

Review of E-government Programme

Herefordshire Council

Audit 2004-2005

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Introduction

'E-government is not an end in itself. It is the heart of the drive to modernise government. Modernising local government is about enhancing the quality of local services and the effectiveness of local democracy.'

ODPM, The National Strategy for Local E-government, November 2002.

- 1 E-government means exploiting the power of information and communications technology to help transform the accessibility, quality and cost-effectiveness of public services. It can be used to revitalise the relationship between citizens and the public bodies who work on their behalf. E-government is more than technology or the internet or service delivery. It is about putting citizens at the heart of everything we do and building service access, delivery and democratic accountability around them. Local e-government is the realisation of this vision at the point where the vast majority of public services are delivered.
- 2 All local authorities are expected to achieve 100 per cent capability in electronic delivery of priority services, as defined by priority service outcomes (2004), by the end of 2005, in ways that customers will use. Between 2002 and 2005 the ODPM provided £675 million of e-government funding to help achieve this target.
- 3 During the financial year 2003/04, local government spent nearly £4 billion on introducing new technologies. Other funding departments have also invested significantly in increasing access to ICT and the internet to enable citizens to access services in new ways, and in improving systems in operation within councils.
- 4 However, the public sector as a whole does not have a good track record in delivering technology-based projects. Factors identified as barriers to success include:
 - large, complex projects with unrealistic goals;
 - inadequate specification and uncontrolled changes;
 - poor project management, often by inexperienced staff;
 - mismanagement of contractors and suppliers;
 - lack of benefits evaluation; and
 - political and multi-agency issues.
- 5 Although use of programme and project management methods cannot guarantee project success, adoption of sound project management practices, and having a framework within which to define objectives and manage inevitable change, should substantially reduce the risk of project failure.

Background

- 6 The Audit Commission's e-government review in March 2003 highlighted a number of weaknesses in Herefordshire Council's e-government programme arrangements, and during the course of 2003 there were increasing concerns about the council's ability to deliver its ambitious e-modernisation agenda.
- 7 Internal reports found that e-modernisation projects were poorly run and did not meet timescales or objectives. Sixty-two percent of users and customers canvassed expressed the view that e-modernisation was not delivering benefits. The scope and objectives of key projects were radically altered without the impact on benefits being adequately managed; lack of funding was a main cause for the reduction in scope.
- 8 By early 2004, the management of this programme had been fundamentally changed. New arrangements were put in place to ensure all ICT-related projects were run in line with the PRINCE2 method. A project and programme support office was being set up to co-ordinate standards and assurance arrangements. An audit of progress against BVPI 157 targets showed that compliance of 82 per cent had been achieved by April 2005.
- 9 As part of the audit programme, we therefore agreed with the Council to assess both the effectiveness of the new management arrangements and what the investment in e-modernisation and the achievement of BVPI 157 targets has meant for the people of Herefordshire.

Audit approach

- 10 We looked at the management of the e-modernisation programme and reviewed in detail one of its constituent projects, the e-Gateway project, against Office of Government Commerce good practice.
- 11 We assessed what impact the programme has had on the citizens of Herefordshire.
- 12 We did this by:
 - examining documents relating to the e-modernisation programme and the e-Gateway project;
 - completing assessment matrices to compare current arrangements against best practice;
 - providing a self assessment questionnaire on the user focus aspects of the programme which was completed by the Council; and
 - conducting interviews with key staff and members.

Main conclusions

- 13 Herefordshire Council is moving in the right direction in terms of its e-government programme. Following an internal review of the programme in 2004, delivery is now planned and controlled and tangible benefits are starting to become apparent. However, the Council is not as far advanced as we would expect given that over £8 million has been invested in e-government in Herefordshire over the last five years. The current state of development falls far short of the original vision for e-government, that '...by 2005 all citizens of Herefordshire will be able to interact effectively with a range of partnership services, at a time and place convenient to them, using a variety of communication channels'.

