

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	18 OCTOBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES UPDATE
REPORT BY:	JOINT DIRECTOR OF ICT

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Purpose

To provide a further progress report on Information Communication and Technology (ICT) service issues requested following the scrutiny review of ICT and subsequent updates.

Recommendation(s)

- THAT (a) the report be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make;**
- and**
- (b) the Committee considers the content and frequency of any further progress reports it wishes to receive.**

Key Points Summary

- Financial reports are now beginning to become available from the social care system, and there is ongoing work to improve the quality of the data in the system. Discussions are being held to determine how these will work when the new finance system is operational as a number of options are available.
- Significant work is being undertaken for the replacement of systems for Finance and HR.
- Markets and Fairs and Waste Management services have now commenced using the Civica APP system, other services are being considered (Strategic Housing).
- Progress is being made to introduce a scanning and document management solution with the Planning service.
- As part of the accommodation strategy, modern and more flexible ways of working are being explored.
- A number of initiatives are being undertaken by the Economic Regeneration Unit to work with broadband suppliers to improve broadband access and speed across Herefordshire.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Zack Pandor, Joint Director of ICT on (01432) 347611

- A pilot project has been initiated to provide front-line staff with mobile equipment to assess efficiency and effectiveness of recording data using such equipment.

Alternative Options

- 1 None.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The report is provided for information.

Introduction and Background

- 3 In March 2010 this Committee received a progress report on Information Communication and Technology (ICT) service issues requested following the scrutiny review of ICT and subsequent updates.
4. The Committee welcomed the progress report and requested a further progress report in 6 months time, noting in particular ongoing work on the interface between the Social Care Frameworki system with the Council's finance system and Civica software packages; and deputed Councillor Bowen to discuss access to the intranet for Members to identify and seek to resolve the apparent problems.

Key Considerations

- 4 Commitment accounting reports are now available from the social care system, Framework-i. Work is ongoing to migrate and continuously improve the quality of data within the social care system, which in turn will lead to increasing accuracy of reports. When the new finance system ('Agresso') is operational, there is additionally the option to provide financial reports through that.
- 5 Finance and HR systems across the council are in the process of being replaced. This is a significant project in that the solution being implemented will work across the local authority and the NHS (including the Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust). The new solution will allow for greater efficiency in staff and budget management. The current plan is to have essential finance and HR functions using the system from 1 April 2011, followed by a roll-out of advanced functionality across the organisations.
- 6 Markets and Fairs and Waste Management services have now commenced using the Civica APP system. Strategic Housing is currently reviewing whether they could take advantage of the system for their service. In addition, those services that have been using the system since the original go-live in November 2008 are reviewing their process to improve use of the system and there is also a piece of work to ensure the data is of good quality. An upgrade of the system is planned in November 2010, which will provide fixes to issues we have raised with the suppliers and some enhanced functionality.
- 7 The Planning service is currently engaged in a project to improve the planning applications process and introduce a scanning and document management solution to replace the current service (which is located out of Herefordshire). The new solution will enable significant improvements to be made in the service.

- 8 Following the approval of the (joint council and NHS) accommodation strategy, technology solutions to enable high efficiency in the usage of office buildings and enabling staff to work more flexibly and productively are being explored.
- 9 Significant activity taken place to improve the county's broadband capability:
- a. The Member of Parliament for Hereford and South Herefordshire organised a Broadband Summit event on 6th September to highlight the poor broadband service in the county. The Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, BT and Rutland Telecom were among the speakers. Rutland Telecom spoke on how they were using fibre optic and local copper circuits from BT to deliver a fast broadband and phone service in their area. Following the event a number of parishes near Ross-on-Wye have approached Rutland Telecom for advice on whether they can bring fast broadband into their areas, and two local IT firms are considering doing something similar in the Shobdon area.
 - b. Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) is the organisation appointed by the government to deliver improved broadband services in the UK. They will let contracts for delivery of a 2Mb minimum service during 2011, to be completely rolled out by the end of 2015. In parallel they have announced that they will fund three superfast broadband pilots to provide experience of the issues of delivering fast broadband in hard to reach areas. Herefordshire, backed by Advantage West Midlands, has submitted a bid for the Golden Valley and south border area of Herefordshire to be a pilot area, linked to bids from Wales and Gloucestershire for their adjacent border areas. A decision should be announced in October.
 - c. Linked to the BDUK pilot bid, and BT's attendance at the Broadband Summit, a series of meetings is being held with BT to look at how the broadband service across the county could be improved. BT recently won a contract to provide fast broadband across Northern Ireland and Cornwall. BT's head of fast broadband delivery, Bill Murphy, will be meeting the Chief Executive to discuss how fast broadband might be delivered in Herefordshire. A new broadband policy paper is being prepared to take account of developments and should be presented to JMT in early November. Funding opportunities are being explored.
 - d. Elsewhere in the county Airband Community Internet will be providing a wireless broadband service with up to 16Mb speeds to the north and east of Leominster, funded through the RRZ using EU funds. Equipment is currently being installed and rollout of this service from Leominster will start from 6th November. Allpay Broadband has said that it intends to provide a wireless broadband across the county by Christmas. Allpay currently provides wireless broadband in Kingstone and Allensmore.
- 10 A pilot project has commenced looking at equipping front-line staff with mobile equipment to make the data collection process more efficient. The current trial involves six different groups within Provider Services. The volunteers have been asked to record and transmit data in free flow format. The results require further detailed assessment, however, initial feedback has been positive. There are also national trials being undertaken, which we are obtaining feedback from and feeding our results into.

Community Impact

- 11 Continued investment in ICT ensures the authority is able to deliver effective and efficient services to its customers. Pursuing the broadband agenda with community, business and industry stakeholders has the potential for significant community benefit.

Financial Implications

12 ICT schemes referred to in this report have been budgeted for as part of the authority's financial plans.

Legal Implications

13 Ensuring we are able to:

- accurately collect,
- securely store,
- efficiently use and
- appropriately share data

enables the authority to discharge its legal obligations against a number of acts, including but not limited to:

- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000)
- Environmental Information Regulations (2004)

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.