

A G E N D A

Strategic Monitoring Committee

Date: **Monday 16 March 2009**

Time: **9.30 am**

Place: **The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35
Hafod Road, Hereford**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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Herefordshire Council

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee

To: Councillor PJ Edwards (Chairman)
Councillor WLS Bowen (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors PA Andrews, WU Attfield, KG Grumbley, TM James, RI Matthews,
PM Morgan, AT Oliver, SJ Robertson and JK Swinburne

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.

GUIDANCE ON DECLARING PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

The Council's Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare against an Agenda item(s) the nature of an interest and whether the interest is personal or prejudicial. Councillors have to decide first whether or not they have a personal interest in the matter under discussion. They will then have to decide whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.

A personal interest is an interest that affects the Councillor more than most other people in the area. People in the area include those who live, work or have property in the area of the Council. Councillors will also have a personal interest if their partner, relative or a close friend, or an organisation that they or the member works for, is affected more than other people in the area. If they do have a personal interest, they must declare it but can stay and take part and vote in the meeting.

Whether an interest is prejudicial is a matter of judgement for each Councillor. What Councillors have to do is ask themselves whether a member of the public – if he or she knew all the facts – would think that the Councillor's interest was so important that their decision would be affected by it. If a Councillor has a prejudicial interest then they must declare what that interest is and leave the meeting room.

3. MINUTES

To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2009.

Pages

1 - 10

4. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY	
To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
5. REVIEW OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES – CABINET’S RESPONSE	11 - 28
To consider Cabinet’s response to the recommendations made to it in the Scrutiny Review of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Services.	
6. ELECTORAL REGISTRATION SERVICES	29 - 38
To receive an update on the Parish and Council by-elections undertaken by Electoral Registration Services over the last 12 months.	
7. PRESENTATION BY THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION	
To receive a presentation by the electoral commission.	
8. WORK PROGRAMME	39 - 42
To consider the Committee’s work programme.	

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing, Childrens' Services, Community Services, Environment, and Health. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises corporate matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

Formal meetings of the Committees are held in public and information on your rights to attend meetings and access to information are set out overleaf

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Public Involvement at Scrutiny Committee Meetings

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There are also two other ways in which you can directly contribute at Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committee meetings.

1. Identifying Areas for Scrutiny

At the meeting the Chairman will ask the members of the public present if they have any issues which they would like the Scrutiny Committee to investigate, however, there will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Councillors will research the issue and consider whether it should form part of the Committee's work programme when compared with other competing priorities.

Please note that the Committees can only scrutinise items which fall within their specific remit (see below). If a matter is raised which falls within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee then it will be noted and passed on to the relevant Chairman for their consideration.

2. Questions from Members of the Public for Consideration at Scrutiny Committee Meetings and Participation at Meetings

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(Please note that the Scrutiny Committees are not able to discuss questions relating to personal or confidential issues.)

Remits of Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committees

Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing

*Statutory functions for adult social services including:
Learning Disabilities
Strategic Housing
Supporting People
Public Health*

Children's Services

Provision of services relating to the well-being of children including education, health and social care.

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

*Libraries
Cultural Services including heritage and tourism
Leisure Services
Parks and Countryside
Community Safety
Economic Development
Youth Services*

Health

*Planning, provision and operation of health services affecting the area
Health Improvement
Services provided by the NHS*

Environment

*Environmental Issues
Highways and Transportation*

Strategic Monitoring Committee

*Corporate Strategy and Finance
Resources
Corporate and Customer Services
Human Resources*

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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Strategic Monitoring Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 16 February 2009 at 1.30 pm

Present: Councillor PJ Edwards (Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, WU Attfield, TM James, RI Matthews, PM Morgan, AT Oliver and SJ Robertson

In attendance: Councillors JP French (Cabinet Member - Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources), JG Jarvis (Cabinet Member - Environment and Strategic Housing), RJ Phillips (Leader of the Council and PD Price (Cabinet Member – ICT, Education and Achievement).

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors WLS Bowen, KG Grumbley and JK Swinburne.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor RJ Phillips declared a personal interest in agenda item 7: Draft Financial Strategy 2209-12 as the Council's representative on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

57. MINUTES

The accuracy of the sentence at the first bullet point on page three of the Minutes was questioned. Instead of the reference to land "currently being £10,000 per acre" it was proposed the sentence should instead read: "The cost of acquiring a farm would in any case be likely to be prohibitive, land in some cases fetching up to £10,000 per acre, although the cost did vary and was dependent on the quality and location of the land."

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the amendment of the sentence on page 3 bullet point one line 4/5 being amended to read: "The cost of acquiring a farm would in any case be likely to be prohibitive, land in some cases fetching up to £10,000 per acre, although the cost did vary and was dependent on the quality and location of the land."

58. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

There were no suggestions from members of the public.

59. INTEGRATED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered performance for the period April to December 2008 against the Corporate Plan 2008-11, the Local Area Agreement and the Herefordshire Community Strategy, and other key indicators where data is available against which a Red/Amber/Green rating or direction of travel judgement can be made, taking account of the separate but complementary financial performance report, and progress against the action plans produced following the Crookall review.

The Corporate Policy and Research Manager (CPRM) presented the report. He informed the Committee that a review of the Council's performance reporting and management arrangements was underway. He also reported that the results of the statutory place survey, known locally as the Herefordshire Quality of Life Survey were imminent and would make it possible to establish a number of baselines and targets.

Compared with the previous quarter's report there were many more green indicators (on target/met target) and many fewer red targets (target unlikely to be achieved). 19 of 32 Local Area Agreement indicators were on track to achieve target compared to 11 at the end of September. The Use of Resources score had increased from a 2 under the old assessment criteria to a score of 3 under the new and more stringent criteria. With a view to the final Comprehensive Performance Assessment assessment scores to be announced in March he was confident these would show an improvement in the direction of travel. It was noteworthy that improved performance had been achieved in a number of areas at a time when managers had been taking measures that had successfully brought back into line earlier projected over-spending against 2008/09 revenue budgets.