Management arrangements

- 14 The governance and management of the ICT service and e-government programme has been strengthened through the introduction of new structures and control standards by the new Head of ICT (who is now the Head of Service – Corporate and Customer Services). Improvements in project management arrangements and ICT procurement should mitigate future risk both of poor selection of ICT solutions and lack of control over poorly performing projects.
- 15 The membership of the information policy group and Herefordshire in Touch Programme Board has been rationalised and they are now ensuring the programme focuses on service improvements and benefits realisation. Members are becoming more engaged with e-government, but this is still at an early stage. Feedback from all the Council representatives we interviewed was positive, and there is increased confidence in the ability of the ICT service to deliver. However, this is tempered by the risk that the Council relies heavily on the Head of ICT to provide the impetus for ensuring the new arrangements are implemented and perform effectively.

Delivery – sample project

- 16 The e-Gateway project was selected for review as it has been running from 2001 and could therefore show the difference in project management effectiveness pre and post the change in management arrangements in 2004.

Phase 1 (2001 to April 2004)

- 17 This phase of the project was poorly managed. There was a lack of clarity over the organisation of and responsibility for the project; this is shown by the lack of key project documentation. Stakeholders were also increasingly unclear about the purpose of the project and their own roles.
- 18 The Council and Herefordshire Partnership recognised and accepted the inadequacies of the original arrangements and should be commended for taking decisive action to remedy them. However the project had been in existence for three years before the newly appointed Head of ICT identified that serious technical and governance problems warranted a fundamental review.

- 19 During this time nearly £600,000 had been spent on the project. Although the new project salvaged what it could from the original systems, investment in scoping and consultancy services was lost, in addition to the time spent by Council and stakeholder staff, much of which must have been wasted effort. The reputation of the Council with stakeholders also suffered from the failure to deliver.

Phase 2 (June 2004 to 2007)

- 20 The project was re-launched with additional funding of over £2.6 million from the Council and external bodies.
- 21 The project management arrangements put in place from June 2004 to May 2005 were of high quality and complied with the best practice standards we used for assessment. Products are now being delivered to plan. Improvements against targets are monitored and are being achieved.
- 22 However, since May 2005, when responsibility for the project changed, key project documentation has not been updated to reflect the new deliverables which are now planned until March 2007 and involve substantial expenditure. Compliance with the Council's PRINCE 2 standard has not yet been achieved on this stage of the project.

Recommendation

R1 Ensure that the project management arrangements for the latest stage of the e-Gateway project comply with the Council's PRINCE2 standards.

Impact on the community

Are e-government services based on consultation with and the needs of the community?

- 23 The Council works with partners in the Herefordshire Partnership and shares information to improve its understanding of community need. Direct consultation with citizens has been limited, but where relevant consultation has taken place there is evidence that it has informed decision-making, such as the siting of information kiosks. The Council has recognised, from its strategic review of the e-Gateway project, that regular communication with stakeholders is an area that needs improvement if it is to deliver services that meet the changing needs of its citizens.

Recommendation

R2 Develop and implement an e-government communications plan to ensure that all stakeholders are appropriately informed and consulted.

Does the e-government programme improve access to services that citizens need in ways they will use?

- 24 The Council has a range of access channels available, but to date the development of these has been unco-ordinated; access methods are therefore inconsistent and may be confusing to the citizen. Restricted and variable implementation of the CRM (customer relationship management) system across services means the Council has not realised full benefits from its investment and the impact on citizens is limited. E-government has not yet broken down departmental barriers in favour of the citizen experience; for example information on the website is very service specific and partner information is not yet readily available. Monitoring of performance against customer service standards is carried out by individual service managers and the Council does not have an accurate view of overall performance for improvement planning.

Recommendations
<i>R3 Develop a strategic approach to the use of access channels across the Council to ensure appropriate, clear and consistent methods of access are available to citizens.</i>
<i>R4 Ensure that appropriate partner information is easily accessible from the Council website.</i>
<i>R5 Provide a means of electronic communication with all relevant services.</i>
<i>R6 Develop and implement a corporate approach to the performance management of customer services to drive service improvement.</i>

Does e-government provision lead to improved service delivery?

