At the time of writing this report, Members of the Task Group were still considering its content. Any further comments received from them prior to this meeting will be reported verbally.

RECOMMENDED that subject to any further comments from the E-Government Task Group, the attached E-Government Strategy be adopted.

Background Papers: Defining E-Government Outcomes for 2005 to Support the Delivery of Priority Services (version 1)

www.localgov.gov.uk the National Strategy for Local e-Government



Uttlesford District Council

E-Government Strategy: 2003 to 2007

| | |
|---|----|
| E-Government Strategy – Summary | 54 |
| Background..... | 55 |
| Overall vision of e-Government enabled services. | 55 |
| Accessing Council Services | 55 |
| Electronic Service Delivery Channels | 55 |
| Traditional Service Delivery Channels | 56 |
| How ICT will contribute to key priorities..... | 56 |
| Local priorities | 56 |
| National priorities..... | 56 |
| Technical Strategy | 57 |
| Delivering Strategy / key milestones / key deliverables | 58 |
| Resources..... | 60 |
| Capital expenditure and funding | 60 |
| Revenue Growth | 60 |
| Staff capacity assessment..... | 60 |
| Change management..... | 61 |
| Sub-strategy requirements..... | 61 |
| Appendix One - Quality of Life Corporate Plan targets..... | 62 |
| Appendix Two – How the Council is responding to the Government mandatory E- Government priority outcomes. | 64 |
| Appendix Three – E-Government Risk Register | 70 |
| Appendix Three – E-Government Risk Register | 70 |
| Appendix Four – E-Government Implementation Plan..... | 71 |
| Appendix Five - E-Government Building Blocks | 74 |
| Appendix Six - E-Government Performance Targets 2004/05 to 2006/07 | 76 |
| Appendix Seven – Change Management Building Blocks | 78 |

E-Government Strategy – Summary

The Government has set a target that by 2005 all council services should be available electronically. This Strategy sets out the actions Uttlesford District Council intends to take both leading up to the 31 December 2005 target date, and beyond.

The Council's aim is to improve the quality of life for the people of Uttlesford by providing efficient and responsive services for all. We will use information communications technology (ICT) to underpin service improvements and help address some of the biggest challenges facing the Council. In developing this strategy, account has been taken of the local priorities contained in the Quality of Life Corporate Plan. Appendix One sets out specific responses that will be made to these priorities. We will also take due account of mandatory national priorities, including the seven key national / local priority services (see appendix two) and the priorities of the Essex Online partnership.

We will support these various aims by making all council services available electronically through our website, by the Government's target date. To achieve this, we will employ a range of technical solutions and will work with a range of public and private sector partners. We will encourage the take up of these 'e-services' by making them easy to use, relevant to local people and offering real advantages over traditional services.

We recognise that the introduction of e-services will require significant changes to 'back-office' administrative processes. We will therefore develop a detailed change management strategy to ensure that services are re-positioned around the needs of the users and the benefits to be derived from e-government are maximised.

We recognise that not all citizens will choose to use the new electronic service delivery channels. We will therefore retain and wherever possible (using ICT) improve telephone and face-to-face contacts with the Council. In particular, in recognition of the rural nature of the district and the limited provision of public transport, we will bring services closer to citizens by improving the services offered at our various 'first points of contact'. To do this, we will introduce a CRM system, linked to the various back-office applications and to the corporate document imaging system. This work will be carried out in conjunction with a best value review of Access to Services.

We will continue to develop our ICT infrastructure, including our 'back-office' applications and databases. We will link these applications and databases to the online services, to electronic hubs, such as the NLPG and to key local partners.

E-Government is not cheap. It is estimated that we will need around £1,500,000 to meet the 2005 target. However, we have been successful in winning Government funding and the burden on the local taxpayer has been kept to a minimum.

Background

The Government has set a target that, by 31 December 2005, 100% of all council services should be capable of being delivered electronically ('the 2005 target'). In so doing, it is encouraging councils to make full use of the potential for electronic service delivery to improve the responsiveness and quality of services. It acknowledges that new technology should not replace personal contact, but it should make it better supported.

E-Government is not a single project, rather a series of interconnected projects contributing to the 2005 target and the wider e-Government objectives. The Council's progress in implementing e-Government is being monitored through the Best Value Performance Indicator, BV 157.

This draft strategy takes account of guidance issued by the Government on the implementation of e-government, most particularly 'local e-gov – the national strategy for local e-government', issued in November 2002 & the recent ODPM paper on mandatory e-Government outcomes for 2005.

Overall vision of e-Government enabled services.

The Council's aim is to improve the quality of life for the people of Uttlesford by providing efficient and responsive services to all. We will support this aim by making all services available electronically by 31 December 2005 and fully linked to back office systems by 31 December 2007. We will use information communications technology (ICT) to underpin service improvements and help address some of the biggest challenges facing the Council.

Accessing Council Services

Increasingly, citizens expect the Council to match the quality of service provided by the best of the private sector. Also, citizens expect choice, both in the way, and the times, they access services. In addition, a proportion of our citizens have difficulties accessing services. Uttlesford is a large, mainly rural area with limited public transport provision. However, ICT can be used to address these issues in ways that are achievable and affordable.

Electronic Service Delivery Channels

With high levels of Internet usage amongst citizens within the district we are focusing attention on the development of our website. By 2005, the website will provide a full range of electronic services ('online services'), designed in ways that make sense to users, which are easy to use and which are accessible at most times, including evenings and weekends.

When developing online services we are ensuring that due priority is given to citizens' most frequent interactions with the Council. These interactions include, for example; bill payments, environmental service requests, council tax change of address notifications and housing property repair requests.

In implementing e-government, it is important that a balance is struck between the development of new "front-end" electronic processes, which count directly towards the 2005 target, and "back office" application and database enhancements, which will improve the overall quality of services. Our programme of work reflects the need for this balance and

includes in 2004/05, for example, the installation of a new financial management system, an upgrade to the integrated housing system and a new Personnel system.

By 2007 we will have also linked all our front-end electronic processes to the underlying applications and databases. In so doing, many of the routine day-to-day transactions that citizens undertake will be automated and the scope for error or delay greatly reduced. Opportunities for efficiency savings will also materialise. Targets will be set for these efficiency savings, which will be monitored and reported to management and Members.

By 2007 we will also have begun to integrate our e-services with those of other agencies, both within and outside of the district. This will simplify citizen's interaction with government when, for example, they are moving house or applying for benefit. To achieve this we will work with local service providers such as the citizens advice bureau and the Primary Care Trust. We will also actively participate in national projects such as the NLPG, NLIS and Planning Portal.

During 2006 and 2007 we will begin to develop new service access channels such as digital TV, mobile telephones, smart cards, telemetry and public access kiosks. We will investigate each technology's potential and where appropriate, work with our partners in Essex to develop these channels.

Traditional Service Delivery Channels

We recognise that many citizens will not wish to use the new electronic services, at least initially. Also, a significant proportion of the local population still does not have ready access to technology. We will therefore retain and, wherever possible, improve traditional means of accessing Council services. A best value review, which is presently taking place, will help determine how these services will be organised.

However service delivery is organised, technology will be used to support front-line staff in their duties. This enhanced support will be built around a CRM system linked directly to both back office applications and a corporate document imaging system. By utilising a CRM system, initial enquiries and requests will be dealt with more effectively. For example, requests for service will be initiated by front-line staff, back-office applications will be updated immediately, payment will be accepted by credit or debit card and, as a consequence, more enquiries will be resolved at the initial point of enquiry.

We will also use the CRM system, and suitable remote access technologies, to support staff making home visits to the housebound and staff working "in the field". We will build upon pilot work that has been carried out in areas such as housing benefits and housing repairs.

How ICT will contribute to key priorities

Local priorities

On 12th June 2004 the Council's new administration began to revisit the priorities for the authority. It took into account its ambitions in the context of the Community Plan. The new priorities are included in the Quality of Life Corporate Plan 2003 to 2007. In developing this E-Government strategy, account has been taken of these local priorities. Appendix One lists the specific e-Government related targets within the Corporate Plan and summarises the ways in which ICT can more generally contribute to achieving the aims of the Plan.

National priorities

The National Strategy for Local e-Government described the seven shared public service delivery priorities that were agreed between the Government and the Local Government Association in July 2002:. These are-

- Raising standards across our schools.
- Improving the quality of life of children, young people, families at risk and older people.
- Promoting healthier communities by targeting key local services, such as health and housing;
- Creating safer and stronger communities;
- Transforming our local environment.
- Meeting local transport needs more effectively.
- Promoting the economic vitality of localities.

The seven shared priorities give a set of broad aims for public service delivery and cover the key issues that impact most on the lives of local people. Specific mandatory outcomes have been identified by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) which all local authorities are required to meet. In addition, the ODPM has identified further specific mandatory outcomes for councils to achieve:

- Progress in terms of the electronic delivery of key high volume / high impact local government services identified as priorities in terms of user benefit and efficiency savings, i.e.
 - voting;
 - consultation;
 - planning applications; and
 - payments (including Council Tax and Housing Benefit).
- The transformation of people's experience of public services through the application of local e-government, as described in the National Strategy for local e-government published in November 2002.

The release of Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) funding is linked to the achievement of these mandatory outcomes. Therefore, the table at appendix two provides a summary of the Council's current position and future plans for each of the outcomes.

Technical Strategy

The diagram on page five provides a visual overview of the different technologies and how they integrate to form the overall e-government model. Citizens will access Council services either directly, via the Council website, or via a member of staff (either telephone or face-to-face contact) equipped with CRM technology.

Both the website and CRM system will be integrated with the Council's back office applications, namely Ocella, Document Imaging, Revenues (Council Tax, Housing Benefits & Business Rates) and Housing (Allocations, Repairs, Rents & Management). A range of smaller, specialist applications, based around SQL databases, will be produced for other council services. For example, a searchable database system has recently been developed to enable citizens to search the Saffron Walden cemetery records.

The National Strategy for Local e-Government, published in November 2002, established a model for the 'e-organisation', made up of some 46 'building blocks' arranged in six themes. Taken together, they make up the essential elements of the local e-government organisation. The Council's progress against the key themes (Enablers, Core Systems, Access Channels and Trust & Connections) is set out in the table attached as appendix five. The table lists each building block, the current status and a brief commentary.

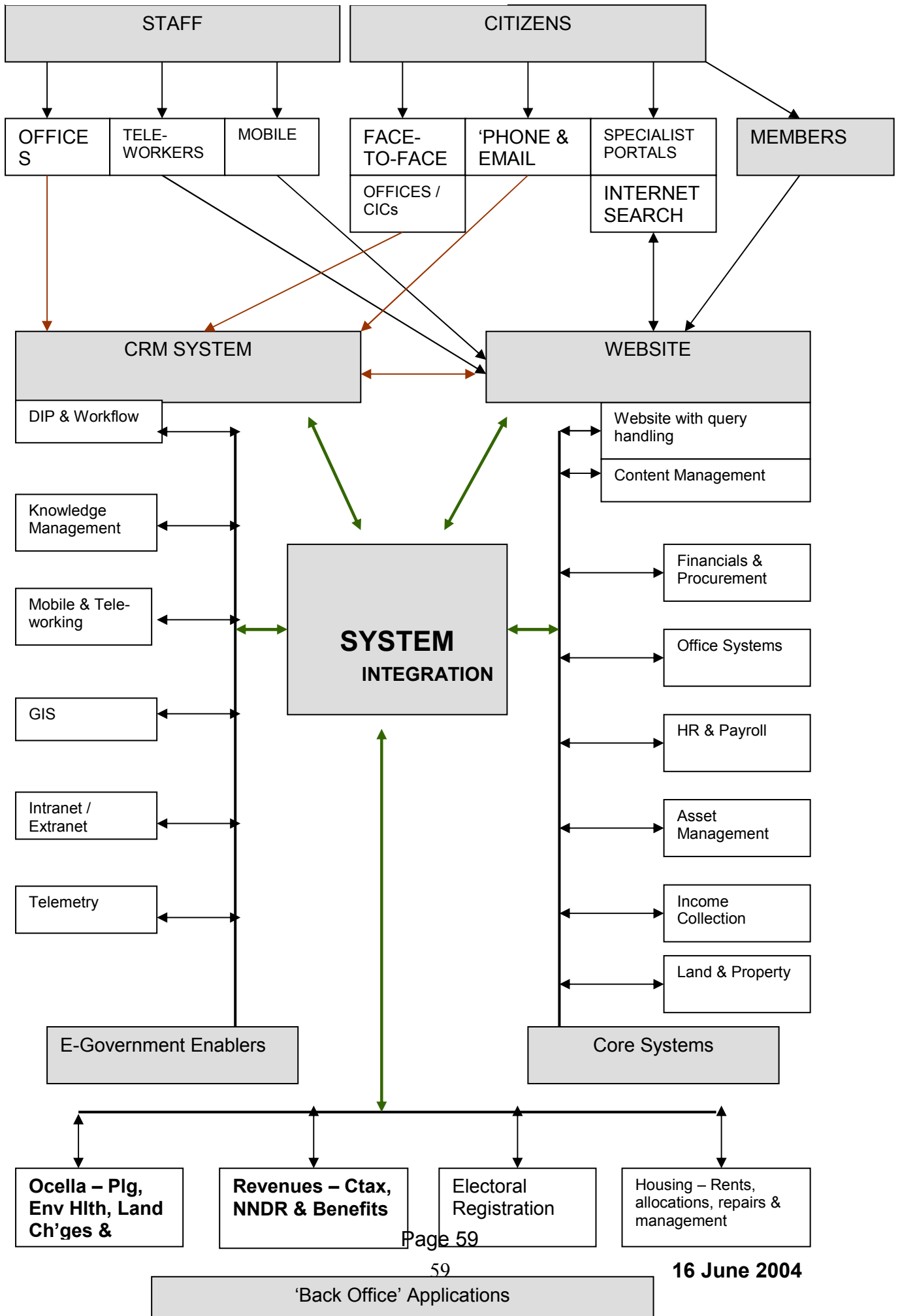
Delivering Strategy / key milestones / key deliverables

Attached as Appendix Four is an E-Government implementation plan, listing all the proposed development projects, and the years in which it is intended to carry out the work. The eighty projects together describe how we will deliver this Strategy.