In relation to the health and well-being objective, a number of indicators were marked red because, although a meeting had now taken place with the Primary Care Trust to ensure that action would be taken, evidence about the results of this had yet to be provided.

In relation to children and young people, he highlighted the additional indicators where performance had improved to green, including as a result of there now being no schools in special measures. There were, however, still a number of red indicators, some of which were likely to be a growing problem in the current economic climate, such as the number of 16-18 yr olds not in education, employment or training.

He cautioned that, in the case of a number of social care indicators, the assessment of performance had had to be based on estimates or the previous quarter's out-turn. This was because the new Frameworki system would not produce the necessary information until the end of March.

Emerging challenges included rising unemployment and other impacts of the recession. An action plan was being developed with partners to address them.

The CPRM also drew attention to the report on progress against the action plan prepared in response to the Crookall review of the Council's ICT financial and contractual governance arrangements. He reported that satisfactory progress continued to be made and had been commented upon favourably by the Audit Commission. It was, therefore, now considered appropriate for the remaining actions to be taken forward as part of service planning and associated performance monitoring.

There was detailed discussion of the steps being taken to deliver the Council's priority of affordable housing.

The Cabinet Member (Environment and Strategic Housing) (ESH) said that a significant amount of work was being done, albeit in a rapidly changing environment which disrupted plans. One example of a successful scheme the Council had introduced was the Mortgage Rescue Scheme, seen by the Government as a model of good practice.

The Head of Strategic Housing provided an overview. He commented that under the Local Area Agreement targets had been set to provide 200 new affordable homes in 2008/09, 300 more new homes in 2009/10 and a further 350 in 2010/2011. The Council was on track to meet the target for 2008/09 with a current projection of 231 homes. It was acknowledged, however, that this level of provision did not address the extent of the need.

He added that developers had been mothballing sites in reaction to the recession. There weren't a large number of built, unsold properties but the Council was in contact with developers and Registered Social Landlords to seek to bring property into use for affordable housing where possible.

He reported that indicative programmes of development had been submitted under the Regional Funding Allocation housing programme for 907 properties in the City, 496 properties in the Market Towns and 329 for rural villages between 2009/10 and 2019.

Two reports were to be submitted to Cabinet on 19 March on the development of the former Elmhurst residential home and options for developing Council owned land.

In conclusion the position was that an ambitious programme was being submitted to the Regional Housing Partnership; officers were negotiating to bring properties into use where possible; two initiatives were shortly to be considered by Cabinet; and the service was on track to meet targets set for the current year.

The following principal points were made in discussion:

- The position on regional funding was discussed noting that the Council had submitted bids totalling approximately £8 million but had received £1.3 million. The Head of Strategic Housing explained that representations were being made at regional level about the criteria being used by the Homes and Communities Agency for awarding grant which currently were to the disadvantage of developments in rural areas.
- In response to a request to publicise the actions being taken and keep Members informed the Cabinet Member (ESH) observed that he was wary of raising public expectation unduly. He would, however, consider summarising the position for Members in Members' News.
- That it was important that investment was efficient. Reference was made to the Rose Gardens Extra Care Housing Scheme, financed by public money, which it was suggested could have been delivered by the Private Sector at much lower cost. The Head of Strategic Housing responded that the contribution of public funding was the key to creating affordable housing options.

It was noted that a request for a report on that Scheme was included in the Committee's work programme and that report would be forthcoming in the late spring/Summer once the final accounts for the Scheme had been agreed.

- That whilst the Council's proposals to increase the supply of affordable housing were welcome, they would make only a limited contribution to solving the problem given its scale.
- Asked about the position on Homelessness the Head of Strategic Housing said that there was evidence that an increasing number of households were finding it difficult to pay mortgages and rents. The Council did have preventative measures in place including rent deposit schemes and loans to make repairs.

He added that in terms of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation (b&b) there were currently no families with children in such accommodation. However, the number of cases being dealt with by each prevention team worker had increased from 20 per week to 35. He therefore foresaw pressure on temporary accommodation which was used in preference to b&b. He noted that the LAA target matched the national target of a 50% reduction in the numbers of households in temporary accommodation by 2010 against a baseline set in 2004. This meant the Council, over that period, had to achieve a reduction from 164 families in such accommodation to 82. Performance in the current year against the milestone target of 109 families had been 108 families.

- Concerns were expressed about the condition of some units of temporary accommodation and the cramped living conditions, even though rental was £200 per week. The Head of Strategic Housing said that the Service would soon be ending the use of hostel accommodation where there were shared facilities. Herefordshire Housing Ltd was ending use of hostels in the 2008/09 financial year and it was expected that other Housing Associations would follow suit.

He noted that it was to the Council's financial advantage to use temporary accommodation at £200 per week rather than b&b accommodation which could cost £1,000 per week. This was because in leasing temporary accommodation the Council was entitled to claim higher levels of housing benefit. It was, however, necessary to ensure that the quality of temporary accommodation was appropriate. It was noted that Housing Associations could be subject to enforcement action if necessary.

In conclusion the Chairman proposed that consideration be given to the need for further investigation of the position on affordable housing following the Executive's planned consideration of two reports in March.

In the remaining discussion the following principal points were made (numbering cross refers to pages in the agenda papers and indicators):

- (p24-percentage of children who were subject to S47 enquiries which led to initial child protection conferences that were held within 15 working days). Performance against this target was queried, the outturn being worse than target and performance the previous year, the commentary noting that there had been some systemic problems in the timeliness of notifying the Planning and Review Team of Section 47 investigations. The commentary went on to state that the Frameworki software system once fully achieved should address these issues. However, it remained an area requiring specific attention to ensure the system achieved that aim. The CPRM informed the Committee that an independent review of safeguarding issues had been undertaken and an action plan drawn up to address any aspects where the arrangements needed to be strengthened.