- 25 The e-government programme is aligned with the Council's improvement plans and is being used to deliver service improvements. All IT and e-government related projects must now demonstrate to the information policy group that they will help achieve both e-government and service improvement targets and set out what benefits are anticipated. Investment is being made in the right 'building blocks' such as the network and training, to allow future improvements to be made. Business process re-engineering, together with the implementation of a new computer system has resulted in measurable improvements in revenues and benefits. However, there are still elements of the e-government programme, such as CRM, where fragmented implementation is leading to duplication of data entry and, therefore, higher costs.

Recommendations
<i>R7 Review the implementation of the CRM system and assess the benefits of integration with back office systems.</i>

Is e-government used to improve consultation with and the engagement of key stakeholders, service users and citizens?

- 26 The Council is making increasing use of web based consultation processes, and has recently purchased software that will allow it to co-ordinate the information and feedback from consultation exercises. The website is also used to promote face-to-face consultations. Access to democratic information, such as contact details and committee papers, is good.

Does e-government investment increase social inclusion?

- 27 ICT and e-government has been used in a number of ways to address social inclusion by different sections of the Council. Recent initiatives include improved access to e-services for young people in care and for people in rural areas and improved website accessibility. The Council's future plans in this area are not well defined and there is no evidence of a co-ordinated approach that would allow shared learning and economies of scale.

Recommendations

R8 Develop a corporate approach to the use of ICT and e-government to address social inclusion that allows for shared learning and economies of scale.

Appendix 1 – Management of the e-Gateway project

Introduction

- 1 The project to develop an e-Gateway for Herefordshire was first started in January 2001. Its aim is to provide a service delivery platform for Herefordshire Partnership organisations to meet their own funding, legislative, statutory and target objectives in delivering information and services via the Internet.
- 2 The project has been funded by Herefordshire Council and through external SRB funding, mainly from Advantage West Midlands (AWM), but also recently from Government Office West Midlands (GOWM). Stakeholder organisations, other than the Council, do not contribute financially.
- 3 The project was originally managed by the Herefordshire in Touch (HIT) Programme Board. However, delivery progress was slow and concerns were raised in 2003 about the adequacy of the management arrangements for the whole e-modernisation programme. The Council fundamentally reorganised the e-modernisation and ICT functions early in 2004, and by April 2004 the e-Gateway project was formally closed.
- 4 An independent review of the project was commissioned in April/May 2004 from an external consultancy. SOCITM validated the review process. The resulting strategic review was hard-hitting and concluded that:
 - the technology platform originally selected was not suitable and its future sustainability was in doubt;
 - there was a significant lack of due diligence in anticipated costs in the original selection process; and
 - management and control of the project was poor in the areas of strategic definition, communication and project team roles and responsibilities.
- 5 These conclusions were reported to the Herefordshire Partnership Board. As a result, it was decided to restart the project using a new technology platform, whilst recycling existing hardware and software where possible. A successful bid was made to AWM for further SRB funding and the project was restarted, using an experienced project manager from the external consultancy, in June 2004.
- 6 The first stage of the project was to implement the new technology platform and to migrate the existing websites. This was successfully completed in May 2005.
- 7 The project has now been taken over by an in-house project manager. It is anticipated that the project will run for another two to three years with deliverables planned to meet the milestones stipulated by the external funding requirements.

- 8 Deliverables and benefits are reported to the Council and to external funding organisations to show progress against:
- key performance indicators;
 - Herefordshire Council's IEG requirements;
 - the Herefordshire Partnership plan;
 - AWM regional goals; and
 - GOWM regional goals.