Set out as Appendix six are the various e-Government targets, both statutory and local, which are being developed to monitor the take-up and effectiveness of the E-Government programme.

Set out as Appendix Three is a summary Risk Register, listing the key risks of the e-Government programme and the actions to be taken to reduce those risks.

Figure 1 - Technical Model for E-Government



Resources

Capital expenditure and funding

Set out in the table below is a summary of the actual and projected expenditure on e-Government between 2003/04 and 2006/07, along with details of the sources of actual and anticipated funding. As can be seen from the table, the Council has been successful in bidding for additional funding and, as a consequence, should have sufficient funding to meet the objectives of this Strategy.

| Programme Area | 2003/04 Actual £ | 2004/05 Approved £ | 2005/06 Estimate £ | 2006/07 Estimate £ |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Expenditure | | | | |
| E-Government ~ compliance with BVPI157 | 125,000 | 200,000 | 150,000 | 0 |
| First Point of Contact | 0 | 302,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 |
| Intranet Developments | 17,000 | 40,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Replacement Applications | 69,000 | 231,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 |
| Other IT Projects | 86,000 | 219,000 | 70,000 | 50,000 |
| | | | | |
| Total Expenditure | 297,000 | 992,000 | 320,000 | 150,000 |
| Grant & other sources of funding | | | | |
| IEG2/3 | 200,000 | 350,000 | 0 | 0 |
| IEG4 | 0 | 0 | 150,000 | 0 |
| E-Innovations | 0 | 78,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Capital Programme | 128,000 | 340,000 | 170,000 | 150,000 |
| Capital Programme B/Fwd | -31,000 | 31,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Housing Revenue Account | 0 | 100,000 | 0 | 0 |
| DWP Housing Benefits Performance Standards Fund | 0 | 93,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Funding & Grants | 297,000 | 992,000 | 320,000 | 150,000 |

Revenue Growth

Set out below is a table showing the actual and anticipated growth in the revenue budget, resulting from the e-Government programme.

| Revenue Growth Items – Cumulative impact of e-Government on revenue estimates | 2003/04 Actual £ | 2004/05 Approved £ | 2005/06 Estimate £ | 2006/07 Estimate £ |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Salaries – Additional permanent staff needed to support growth in IT infrastructure resulting from E-Government programme. | 0 | 28,000 | 43,000 | 43,000 |
| Revenue Effects of Capital Programme | 0 | 10,000 | 20,000 | 30,000 |
| Total Anticipated Growth | 0 | 38,000 | 63,000 | 73,000 |

Staff capacity assessment

A detailed analysis of the e-Government programme has identified the need for a total of eight staff, four to work on online service related projects (including national & regional infrastructure projects) and four to work on Access to Service projects (including CRM, DIP and workflow). Of these, all but one of the posts is IT-related. The remaining post requires a customer care specialist. In addition to the eight identified posts, there is a likely requirement for temporary staff resources to assist with setting up the scanning function for the corporate use of document imaging.

All seven IT posts are fully funded. The remaining non-IT post is being filled by internal secondment.

Change management

The table attached as appendix seven sets out the key building blocks, as defined in the national strategy, needing to be in place in order to make e-Government successful, and realise the potential benefits of electronic service delivery.

Sub-strategy requirements

In support of this outline E-Government Strategy, the following detailed sub-strategies will be prepared:

1. A Consultation Strategy – to ensure that e-services meet the citizen's needs.
2. A Marketing & Take-Up Strategy – to ensure that citizens use the e-services that have been developed.
3. A Social inclusion Strategy – to ensure that no one is disenfranchised by the introduction of new electronic delivery channels.
4. A detailed technical strategy – to ensure that the technical infrastructure keeps pace with current developments, and anticipates future developments.
5. A First Point of Contact Strategy – to be produced as an output of the current Access to Services Best Value Review.

Appendix One - Quality of Life Corporate Plan targets

The table adopts the Government 'traffic light' approach to provide easy to read progress. In summary:

Red = Projects that are being planned but not yet approved for funding.

Amber = Implementation stage – roll out of approved & funded projects.

Green = Fully implemented – projects completed & implemented.

| Quality of Life Action | Current Position | Commentary |
|--|------------------|---|
| Specific Corporate Plan Targets | | |
| Secure the electronic delivery of all legally permissible interactions. | Amber | Target to have 95% of transactions online by 31/3/05 & 100% by 31/3/06. |
| Maximise the effective use of ICT to deliver improved customer access to services. | Amber | A challenging programme of new developments is scheduled to take place to improve customer access to services. The programme includes CRM & DIP development & will be informed by the outcome of the Access to Services Best Value review. |
| Develop & implement a more attractively designed, faster & up to date Council website, which will facilitate greater communication & transactions by local people. | Green | The new website went live in February 2004. A programme of on-going development will add additional content and functionality. |
| Improved seamless working with non governmental organisations including links to their websites. | Amber | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-Innovations funding secured to link up services with Citizens Advice Bureau by 30 June 2005. Development of a comprehensive, integrated database, developed & supported by all local NGOs. |
| Develop an email list of contacts across the District to supply information, seek views & consult on key issues. | Red | To be carried out during 2004/05. |
| Promote the availability of broadband (ADSL etc) technology to all in Uttlesford. | Amber | 90% coverage by 31/12/07. Council to support Essex Online broadband roll-out strategy. |

How E-Government can contribute to the general aims of the Quality of Life Corporate Plan

| To provide strong community leadership & openness | Current Position | Commentary |
|---|------------------|---|
| Providing strong community leadership and openness. | Amber | <p>The website will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make contacting the Council easier. Tell citizens what we are doing. Publish draft plans and policies, performance information etc. Invite debate and comment. Complain when things go wrong. Publicise public meetings. Enable citizen to access the information we hold about them - A project will be carried out to ensure that the Council fully complies with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act by 1 January 2005. |

| To provide strong community leadership & openness | Current Position | Commentary |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Protecting & enhancing the environment & character of the district.</p> <p>...whilst improving rural transport</p> <p>...whilst encouraging appropriate economic development.</p> <p>...whilst improving the supply of affordable homes</p> <p>...whilst promoting tourism, culture & leisure opportunities</p> | <p>Amber</p> <p>Amber</p> <p>Amber</p> <p>Amber</p> <p>Amber</p> | <p>The website will be used to raise awareness of the important issues facing the district.</p> <p>We will continue to develop ICT facilities within the Planning department (eg workflow) to improve the efficiency of the Development Control function.</p> <p>The website will be used to provide information about rural public transport, enable the elderly to apply for travel concessions and encourage car sharing (a Saffire scheme, to be grant-aided by the Council).</p> <p>The website will be used to provide information on starting and running a business.</p> <p>We will upgrade the integrated housing system in 2004 to accommodate legislative changes. We will upgrade online housing services by providing interactive info about affordable housing; the waiting list, mutual exchanges etc.</p> <p>We have developed a tourism website which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sights to see, places to stay, places to eat, what's on etc. • A virtual tour of Uttlesford. <p>We will further develop the website in light of users' requirements & best practice.</p> <p>Green leisure will be promoted via the website – eg footpath maps drawn from the online GIS system.</p> |
| <p>Improving access to value for money services</p> | <p>Amber</p> | <p>The website can extend & improve access to services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering 'self-service' option outside of normal office hours. • Enabling citizens to access services without need to travel to offices. <p>IT can support the service offered to citizens at CICs & those contacting the Council by 'phone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A BV review of access to services is due to be completed by October 2004. • A Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) system is being installed. <p>IT can support visits to the housebound.</p> <p>Council can facilitate broadband access for all Uttlesford residents.</p> |
| <p>Improving community safety and the health of the population.</p> | <p>Amber</p> | <p>The website will provide information on cycle routes, local walks etc.</p> <p>Comprehensive local health information available via the Essex Online Partnership.</p> |
| <p>Supporting lifelong learning & developing better opportunities for young people.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>The website will be used to promote opportunities for young people.</p> |

| To provide strong community leadership & openness | Current Position | Commentary |
|---|------------------|---|
| | | A life long learning website has been developed in conjunction with the LLL co-ordinating group for Uttlesford. It will be extended in line with the requirements of the LLL group. |

Appendix Two – How the Council is responding to the Government mandatory E-Government priority outcomes.

The table adopts the Government ‘traffic light’ approach to provide easy to read progress. In summary:

Red = Projects that are being planned but not yet approved for funding.

Amber = Implementation stage – roll out of approved & funded projects.

Green = Fully implemented – projects completed & implemented.

| | Current Position | Commentary |
|---|------------------|--|
| 1. Community Information | | |
| R3 One stop direct online access and deep linking to joined up A-Z information on all local authority services via website or shared telephone contact centre using the recognised taxonomy of the Local Government Category List (see www.laws-project.org.uk). | Amber | A-Z of local services created through Essex Online Portal. The portal currently uses the Seamless UK taxonomy and will therefore require migration to the LGCL by December 2005. A-Z on council website created, although further work required to develop LGCL taxonomy. |
| R4 Local authority and youth justice agencies to co-ordinate the secure online sending, sharing of and access to information in support of crime reduction initiatives in partnership with the local community. | Red | Secure Essex Extranet created to aid the exchange of confidential information. This project will need to be led by the Essex Online Partnership. |
| G2 Empowering and supporting local organisations, community groups and clubs to create and maintain their own information online, including the promotion of job vacancies and events | Amber | Website facilities are being offered to all parish councils. The Council has also funded a project to enable local groups to use the Saffire community portal for the purposes outlined in G2. |
| 2. Democratic Renewal | | |
| R5 Public access to online reports, minutes and agendas from past council meetings, including future meetings diary updated daily. | Green | Online committee management system in place since 2000. Contains all minutes and reports dating back to 1991. http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/your+council/committee+and+pr/committee+management+system/default.htm |
| R6 Providing every Councillor with the option to have an easy-to-manage set of public web pages (for community leadership purposes) that is either maintained for them, or that they can maintain themselves. | Amber | A Member website design has been created. Consultation currently taking place with Members. Likely to go live in summer 2004. |
| G3 Citizen participation and response to forthcoming consultations and decisions on matters of public interest (e-consultation), | Amber | By 31 December 2004, we will have developed an email list of contacts, across the district, to supply information, seek views and consult on key issues. |

| | Current Position | Commentary |
|--|------------------|--|
| including facility for citizens to sign up for email and/or SMS text alerts on nominated topics. | | Participating in Colchester Borough Council E-Innovations project re the use of SMS texting for council services. |
| G4 Establishment of multimedia resources on local policy priorities accessible via public website (e.g. video & audio files). | Amber | Webcasting has been used for an important public meeting. Other ways of using multi-media are being explored. |
| 3. Local Environment | | |
| R7 Online public reporting/applications, procurement and tracking of environmental services, includes waste management and street scene (e.g. abandoned cars, graffiti removal, bulky waste removal, recycling). | Green | Comprehensive online environmental services have been developed. http://www.uttleford.gov.uk/the+environment/default.htm |
| R8 Online receipt and processing of planning and building control applications. | Green | Online planning & building control application forms have been added to the Council website. The Council will shortly be able to accept electronic planning applications via the National Planning Portal. |
| G5 Public access to corporate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for map-based data presentation of property-related information. | Green | A range of GIS data sets, including several relating to Planning, are available via the Council website. http://192.168.1.10/the+environment/planning/interactive+maps.htm |
| G7 Use of technology to integrate planning, regulation and licensing functions (including Entertainment Licensing and Liquor Licensing) in order to improve policy and decision-making processes around the prevention of anti-social behaviour. | Red | To be investigated during 2004/05. |
| 4. e-Procurement | | |
| R9 Appropriate online e-procurement solutions in place, including as a minimum paperless ordering, invoicing and payment. | Amber | A new financial information system, with e-procurement functionality, is currently being installed. By 31 March 2005. |
| G8 Establishment of a single business account (i.e. a cross-departmental 'account' run by the local authority whereby businesses are allocated a unique identifier that can be stored and managed via a corporate CRM account facility supporting face-to-face, website and contact centre transactions). | Red | To be investigated during 2004/05 as part of the CRM project (with assistance from the newly formed Economic Development function). |
| G9 Regional co-operation on e-procurement between local councils. | Green | The Council has joined the Essex Marketplace and Essex Procurement partnerships. |
| 5. Payments | | |
| R10 Online facilities to be available to allow payments to the council in ways that engender public trust and confidence in local government electronic payment solutions (e.g. email receipting/proof of payment, supply of automatic transaction ID numbers). | Green | Full e-payments facilities are in place on the Council website. http://www.uttleford.gov.uk/your+council/revenues/council+tax/questions+and+answers/281f37fe-99a6-4dc9-a374-55cfb713a39b.htm |
| R11 Delivery of 'added value' around online payment facilities, including ability to check Council Tax and Business Rate balances | Amber | Online payment facilities in place. Online access to account details to go live by end of June 2004. |