- Members noted with concern the significant number of indicators marked red (target unlikely to be achieved/ no evidence of activity taking place) under the objective of best possible life for every child as set out on page 8 of the report including absenteeism in secondary schools and a number of targets for looked-after children.
- (p22 indicator 221 a - percentage of young people aged 13-19 gaining a recorded outcome compared to the percentage of young people in the Local Authority area). It was observed that performance was substantially below target and worse than in the previous year.
- (p26) Members also noted with concern that performance against a number of adult social care indicators including the timeliness of social care packages had been assessed as moving from amber to red.
- Attention was drawn to the apparent disparity between the statement on p54 of the agenda papers that “street cleanliness and waste collection continues to perform well against targets” and the statement in the commentary of the Director of Environment and Culture on p55 to the effect that, in respect of one element of the assessment of street cleanliness, namely the deposit of detritus, performance had worsened. The Cabinet Member (ESH) reported that an enforcement team was now in place. In response to an observation about the hours worked by dog wardens he undertook to examine whether these needed to be varied to facilitate effective enforcement.

RESOLVED:

- That (a) the need for a formal report to the Committee on affordable housing be reconsidered following consideration of reports on the matter by Cabinet in March 2009;**
- (b) the Environment Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider a report on the cleanliness of streets and other public places; and**
- (c) Cabinet be advised of the Committee’s other observations on performance.**

60. BUDGET MONITORING 2008/09

The Committee considered the Council’s performance against revenue and capital budgets as at 31 December 2008 and an indication of the estimated outturn for the 2008/09 financial year.

The Director of Resources presented the report. He informed the Committee that there was now a projected underspend of £238k on the revenue budget compared to the projected £1.53m overspend in September 2008. This improvement in the financial position was attributable to ongoing work to deliver recovery plans, the application of non-recurring funding and underspends on treasury management activities.

He noted that the position on borrowing had improved because of slippage on the capital programme and a change to the capital accounting requirements. The return on investments had also been slightly better than expected despite lower interest rates.

He commented that the position on adult social care might deteriorate, noted that it was not proposed to draw on the winter maintenance reserve and drew attention to the work within the strategic housing service in reducing expenditure on bed and breakfast accommodation.

In terms of the capital programme he reported that expenditure to date represented 49% of the total expenditure forecast. There were a number of reasons for this, as set out in paragraph 5 of the capital programme budget monitoring report.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- The additional expenditure on Customer Relations Management licenses was raised. The Director of Resources explained that a review had shown that insufficient provision had been made for the necessary number of users in the original business case. He undertook to provide a reply seeking assurance that people who left the Council's employment were being removed from the list of licensees.
- The implications of the reduction in income from planning applications were raised. It was noted that development control staff were currently being redeployed to other tasks that would need to have been carried out in any event, such as work on the Local Development Framework and energy efficiency assessments. A Member suggested that staff should be deployed to ensure that all S106 monies owed to the Council were realised. It was confirmed that vacancies were not being filled and the position would be monitored. It was suggested that information on redeployments might usefully be included in Members' news.
- Clarification was sought on the additional expenses on office accommodation that had been incurred. The Director of Resources replied that it was difficult to be precise in calculating costs associated with office moves. Delays in vacating some buildings had led to some dual running costs. In response to a further question about progress on the accommodation strategy he said that the intention was to inform the Committee of the position as soon as commercial confidentiality permitted. He also confirmed that the revenue consequences of the borrowing associated with the project were factored into the cost of the scheme.
- It was asked whether the Council would receive all the grant funding associated with the Ross flood alleviation scheme that it had expected. The Director of Resources replied that he was seeking assurances that the necessary information was being provided to the Environment Agency to ensure that the Grant was secured.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be advised of the Committee's observations.

61. DRAFT FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2009-12

(Councillor RJ Phillips declared a personal interest)

The Committee considered the draft financial strategy for 2009-12.

The Director of Resources presented the report. He commented on the challenging financial climate that had necessitated revisiting the financial assumptions that underpinned the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The MTFS had envisaged that there would be £3 million available for allocation in 2009/10. However, an expected reduction in directorate based income of £500k; a reduction in income as a result of reduced investment interest rates of £1.5 million; and a reduction in the proposed Council tax income, levying a band D increase of 3.9% rather than 4.7 %, mindful of the Government's expectation that Council Tax increases would be substantially below 5%, accounted for almost all of this sum. This in turn largely accounted for the £3.6 million of extra budget pressures.

He highlighted the key elements of the Financial Resource Model, containing a series of assumptions and assessments that shaped the financial plan as set out on pages 105/106 of the report and the proposed based budget adjustments for 2009/10.

He drew attention to the intention to use £1m of general fund reserve to assist in meeting pressures. He emphasised that it was planned to back-fill the revenue budget from 2010/11 and top up the general fund reserve by £1m so that it returned to its 2008/09 level. He also indicated that the element of the Local Public Service Agreement reward grant that the Council had led on amounted to £712k and would also be used to assist the budget. This would be back-filled in 2010/11.

He referred to Directorate expenditure requirements and savings proposals as set out at Appendix B to the report. He added that the MTFS as presented did not entail enforced budget cuts. However, if a Council Tax increase of below 3.9% were to be proposed this would require difficult decisions to be made.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- An assurance was sought that the savings expected from the Herefordshire Connects project were as reported to Cabinet on 31 July 2008 and would not be affected by the recession. The Cabinet Member (ICT, Education and Achievement) said that the expectation was that those savings would be achieved and this should not be affected by the economic situation.
- A Member suggested that provision of an improved Broadband Service at Rotherwas was a priority in responding to the economic downturn. The Leader of the Council acknowledged this point and said discussions were taking place with British Telecom.
- In response to a question the Director of Resources confirmed that the revised MTFS proposed a 3.9% Council Tax increase for 2009/10 and for the further two years of the MTFS up to 2011/12. He emphasised, however, that the Council would have to be mindful of Government pronouncements on Council Tax levels and monitor the situation.
- The Leader of the Council stated his wish to reduce Council Tax levels but noted also the 3% efficiency savings the Council was required to make.
- A Member reiterated that he considered monies from S106 agreements were outstanding.
- Concerns were expressed over the cost to the Council of free bus travel for the over 60s.
- That regard needed to be had to the extent to which roads had been damaged by the recent winter conditions.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's observations be submitted to Cabinet.

62. DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10

The Committee considered the draft capital programme for 2009/10.

The Director of Resources presented the report. He explained that bids from Directorates were set out at appendix 2 to the report and commented on the assessment process that had been followed, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report to Cabinet on 19 February enclosed with the agenda papers. The bids recommended for funding were summarised in section 7 of the report. He cautioned that, as described in paragraph 8 of the report, the Council had submitted an expression of interest to bring forward the Building Schools for the Future capital scheme. Local authorities were expected to provide funding to implement these capital schemes at approximately 3% of the cost, amounting to £800k per annum for three years. Both the capital and revenue implications would therefore need to be assessed if the bid were successful and this would lead to additional pressure.

In the course of discussion the following principal points were made:

- A Member questioned whether an appropriate proportion of the capital funding was being allocated to schemes in Hereford City. The Leader of the Council drew attention to a number of schemes in the City in the programme, adding that account also needed to be taken of the Council's investment in the Edgar Street Grid and the Rotherwas Access Road.
- Clarification was sought and received on the funding arrangements for the Hereford Academy.
- Asked if the Council was complying with the Disability Discrimination Act the Director of Resources said that this was the case either through appropriate works or arrangements made for service delivery.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be advised of the Committee's comments.

63. 2009/10 DRAFT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the draft treasury management strategy and prudential indicators for 2009/10.

The Director of Resources presented the report. He reported that the Council's approach to treasury management as set out in the Treasury Management Policy Statement was consistent with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy guidance. He commented that the Council's estimated borrowing requirement for 2009/10 was £116m. The operational boundary for external debt, the expected maximum level of external debt for 2009/10 was 180m with an absolute authorised limit of £200m. The Council's borrowing was therefore well within these limits.

He added that the current intention was to adopt a more flexible approach to borrowing. He added that in many ways conditions for borrowing to support the Capital Programme were good because rates were at a very low level compared with recent years.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- In response to questions about borrowing the Director of Resources reiterated that the Council could only borrow where it had a reason to do so and the Audit Commission would examine the Council's reasons for borrowing. Slippage in the Capital Programme would not lead to difficulties in this regard. However, work was ongoing to seek to continue to improve financial modelling and reduce slippage. He added that the borrowing position was reviewed daily and refinancing of loans regularly took place, consolidating borrowing for several projects. He also clarified the position on two Lender Option Borrower option loans as referred to on page 192 of the agenda papers.
- It was observed that the effect of borrowing on the Band D Council Tax rate would involve a rise from £23.68 in 2009/10 to £97.36 in 2011/12. The Director of Resources commented that this was a correct estimate based on the current position but the intention would be to refinance borrowing to reduce the impact.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be advised of the Committee's comments.

64. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme.

The Chairman noted that the Electoral Commission was due to attend the Committee's meeting in March with the report on the scrutiny function moving to April following consideration of the external scrutiny healthcheck at an informal meeting. He proposed that consideration be given to the need for further investigation of the position on affordable housing following the Executive's planned consideration of two reports in March.

RESOLVED: That the work programme serve as a basis for further development.

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm

CHAIRMAN

REVIEW OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES – CABINET’S RESPONSE

Report By: Interim Head of ICT Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider Cabinet's response to the recommendations made to it in the Scrutiny Review of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Services.

Background

2. In November 2008 this Committee approved the findings of the Scrutiny Review of ICT Services
3. The Committee agreed that the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive had approved its response; and that a further report on progress in response to the Review then be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.
4. Cabinet considered its response to the findings on 19 February 2009. The report to Cabinet setting out the response to the Review is appended.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT (a) Cabinet’s response to the findings of the review of the support for ICT Services be noted, subject to any comments which the Committee wishes to make;

and

- (b) a further report on progress in response to the Review be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Zack Pandor, Interim Head of ICT Services, on 01432 347601

STRATEGIC MONITORING REVIEW OF ICT SERVICES, NOVEMBER 2008

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ICT, EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

CABINET

19 FEBRUARY 2009

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the response to the recommendations arising from the Strategic Monitoring Committee (SMC) review of ICT Services, conducted by the ICT Services Review Group in November 2008.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT the proposed response to the recommendations arising from the Review be approved.

Reasons

The Review produced a number of specific recommendations for consideration by the Executive which are ultimately aimed at improving ICT support across the Council.

Considerations

1. ICT Services have been the subject of a scrutiny review by the Strategic Monitoring Committee. The Terms of Reference were:
 - To revisit the scrutiny review of ICT Services completed in December 2006 and establish:
 - progress of the key corporate systems and projects, including the corporate network replacement project
 - progress of security incidents and resultant actions in period.
 - progress of disaster recovery plans.
 - progress of performance against key performance indicators
 - update regarding the “Value for Money” aspect of ICT service provision
 - To review progress against the executive’s action plan (published in March 2007) in response to the above.
 - To make recommendations regarding the future direction of ICT services and possible

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Zack Pandor, Interim Head of ICT Services, on 01432 347601

improvements in the wider use of IT Technology to support improved outcomes in the county.

2. The desired outcomes identified were:
 - To ensure that the ICT Service is providing value for money, and make recommendations to the executive as appropriate.
 - To ensure that performance of the ICT service is improving, and make recommendations to the executive as appropriate.
 - To ensure that the ICT service is fit for purpose to improve outcomes in the county, and make recommendations to the executive as appropriate.
3. The Review Group report was presented to the Committee in November 2008. The full report is attached at Appendix 1 for information
4. Each recommendation and the proposed response is detailed in Appendix 2. A number of the key recommendations support activity already being progressed through the current service plan, including:
 - Data Centre re-provision;
 - Use of Community Network by PCT and inclusion in re-procurement;
 - Encryption of mobile equipment;
 - Ensuring websites meet accessibility standards;
 - Roll-out of enhanced broadband services to schools;

Financial Implications

5. Included within the action plan. It should be noted that to the proposed additional activity is unlikely to be undertaken without significant additional investment; work will be prioritised to align with overall corporate priorities and legal requirements.