Project management method

- 9 The project has had four project managers to date; two on the original project and two for the re-started project.
- 10 Although the corporate project management method is PRINCE2, this standard had not been followed on the original project and there were inadequate project management controls and processes. An Internal Audit report in December 2003 found that there was a lack of fundamental project documentation needed to define the project and against which progress and controls should be monitored. This was confirmed by the strategic review in April 2004 which also found that stakeholders had no clear idea what the project was about, what it was intended to deliver and the role they needed to play.
- 11 A subset of PRINCE 2 was implemented for the re-started project in June 2004. Project monitoring requirements for the external funding bodies have also had to be complied with. The external project manager who ran the project until May 2005 was trained and experienced. The in-house project manager and his assistant, now in charge of the e-Gateway, are not trained in PRINCE2.

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Business context			
<p>Has the requirement for the project been generated from a consideration of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic context; • corporate plan; • corporate or departmental strategy; • likely costs; and • and benefits. 	<p>It is assumed that any project will start with the identification of a business requirement needing investment.</p>	<p>An Internal Audit (IA) report states the project was mandated in the modernisation programme brief (2002) as part of the HIT programme.</p> <p>However an ‘e-Gateway strategic review’ carried out by Xayce consultancy in April/ May 2004 states that the project had already been underway for 40 months at that point. This would mean it started in 2001. Discrepancies around the start of the e-Gateway can be attributed to lack of documentation from that period.</p>	<p>As part of the strategic review stakeholders were canvassed as to their expectations from the project. One of the options considered was to scrap the project completely.</p> <p>The results of the review were presented to the Herefordshire Partnership.</p> <p>The ambitions and key performance indicators that the project needs to deliver against are detailed in the benefits realisation model document.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Feasibility			
<p>Has a feasibility study has been undertaken, where appropriate, and options researched, documented and considered?</p> <p>Have key suppliers been detailed and indicative costs made available?</p>	<p>This is a study usually undertaken to identify alternative solutions to a business problem or opportunity. It assesses if there is a business solution in the marketplace or if a product or service needs developing to meet the business requirements.</p> <p>Without this initial market research, considerable time can be wasted.</p>	<p>No documentation available.</p>	<p>A strategic review was carried out in April/May 2004 to determine if the original solution was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fit for purpose; and • worth further investment. <p>The method used for this exercise was then validated by SOCITM.</p> <p>A decision was taken on the basis of the final report (POL0185-002) to change the e-Gateway platform.</p> <p>This decision was signed off by the Herefordshire Partnership members in September 2004.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Business case			
<p>Has a detailed business case been prepared showing what is required and why?</p> <p>Has the business case been approved (by Committee/CE/CO/Project Board) before the project proceeds?</p>	<p>The business case should include the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • objectives; • benefits; • criteria for success; • preferred option; • business justification; • business risks; • investment required; and • any potential return. 	<p>Bid documents for SRB funding were produced.</p> <p>The 2004 stakeholder analysis, carried out as part of the strategic review, concluded that 'there is no link between the strategic visions mandated in the bid documents and what actually needs to be delivered'.</p>	<p>A new bid for funding for 'e-Gateway phase 2' was submitted to AWM following approval of the way forward by the Herefordshire Partnership Board.</p> <p>This was approved in November 2004 subject to delivery milestones being achieved.</p> <p>Since 2004/05 European Regional Development Funding has also been agreed through a bid to GOWM.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Funding			
<p>Has the organisation identified and agreed funding which is sufficient for the project to proceed?</p> <p>Have all likely costs (capital, one off, recurring) been identified?</p> <p>Has funding been agreed by those with the required level of authorisation for the investment?</p> <p>Has an investment appraisal been carried out and a decision made in line with the organisation's investment strategy?</p>	<p>Funding has been identified within the capital programme or from specific funds (for example modernisation) which are sufficient to meet costs identified in the business case and initial project plan.</p> <p>A comprehensive and realistic budget has been established which provides for all likely elements of cost associated with project management, including consultancy costs where appropriate.</p>	<p>For phase 1 of the project, until 2004, over £700,000 was provided from SRB, the Council and other public funds (see Appendix 2).</p> <p>The strategic review stated there was 'significant lack of due diligence in anticipated costs on selecting the technology platform'.</p>	<p>For the current project funding is from SRB, Herefordshire Council and ERDF (See Appendix 2). The other stakeholders do not contribute financially. Spend is detailed in the SRB quarterly monitoring returns submitted to the Performance Manager.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Project initiation document			