| | Current Position | Commentary |
|--|------------------|---|
| online or via touch tone telephone dialling. | | Touch tone systems (initially for payments) included in the 2004/05 development budget. |
| G10 Demonstration of efficiency savings and improved collection rates from implementation of e-payments. | Amber | Baseline information has been collected, targets set and monitoring taking place. |
| G11 Registration for Council Tax and Business Rates e-billing for Direct Debit payers. | Red | To be investigated during 2004/05. |
| 6. Libraries, Sports & Leisure | | |
| R13 Online booking of sports and leisure facilities, including both direct and contracted-out operations. | Red | A sports and leisure booking system to be installed during 2004/05. Discussions with leisure contractor, re outsourced services, to take place during 2004/05. |
| G12 Integrated ICT infrastructure and support to ensure the consistent delivery of services across all access channels (e.g. web, telephone, face to face) based on e-enabled back offices and smart card interfaces for council library, sports and leisure services. | Red | An Uttlesford Leisure Card scheme is being introduced that provides reduced access to leisure centre facilities and other leisure venues for young, unemployed, elderly and disabled people. By 31 March 2006. |
| 7. Transport | | |
| R14 Online facilities to be available to allow the public to inspect local public transport timetables and information via available providing organisation, including links to 'live' systems for interactive journey planning. | Green | Available via Council website. http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/transport/default.htm |
| R15 Online public e-consultation facilities for new proposals on traffic management (e.g. controlled parking zones (CPZs), traffic calming schemes), including publication of consultation survey results. | Red | E-consultation facilities to be added to Council website during 2004/05. Online GIS system will be used to help display proposals. |
| G13 E-forms for "parking contravention mitigation" (i.e. appeal against the issue of a penalty charge notice), including email notification of form receipt and appeal procedures. | Amber | E-forms package fully developed. Specific forms for parking to be developed as part of decriminalisation project taking place during 2004/05. |
| 8. Benefits | | |
| R16 E-enabled "one stop" resolution of Housing & Council Tax Benefit enquiries via telephone, contact centres, or via one stop shops using workflow tools and CRM software to provide information at all appropriate locations and enable electronic working from front to back office. | Amber | Funding approved for installation of a CRM system, to enable enquiries to be resolved at the first point of contact. The CRM system will be integrated with the back office housing benefits system (by 31 March 2005). Funding successfully obtained from DWP Performance Standards Fund to enable UDC to work with Bromsgrove Council on the development of housing benefits workflow processes. |
| R17 Online facilities to be available to allow citizens or their agents to check their eligibility for and calculate their entitlement to Housing & Council Tax Benefit and to download and print relevant claim forms. | Amber | Claim forms available online. Online entitlement checker to be installed during 2004/05. Online access to housing benefit entitlement details to be installed during 2004/05. |

| | Current Position | Commentary |
|--|------------------|---|
| | | E-Innovations funding obtained to enable Citizens Advice Bureaux to more effectively handle housing benefit enquiries on behalf of their clients. |
| G15 Mobile office service using technology to offer processing of Council Tax and Housing Benefit claims directly from citizens' homes. | Amber | Technology currently being piloted. Will be available for Council Tax & Housing Benefits staff by 31 March 2006. |
| 9. Support for Vulnerable People | | |
| R18 Comprehensive and dedicated information about access to local care services available over the web and telephone contact centres. | Amber | To be made available during 2004/05. |
| R19 Remote web access or mediated access via telephone (including outside of standard working hours availability) for authorised officers to information about individual 'care packages', including payments, requests for service and review dates. | Red | To be investigated during 2004/05, probably as an Essex Online project. |
| G16 Systems to support joined-up working on children at risk across multiple agencies. | Red | To be investigated during 2004/05, probably as an Essex Online project. |
| G17 Joint assessments of the needs of vulnerable people (children and adults), using mobile technology to support workers in the field. | Red | To be investigated during 2004/05, probably as an Essex Online project. |
| 10. Supporting new ways of working | | |
| R20 Email and Internet access provided for all Members and staff that establish a need for it. | Green | In place. |
| R21 ICT support and documented policy for home/remote working (teleworking) for council members and staff. | Green | In place. |
| R22 Access to home/remote working facilities to all council members and staff that satisfy the requirements set by the Council's published home/remote working policy. | Amber | All elected Members have home working facilities. Home / remote working facilities to be extended to a wider range of staff during 2004/05. DWP Performance Standards funding obtained to enable housing benefit staff to work from home on a rota basis. |
| G18 Establishment of e-skills training programme for council members and staff with recognised basic level of attainment (e.g. European Computer Driving Licence, British Computer Society Qualification "e-Citizen"). | Amber | E-skills programme to be re-introduced during 2004/05, probably based around the European Computer Driving Licence. |
| 11. Accessibility of services | | |
| R23 Self-service or mediated access to all council services outside standard working hours via the Internet or telephone contact centres (i.e. available for extended hours outside of 9am-5pm Monday to Friday). | Amber | All services will available out of standard working hours by 31 December 2005. As a minimum, this will be via the website. |

| | Current Position | Commentary |
|---|------------------|---|
| R24 Implementation of a content management system (CMS) to facilitate devolved web content creation and website management. | Green | Implemented. |
| G19 Adoption of ISO 15489 methodology for Electronic Document Records Management (ERDM) and identification of areas where current records management policies, procedures and systems need improvement to meet the requirements of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection legislation (see www.pro.gov.uk/about/foi/map-local.rtf). | Amber | Funding in place to ensure the Council's ERDM policies, procedures & systems meet the requirements of FOI & DP legislation, by 1 January 2005. |
| G20 Conformance with level AA of W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) standards on website accessibility (see www.w3.org/WAI). | Amber | The Council is currently working towards full conformity with the WAI standards. |
| G21 Compliance with Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF), including the Government Metadata Standard (e-GMS). | Amber | The Council is working towards compliance with e-GIF, including e-GMS, with resources allocated for 2004/05. |
| 12. High take up of web-based transactional services | | |
| R25 Online publication of Internet service standards, including past performance and commitments on service availability. | Red | To be developed during 2004/05. Discussions are taking place with a specialist supplier to carry out the necessary monitoring on behalf of the Council. |
| R26 Monitoring of performance of corporate website between 2003/04 and 2005/06 in order to demonstrate rising and sustained use, as measured by industry standards including page impressions and unique users. | Green | Monitoring taking place. |
| G22 Establishment of internal targets and measures for customer take-up of e-enabled access channels. | Green | Targets in place and being monitored. |
| G23 Adoption of recognised guidelines for usability of website design (see www.laws-project.org.uk). | Amber | Guidelines have been adopted and changes to the website's design are being made. In addition, an IT disability access expert has been engaged to assist the Council to achieve high levels of usability. |
| 13. Making it easy for citizens to do business with the council | | |
| R27 Systems in place to ensure effective and consistent customer relationship management across access channels and to provide a 'first time fix' for citizen and business enquiries, i.e. using a common database, which holds customer's records, to deliver services across different channels, and enabling joined-up and automated service delivery. | Amber | A CRM system is being installed in 2004/05 that will help to ensure consistency of service across different access channels. Performance targets are being developed for 'first time fix' of enquiries at all access points. |
| R28 All email and web form acknowledgements to include unique | Green | Implemented. |

| | Current Position | Commentary |
|--|------------------|--|
| reference number allocated to allow tracking of enquiry and service response. | | |
| R29 100% of email enquiries from the public responded to within one working day, with documented corporate performance standards for both email acknowledgements and service replies | Red | To be developed as part of a Service Quality Initiative designed to standardise the First Point of Contact services to an agreed quality standard. |
| G24 Integration of customer relationship management systems with back office activity through use of enabling technology such as Workflow to create complete automation of business process management. | Amber | A CRM system is being installed in 2004/05 that will contain workflow functionality & tools to integrate to back office applications. |
| G25 Facilities to support the single notification of a change of address, i.e. a citizen should only have to tell the council they have moved on one occasion and the council should then be able to update all records relating to that person to include the new address. | Green | The Council, in partnership with Colchester and Braintree Councils, has joined the national iamoving.com service. http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/your+council/moving+house/default.htm |

Appendix Three – E-Government Risk Register

| Barrier / Constraint to achievement of the 2005 target | Likelihood | Impact | Management Action |
|--|------------|--------|---|
| Internal Barriers and Constraints | | | |
| Lack of capacity for managing large-scale change | M | M | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy-in assistance for projects and to develop capacity to manage change. Effect programme management will help identify & secure resources. Use PEG self-assessment models to help deliver change. |
| Lack of commitment from the Council | L | H | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of potential benefits of e-government process. Active support of E-Champions. Regular progress reports to EMT and E-Gov Task Group. Minimum training standards set for all staff in the use of technology. |
| Legacy systems may not be suitable for delivering services electronically (eg inability to integrate to overall systems architecture). | L | M | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade remaining legacy system (financial management) as soon as possible. Ensure remaining applications are maintained at supplier's latest release. |
| External Barriers and Constraints | | | |
| Citizens cannot access e-services, either due to lack of ICT or availability of broadband. | H | H | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate demand within the community to encourage Telcos to install broadband. Support the work of the Essex Online Partnership broadband project. Design e-government services around available band-width. Maintain existing access channels as long as there is a significant demand or removing them would create inequality. Ensure the same quality of service is delivered regardless of access means. Provide information about ICT availability at local libraries etc. |
| Wasted investment due to poor take-up of e-Government services. | M | H | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide citizens with the online services they want, based upon existing demand and on-going consultation. Adapt e-government plans in light of changing community priorities. Ensure developments are adequately publicised. |
| Data Protection / Privacy issues prevent services from being joined up. | L | M | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that personal information is properly protected – work with the Council's Data Protection Officer. |
| Inadequate progress on County-wide initiatives | M | M | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play an active role in the Essex e-Champions group. Contribute to the work of the partnership by leading project work. |

Appendix Four – E-Government Implementation Plan

| Projects | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 |
|---|----------------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| Website development:- | | | | |
| General information on all services | | | | |
| Environmental Services | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Oracle portal. • Licensing • Trade waste (ordering container services etc). • Street care & cleansing. | √ | √ √ √ | √ | |
| Planning | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online GIS system • Online access to planning applications & supporting documentation. • Online forms etc. • Links to National Planning Portal • Planning casework service. | √ √ √ √ | √ √ | √ √ | |
| Tourism | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's On. • Sight's to See. • Where to Stay. • Food & Drink. • What's Nearby facility. • Bridge End Garden. | √ √ √ √ √ √ | | | |
| Family History, including online access to Internment records for Saffron Walden cemetery. | √ | | | |
| Housing: | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications to join housing register. • Access to mutual exchange list • Facility for tenants to report repairs • Access to rent account information • Online forms etc. | √ | √ √ √ √ | | |
| Saffron Walden Museum | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online access to Museum Catalogues. • Online forms etc. • Online access to local history recorders' records. | | √ √ √ | √ √ | |
| Revenues (Council Tax & Business rates): | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online access to banding & RV information. • Online access to account details. • Online forms etc | √ | √ √ | | |
| Housing Benefits | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online application / change of circumstance forms. • Quick entitlement checker | | √ √ | | |
| Travel & transport | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online access in respect of decriminalisation. | | | | |

| Projects | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online renewal of concessionary fare passes. • Grant for Saffire redevelopment (car share scheme etc). | | √ | √ | |
| <p>Generic online applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of address service. • Online booking system for sports coaching courses, arts & cultural events, museum educational visits etc. • Booking of leisure centre facilities (e.g. squash courts) including both direct and contracted-out operations. | √ | √ | √ | |
| <p>Online discussion, feedback & complaint facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public response for forthcoming decisions of matters of public interest (e-consultation). • 'Quick Vote' facilities using the website for market research. • Maintained public web pages for every councillor. • E-enablement of councillor surgeries & home visits. • Public inspection of performance on CPA and BVPI 157 • Complaints system, with built-in workflow. | | √ | √ | |
| <p>Shared community information databases, linked to the deliver of services via community portals and / or contact centres, to enable single point of access to a wide and comprehensive range of community information.</p> | √ | √ | √ | |
| <p>Online services infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration & authentication. • Government Gateway. • Automated telephone payments. • Essex Extranet • NLPG ~ completion of LLPG. • NLIS ~ accreditation to level 3 • Broadband | √ | √ | √ | |
| <p>Intranet Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build of replacement site • Home Working Pilot • Home working ~ housing benefits & other services | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| <p>Replacement Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Information System (FIS) • iWorld Housing • Personnel System • Legal Services ~ Case Management System. • Housing Benefits ~ Verification Framework. | √ | √ | √ | |
| <p>First Point of Contact Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of a CRM system. • Installation of a corporate document imaging (DIP) system. • Corporate complaints system. | | √ | √ | √ |

| Projects | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of first point of contact (fpoc) facilities with other agencies' services ~ including E-Innovations project. • Creation of additional fpoc hubs. • Workflow pilot ~ housing benefits. • Creation of new access channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMS text messaging. • Digital TV. • Telemetry • Public access kiosks. • Smart cards. | | √ | √ | √ |
| <p>Other IT projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement Server Programme. • Upgrade to disaster recovery infrastructure. • Records Management System. • Upgrade to operating & messaging platforms. • Extension of wide area network to sheltered accommodation. • Minor projects. • Members' home computing ~ replacement hardware. • Technical Strategy implementation. • Revenues ~ replacement Unix server. • Other projects ~ to be identified. | √ √ √ √ √ √ | √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ | √ √ √ √ √ √ | √ √ √ √ √ √ |

Appendix Five - E-Government Building Blocks

The table adopts the Government 'traffic light' approach to provide easy to read progress. In summary:

Red = Projects that are being planned but not yet approved for funding.