Risk Management

6. A number of recommendations will mitigate key risks currently on the councils corporate risk register.

Alternative Options

7. To do nothing. This however would fail to deliver service improvements and efficiencies.

Consultees

(Internal) Service Users
ICT Staff

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Report of the SMC Review of ICT
- Appendix 2 - Detailed Responses to Recommendations.

Background Papers

Appendix 2 - Detailed Responses to Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
a)	That the following recommendations which are outstanding from the ICT Review of 2006 be actioned without further delay: (recommendation references are to the original 2006 report)	Recommendations agreed and incorporated in other recommendations below.
	<i>(a) Responsibility for the line management for all the authority's ICT staff should be placed within the ICT Services Division and implemented with immediate effect. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendation (t).</i>	See recommendation t
	<i>(c) A review of the financing of ICT Services is undertaken examining the way directorates account for ICT spend, base budget for ICT Services, as well as the corporate funding of ICT programmes. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendation (x).</i>	See recommendation x
	<i>(e) The existing ICT procurement policies and procedures, including taking positive action to address non-compliance, are enforced. Further that the appointment of the Strategic Procurement & Efficiency Review manager will progress the need to develop the council-wide procurement policy. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendation (n).</i>	See recommendation n
	<i>(h) The responsibility for providing ICT training and its procurement be centralised under the management of the ICT service. As part thereof, the identification of ICT training needs should be formalised as part of induction and recorded. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendations (s) and (u).</i>	See recommendation s and u