<p>Is a PID (or equivalent) available and containing the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • background; • project scope, objectives, approach; • quality plan and acceptance criteria; • risk log; • project and stage plans; • organisation and controls; • business case/feasibility study summary; and • communication plan? 	<p>The PID prepares the information necessary to decide whether there is sufficient justification to proceed with the project and sets out the plans and controls according to which the project will be run.</p>	<p>Although the project started in January 2003, a PID was not produced until July 2003. This did not contain all the elements that would be expected from a PID, and the document was not used.</p>	<p>A detailed PID was produced for the project to migrate to the new RedDot platform. This is of good quality and contains most key elements. The business case, objectives and anticipated benefits are not detailed in this document. These are held in other documents (strategic review, SRB bid and returns, benefits realisation model report). No up-to-date PID has yet been produced for the project that was handed over to in-house project managers in May 2005.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Organisational structure			
<p>Has an organisational structure been agreed which defines responsibility, accountability and reporting structures for the project?</p>	<p>It is important to establish the organisation structure and roles and responsibilities at the PID stage, complete with job descriptions.</p> <p>This avoids potential conflict and duplication or omission of effort at a later stage if boundaries cross.</p>	<p>Reporting structures for the project were not clear.</p> <p>The project reported into the Head of e-Modernisation and the HIT Programme Board.</p> <p>The programme board contained up to 40 members and was too unwieldy for effective decision-making.</p> <p>The project also reported into AWM, via a programme manager to justify the SRB funding.</p>	<p>The reporting structure is detailed in the project PID.</p> <p>Reporting lines are complex due to the need to report to external funding bodies, stakeholders and to council management.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Project board			
<p>Has a project board has been established which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a project sponsor/executive; • includes user and supplier representatives; • does not contain more than six members; • has the appropriate authority to make project decisions (for example, can approve the cost of the project within predefined limits and can commit resources required by the project); and • understands and has agreed the responsibilities and specific tasks of the board and of each member? 	<p>Members of the project board need to understand, and preferably have awareness training in, their role and responsibilities.</p> <p>The project board also needs to commit to be available when needed to make project-related decisions.</p> <p>PRINCE2 recommends that the project board has between three and six members. A large project board can become unwieldy and inhibit decision-making.</p>	<p>A number of deficiencies in the roles and responsibilities for the project were identified from the stakeholder interviews carried out in 2004.</p> <p>‘The majority of stakeholders stated that they had no clear idea as to the ownership of the project, the roles they were supposed to take or who they should talk to about participation. There were no clear engagement or governance structures for people to refer to.’</p>	<p>The HIT programme board (eight people) is considered to be the project board, but this does not follow the PRINCE2 model.</p> <p>This board does not receive all project reports (for example highlight reports) from the project team, and reporting is done via a Programme Manager using the quarterly returns required by the external funding bodies.</p> <p>Project management reporting is sent to the Head of ICT and then to the Council’s management team for project management decisions (eg risk management). This structure is considered to work well.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Project manager			