Amber = Implementation stage – roll out of approved & funded projects.

Green = Fully implemented – projects completed & implemented.

| Key Building Block | Current Position | Commentary |
|---|------------------|---|
| Enablers Geographic Information System (GIS) | Green | Corporate GIS system installed, accessible by most departments. Main data capture projects completed, e.g. planning applications dating back to 1948, as well as some 90 other data sets. GIS data available via website. Scope to share suitable data with key partners (through the Essex Information Sharing Protocol). |
| Document Image Processing (DIP) and Workflow | Amber | DIP is already used extensively in revenues, benefits, planning and central administration. A corporate site licence has been purchased and the system is being rolled out to all departments. By 31 March 2005. Workflow is being piloted in the Revenues and Benefits Service during 2004/05 (special funding awarded by DWP) By 31 March 2005. |
| Knowledge Management (KM) | Amber | Searchable archive of committee papers dating back to 1992. Content management system in use on website & Intranet. Citizen database to be compiled as part of CRM project. By 31 March 2006. Electronic access to the museum collections available via website. By 30 June 2004. |
| Intranet / Extranet | Green | New Intranet built. Currently being tested. By 30 June 2004. |
| Telemetry | Red | No use identified. |
| Core Systems Financials & procurement | Amber | A new financial management (FIS) system is being installed. By July 2004. The new system will incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automation of the procurement process (E-Procurement), including internal ordering & integration with electronic catalogues (including IDEA Marketplace). By 31 March 2005. Business to Business Transactions – automation of as many transactions with suppliers and partners as possible e.g. contractor's housing repair invoices (11,000 transactions pa). By 31 December 2005. Greater use of BACS as a means of paying suppliers. By 31 March 2005. |
| Human Resources & Payroll | Amber | A new Personnel Management system is to be installed. Will include greater automation of personnel functions, such as recruitment & starters / leavers. By 31 March 2005. |
| Asset Management | Red | No plans identified. |
| Customer, land & property databases | Amber | LLPG developed in accordance with the NLPG project. NLPG accreditation received. Final LLPG data cleansing in progress. Links to other corporate land & property databases being developed. |
| Income collection | Green | A new cash receipting system installed in March 2002. |

| | | |
|--|-------|---|
| | | Credit and debit card payment facilities, for cash office, telephone and online payments, installed. |
| Office Systems | Green | Upgrade of Office 2000 to latest version (subject to adequate business case). By 31 March 2007. |
| Access Channels | | |
| Local Service Websites | Green | Website live. Funding provided to enable Saffire to be modernised. |
| Specialist portals & UK Online | Amber | Links to UK online created. Parish websites to be created. UDC will continue to participate in the creation of the Essex Portal. |
| Contact Centres | Red | To be considered as part of the Access to Services Best Value Review |
| One Stop Shops (Community Information Centres) | Green | CICs established in Dunmow & Thaxted. Access to Services Review considering possibility of extending the network. |
| Home visits / supported access | | Mobile working pilot in progress (housing). Will be extended to other departments as need arises. |
| Digital TV | Red | To be investigated after 31/12/2005. |
| Local Councillors | Amber | All councillors have email, Intranet and Internet access. Personalised websites are being created for councillors. |
| Intermediaries | Amber | E-Innovations funding has been secured to provide Citizen Advice Bureau offices with direct access to Council systems. |
| Trust & Connections | | |
| Government Gateway Encryption & digital signatures | Amber | UDC leading county-wide study of online citizen registration & authentication. To report by 30 June 2004. Likely to recommend use of Government Gateway. Installation by 31 March 2006. |
| Security & Building Trust | Green | Security infrastructure built – includes DMZ, firewalls, anti-virus systems, vulnerability testing etc. |
| Smart Cards | Red | No current plans for the use of Smart Cards. |
| Broadband | Amber | 90% coverage by 31 December 2007. Council to support Essex Online broadband roll-out strategy. |
| Legal Framework | Green | Work currently taking place to ensure that Council is fully compliant with all relevant legislation by due dates Including Freedom of Information Act). |

Appendix Six - E-Government Performance Targets 2004/05 to 2006/07

| Target | 2003/04 Actual 000's | 2004/05 Forecast 000's | 2005/06 Forecast 000's | 2006/07 Forecast 000's |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| BVPI 157 - % of services available electronically | 62% | 95% | 100% | 100% |
| Take Up – IEG Targets | | | | |
| Website | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page impressions (annual) | 600 | 1200 | 1700 | 2000 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique users i.e. separate individuals visiting website (annual) | 60 | 100 | 120 | 150 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of e-enabled payment transactions accepted via the website | 0.2 | 3 | 5 | 10 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of abandoned vehicle reports accepted via the website | 0.02 | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.30 |
| Telephone | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of e-enabled payment transactions accepted by telephone. | 4.3 | 7 | 10 | 15 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of abandoned vehicle reports accepted via telephone. | 0.25 | 0.14 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Face to Face | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of e-enabled payment transactions accepted via personal contact. | 0.5 | 1.5 | 3 | 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of abandoned vehicle reports accepted via personal contact. | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.001 | 0.001 |
| Targets based upon national priorities | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen satisfaction with e-services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic renewal. Local environment. Sports & leisure services. Transport, including car parking. | | Targets to be developed during 2004/05 | Targets to be developed during 2004/05 | Targets to be developed during 2004/05 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency savings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning. E-Procurement. % of undisputed invoices paid in 30 days (BVPI18). Reductions in unit costs of payment transactions. Sports & leisure services. Transport, including car parking. From new ways of working. Accessibility of services. Migration to e-access channels. From CRM & workflow technology. | | -ditto- | -ditto- | -ditto- |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take-Up targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online planning & regulatory services. Sports & leisure services | | -ditto- | -ditto- | -ditto- |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turnaround in processing of Council Tax & Housing Benefit claims (BVPI78) & renewals. | | -ditto- | -ditto- | -ditto- |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of enquiries about public services | | ditto- | -ditto- | -ditto- |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-----|-----|-----|
| resolved at first point of contact. | | | | |
| Broadband availability with district | | 40% | 60% | 80% |
| Percentage of telephone calls answered within 15 seconds | | 95% | 98% | 98% |

Detailed breakdown of progress against BVPI 157 – the percentage of services available electronically.

| Interaction Type | Actual | | | Projected | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|-----------|---------|
| | 2001/2 | 2002/3 | 2003/4 | 2004/5 | 2005/06 |
| Providing information: | | | | | |
| • Total types of interaction identified | 120 | 185 | 210 | 307 | 307 |
| • % e-enabled | 35.93% | 55.4% | 68% | 100% | 100% |
| Collecting revenue: | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 1 | 4 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| • % e-enabled | 12.5% | 50% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Providing benefits & grants: | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| • % e-enabled | 0% | 0% | 12% | 89% | 100% |
| Consultation: | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 6 | 12 | 10 | 11 | 21 |
| • % e-enabled | 20% | 40% | 48% | 52% | 100% |
| Regulation (such as issuing licences): | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 0 | 31 | 32 | 43 | 43 |
| • % e-enabled | 0% | 56.3% | 74% | 100% | 100% |
| Applications for services: | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 0 | 11 | 52 | 95 | 100 |
| • % e-enabled | 0% | 9% | 52% | 95% | 100% |
| Booking venues, resources & courses: | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 13 |
| • % e-enabled | 0% | 0% | 0% | 77% | 100% |
| Paying for goods & services: | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 0 | 6 | 15 | 24 | 24 |
| • % e-enabled | 0% | 22.22% | 62% | 100% | 100% |
| Providing access to community, professional or business networks: | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 1 | 6 | 7 | 14 | 15 |
| • % e-enabled | 5.5% | 33.3% | 47% | 93% | 100% |
| Procurement: | | | | | |
| • total types of interaction identified | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| • % e-enabled | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| TOTAL: | | | | | |
| • TYPES OF INTERACTION IDENTIFIED | 128 | 255 | 344 | 529 | 557 |
| • % E-ENABLED | 20.1% | 40% | 62% | 95% | 100% |

Appendix Seven – Change Management Building Blocks

The table adopts the Government 'traffic light' approach to provide easy to read progress. In summary:

Red = Projects that are being planned but not yet approved for funding.

Amber = Implementation stage – roll out of approved & funded projects.

Green = Fully implemented – projects completed & implemented.

| | Current Position | Proposed Action |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Leadership | Amber | Member and officer E-Champions have been appointed. They will continue to champion the cause of e-Government and promote its benefits. |
| Understanding customers | Amber | Included in citizen panel consultation for November 2004. A consultation strategy is to be prepared following the production of this outline E-Government Strategy. This work is due to be completed by 31 December 2004. In anticipation of this strategy, a number of improved consultation mechanisms are being put in place, including the establishment of online forums. |
| Marketing & take-up | Green | A marketing and take-up strategy is to be prepared following the production of this outline E-Government Strategy. A budget of £5,000 has been identified to support this work. The work is due to be completed by 31 December 2004. |
| Change management | Amber | An Access to Services Best Value review is taking place which will help ensure that services are re-engineered in order to fully exploit the potential of the new electronic services. |
| Programme / project management | Red | An Executive Programme Manager post has been created, with specific responsibility for E-Government & Access to Services. A number of staff are being seconded to the Programme Office to support the Programme Manager. All staff working within the Programme Office are qualified in PRINCE2 project methodology. |
| e-skills | Amber | The Council has previously encouraged staff to take Microsoft Office qualifications. It is proposed to review this decision during 2004/05, with the likelihood that an alternative, such as the European Computer Driving Licence, will instead be adopted. |
| e-learning | Amber | In conjunction with Personnel Services, suitable e-learning tools and programmes will be identified and implemented. |

Committee: Resources Committee
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 16
Title: Counter-Fraud Partnership
Author: John Mercer (01799) 510421

Summary

- 1 This report sets out options for the future management of the Council's Counter-Fraud function. It recommends the establishment of a formal counter-fraud partnership with East Hertfordshire District Council (East Herts) for an initial period to 31 March 2006.
- 2 The proposals in this report have been discussed with managers at East Herts. The agreement of East Herts Executive Board will of course be required before the partnership can be pursued further.

Background

- 3 Uttlesford's Counter-Fraud team was established in 1995. Its performance in identifying and preventing housing benefit fraud is one of the best in the country. In 2003/04 the following counter-fraud sanctions were issued where fraud was proven:
 - a. Prosecutions
 - b. Administrative Penalties.
 - c. Formal Cautions.

Additional housing benefit subsidy is awarded for each of the formal sanctions listed above.

- 4 The Council's counter-fraud arrangements were judged 'fair to good' by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) during a recent inspection. This is one of the highest scores awarded so far by the BFI. However, over the last two years it has been difficult to devote management time to running Uttlesford's Counter-Fraud team, as both the Head of IT & Anti-Fraud Services and the Principal IT & Anti-Fraud Services, have had to devote the majority of their time to IT-related work. As a consequence, discussions were entered into with East Herts regarding the possibility of establishing a counter-fraud partnership.

Option One - Partnership with East Herts District Council

- 5 It is considered that there would be a number of benefits to establishing a counter-fraud partnership with East Herts. These would include:-
 - Adoption of the best counter-fraud practices of each council, for example UDC's proactive investigation techniques & East Herts' success with obtaining referrals from other council departments.

- Reduction in management costs ~ by having one Counter-Fraud Manager responsible for both councils, management costs at both sites would be reduced.
 - Improved flexibility – the partnership would have the ability to direct staffing resources where they are most needed, for example, for targeted fraud drives.
 - Increasing capacity ~ although no direct cost savings would result from this proposal, it would free up management time to be spend on other Council priorities.
- 6 It is proposed that East Herts would be the lead authority for the partnership. The current Counter-Fraud Manager at East Herts would manage the partnership staff on a day-to-day basis, and would report to the Head of Revenues at East Herts. The current anti-fraud management (Adrian Webb & John Mercer) at Uttlesford would not be involved in the new partnership and their duties would be transferred to East Herts' Counter Fraud Manager.
- 7 Under Uttlesford's new management arrangements, responsibility for counter-fraud matters have been transferred to the Executive Manager – Corporate Governance. Although the Executive Manager would have no line management responsibility for the counter-fraud team, he would act as the client officer for Uttlesford. The role of the client officer would be to:
- Liase with the Counter-Fraud Manager, resolving any problems or issues that might arise.
 - Monitor the performance of the partnership, ensuring that agreed performance targets are being met, etc. It would be necessary to establish a formal Service Level Agreement between Uttlesford and East Herts.
 - Report counter-fraud related issues to Uttlesford's Members & Executive Management Team. It should be noted that it is not proposed to establish any form of 'joint-board' arrangement, as exists for the Internal Audit Partnership.
- 8 It is proposed that the partnership staffing levels should reflect the caseloads of the respective partners and trends in levels of fraud resulting from recent legislative changes. In particular, it is felt that there are opportunities for East Herts to increase subsidy & reduce the level of fraud within its district. Additional staffing would help achieve this and it is therefore proposed that its counter-fraud establishment be increased by one and a half posts. Conversely, it has been concluded that Uttlesford no longer needs two full-time investigators. It has been difficult to generate sufficient work in recent months to keep two full-time investigators occupied. This is mainly due to the deterrent effect of previous fraud work, and the current high levels of employment in the local economy. Despite this, the team was able to get close to its internal performance targets in 2003/04 (£110,000 compared to a target of £120,000). It is therefore felt that the establishment can be reduced by half a post. It is also felt that Page 80

provided there is an increase in the number of referrals received from the Council's benefits team. Such referrals should form the majority of case work of a counter-fraud team. However, at Uttlesford, they account for only 32% of the team's workload (compared to a national benchmark of 70%). If referrals could be increased to these levels, by adopting the working practices of East Herts, it should be possible to retain existing subsidy levels and still reduce the staffing establishment. A proposed staffing structure for the partnership is attached as appendix one, along with details of existing staffing structures at both councils.