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
	<p>(l) A single website for all council services is developed ensuring consistent branding and access to services for all. Further that the website should consider the potential for a single, obvious directory of contacts for all council services To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendations (l) and (n)..</p>	<p>See recommendation l and n</p>
	<p>(m) The options for “growing own talent” through training and the use of a form of “golden handcuffs”, possibly by means of recouping the cost of training should the individual leave the authority within a given period, be explored by Human Resources. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendations (v) and (w).</p>	<p>See recommendation v and w</p>
<p>b)</p>	<p>That the need for a fit for purpose, sustainable, secure and resilient replacement Data Centre at Rotherwas be addressed as a priority.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding allocated within the capital programme.</p> <p>As at December 2008 there is a project underway with the mandate to provide a fit for purpose data centre.</p> <p>Following detailed feasibility of the Rotherwas site a number of options are being considered to progress this objective.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
c)	<p>The necessary investment required in order to build a new data centre should be leveraged by investigating the possibilities of using the Community Network to provide increased broadband provision to the Rotherwas area.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress Funding requirement/source to be identified within options appraisal.</p> <p>Discussions to provide Broadband to Rotherwas (and other industrial estates) being taken forward with BT, in conjunction with the Council's Economic Regeneration Unit.</p> <p>Options to provide Broadband to Rotherwas will be considered as part of the Community Network Review, however, caution must be taken that the Council does not breach any competition rules or Ofcom regulations.</p> <p>The newly launched interim 'Digital Britain' Report available from: http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/broadcasting/5631.aspx contains recommendations and proposals on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • universal access to broadband • the creation of a second public service provider of scale • enhancing the digital delivery of public services <p>The full report is expected late in Spring 2009.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
d)	<p>Principles of Information Security accreditation ISO27001 should be rolled out across the Council with certification being the eventual aim. Resource should be made available in each Directorate.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted. To be resourced from within existing budgets. If full certification required, additional funding would be required.</p> <p>The remit of the current information security team is authority-wide and as such the work carried out by the team serves all areas. There is currently a lack of resource available within the central team, to carry out and sustain the required levels of training and awareness. This was highlighted to SMC with the suggestion that we should engage “information security champions” within each directorate. These ‘champions’ would then be the first point of contact for staff with information security, data protection or freedom of information issues. Support is required by all directors in order to engage appropriate staff as ‘champions’ and carrying this recommendation forward.</p>
e)	<p>All Council owned laptops should be encrypted prior to commissioning.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Budgets in place to deliver.</p> <p>A product has been identified and procured for this work, a plan is currently being prepared to apply this to all new and existing laptops and handheld devices.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
f)	Only Council approved and supplied memory sticks should be used on Council equipment and this policy to be enforced by the use of remote tracking.	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress Budgets in place to deliver.</p> <p>The Managing Media Devices Policy has been approved by JMT and the Information Management Group, and roll out is planned for early 2009</p>
g)	The Executive is urged to ensure that all Directorates/Services are fully aware of their responsibilities and the subsequent consequences of not putting in place appropriate planning in respect of their IT requirements taking into account at all times Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity.	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. No additional resource requirement</p> <p>ICT Services Client Accounts Team have engaged with service managers to support them in writing their Service Plans, including their ICT requirements for the coming year</p>
h)	Use of the Community Network by the PCT should be strongly encouraged and supported.	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. PCT resourcing being negotiated.</p> <p>The PCT are now using the Community Network for their staff located at Bath Street and Plough Lane. There is also a link on the CNU for Council Staff located at Belmont (the PCT site).</p> <p>The re-procurement of the community network includes health partners (PCT and Hereford Hospitals).</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
i)	<p>The web site must be improved making it transactional (i.e. the ability to complete and submit forms on-line.)</p> <p>The customer interface should be AA compliant.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and scoping work being planned. Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>Although a number of forms have been introduced to the Council website such as Jobs Online and the wheelie bin selection form, the current web forms architecture is not robust enough to deploy widespread interactive forms at this point. Development of this capacity is required to support this recommendation and Service/Directorate objectives such as the Better Connected audit and Equality Impact Assessment action plan indicators. In addition this capacity is required to support the Connects public facing forms provision and Children's services common application process for the 14 – 19 prospectus objectives in 2010 (a pilot is being run in early 2009). This requirement has been included in the ICT and Directorate plans and work has been done to design the topology and work identifying costs are in progress.</p> <p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. ICT (WIMS) will use the Connects 'Technology & Integrations Group' (TIG) as a mechanism to maintain the AA compliance standard in the delivery of Connects.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
j)	<p>Wherever practical and reasonable web-based software applications should be AA compliant. If not practical an action plan to improve accessibility should be agreed.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and planning in progress, Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>New technology procurement:</p> <p>ICT (WIMS) will use the Connects 'Technology & Integrations Group' (TIG) as a mechanism to maintain the AA compliance standard in the delivery of Connects and to establish accessibility mitigation action plans where required.</p> <p>ICT (WIMS) will use the IPG business case process as a mechanism to maintain the AA compliance standard in the delivery of technology projects and to establish accessibility mitigation action plans where required.</p> <p>This principle will be included as part of the Web strategy and Web based software will not be deployed unless AA compliance or accessibility mitigation action plans are established.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
k)	<p>The Council Intranet should be re-designed to make it easy for officers and members to use and promote good practice through a reliable and timely knowledge base, supporting effective decision-making.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and planning in progress. Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>This has been included in the Directorate and ICT Services Planning indicators and supporting actions.. A staff user group will be used to support the redesign to make sure it is 'useful, usable and used' by staff. It must also take into account the digital brand policy required to support the HPS brand guidelines and the implications of working jointly with the PCT. Propose that a joint web strategy with the PCT will help in this process. Work on the strategy and digital brand policy is in progress and drafts will be available in January. Close working with the Records manager and Communications will also be required. ICT (WIMS) have requested that Communications lead on the naming of the intranet(s).</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
I)	<p>Education and school web sites should be consolidated.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and planning in progress Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>A work package to move core content to the council website is in progress – being led by Carla Preston from Communications and Rebecca Walder from ICT (WIMS).</p> <p>A number of additional work packages have also been identified but there is no budget currently in place to support the development work required. This work is competing with other organisational operational and strategic priorities as there is no dedicated resource. Consideration is being given to the creation of a temporary web developer post to support the transfer work, to be reviewed with regard to developing a business case if can justify continuation of role.</p> <p>A risk is that the current schools extranet has proved insecure and that it needs to be replaced by a more robust extranet as part of this work package. Previously it was expected that the VLE would perform this function. Revised expectations mean that an alternative solution is required but no resource has yet been identified for this.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
m)	Corporate ICT capacity should be increased, on an 'Invest to Save' basis, to allow for development work e.g. web site, intranet.	<p>Recommendation accepted Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>Web strategy and clear supporting business vision, together with integrated channel management strategy will help to identify business priorities. An action plan will include criteria for savings or improvement of services within current budgets. A key feature is that the savings or improved service indicators are likely to be manifested across corporate service areas.</p>
n)	The Executive should make it clear across the authority that all ICT services and equipment should be procured either through or in consultation with ICT Services. This includes the development of all web sites, which will be used to deliver Council Information and services so as to ensure compliance to Council and National Policies.	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required.</p> <p>This is vital to the success of j), k), l) and m). The governance route for this needs to be agreed. The two mechanisms currently in place (TIG and IPG) do not necessarily cover the grants/projects process or partnership procurements and these areas also need to be addressed.</p>
o)	The importance of Information Security and the consequences of non-compliance should be highlighted to all schools.	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress Funding not required.</p> <p>As at December 2008 members from the information security team have carried out briefing sessions on information security at 3 primary school IT co-ordinators meetings.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
p)	The link-up to JANET (The Joint Academic Network) is supported and it is urged that phase II of this project be completed as a priority.	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Resources in place.</p> <p>The project to link to Ja.Net is underway</p>
q)	It should be communicated to schools that there is an imminent major upgrade to Broadband provision explaining the advantages that this will give them.	<p>Recommendation accepted; action completed. Resources not required</p> <p>Communication went out to schools 18th Nov via Children's Services</p>
r)	That a further review be undertaken of the current web site filtering process in place in schools.	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required.</p> <p>Work on this is underway in conjunction with Children's Services staff</p>
s)	It is strongly recommended that all school employees that connect to the Council network have to attend ICT Induction training as proposed for Council employees in recommendation (u).	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required.</p> <p>This will be raised at the termly Schools ICT liaison meeting. As part of the Council Induction an ICT induction is being developed.</p>
t)	Immediate action be taken to clarify the provision of ICT services to schools and that clear roles and responsibilities are identified between ICT and CYPD.	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Resourcing implications being worked through.</p> <p>Aligned SLA's formats between schools and CYPD / ICT.</p> <p>Schools representatives review ICT SLA's and the changes each year prior to them being issued</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
u)	All Council personnel and Members should have mandatory IT training at commencement of employment or on taking office. The level of training required should be assessed by use of questionnaire. ICT Training should be a matter of Continuous Professional Development across the authority.	<p>Recommendation accepted and being progressed Funding not required.</p> <p>Members have access to ICT training.</p> <p>An initial IT specific induction / training programme is being drawn up.</p>
v)	Human Resources and Job Evaluation should revisit IT salary scales taking into account the relevant market forces as well as the financial consequences for the Council of not being able to recruit into key positions. The adoption of a pay scale for technical ICT staff may be appropriate.	<p>Recommendation accepted. The issue has been referred to HR to advise on options available within the relevant equal pay legislation and frameworks, and to identify the financial implications of those options.</p> <p>This issue is identified on the ICT risk register and it impacts best value and ability to deliver. The shared services approach with the PCT offers opportunities to explore how they have sought to deal with similar difficulties. A skills audit across the two services is in progress. A joint approach to this issue would be helpful and inform proposals for how best to tackle this recommendation.</p>
w)	Consideration should be given to a policy whereby staff are asked to reimburse to the Council a specified percentage of training costs if they decide to leave the Council's employment within a specified period of time from receiving the training.	<p>Recommendation accepted – the issue has been referred to HR for their consideration.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommended Response
x)	The Executive should ensure that the proposal that Corporate ICT Services be funded from base budget from April 2009, be properly reflected and taken account of in budget proposals.	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Additional funding not required. From April 2009, ICT Services will operate from a base budget.
y)	Subject to the Review being approved, the Executive's response to the Review, including an action plan, is reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response.	Recommendation accepted. Funding not required. This will be scheduled.
z)	A further report on progress with respect to the Review be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.	Recommendation accepted, Funding not required. This will be scheduled.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION SERVICES

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Legal And Democratic

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To receive an update on the Parish and Council by-elections undertaken by Electoral Registration Services over the last 12 months.

