

## **West Wiltshire District Council**

### **Cabinet**

**28 July 2004**

### **ICT Update**

#### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on a number of ICT matters and to seek the necessary approvals.

#### **Members' ICT Facilities**

The Members' IT Steering Group has agreed an updated policy for the provision of Members' computing. This sets out how the computing equipment and services will be provided and is in line with the main outcomes from the consultation exercise previously carried out. The main areas of change include; the clarification of contact points for support, the implementation of a structured training plan and the introduction of a one-off allowance of £75 to support Members' printing. The printing allowance would be funded from the Council's ICT capital budget.

The draft updated policy is available on the Council's website in the secure Members' area and will be circulated to all Members following approval by cabinet.

The Steering Group meets regularly to progress the ongoing development of Members' ICT and future initiatives will include the investigation of the use of broadband and the introduction of regular laptop health checks.

#### **Open Day**

A Members' ICT Open Day was held on Thursday 17 June. The main purpose of the event was to give Members the opportunity to find out about the Council's computing and to obtain a better understanding of e-government. The programme for the event included short presentations on e-government, Customers First, the draft ICT Strategy and partnership working. These were followed by practical demonstrations of some of the main front line computing systems in use. Eleven Members attended.

#### **E-Government Priority Outcomes**

Earlier this year, the Government published a list of "priority outcomes" which it expects councils to deliver by December 2005. The outcomes are various facilities which will improve local government services by use of electronic means. Examples are; the ability to make payments, to make planning and building control applications and to book leisure

facilities on-line. The achievements of these outcomes will be used to determine the value of the councils next Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) grant.

A number of the outcomes have either been achieved or are in the process of being implemented at West Wiltshire. Others however are not yet programmed. Clearly the Council will want to achieve as many of the outcomes as possible to deliver the benefits for its citizens and to maximise the receipt of future government grant.

A Working Group of the relevant Service Managers has been established and is co-ordinating work to achieve the outcomes. Councillor Roy While, the Resources Portfolio Holder, attended the first meeting and suggests that one or two more Members might wish to participate in the work of the group.

The schedule of priority outcomes, together with the Council's current position and proposed actions, can be supplied on request.

### **Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Grant**

The Council submitted its third IEG Statement in November 2003. This was judged to be satisfactory and the Council has now received its IEG Grant of £350,000.

Some £200,000 of this is already committed to projects approved in the last budgetary round. The purpose of the grant is to enable the implementation of e-government capital projects. It is proposed that the balance of the grant is used to address the required e-government priority outcomes (see above). This will help to maximise the receipt of further IEG Grant.

### **ICT Strategy**

A draft ICT Strategy was presented at the Members' ICT Seminar on 17 June. Copies are available from the ICT Unit and any comments from Members would be welcome. The Strategy will be considered by Cabinet on 1 September 2004.

### **Wiltshire and Swindon Customer Services Programme**

Following the report to Cabinet on 5 May 2004, Councillor Roy While and Tim Darsley attended the first Steering Group meeting of the partnership on 1 June. Terms of Reference for the partnership and the future direction of joint working were discussed.

The current focus of activity is the joint procurement of a Customer Relationship Management System to serve all of the Wiltshire and Swindon authorities. The District Council has been involved in specifying and planning the procurement of this and will be able to take advantage of the joint arrangements, probably in 2005. In the meantime, we will monitor the implementation of the early projects and learn from this experience.

## **Members' IT - Joint Approach**

A meeting between Wiltshire and Swindon councils is being arranged to discuss joint arrangements for the provision and support of Members' IT. The Resources Portfolio Holder has arranged for Councillors Rosier and Mudge to attend and contribute the West Wiltshire Members' perspective.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

- a) The updated policy on Members' ICT is noted and approved.
- b) A one-off allowance of £75 per member to support printing requirements is approved.
- c) Up to two additional Members be invited to attend the meetings of the E-Government Working Group.
- d) The receipt of the IEG grant for 2004/05 be noted and the uncommitted balance be allocated in principle to the achievement of the Government's Priority Outcome requirements, with details to be considered through the forthcoming service and financial planning round.

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