

## BEST VALUE REVIEW OF ICT & E-GOVERNMENT SCOPE

### 1. Strategic links

ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), which includes voice and data services as well as Internet technology, is one of the Council's core strategic resources. In the past ICT was primarily used to improve business efficiencies, and to automate repetitive procedures. Increasingly it is seen as an agent of change as evidenced by the Government's ambitious e-government programme.

The Council's response to the national e-government agenda is detailed in its Implementing E-Government (IEG) statement.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of the ICT service is to promote, deliver and support the effective use of ICT across the Council to meet the business needs of the organisation.

E-government is a vital element of the Government's plans to modernise the public sector and includes plans to use technology to radically change and improve the image, efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector.

The ICT service will support the business in the achievement of its e-government aims.

### 3. Services to be included/excluded

The whole of ICT Services:

- Technical Services;

Network Services, EUC, Systems Support and the Telephony/WAN team together form the Technical Services Function. Systems Support is responsible for operating systems support, systems security, performance tuning, database management etc, for all of the systems managed by Operations. Network Services, EUC and the Telephony/WAN team are responsible for the support, maintenance, and strategic management of the Council's voice and data network and for standalone computing facilities. These teams are also responsible for e-mail, anti-virus measures and for the Council's Internet Gateway. The teams offer technical consultancy services and also project-manage major installations.

- Development Services (including the Web Team);

Development Services maintain and develop the Council's major

applications such as Rent Accounting and FMIS. They also develop and support PC based applications, and supply advice and assistance in the acquisition and implementation of third party packages.

The Web team leads the development of the Council's Internet and Intranet sites and promotes the use of Internet technology.

- Contracts & Security;

This small team is responsible for the contractual management of ICT across the Council. They manage all of the Council's major IT contracts and can advise on the whole process from tender development through to final contract negotiation. They are also responsible for the development and implementation of the Council's information security policies, including Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

- Strategy & Programmes;

This function is responsible for the development, review and implementation of the Council's ICT strategies and programmes including e-government. It is also responsible for promoting effective project management and for the maintenance and publication of the Council's ICT policies and procedures.

- Operations and Production Control;

Operations manage the Council's main computers - AS/400, RS/600 and SUN. They also provide a major printing service – secure, volume print runs from the corporate applications (Council Tax bills, Housing Benefit letters, payslips, cheques etc). The service includes customised form design.

- Business Services (including ICT training).

The Business Services section includes ICT and Customer Access' administrative support unit, the Council's ICT Support Centre and the Corporate ICT Training team. Business Services is also responsible for ICT Services' budgetary management, including internal recharges, and for the collation and presentation of performance management information.

The review will also include departmental ICT support sections (E&D, Housing, A&L and Education) and EDISS (the Education Department Information Systems Support team).

The review will exclude:

- A review of customer access arrangements (call-centres, front of house etc.) except where relevant to the e-government agenda, as this was done as part of the Customer Care review;
- Departmental teams responsible for specialist support to business applications e.g. FMIS. These teams will be looked at within the scope of

service specific Best Value reviews;

- So called 'Departmental ICT liaison officers' where this role accounts for less than 25% of a person's responsibilities;
- Consideration of the effectiveness of key operational and support systems e.g. Payroll, FMIS, Carefirst etc. Such reviews will be included in service specific reviews.

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#### **4. Key focus**

The key focus of the review is to consider the following:

##### ***Is ICT supporting the Council's strategic agenda?***

ICT is both a support service and a key strategic resource. The Government's e-government agenda has set clear targets for local Authorities to ensure that 100% of relevant services are available electronically by 2005. This review will look at the Council's management of ICT as a strategic resource and specifically its response to the e-government agenda.

The review will consider the following four areas:

- 4.1** Is the Council investing effectively in ICT?
- 4.2** Does the Council's ICT support service represent good value?
- 4.3** Will our e-government strategy ensure the organisation meets the e-government objectives of: building services around citizen choice; making government and its services more accessible; social inclusion and better access; and using information better?
- 4.4** Do we have the ICT capacity and capability to meet the Council's strategic agenda including Revitalising Neighbourhoods and e-government?

It is recommended that the first two areas should be reviewed within the Year three Best Value timescales (i.e. completion by end August), but that work on the third and fourth areas should be frozen pending a review of the Council's ICT strategy (last reviewed in January 2001) and the development of a detailed e-government route map.

The targeted date for completing the e-government route map should be August 2002. The ICT strategy can then be reviewed, with a target completion date of October 2002.

*See Appendix A1 for detail of the areas of review behind each question.  
See Appendix A2 for detail of how we plan to tackle 4.1 and 4.2.*

## **5. Stakeholders.**

The Strategic Resources Group (SRG).

The Technical Strategy Group (TSG).

Principal Customers (software application owners).

All Council office based staff (consulted via departmental user groups.)  
Members (as users.)

The Member e-government lead – Cllr Veejay Patel.

Directors Board. (The DTLR describe DB as a key stakeholder in the e-government agenda).

The E-Government Group.

Schools (for the EDISS review).

The public (for e-government).

The Council's strategic partners for e-government.

The role of our hardware, software and service providers as potential stakeholders will be reviewed by the core review team.

## **6. Independent element**

Independent support to the review will be obtained from the local University and the Society of IT Managers (SOCITM). The University adviser is someone who understands the business potential of ICT, but is not from a technical background. We're also in contact with IdeA.

## **7. Equalities**

There are two main equalities issues to address:

1. Will our E-Government plans help disadvantaged groups obtain greater access to Council services?
2. Whether the Council is making the most use of ICT to meet the needs of disadvantaged staff within the Council.