Financial Implications

2. It is anticipated that any costs arising from improvements made within the service will be met within existing budgets apart from those already identified.

Background

3. In November 2008 the Committee considered an update on progress in implementing the electoral registration services action plan. The Committee agreed that a further report on the by elections that took place in 2008 be presented and this is set out below.

By-elections

4. During 2008 there were eight parish council and two unitary council by-elections. These gave the opportunity to implement the improved processes and procedures arising out of the Action Plan following the review of the May 2007 elections. Examples of these improvements are set out below:
 - Meetings with candidates and agents take place at the beginning and end of each election
 - Meetings with ICT, Communications and Amey are carried out at the beginning of each election to ascertain what is required, by whom and when. An action plan for each service is devised and relevant information added
 - Improved signage at the count and clearer explanation of each stage of the count
5. Set out at Appendix 1 is a table detailing the elections that took place and providing information regarding the numbers of candidates, percentage of turnout etc.

Communication

6. All notices and information regarding elections is now supplied to Parish Clerks, Polling Stations, Booking Clerks, District Councillors, Local Agents, Political Party Agents, Group Leaders, HALC and Communications. Information is also added to the Council website. A database is being built up of where notices can be displayed for advertising casual vacancies and running elections. Contact is made with each individual via phone first to establish if a notice can be displayed, then a letter is sent confirming the agreement.

7. All suppliers for printing and consumables are contacted to give advance warning of an election, then contacted again to confirm if the election is taking place or not.
8. Custodians of the Town Hall are notified of the date for close of nomination papers and a sweep of the building is carried out to ensure that no papers have been received by another section.
9. Royal Mail is informed in advance of all mailing out, using discount walksort and cleanmail.
10. Members Services are contacted so that all election information is available in the Member Services Newsletter.

European Elections

11. Work has commenced on preparing for the European Elections scheduled for the 4th June 2009.
12. There have been four refresher training sessions for Presiding Officers, both existing and those who wish to become a Presiding Officer, organised which are scheduled to be completed by 11th March, 2009. Feedback from these sessions is collated and any suggestions for improving the process are considered. There will be further training sessions closer to the election date for those who have been allocated a Presiding Officer role to cover any changes in legislation and procedures.
13. An inspection has been carried out of all polling booths and those requiring repair have been sent to Amey. The polling booths that are beyond repair will be replaced and this is in hand.
14. A meeting has taken place with ICT to start to identify IT requirements during the course of the election. A meeting has also taken place with the Leisure Centre to discuss requirements for the verification and count e.g. layout of count station, dropping off of ballot boxes and public address system.
15. Polling Stations are being booked and confirmation of bookings made. Allocation of staff to roles has also commenced.
16. Information regarding the verification and count process will be given to candidates, agents and any other person attending the count. A layout of the counting station will also be provided. There will be clear signage on tables as to what process is taking place at a particular table. Coloured bibs will be worn by counting supervisors and counting staff together with information regarding their role.
17. The Returning Officer for the European Elections is Mr Steven Hughes, Birmingham City Council. Training sessions have been held at Birmingham for Local Returning Officers which have been attended by the Deputy Returning Officer with a final session for training on 9th March, 2009.
18. The Electoral Registration Team have also provided assistance to Shropshire County Council who will be holding Council and parish council elections as well as the European Elections who came to visit and talk through the process for such elections.
19. The Electoral Registration Service is currently looking for approximately 20 internal employees who can be released by their line managers to be trained and appointed

STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2009

to roles to help in the European Parliamentary Election on June 4th 2009 and for any further elections. Information regarding this recruitment process has been placed in First Press, Team Talk, Schools Newsletter and on the Intranet under Jobs and Vacancies.

20. The Electoral Registration Manager and Registration Services Manager meet the Deputy Returning Officer on a fortnightly basis who in turns briefs the Returning Officer.
21. Guidance will be issued to Members in respect of the pre-election period (Purdah Period) by the end of March, 2009.

Performance Standards

22. The Electoral Commission has introduced a set of performance standards for electoral registration officers and these are set out at Appendix 2. There are ten standards and each standard has three levels;
 - Not currently meeting the performance standard
 - Performance Standard
 - Above performance standard.
23. A self assessment was submitted to the Electoral Commission on the 16th January, 2009.
24. As this was a new initiative the Electoral Commission selected a number of authorities with a view of visiting each one and going through the self assessment form. This was to enable them to gauge whether the standards were measurable, that they were set at the right level and that those carrying out the self assessment were assessing themselves correctly. Herefordshire was chosen as one of the authorities that the Electoral Commission would visit and a meeting was held on 6th February, 2009 following the submission of the self assessment.
25. Each standard was considered and out of the ten the Electoral Commission felt that seven met the standard, one was below standard and two were above standard. The Commission felt that whilst in several areas the Electoral Registration Service was doing many of the actions necessary that would improve some of the levels of standard, there was no written evidence to support the actions. Steps are being taken to produce plans which will provide the supportive evidence. The Commission will be producing a report after visits to all authorities have been completed giving a general overview of what has been found. There is no intention to provide reports for individual authorities.