- 9 It is proposed that the whole team is based at Bishop's Stortford. This would make management of the team easier, and ensure that staff working on the Uttlesford caseload are not isolated from their colleagues. Consultation is presently taking place with staff on this issue.
- 10 Wherever staff are based, interviews under caution (IUCs) will still need to be carried out at a convenient location for the claimant. The option of using Bishop's Stortford for some of Uttlesford's IUCs may actually increase choice of locations for claimants.
- 11 It is proposed that the partnership is set up for an initial trial period to 31 March 2006. For the trial period, Uttlesford staff would remain on the Uttlesford payroll on their existing terms and conditions. Thereafter, if the partnership is made permanent, staff would transfer on their terms and conditions applying at the time, in accordance with the provisions of TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment Regulations) 1981).
- 12 The loss of internal counter-fraud staff will create one problem. There will no longer be any in-house resource to carry out internal, non-benefit related investigations, such as minor thefts from offices etc. It is recommended that this responsibility is transferred to the Internal Audit partnership.

Computer systems

- 13 The two councils operate different anti-fraud computer systems. As a longer-term objective it would be advisable, for cost, support and integration reasons, to consolidate on one of the systems. A view on the relative merits of the two systems would need to be taken during the trial period before the decision was taken.
- 14 Uttlesford and East Herts use different benefits and Council Tax systems (SX3 and Academy respectively). This is unlikely to change for the foreseeable future and consequently staff would need to receive training in both systems. They will also need training in both the document imaging systems currently in use. It will also be necessary to establish computer links from the UDC system to East Herts and vice versa (dependent upon the working patterns of investigators).

Legal Issues

- 15 Partnership powers within the Local Government Act can be used to overcome any difficulties with East Herts carrying out work on behalf of

Uttlesford. These powers have been used by the London Borough of Greenwich to provide counter-fraud services to the London Borough of Bromley, who do not have their own team. In particular, Greenwich use the LG Act powers to:

- Investigate Bromley's cases.
- Obtain access to Bromley's computer systems, case files, employees etc.
- Interview Bromley's claimants.
- Authorise RIPA requests for surveillance at Bromley.
- Attend court on behalf of Bromley.

It is apparent from discussions with the two councils that the partnership, which has been operational since April 2002, works well.

- 16 It is noted that East Herts use external solicitors for prosecutions. Uttlesford in contrast, use its in-house legal team. Both legal services are extremely professional and effective, with excellent prosecution success rates. Uttlesford would not be prepared to return to using external solicitors during the trial period. However, it is not felt that this should pose a significant problem for the partnership.

Financial Issues

- 17 It is important that there is no overall increase in costs to either Uttlesford or East Herts as a result of establishing the partnership. Furthermore, Uttlesford presently makes a net 'surplus' from fraud investigation i.e. the sanction subsidy received outweighs the direct costs of the Anti-Fraud team. Uttlesford can not afford to be any worse off as a result of the partnership. Consequently, the following is proposed:

- (a) Uttlesford reduce its baseline costs by cutting its establishment by half a post.
- (b) East Herts increase its subsidy income by employing additional staff, which in turn will generate additional caseload & subsidy, in excess of the employment costs. This approach has been used very successful at Uttlesford over a number of years. .

- 18 Financial detail are attached as Appendix Two.
- 19 Sanctions subsidy would continue to be paid by the Department of Work & Pensions directly to the respective councils. However, for Uttlesford, there is an element of risk associated with this arrangement. Should the joint counter-fraud team fail to meet the agreed subsidy targets, Uttlesford could be financially disadvantaged. It is proposed therefore to cap this risk by agreeing a minimum level of subsidy Uttlesford could expect from the partnership. It is proposed that this is set at 75% of the agreed target. If this level was not achieved, East Herts would compensate Uttlesford accordingly. Hopefully the need for such a safeguard would be purely academic. Conversely, should the team exceed Uttlesford pre-agreed target, East Herts would receive 50% of the additional sum.

Option Two – Retain service in-house

- 20 As an alternative, it would be possible to continue to run a team in-house. As previously stated, responsibility for counter-fraud services has been transferred to the Executive Manager – Corporate Governance. Line management responsibility could rest within his section although the amount of time that the postholder could devote to counter-fraud would be considerably less than the dedicated Counter-Fraud Manager under Option One. For this reason, it would not be possible to reduce the number of investigators from the existing level, as more management-type work would have to be carried out by the investigators. As one of the investigator posts is currently vacant, an advertisement would need to be placed for a full-time replacement.
- 21 For the team to continue to meet its targets under this option, additional measures would need to be put into place to ensure a higher level of referrals from the benefits team. Without this higher level of referrals, the counter-fraud team would struggle to meet its financial targets.

Conclusions

- 22 Establishing a counter-fraud partnership with East Herts would help to ensure that the current high quality of counter-fraud work is maintained. It would also enable the two councils to share expertise, use staff resources more flexibly and reduce management costs.
- 23 Alternatively, retaining the function in-house would retain direct control over the performance of the team, helping to minimise risks of financial targets not being achieved. However, the considerable advantages of joint working, as outlined in paragraph 5 would be lost. Also, more senior officer time would need to be devoted to the function than under option one. For these reasons, it is felt that option one, the creation of a counter-fraud partnership, should be pursued.

RECOMMENDED that

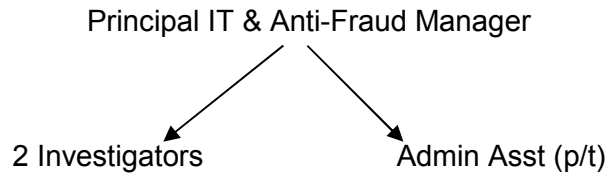
- 1 a counter-fraud partnership between East Herts and Uttlesford be pursued, for an initial trial period to 31 March 2006. The trial to start at the earliest possible date after appropriate committee approvals have been obtained.
- 2 East Herts provide the management for the partnership.
- 3 the staffing structure in Appendix One be adopted.
- 4 a further report be submitted to the Committee before the end of the trial period, recommending long-term management arrangements.

Background Papers: None

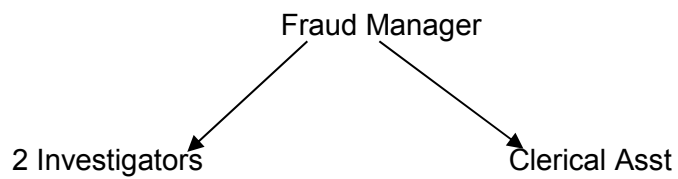
Appendix One

1. Current Staffing Structures

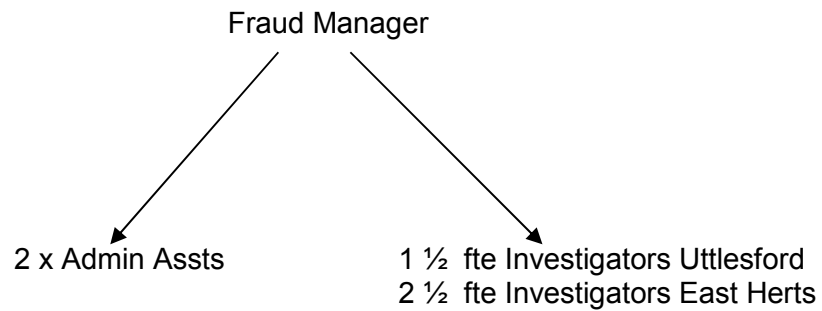
a. Uttlesford District Council



b. East Herts District Council



2. Proposed Staffing Structure



Appendix Two – Impact of Proposals on Costs

Option One – Partnership with East Herts District Council

| | 2004/05 Existing Budget £ | 2004/05 Revised Budget £ | 2005/06 Revised Budget £ |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Costs | 0 | 8,470 | 14,520 |
| Proportion (38%) of East Herts Counter-Fraud Manager ~ note 1 | | | |
| Investigators x £30,000 each (maximum) Note 2 | 55,020 | 36,680 | 40,020 |
| Admin Asst (P/T) | 13,810 | 13,810 | 13,810 |
| Direct Costs Note 3 | 10,500 | 10,500 | 10,500 |
| Total Direct Costs | 79,330 | 69,460 | 78,850 |
| Subsidy | 120,000 | 110,000 | 120,000 |
| Counter-Fraud Subsidy | | | |
| Net Surplus | -40,670 | -40,540 | 41,150 |

Notes

- The allocation of the Counter-Fraud Manager's costs is based upon the respective caseloads of the two councils ~ Further details are provided below.
- The costings take account of the current vacancy within the counter-fraud team, and the proposed reduction in the number of investigators by half a post.
- It is assumed, for the purposes of this report, that direct non-staffing expenditure will remain unchanged.

Caseload Statistics

| | No of Cases | % of Total |
|--|---------------|------------|
| East Herts District Council (HB & CTB) | 9,000 | 62 |
| Uttlesford District Council | | |
| • Housing Benefit | 2,400 | 38 |
| • Council Tax Benefit | 3,100 | |
| | 14,500 | 100 |

Therefore allocation of Counter-Fraud Manager's costs: 38% UDC & 62% EHDC

Option Two – Continuation of in-house service

| | 2004/05 Existing Budget £ | 2004/05 Revised Budget £ | 2005/06 Revised Budget £ |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Costs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Proportion (38%) of East Herts Counter-Fraud Manager | | | |
| Investigators Note a | 55,020 | 46,680 | 55,020 |
| Admin Asst (P/T) | 13,810 | 13,810 | 13,810 |
| Direct Costs | 10,500 | 10,500 | 10,500 |
| Total Direct Costs | 79,330 | 70,990 | 79,330 |
| Subsidy | 120,000 | 112,000 | 120,000 |
| Counter-Fraud Subsidy | | | |
| Net Surplus | -40,670 | -41,010 | -40,670 |

Note a. ~ for the purposes of this option, the cost of two full time posts has been included.

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 17
Title: Housing and Council Tax Benefit Recovery Overpayment Policy
Author: Mike Brean (01799) 510330

Summary

- 1 This report seeks approval for the Council to adopt a policy for the administration and recovery of Housing and Council Tax Benefit overpayments.

Background

- 2 At the Resources Committee on 18 September 2003, Members agreed to adopt the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Housing and Council Tax Benefit Performance Standards.
- 3 The DWP Performance Standards cover seven modules, each split into 'standard' and 'above standard' categories. The Performance Standards have been used by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) as the basis for the Benefits Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), which in turn has contributed towards the overall CPA for the Council.
- 4 The BFI assessed the council's Benefits service as being 99% compliant with the 'standard' part of the modules. The BFI recommended that Members approve the overpayment recovery policy in order for it to be compliant with the Performance Standards.

Overpayment Recovery Policy

- 5 The policy is detailed at appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve the overpayments recovery policy at appendix 1.

Background Papers: Department for Work and Pensions Performance standards.

Housing and Council Tax Benefit Overpayment Recovery Policy

The Council believes that it is important to recover overpayments of Housing and Council Tax Benefit because effective recovery: -

- Reduces the loss of public Funds;
- Is a source of revenue for the Local Authority and helps to offset the loss of subsidy on overpaid Benefits;
- Can act as a deterrent to fraud.

We are committed to the effective recovery of all outstanding overpayments that have been deemed recoverable. To do this the Council will use all methods of recovery available to it, while taking into account the debtor's ability to pay.

In order to ensure that outstanding overpayments are effectively managed, the Council will produce a quarterly review of all outstanding debt owed to the Council in addition to the annual reconciliation of the sundry debtors system. This report will list the value of all outstanding overpayments, their age, tenancy type, (overpayment classification) and current recovery status. This will allow the Council to decide whether each debt is being recovered effectively, and whether it can resume recovery of a suspended debt. It will also allow the Council to meet our targets to reduce old and fraudulent debt.

The Council will effectively administer overpayments by ensuring: -

- Changes of circumstances are actioned within the standard laid down in the Benefits Annual Service Plan;
- Overpayments are classified correctly and that sufficient management checks are carried out to maximise accuracy;
- That the underlying entitlement provision is applied;
- Un-issued or un-cashed cheques are stopped to reduce the overall overpayment;
- Decision letters comply fully with legislation, are clear and user friendly.

When an overpayment occurs due to either a reduction in entitlement or the cancellation of a claim, the debt may be recovered in a number of ways: -

Ongoing Entitlement

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have issued guidelines, which set out how much can be recovered from ongoing benefit.

The two rates of recovery are: -

- Standard maximum rate of recovery from continuing benefit £8.40

- Maximum rate of recovery where the claimant has been found guilty of an offence, admitted an offence after caution, or has agreed to repay an admin penalty £11.20

Where there is a disregard given in respect of income or earnings, up to half the disregarded amount may be added to the recovery rate, regardless of which rate is to be used.