## **8. Lead officer/ review group**

The feedback from our consultation was that the ICT service and the theme of E-Government should be considered as a composite review. The main issues raised were around how effective the Council is at managing ICT as a strategic resource and the Council's capacity to meet the ICT needs of the organisation, including Revitalising Neighbourhoods and its E-Government

ambitions. Therefore it's important that the review group consists of people with a sound understanding of the strategic potential of ICT not just technical staff.

The following review group is proposed:

Jill Craig (Head of ICT &CA)	-	Chair
Paul Masters	-	Lead Officer (ICT)
Ismail Vania	-	Lead Officer (E-Govt)
Ann Oliver	-	Review facilitator
Ros Melrose	-	Union Representative
Bob Drake, Social Services	-	Principal Customer
Geoff Whittle, Housing	-	Departmental IT representative
Jen Clarke, Education	-	Service Manager
Tim Bastock, Finance	-	Service Manager
Adrian Wills, Libraries	-	Service Manager
Guy Wisby, Commercial Services	-	Service Manager

## 9. Costs of the review

As far as practicable, the review will be carried out using existing resources, primarily from ICT Services, but also drawing on support from departmental ICT support teams. However, we anticipate that some additional consultancy expertise will be required to research some of the challenging questions raised, to develop the e-government route map and to manage the public and partner e-government consultation exercises. Estimated costs are in the order of £35,000 - £45,000 plus any costs associated with the appointment of an independent advisor. The costs of the e-government strategy review can be met from our IEG funding allocation.

## 10. Consultation

Consultation on this scoping document has taken place with:

- Strategic Resources Group;
- The Technical Strategy Group (TSG);
- ICT Services' Principal Customers;
- Departmental User Groups (via TSG representatives);
- Staff in the ICT & Customer Services division of the Town Clerk's Department;
- Directors;
- The Scrutiny Director;
- Unions.

Revisions to the scoping document have been made as a result of these consultations. Copies of the original scope are available if required.

**BEST VALUE REVIEW OF ICT & E-GOVERNMENT****- *Is ICT supporting the Council's strategic agenda?*****4.1 *Is the Council investing effectively in ICT?***

- Is the Council's investment in ICT meeting the Council's strategic needs?
  - Is the Council's ICT strategy aligned to the business needs of the organisation? Is ICT positively contributing to the achievement of our strategic agenda?
  - Is everyone committed to the Council's ICT strategy?
  - Can we evidence its implementation?
  - Are we considering the corporate, strategic application of current technology e.g. document imaging?
  - Are we sufficiently rigorous in the application of corporate standards and procedures or overly prescriptive?
- How effective are we at implementing ICT change?
  - Do we resource planned changes properly?
  - Our users don't feel properly involved in planning new systems, why not? What needs to change?
  - Are the project roles and responsibilities properly understood?
  - Is the training of staff given appropriate priority?
- Investment priorities
  - Are our investment priorities determined by corporate need or the availability of departmental funding?
  - Equality of deployment – are some sections ICT 'richer' than others, if so why? What are the implications of any disparities?
- Skills
  - Comparison with other Local Authorities suggest that our investment in ICT training is significantly less than the national average. Why is this and what are the implications?
  - How effective is our investment in ICT training?
    - Does our investment reflect business priorities?
    - Is the training received the training needed to do the job?
    - Do we apply the most appropriate training methods? What about e-learning?

- Awareness
  - We know from user consultation that most staff rely on New Connections and the IT Awareness events to keep users informed of technical developments? Is this sufficient? How could it be improved?

#### **4.2 Does the ICT support service represent good value?**

##### **Cost and quality issues**

- Comparison with other Local Authorities suggests our unit costs are higher than average? Why is this? How can they be reduced?
- Some existing departments are supported entirely by ICT Services; others have their own local, first line technical support arrangements. Which model is most effective?
- Is the Council's ICT support service actually meeting the needs of its customers?

#### **4.3 Will our e-government strategy ensure the organisation meets the e-government objectives of: building services around citizen choice; making government and its services more accessible; social inclusion and better access; using information better?**

- Is e-government properly understood throughout the Council - officers and Members?
- Are senior officers and Service Heads fully committed and engaged in the programme or do they see it as a job for the "techies"?
- What evidence is there of planning for e-government in corporate, departmental and divisional business plans?
- Are our IEG commitments to achieve e-government by 2005 realistic?
- Does our e-government strategy align with other Councils strategies (community planning, Revitalising Neighbourhoods, capital budgeting, regeneration etc.) and those of other public sector agencies in the City?
- Do our e-government plans reflect the needs of the stakeholders i.e. the Council, its strategic partners and the communities it serves?
- Community access – are our users aware of the new access options, do they want to use them and are they in a position to take advantage of them?
- Do our e-government plans recognise the barriers to access for disadvantaged sections of our user community and how they are being addressed?

**4.4 Do we have the ICT capacity and capability to meet the Council's strategic agenda including Revitalising Neighbourhoods and e-government?**

**Resources**

- E-government is not just about technology, but also cultural change, organisational transformation and change management. How are we addressing those areas?
- How responsive are we to changing demands and needs?
- What are the skills and training requirements for our staff?
- What are the funding implications of our e-government plans?
- Are we being suitably resourceful in trying to identify alternative sources of funding?
- Do we have an asset replacement strategy?

**Infrastructure**

- Will our infrastructure support the achievement of our strategic objectives?
  - Voice and data network;
  - Corporate hardware and software.
- Do the Support Centre's opening hours reflect current user requirements?

**Business continuity**

- Increased reliance on computerised solutions will place a greater significance on our business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements - are we prepared?