Action Plan

26. Attached at Appendix 3 is a copy of the Action Plan which sets out the actions arising from the review that was carried out following the May 2007 elections together with progress made.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

APPENDIX 1

PARISH AND DISTRICT BY-ELECTION REPORT

Date of Election	Parish / Ward	No. of Seats	No. of Candidates	No. Postal Votes	No. of Proxies	No. of Eligible Electors	Percentage Turnout	Contested / Uncontested
03 Apr 08	Little Dewchurch Parish	1	2	40	1	334	44.28	Contested
10 Apr 08	Old Gore Ward	1	4	304	4	2430	46.28	Contested
08 May 08	Colwall Parish	1	3	251	3	1933	26.21	Contested
26 Jun 08	Kington Town	1	4	224	3	1668	29.07	Contested
28 Aug 08	Kington Town	2	2	216	3	1989		Uncontested
02 Oct 08	Belmont Rural Parish	1	3	315	4	2832	11.05	Contested
02 Oct 08	Leominster South Ward	1	4	458	8	4433	28.14	Contested
13 Nov 08	Kington Town	1	1	216	3	1895		Uncontested
19 Feb 09	Hereford City (Aylestone)	1	3	719	7	4933	29.34%	Contested

APPENDIX 2

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICERS

Subject area: Completeness and accuracy of electoral registration records	
Performance Standard 1	Using information sources to verify entries on the register of electors and identify potential new electors
Performance Standard 2	Maintaining the property database
Performance Standard 3	House-to-house enquiries
Subject area: Integrity	
Performance Standard 4	Maintaining the integrity of registration and absent vote applications
Performance Standard 5	Supply and security of the register and absent voter lists
Subject area: Participation	
Performance Standard 6	Public awareness strategy
Performance Standard 7	Working with partners
Performance Standard 8	Accessibility and communication of information
Subject area: Planning and Organisation	
Performance Standard 9	Planning for rolling registration and the annual canvass
Performance Standard 10	Training

APPENDIX 3

Issue	Action	Progress
Planning	With support from Corporate Programmes, develop a project plan for annual tasks, and a project plan for elections-specific tasks including identification of resources required and timescales.	Created a complete working plan/timetable for each election of every action/role. Each plan includes job descriptions, processes, flowcharts and desk instructions.
Annual Canvass Review of Polling Stations		Completed Completed
Staffing	<p>Recruitment of Deputy Manager (Electoral Registration Services)</p> <p>Review of roles and responsibilities within the service team (including revisions to JD/PS as appropriate)</p> <p>From project plans, identify numbers and timing of temporary staff requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominations process • Issue and processing of postal votes • Staffing Polling Stations • Count <p>Recruit and develop a pool of in-house staff to be called on to carry out specific support roles during elections.</p> <p>Explore with HR the potential for including a requirement to assist at elections within job descriptions.</p> <p>Identify agency staff interested and able to undertake election support work</p> <p>Identify requirements for info by phone to take calls re nomination process. Electoral register and postal votes (e.g. software links/permissions, script for call operators)</p>	<p>Appointment made</p> <p>JD/PS reviewed – in the process of being evaluated</p> <p>This has been included in the plan mentioned above.</p> <p>Recruitment process currently in progress</p> <p>To be followed up with HR</p> <p>All agency staff employed through Pertemps</p> <p>Info by Phone previously under resourced so unable to assist. Meeting to take place to review situation.</p>

APPENDIX 3

Issue	Action	Progress
Training	Develop programme of training for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Clerks • Temporary staff • Refresher training for permanent staff Develop 'handbook' to support above.	Programme of training being developed and put into practice for the European Elections. Meeting to take place with HALC regarding closer working with Parish Councils.
Communications	Liaise with Communications Unit to develop a communications strategy to cover both annual tasks and specific requirements around the range of elections. (To include key dates, register of electors process, notices of election & nomination packs on website and publication of notices of election in local press)	Processes in place for communicating with all relevant services regarding requirements for elections, etc.
Resources	Ensure access to appropriate scanners/printers/high-volume copiers Review requirements for polling booths/boxes following polling station review Review Post Office support requirements and negotiate revised service agreement Ensure ICT support requirements are specified within SLA. Review software requirements/options and prepare exceptions business case if necessary Review process with Opt2vote	Completed – additional scanners/printers acquired Completed Account Manager now in place - Completed – process in place with ICT to identify resources for elections Business case to be considered by IPG in March
Postal Voting	Review process with Opt2vote	Completed
House name changes	Explore options for this activity to be passed to another service.	Matter resolved

WORK PROGRAMME

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the Committee's work programme.

Background

2. A report on the Scrutiny Committees' current work programmes will be made to this Scrutiny Committee quarterly. A copy of this Committee's own work programme will be made to each of its scheduled meetings. A copy of this Committee's current work programme is therefore attached for this meeting.
3. Should Members become aware of any issues they consider may be added to the scrutiny programme they should contact the Chairman to log the issue so that it may be taken into consideration when planning future agendas or when revising the work programme.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the current work programme serves as a basis for further development, subject to any comment the Committee wishes to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Strategic Monitoring Committee – work programme 2008/09

	TBC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome of officer review of asset management and property
	April 2009
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Options and Challenge • Report on place survey • Report on the Scrutiny Function
<p>Other issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User Satisfaction Surveys. • Gender Equality Scheme Monitoring (reported March 2007 6 month/annual). • Comprehensive Equality Scheme Action Plan monitoring. • Scrutiny of Police/Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. • Communications Strategy Monitoring • Comprehensive Equality Policy • Rose Bank Garden Scheme - reviewing its value for money and whether there were any lessons to be learned for future schemes. • Analysis of Complaints • Pay and Workforce Development Strategy (Replacement) • Herefordshire Public Services – possible consideration of effectiveness of working arrangements • Affordable Housing – (provisional) – dependent on outcome of reports to Cabinet on 19 March 	

Further additions to the work programme will be made as required