Offsetting

Our policy is to completely offset under and overpayments for the same period of time provided that the payments are in respect of the same property.

If a claimant has been overpaid at one address, and is due benefit at another, we would not normally offset against an overpayment that occurred in respect of a different property, particularly if the benefit was paid to a landlord or agent.

However, if the overpayment has occurred because a council tenant has moved between council addresses, and benefit has continued in payment after the tenancy has ended, we will notify the rents section that any overpaid Housing Benefit on the old address should be transferred to the new account. (A pro-forma is attached for sending to rents.) The overpayment can then be completely offset on the first payment in respect of the new address.

Over and underpayments for different periods should not normally be completely offset, unless the payment being made is a final one, and the property has been vacated or entitlement has ended.

Invoicing

If an overpayment has occurred and there is neither ongoing benefit nor any underpayment, then an invoice will be generated. The system has been set up to automatically issue an invoice on any outstanding unallocated debt after 4 weeks.

We also have the option of raising an invoice immediately. We would normally do this when we are aware that Housing Benefit is unlikely to resume, i.e. a claimant withdraws their claim, moves out of a property, or a change in circumstances results in nil entitlement.

Where payments have been made to some one other than the claimant, such as an agent or a landlord. We have the option of invoicing either the claimant or the payee. We would normally invoice the claimant unless the landlord could be expected to realise that benefit had been overpaid, for example: -

- The overpayment has been caused by the tenancy coming to an end, or
- The overpayment was caused by a reduction of rental liability, including an increase of ineligible services.

Repayment of invoices

Our invoices state that full repayment is required within 14 days, but if the debtor cannot make full repayment instalments can be arranged.

Instalments are arranged by our Recovery Officers at the request of the debtor, all other debts known to the Council, in particular Liability Orders for Council Tax and both Court Orders and voluntary arrangements for Rent arrears, are taken into account when the arrangements are made.

If payment is not made, and instalments have not been agreed. We will issue a reminder notice after 21 days. A second reminder is sent after a further 21 days, and then a final notice.

A County Court judgement can be obtained if payment is still not forthcoming, we do not instigate Legal proceedings if the debt is less than £100.00.

Before we take a debt to County Court we can also consider using the following methods of Recovery:

Deductions from entitlement to Housing Benefit at another Local Authority

We have reciprocal agreements with Broxbourne Borough Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council that they will recover our overpayments from the entitlement of claimants that have moved from our area to theirs, and vice-versa.

Deductions from other Benefits

We are able to ask the Benefits Agency or Pensions Service to make deductions from the following Benefits: -

- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Retirement Pension
- Incapacity Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Widows Pension
- Widowed Mothers Allowance

These deductions can only be made if there is no entitlement to Housing Benefit (with any Local Authority).

Collection by Agent

We also have in place a system where Hammond Hillman Ltd, the Council's Bailiff for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates, will undertake to collect a debt on our behalf as our Agents.

Once a debt has been passed to them, they will charge us a commission of 17.5 % on any monies collected.

Small Debts

We would not normally issue an invoice for less than £20.00, and the system will not automatically produce an invoice for any amount below £20.00.

Writing Off Debts

If an overpayment has been caused by Local Authority error, and we have decided that the claimant would not have been aware of the overpayment at the time that it was made, then the overpayment should be written off on the Housing Benefit System and the write off book should be detailed accordingly.

If the overpayment is otherwise recoverable, we would only write off in the following circumstances: -

- The claimant has died, and there is either no Next of Kin or Estate;
- The debt is over 6 years old;
- Exceptionally, if the debt is in some other way impossible to pursue, i.e. we have failed to properly notify the claimant of the debt and so cannot proceed to County Court etc;
- With the approval of either the Executive Manager (Customer Services) or the Benefit Team Leader, the overpayment can then be written off on the Housing Benefit System and the write off amended accordingly;
- Debts of £5000 or more should be referred to Resources Committee via the Executive Manager (Customer Services) before being written off;
- All other debts, which cannot be recovered, should remain on the debtors system. This will enable automatic recovery should the claimant re-apply successfully for Housing Benefit in the future.

Reporting and Monitoring

The monitoring of overpayments is essential to maintaining an effective Benefit Service. The recovery of overpaid Housing and Council Tax Benefit directly affects the income received by the Council.

The Council will seek to maximise recovery by effective monitoring and reporting of: -

- The value, number, age and type of overpayments currently owed to the Council.
- The amount of debt in recovery/out of recovery.

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 18
Title: Credit Union
Author: Mike Brean (01799) 510330

Summary

- 1 This report sets out the options for establishing Credit Union (CU) facilities in the Uttlesford area.

Background

- 2 The Quality of Life Corporate Plan requires an evaluation to be carried out for developing a CU scheme. If it is decided to develop such a scheme, it has to be up and running by 31 March 2006.

Credit Union

- 3 A CU is a profit-sharing financial co-operative owned and controlled by its members. It exists to help people in the local area by enabling them to save and borrow in a fair and ethical way. Profits are shared annually amongst the members as a dividend. A CU can help members save for holidays, car insurance, a new washing machine or a special event like a wedding. Also, Christmas Clubs can be included in a CU scheme. There are no charges to pay money in or take it out.
- 4 A loan with a CU will cost only 1% per month on the outstanding balance (12.7% APR). For example, a loan of £100 over 52 weeks will cost £2.04 per week.
- 5 The Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulates a Credit Union as it does a bank or building society and savings are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, so members' money is safe and protected by law. A Credit Union also offers free life insurance on savings in most cases.
- 6 Credit Unions can only provide services to members who qualify as having a 'common bond'. This usually means that they have to live or work in a certain area.

Options for setting up a Credit Union

- 7 The three main options available for offering CU facilities in the Uttlesford district are: -
 - a Uttlesford District Council Scheme

Meetings and discussions have taken place with Ipswich CU Ltd, Harlowsave CU and Colchester CU Ltd about establishing a local authority run CU. It is clear that this option would require extensive people and financial resources. The main considerations are: -

- Scheme take-up is normally estimated at 1% of the population, which means that we can expect to attract a maximum of 700 members. However, 5000 members would be needed in order to make the scheme viable;
- It is estimated that it would take 2-4 years to get the scheme up and running;
- Start up costs alone are estimated at being a minimum of £100 000.

b Joining Essex Savers Net Credit Union

Meetings have taken place with Net Credit Union Development Agency (NetCUDA) about their proposals for establishing the Essex Savers Net CU for the whole of the county. Funding for the development agency is due to run out in September 2005. The FSA like the concept of a countywide CU. However, for the FSA to approve the establishment of the CU, NetCUDA have to obtain funding of approximately £200 000 from member organisations in the first year. Further funding of £250 000 will be required over years' two and three, with the intention that the CU will become self-financing from year four. NetCUDA estimate that to establish a CU community branch in Uttlesford, three years' funding of £59 000 would have to be raised by the Council in year one. No further funding would be required in the second and third year. The main considerations are: -

- NetCUDA is merely a lottery funded development agency established with the objective of setting up a countywide CU;
- NetCUDA has faced problems in gaining support from organisations willing to sign up to a countywide CU. There is a risk that the CU will not materialise due to the lack of commitment from interested organisations;
- Three years' grant funding of approximately £59 000 would be required in year one to set up a community branch of the CU in Uttlesford;
- If established, economies of scale would be realised in central administration of the CU.

c Partnership with Rainbow Saver Anglia CU Ltd

This CU has been running for five years and covers the Cambridge and Anglia regions. The CU currently works in partnership with other organisations including Waveney District Council, Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The main considerations are: -

- The common bond only covers part of the Uttlesford area (down to the A120). Also, members have to join Co-operative Group (formerly CRS and CWS) for a nominal fee of £1. However, it is proposed to widen the bond by 31 December 2004 in two ways; by extending the boundaries to cover the whole of Uttlesford and by enabling membership of a number of retail co-operative societies;
- If the scheme is initially rolled out to Council employees, the annual cost of administering the scheme is likely to be in the region of £3000. This would cover an administration fee per CU member, plus publicity and training. Annual costs would rise as CU membership increases, but it is expected that the administration fee will end after three years when the income from loan interest starts to be realised. The administration fees paid in the first three years would not be refunded.

Other considerations

- 8 Collection points would have to be established to enable CU members to make their payments and it is envisaged that existing Council cash offices would meet the estimated demand. However, these would only be required when the CU facilities are rolled out to non-Council employees.
- 9 The CU would have to be publicised and promoted. Some larger CUs have been successful in securing European funding for the appointment of a Development Worker to undertake this work.

RECOMMENDED that

- i) Members agree, in principle, to provide Credit Union facilities in the Uttlesford area;
- ii) Members agree to adopt option 7c above, subject to a further report once a decision is known on the change in the Rainbow Saver Anglia CU Ltd common bond and receipt of their formal proposal.

Background Papers: Credit Union field held by M Brean.

Committee: Resources Committee – 24 June 2004
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 19
Title: Refurbishment of Hill Street Toilets, Saffron Walden
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of the results of the tender exercise for the refurbishment of the Hill Street Toilets, Saffron Walden.

Background

- 2 It is in the Council's capital programme that the Hill Street Toilets, Saffron Walden undergo an internal upgrade and remodelling during 2004/05. The work is scheduled to take place over a 10 week period starting in the summer.
- 3 The capital budget for this work was estimated at £40,000. Following a tendering exercise the lowest suitable tender has emerged as much higher than expected at £71,000.

The Way Forward

- 4 It is felt that this much needed work should proceed and the Committee is requested to authorise officers to proceed. This will require a revision of the capital programme budgets in the Autumn.

RECOMMENDED that officers proceed with the required refurbishment of the Hill Street Toilets, Saffron Walden.

Background Papers:- Capital Works Programme 2004/05
Tender documentation

Committee: Resources

Date: 24 June 2004

Agenda Item No: 20

Title: Travel Plan

Author: Bronwen Stacey (01799) 510363, on behalf of the Travel Plan Working Group members:
Cllr W Bowker, Denise Greenwood, Jeremy Pine, Mary Rowe, Jan Sanders, Bronwen Stacey, Alex Stewart.

Summary

- 1 It is recommended that the following proposals be implemented as soon as is practicable:
 - Green Service Targets
 - 9 day fortnight working options
 - A town-centre One Stop Shop
 - A car-share register for Members
 - A Green Target Mileage Scheme for Members
 - Further incentive to encourage conversion to remote payments
 - A visitors overflow car park
 - A parking pass scheme for the Swan Meadow car park for long-stay visitors.
 - IT facilities be developed specifically to improve early opportunities for homeworking, hotdesking at other bases, on-line Planning enquiries, other enquiries on-line.
 - A review of current courier services for Members.

- 2 The following be considered in the medium term:
 - A Green Bank Scheme
 - A mini-bus collection along major routes of members attending major meetings
 - Targets for car-sharing be agreed by member-groups
 - Short-stay parking time limit notices be posted in the visitors parking area.
 - Implement a 'staff car-park waiting list' for newly-recruited employees.

Background

1 INTRODUCTION

The Travel Plan Working Group (TPWG) has reviewed the stated objectives of the Travel Plan published in 2003, and identified how to achieve this, with a view to making recommendations to Members.

1.1 Surveys

As indicated in the Travel Plan 2003, the starting point was to undertake surveys of travel patterns of the three relevant groups of people: staff, Members and members of the public. The TPWG developed and undertook three surveys:

- The Staff Survey of work-related and travel patterns
- The UDC Travel Plan Questionnaire for Members
- The Visitors Survey, (conducted in two parts, the first weeks in December 2003 and February 2004 respectively).

The Questionnaires, the results and the main findings of these Surveys are attached in the background papers. All recommendations stem from the findings and conclusions out of the Surveys, but these are influenced by two main points:

- The rural nature of the district, and the average travel-to-work distance (one way) for Council employees; from the survey, statistically, the average home-to-work distance travelled by employees is 12.5 miles, but of even greater significance is the finding that the two largest groups of respondents, totalling 48%, live between 10 and 30 miles away from their work-base.
- recommendations for action are based on incentives, rather than enforcement, as freedom of choice is wielded by the individuals, and it is preferable to gain commitment to ideals, and achieve a motivated workforce than to risk their alienation.

1.2 Issues

The following issues were identified and will be addressed:

To attempt to increase other modes of travel; to decrease/reduce personal travel and work-related travel; dissemination and accessibility of information on public transport; car parking.

All the above issues will be addressed in relation to Employees, Visitors and Members.

2 TO INCREASE MORE SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRAVEL

2.1 Employees

Walking and cycling (even occasionally) for staff who live within practical proximity is now being encouraged in the following ways:

- 2.1.1 A cycle stand, positioned in the grounds, has recently being provided by Essex County Council.

- 2.1.2 A hairdryer has now been provided in the staff shower, for staff who cycle to work.
- 2.1.3 Use of public transport, (buses specifically) may be increased (even if only on an occasional basis), but this will be dependent upon availability and frequency of bus services. Up-to-date information on current services is being publicised in both leaflets and on the intranet (see below 4.2.1 and 4.2.2).
- 2.1.4 All car miles saved through travelling by alternative modes will be recognised in the proposed Green Service Targets Scheme (see below 3.2.4 and 3.2.5).

2.2 Visitors

Although over 40% of visitors live locally in Saffron Walden, only 11% currently walk to the Council Offices. Members of the public who do not drive to the Council Offices tend to be older people who have time to walk, or perhaps who do not have a car. Those who drive are likely to be busy people who are time-impooverished. Suggestions to increase other modes of travel include:

- 2.2.1 Increase access to information on current public transport services, (see below 4.2.1 and 4.2.2).
- 2.2.2 Improve the frequency of local public bus services.
- 2.2.3 Offer alternative 'One stop shop'/Payment Service centres in the town centre, which are convenient for walking to, whilst shopping.
- 2.2.4.1 **Town Centre One-Stop-Shop:** As already occurs in Great Dunmow, a new facility could be established in Saffron Walden town centre, either Mondays - Fridays or possibly on Tuesdays and Saturday mornings only (although it is acknowledged that this would be increasing expectations, and would necessitate expenditure). Although the existing TIC in Saffron Walden does not currently have the necessary facilities, these could be made available so that payments, benefits advice, Council Tax and general council queries may be dealt with conveniently for local residents without a special journey to the Council Offices. This suggestion links to The UDC Quality of Life Corporate Plan: L4.4; I2.

2.3 Members

Survey responses indicate that those Members who live close enough to walk or cycle to meetings already do so when possible.

Bus routes and timetables are not conducive to increasing the incidence of travel to meetings by public transport;

- 2.3.1 Apply suggestion 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above.
- 2.3.2 An increase in other sustainable forms of travel may be achieved by initiating a "Green Target Mileage Scheme", which could be a variation from the proposed Service-related scheme to a Committee-related version (see below 3.2.4).

3 TO DECREASE/REDUCE CURRENT LEVELS OF MILEAGE

3.1 Employees: Personal Mileage

Reductions in the current levels of mileage undertaken by staff to get to work may be achieved by one or more of the following:

3.1.1 **9-day working fortnight:** Where possible, taking into account the nature of the work done by individuals, employees be offered the opportunity to work their contractual hours over 9 days instead of the traditional 10 days per fortnight, thereby reducing travel to work journeys to work by one journey every 10 working days.

3.1.2 **Car Share Register:** The Car-Share Register has been radically overhauled by an IT specialist, and been relaunched. It is accessible on Desktop, on all Citrix servers. The facility allows access to either view or enter a wide range of information, to facilitate as wide a usage as possible. Although currently only a small proportion of the workforce have registered, employees are now being encouraged to consider registering even if they may only wish or be willing to share transport very occasionally, or for emergencies. If most employees only car-share on occasions, the saved miles will be beneficial, and it may be that a greater frequency of car-sharing grows over a longer period of time, through growing familiarity and possibly the use of incentives/targets (see below 3.2.4 and 3.2.5).

3.1.3 **Homeworking:** Whilst acknowledging that:

- some types of work are more suited than others to homeworking, and
- some employees would require IT support at a level not yet available, an increase in the level of occurrences of homeworking would contribute hugely to the reduction of mileage undertaken by staff, and this may be monitored through the use of incentives/targets (see below 3.2.4)

3.1.4 **Green Bank Scheme:** Please see 3.2.5 below for further details of a proposal to act as an incentive to employees to reduce their personal mileage.

3.2 Employees: Work-related travel

Reductions in employees' work-related mileage may be achieved in one or a combination of the following ways:

3.2.1 **'Hotdesking':** the practice of employees using more conveniently-situated bases, other than in the Saffron Walden Office, could be increased in appropriate situations. This could help to reduce current levels of mileage, where the 'hotdesk' was situated nearer to home or the day's visits. 'Hotdesks' could be set up at CICs, or other Council-owned properties.

3.2.2 **Working practices may be modified** in order to reduce the overall mileage between home and the first, and/or last visit of the day, where this is not happening currently.

3.2.3 Subject to appropriate negotiations/agreements by officer groups through Single Status etc, **'green' vehicles**, which both are more economical, and more environmentally-friendly, with maximum CO₂ emissions of 145, could be inbuilt as part of formal Council Vehicle policy and practice.

3.2.4 **Green Service Target Scheme:** All Services be asked to reduce miles travelled, relating to personal, "Essential" and "Casual" mileage, to meet a specified "Service Target".

"Service Targets" could be set and calculated as follows.

3.2.4.1 Each Service be asked to calculate (in fairly rounded terms), a total of usual weekly (or monthly or annual) mileage (both home to work and work-related) for all members of staff. This information to be 'publicised', as the starting point, for measured improvements.

3.2.4.2 A Target of saving on total miles travelled by all employees in the Service, to be set by a Green Travel panel. The Target could be eg 5% saving during the first 12 months. How savings are made has purposefully been left open, (subject to the guidance below on what may be counted), for decision at Service level. Targets could be modified in relation to:

- The actual % saving to be made
- The length of the period of time given for the improvement.

The targets could be tailored to each Service to recognise or require greater savings to be made by Services where the nature of their work entails regular travel around the District.

3.2.4.3 Savings made through **homeworking** and **car sharing** as well as flexidays (whole days only) and other whole days off work (TOIL etc), may be counted. Annual leave days should NOT be counted in the savings, as all employees currently do not travel to work on a/l days. Car-sharing miles saved may be calculated as follows: where two people car-share, the total number of miles saved by one person be divided between the two, and each person claims to have 'saved' half the total miles saved. Where three people car-share, add the total number of miles saved by person B to those saved by person C, and each of the three car-sharers may claim a third of the total miles saved.

3.2.4.4 Each week, the total of miles saved per week should be recorded, and compared against the starting point total.

3.2.4.5 Services could be asked to produce a total "Miles Saved" Report quarterly, six-monthly or annually, along with Best Value Performance Indicators.

3.2.4.6 If tighter restrictions were considered desirable, at some stage, limits could be placed on the % of times per month each Essential Car User starts journeys from the Office, and/or ends work-related journeys at the office.

3.2.4.7 Further Guidance would be provided on implementation and application of this Scheme, prior to its commencement.

3.2.5 **Green Bank Scheme:** Alternatively, or additionally at a later stage (it is not proposed that this be implemented initially, but rather, as an incentive to individuals to improve their personal mileage savings, when other reductions have reached a plateau):

3.2.5.1 For each return home to work journey walked, cycled, or where public transport used:

Each employee claim 1 x credit.

3.2.5.2 For each return home to work car-share journey, (whether sharing with a colleague or getting a lift with someone outside the Council), 1 x credit to be claimed by each UDC employee involved.

3.2.5.3 Credits: each credit may be entered into a draw every 6 months, the prize being a (holiday) voucher to the value of (eg)£100 (provided by Council funds). There would be no limit to the number of credits each employee

could enter into the draw – the more credits a person enters, the more likelihood they have of winning.

3.2.5.4 Credits may require validation, the method of validation to be agreed.

3.3 Visitors

It is difficult to suggest ways in which members of the public may be encouraged to **reduce Council-related mileage**; on-line payments are already encouraged, and it is acknowledged that payments made in person are linked to demographics, and will in time decrease naturally. However, this process could potentially be speeded up by reviewing the existing arrangements and improving where possible:

- 3.3.1 Renewed/greater publicity for on-line payments of all council services,
- 3.3.2 Simplification of explanations for payments remotely;
- 3.3.3 Improve on-line access to Council Services such as Planning applications;
- 3.3.4 Consider providing an incentive (eg:one-off reduced charge) to encourage conversion to paying remotely.

3.4 Members

3.4.1 **Initiate a Member Car-Share Register:** In order for each Committee/group of Members to maximise the opportunities for car sharing, it could be useful to have a version of the new Car Share Register (currently an icon on the Citrix Desktops, for staff) adapted specifically for Members, and placed on Members laptops; they could then access details of other members who travel the same route as themselves, and could liaise directly by phone with the individual(s) to arrange travel to the meetings.

In addition, the Car-Share idea could be enhanced to improve the % car-sharing, by, for example,

- Appointing a Member on each Committee or Working Group as a Travel-co-ordinator, to 'chase' and organise the transport arrangements of Members.
 - agreeing a target for Car-sharing for each Committee or Group, to improve the % of car sharing. Possibly having an incentive for the most improved Group of Members or those reaching the target first, etc.
- 3.4.2 Where/if appropriate, for full committee meetings or those where sufficient Members attend scheduled meetings, a minibus could be organised to run from/return to major communities along travel corridors, picking up/dropping off Members en route. The drawbacks of this suggestion are acknowledged:
- as Members live all over the District, there is no 'main' travel corridor;
 - individuals' journey time will take longer if undertaken in this manner.
 - there would be a cost associated with a 'communal' mini bus.
- 3.4.3 It is recommended that current services, such as the twice-weekly courier service to Members' homes, be reviewed, for potential to save/reduce current mileage, as this is not compatible with a Green Travel Policy.
- 3.4.4 Greater use of IT and on-line facilities could be made, to increase alternatives to travel, and to decrease current levels of mileage undertaken by/on behalf of Members.
- 3.4.5 Members may wish to approve some travel expenses incentive, whereby mileage allowance is biased towards car-sharing, and away from single-

occupancy journeys.

4 DISSEMINATION AND ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 4.1 All information should be available to all three parties: employees, members of the public and Members.
- 4.2 As Uttlesford is part of Essex, the task is to reflect the transport situation in that context. Therefore it is not logical to spend substantial amounts of money in areas where existing provisions adequately reflect the situation, and efforts should be concentrated instead on accessibility of up-to date information on public transport services for Uttlesford users:

4.2.1 **Leaflet:** ECC have produced a comprehensive up-to-date transport information leaflet specifically on Uttlesford, entitled 'Uttlesford passport to Travel', which has already been distributed to all households in the Uttlesford District. In addition, ECC provided UDC with a number of these, which have already been made available for members of the public at the Reception and CIC/TICs. More of these leaflets have been requested from ECC, with a view to distributing these to all team leaders for dissemination to all employees via team meetings, and additional supplies to go to the relevant reception areas, as/when necessary. There are limitations on this publication as a result of the cost of printing re-runs at ECC. Therefore if any funds are available for transport services information, it may be that this is used to pay for the cost of a re-print of this ECC leaflet.

4.2.2 **Hyperlinks:** ECC have a dedicated team of staff who deal with transport issues, and access to transport information is accessible via various web links. Uttlesford District Council's Web Manager has been asked to create links between all relevant ECC sites and the UDC Web-site and UDC Intranet, in order to improve access by members of the public, employees of UDC and Members to up-to-date information.

5 CAR PARKING

- 5.1 There is a strain on the car-parking facilities during the day-time, from :
- Employees, who, as a result of working in a rural District, and also as a result of the high proportion of employees who live between 10 and 30 miles away from work, of necessity travel by car. In addition, many employees are Essential Car Users who need to travel around the District frequently in the course of their work.
 - Members of the public. Survey results indicate that 79% of visitors travelled to the Council Offices by car, 43% of visitors had come from Saffron Walden. 40% of visitors had a problem with parking.
 - Members: Although a number of Member meetings are held in evenings, those Members who visit the London Road Offices for meetings during the day have difficulty equal to the staff in finding a parking space, unless spaces have been reserved specifically for them, thereby reducing the space available overall.

The TPWG is aware that car-parking is a high-profile issue for visitors to the Council, and one which can create a negative impression of the quality of Council service in general. The TPWG therefore considers it important to include the issue of car-parking in the Travel Plan, and endeavour to meet satisfactorily the reasonable needs of all user-groups of the parking facilities.

5.2 Employees:

Car-parking for employees (if retained at current levels), is not regarded as a problem, except on days when other meetings put a strain on existing arrangements. However, car-park overcrowding for day-time users will be eased by the following proposals: homeworking, hotdesking at other bases, modifications to existing working practices, car-sharing, and the use of alternative modes of travel to work.

- 5.2.1 If a problem does arise in the medium term, for staff parking, a 'staff car-park waiting list' for all new employees could be considered. This would operate by informing all candidates at interview, that there would not be a parking place available immediately, but that their name would be put on a waiting list, for a space in the London Road Offices car park, and when their name reached the top they would be offered a parking pass. A further possibility would be to issue new employees with a free parking pass for Swan Meadow car park, in the meantime. It is acknowledged that this suggestion may make recruitment even more difficult.

5.3 Visitors:

Visitors should be divided into two categories:

- residents of Uttlesford, who visit the Council offices to use Council services. On average, 32% stay less than 5 minutes, 67% stay less than 20 minutes.
- visitors who have been invited to meetings in the course of council business. Only 14 % of visitors stayed longer than one hour. No distinction was made between residents using Planning Services, requiring a longer stay, and visitors who were on council business.

- 5.3.1 As the majority of visitors require only short-stay parking, we should endeavour to meet their requirements, and be more stringent in implementation of suitable arrangements for work-related visitors.

- 5.3.2 The existing arrangements, recently augmented by additional 'round-the circle' parking, are still inadequate to cater for peak demand.

- 5.3.3 **Visitors' overflow car-park proposal:** A proposal of the TRWG, which was progressed in February to SMT, was that of designating the small car park enclosure of 8 spaces next to the existing Visitors' car park, as an overflow car park for visitors after 10.30am each day. Prior to that the spaces would be reserved only for use first thing in the morning by employees who are going to be going out on Council business before 10.30am. Employees who normally park in that area but who do not fit the new criteria will be asked to park elsewhere in the car park. The small car park will therefore be vacated by 10.30am, leaving the car park free for visitors from that time onwards. A sign will be displayed, explaining "This is an overflow car park for visitors from 10.30am". This will provide 8 extra spaces for short-stay visitors.

5.3.4 **Short stay time limits?** It is difficult at this time, without seeing the benefit of all the above proposals, to determine whether there will still be a need to consider indicating a short-stay time limit (eg 15 minutes) for visitor parking. There will always be a small risk of abuse of our car-parking facilities by visitors who leave their vehicle for long periods whilst going down into the town, who would be unlikely to be deterred by anything other than parking enforcement. As enforcement is not recommended, any limitations would be purely 'advisory requests'.

If future monitoring of the situation reveals continuing difficulty for the short-stay visitors, it may be necessary to consider posting signs and/or time limits. It is recognised that this would not be an ideal solution, if it penalised users of the Planning Services and enquiries, however, advanced technology and on-line planning services facilities should reduce the need for personal visits of this nature.

5.3.5 **Visitors on Council Business:** Although there is already guidance and requirements in place (reminders are issued by the room-booking facility) for officers to notify their clients/customers/colleagues etc that they should park at one of the alternative town car parks, and maps may be printed off to send to all visitors, this requirement is not consistently adhered to by staff. New guidance should be prepared, and all employees made fully aware of the requirements for visitor-parking: for meetings involving more than one vehicle, all visitors must be told that there is no on-site parking, and asked to use a town car park. Visitors for meetings should not park in the 'designated' short-stay spaces.

5.3.5.1 **Swan Meadow Parking Passes:**

In order to further encourage visitors for 'bulk' meetings to park off-site, whilst not causing annoyance to local residents by parking on local streets, the TPWG proposes that free passes for Swan Meadow parking be allocated in advance for specific events or meetings. Details of this proposal are contained in **Annex 1**, and recent trials of the scheme have been successful. The TPWG recommend this in the light of the findings of the Surveys, and in an effort to maintain a satisfactory level of short-stay parking for Council-service users.

5.3.5.2 A subsidiary advantage of proposals to make more use of the Swan Meadow car park (5.2.1; 5.3.5.1; 5.4.1)) is that greater usage will increase awareness of its proximity to the town centre, increase its usage for other reasons and thus decrease those members of the public who cruise the streets seeking suitable parking, and decrease the likelihood of vandalism occurring because it is perceived as a remote and little-used facility.

5.4 **Members**

It is appreciated that Members, like employees, have restricted time and therefore would not welcome the constraints posed by alternative parking at Swan Meadow; in addition, some Members may not be able to walk the long distance uphill from Swan Meadow.

5.4.1 **Development Control Committee:** A suggestion that Members might consider the feasibility of utilising the Swan Meadow car park and collection by coach from there, on days when the DC Committee meets, was rejected by Members at their meeting on 7 June 2004.

It is RECOMMENDED that

Members approve the following for action:

- 1 Green Service Targets
- 2 9 day fortnight working options
- 3 A town-centre One Stop Shop
- 4 A car-share register for Members
- 5 A Green Target Mileage Scheme for Members
- 6 Further incentive to encourage conversion to remote payments
- 7 A visitors overflow car park
- 8 A parking pass scheme for the Swan Meadow car park for long-stay visitors.
- 9 IT facilities be developed specifically to improve early opportunities for homeworking, hotdesking at other bases, on-line Planning enquiries, other enquiries on-line.
- 10 A review of current courier services for Members.

In the medium term:

- 11 A Green Bank Scheme
- 12 A mini-bus collection along major routes of members attending major meetings
- 13 Targets for car-sharing be agreed by member-groups
- 14 Short-stay parking time limit notices be posted in the visitors parking area.
- 15 Implement a 'staff car-park waiting list' for newly-recruited employees.

Background Papers:

All the following background papers may be accessed at:

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/background+papers

The UDC Travel Plan for Staff, Members and Visitors (2)

The Staff Survey

The Results of the Staff Survey of Work Related Travel Patterns

Staff Survey Summary

The Members' Survey

The Results of the Members' Survey

Members' Survey Summary

The Visitors' Survey

The Results of the Visitors' Survey

Visitors' Survey Summary

Parking Arrangements for MeetingsProblem:

- 1 There is currently a lack of consistency of approach by employees when arranging meetings, regarding the parking guidelines/instructions for their visitors.
- 2 Although there are already clear procedures in place which are linked to the Room bookings facility, it is clear that people are not using this in many cases; in some instances the car parking instructions have been ignored, and in others, Reception has been asked to make the room booking and the parking instructions have not been considered.
- 3 Currently, visitors are not discouraged from parking 'on site' here, and therefore usually park for up to several hours in the Visitors car park.
- 4 The TPWG believes that a consistent and corporate approach to this would help to relieve the pressures in the visitors' car park.

The TPWG Recommends:

That the following decision be made and subsequent procedure/process be approved to be put in place:

- 1 That agreement is reached that all employees will follow the required procedure.
- 2 That a procedure is publicised on behalf of the TPWG.
- 3 That all meetings involving outside visitors are dealt with in the same way.
- 4 That for all meetings involving more than one vehicle, the following process be applied.
- 5 That all visitors are informed that there is no parking on site. **Exceptions** may only be made:
 - where the purpose of the meeting necessitates heavy equipment which could not easily be carried from Swan Meadow car park
 - for disabled visitors, who may park either in one of the designated visitor disabled spaces, or through the barrier, as best fits the situation;
 - where, although not necessarily disabled, the meeting participant is elderly/infirm.

In all the above exceptional cases, the UDC employee who arranges the meeting must be responsible for gaining access through the barrier to parking for the individual (or in the case of infirm visitors, confirming a space may be taken in the visitors car park; if more appropriate).

- 6 That all employees are requested to make their own room bookings and meeting arrangements, rather than relying on reception staff to do these tasks for them. In exceptional circumstances (eg when the room booking system goes down), obviously, the aid of reception may be requested for bookings, but responsibility for the visitor parking must be assumed by the employee concerned.)
- 7 Visitors are therefore directed to alternative parking, but to facilitate this, a parking pass for parking for the specific day in question at Swan Meadow will be sent to the individual(s) concerned; this to be arranged by the

- organiser of the meeting. Vouchers should be placed in the windscreen for the day in question.
- 8 The parking pass(es) may either be printed off via the Room-Booking Request Form, or alternatively, may be requested through Tricia Halford, (but in this case 2 weeks' notice is required to allow issue.)
 - 9 The number of passes issued in this way would need to be monitored, in order to ensure that this facility is not abused. It is anticipated that IT be asked to develop a method of tracking the issue of passes via the room-booking facility.
 - 10 Arrangements will obviously be made to ensure that Traffic Wardens will accept the passes in lieu of a ticket.
 - 11 For "single" visits *ie: visits of short duration of 3 hours or less, where only one vehicle is concerned*, (please refer to 4 above), it will usually be possible for the visitor to park through the barrier, in which case, responsibility for organising this must be taken by the employee organising the meeting. All visitors should nevertheless be advised in advance that there is no guarantee of car parking and if there is no room in the staff car park, they should use the alternative car parking at Swan Meadow, for which a pass may be provided.

21 Extract from Minutes of Health and Housing Committee – 27 May 2004

HH11 AFFORDABLE HOUSING – ARDLEY CRESCENT HATFIELD HEATH

The Committee was asked to consider disposing of some Council owned land at Ardley Crescent, currently the site of four dilapidated bungalows, to a registered social landlord in order to provide eight shared ownership housing units. Members were informed that the Council had power under the Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (England), to dispose of a site at nil or reduced market price if it would assist with the provision of new affordable housing units. The properties would only be available to local people for perpetuity and the Council would have the nomination rights to the units.

RECOMMENDED that the Resources Committee be asked to agree to transfer the housing site (known as 1-4 Ardley Crescent Hatfield Heath), at nil cost, to a registered social landlord to enable the provision of new affordable housing in return for full initial nomination rights.

HH17 MARGARET STREET THAXTED PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Committee was asked to approve the sale of the redundant public lavatories at Margaret Street, Thaxted.

RESOLVED that the Resources Committee be asked to approve the disposal for the sum of £6,000.

Committee: Resources
Date: 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 22
Title: Cleaning Contract
Author: Carole C W Hughes (01799) 510407

Summary

- 1 Members will be aware that the Steward David Noble is in hospital following a serious road traffic accident. One of the tasks the Steward was involved in before his accident was the letting of the Building and Window Cleaning contracts.
- 2 Tenders were due to be submitted by 1 June 2004. Unfortunately due to the absence of the Steward sets of questions submitted by potential contractors took time to research and answer. As a result of the time taken to respond to all parties it was decided to move the closing dates for submission of tenders to 21 June 2004.
- 3 It is therefore recommended to Members that in the light of the action taken to deal with the absence of the Steward that delegated authority is given to the Chair of Resources, Executive Managers, HR, Finance and Asset Strategy and Corporate Governance to manage the selection of the contractors and report back to Resources Committee in September.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 Members delegate authority to the Chair of Resources and the three Executive Managers mentioned above to conclude the tender process and appoint contractors and
- 2 That the Executive Manager, HR reports back to September Resources Committee.

Background Papers: Tender documentation.

Committee: ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES
Date: 8 June and 24 June 2004
Agenda Item No: 23
Title: ENERGY EFFICIENCY POST
Author: ERNIE SPENCER (01799) 510530
JOHN FARNELL (01799) 510538

Summary

1 This report provides the additional information requested by Members to support the creation of an Energy Efficiency post. The Environment Committee, at its meeting on 8th June, resolved as the recommendation below.

Background

- 2 At the Environment and Transport Committee meeting held on 4 November it was agreed in principal to the preparation of a further report to include a cost / benefit analysis and consider further options for funding from within the Council or from other sources.
- 3 At the Council meeting held on 20 April it was resolved that the authority should aim to cut energy consumption in its operational buildings by 10% by 2005 through practical housekeeping measures.

Cost Benefit Analysis

4

| Task | Benefits | Savings / Income |
|---|---|--|
| Devise and implement meter reading strategy, based on cost and risk | 1. Identify excessive use as early as possible to minimise cost and wastage 2. Correct data used to ratify estimated invoices from supplies to smooth out expenditure. | Prevention of potential significant overspends due to water leaks etc. |
| Interrogate invoice data on Energy Management system and query inconsistencies and errors. Compare costs with budgets | Identify over / under spends early, improve accuracy of budgets. Avoid paying incorrect invoices. Page 110 | Not possible to quantify at present time. |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Survey all properties included in BV180 report for benchmarking | Improved accuracy of BV180 performance indicator to enable year to year improvement to be determined. | Not possible to quantify at present time |
| Oversee energy audit of the 30 or so buildings associated with greatest expenditure. (Possible government funded Action Energy surveys, part in house audits). | Opportunities to reduce use and expenditure will be identified and costed. (Quality of life plan). Council commitment to cut energy consumption by 10% by 2005. | £19,000 pa at current budgeted prices. |
| Co-ordinate or commission a full questionnaire or take phone survey to assess HECA progress to date. | Fulfil statutory requirements of HECA in a more robust way than before. | Savings of around £2,500 if carried out internally. |
| Carry out an assessment / audit of the potential Renewable Energy resource in the district. | Identify opportunities locally to help produce 14% of power from Renewable by 2010 (Quality of Life Plan). | Not possible to quantify at present time |
| Project work; Grant funded insulation projects; ie Interglow loft insulation project. Partnership projects ie EAGA Solar Scheme. | Maximise take up of grants available to Local Authorities. Enable UDC to benefit from finance which is available for project work. | For example; over £400,000 received in grant aid for improvement of Council stock in 2004 |
| Investigate closer links with local Primary Care Trust and Uttlesford Benefits network. | Greater targeting of fuel poverty for grants. Reduced excess winter deaths. | Not possible to quantify in financial terms. |
| Carry out SAP energy ratings on new dwellings from plans (Building Regulation applications). | Enhance Building Surveying Service. | Potential fee income of £2,000 |
| Deputise for Technical Assistant in plan checking role, setting out checks, road sign checking. | Currently surveyors have to carry out this function. | Potential fee income £1,500 |
| Checking for compliance with certain aspects of Part L (conservation of fuel & power) of the Building Regulations. | Reducing workload on Building Surveyors. All work undertaken would be fee earning. | Potential fee income of £1,500 |

It can be clearly seen that the employment of an Energy Efficiency Officer would be self financing and bring about significant benefits to the Council and residents of Uttlesford. The post would also enable the Council to fulfil its growing statutory duty in this area of activity

RECOMMENDED that the Committee be requested to approve the creation of the Energy Efficiency Officer post, and that the resolution is forwarded to the Resources Committee for endorsement that the post be added to the establishment.

Background Papers: Council Minutes 16 December 2003 and 20 April 2004
Job Description & Person Specification.

Agenda Item No: 24
Date 24.6.2004
Title: Staffing Update
Author: Carole Hughes (01799) 510407

Summary

- 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 |
|----------|---------------------------------|---------------|---|
| 8/3/04 | Non-Contentious Solicitor/FILEX | Legal | To advertise and recruit on a permanent basis |
| 8/3/04 | Pest Control Officer | Environmental | ditto |
| 22/3/04 | Recycling Loader | DSO | ditto |
| 22/3/04 | Clerical Assistant | Revenues | ditto |
| | | | ditto |
| 22/3/04 | Recovery & Overpayments Officer | Revenues | Temp maternity leave cover |
| 29/3/04 | Cleaner Museum | C & L | To advertise and recruit on a permanent basis |
| 29/03/04 | Casual Museum Assistants | C & L | Casual as and when Contracts |
| 29/03/04 | Emergency Planning Officer | C & L | To advertise and recruit on a permanent basis |
| 12/4/04 | Planning Officer | Planning | ditto |
| 12/4/04 | Clerical Assistant R & S | Planning | ditto |
| 12/4/04 | Legal Assistant | Legal | ditto |