<p>Is there a trained and/or experienced project manager who understands his/her responsibility is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the project produces the required products; • ensure products are of the required standard; • ensure tasks are completed within the specified constraints of time and cost; • report progress and risks to the Project Board; • assess and report on project risks? 	<p>This role is often assigned to available personnel within an organisation without the appropriate qualifications. This is recognised as a key reason for failure of many projects as Project managers have to learn their mistakes 'on the job' and are unsure of their responsibilities.</p>	<p>There were two project managers for the original project.</p> <p>PM1 – January 2003 to July 2003.</p> <p>PM2 – July 2003 to April 2004.</p> <p>The first project manager was a contractor who did not comply with PRINCE2 standards.</p> <p>The second project manager spent most of his time sorting out budget issues and closing down the project.</p> <p>There was little perceived support for project managers when unapproved purchasing decisions were made by departments.</p> <p>Stakeholders were unclear about who was running the project.</p>	<p>An external project manager was engaged from Xayce in June 2004 (having already carried out the re-scoping exercise).</p> <p>An in-house project manager took over the role in May 2005.</p> <p>The new project manager and his assistant are not trained in the PRINCE2 method though they both have experience of running projects to PRINCE2 standards.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Project assurance			
<p>Have trained and/or experienced personnel been identified at the start of the project to undertake project assurance? Do they have sufficient independence from the project management team?</p>	<p>This is the independent monitoring of project progress on behalf of the project board. This can encompass business, technical and user issues.</p>	<p>Internal Audit (IA) carried out a review of the project dated January 2004 and a number of recommendations were made. However, this was hampered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little project documentation being available; and • no access to information being collated for an internal review of the HIT programme. 	<p>One of the Council's project managers has project assurance responsibilities for major projects. A limited amount of work has been done to ensure the project manager is complying with council standards.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Team and users			
<p>Are team members with the required level of expertise allocated to the project?</p> <p>Are these team members named on the project plan?</p> <p>Has the actual availability of these team members been checked and committed to?</p>	<p>Team members could include managers of affected services, support staff, IT representatives, users etc.</p> <p>When the project plan is signed off, this should commit the project board to ensure those staff are available at the required time. Actual, rather than theoretical, availability should therefore be checked.</p>	<p>No detail available on staff availability and skills.</p> <p>The Jan 2004 IA report showed tensions over the level of support between the Head of e-Modernisation and the then Head of ICT.</p> <p>ICT was not included in the decision-making on the original choice of platform and technical delivery was fragmented.</p>	<p>Roles and responsibilities of team members are now defined, with ICT involved as appropriate.</p> <p>The migration project had very tight and immovable timescales for some elements due to the need to comply with the new Freedom of Information Act that came into force in January 2005. Staff were required to work additional hours in order to complete content entry deadlines.</p> <p>For remaining projects, content entry will be the responsibility of site owners/users.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Scope			
<p>Has the scope of the project been defined and agreed eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the products and outcomes from the project; • whether any other project initiation requests address the same business need and whether they might be combined or interfaced; • existing processes, systems etc included; • organisations and user departments included within the project scope; and • what the project does not include. 	<p>Setting out the scope of the project at this stage helps to prevent 'scope creep'. This is where extra requirements are gradually added to the original project adding to its complexity and impacting on resource and timescales.</p> <p>This is one of the main causes of the failure of large projects.</p>	<p>There was a lack of clarity over what the e-Gateway was. There were a large number of stakeholders each with their own interpretation of how the e-Gateway would meet their needs.</p> <p>The re-scoping review found that 85 per cent of stakeholders 'had no clear idea of what the project would deliver'.</p>	<p>A strategy for the e-Gateway was developed in 2004 following the re-scoping exercise.</p> <p>Work packages and deliverables were defined. This was presented to the Herefordshire Partnership Board and included in the quarterly returns to the external funding bodies.</p> <p>A detailed PID for the agreed project was produced. This has not yet been updated to reflect the new deliverables post January 2005.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Acceptance criteria			
<p>Have the key factors over which the product/service will be accepted been clearly defined eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting statutory guidelines; • minimum acceptable quality; • when the outcome is acceptable (for example, smooth running for a given period); • availability; • impact on staff; • impact on the public; • security. 	<p>This should be used as a baseline for quality reviews when designing and testing.</p>	<p>The lack of clarity over scope and deliverables meant that no detailed acceptance criteria were set down.</p>	<p>No acceptance criteria are detailed in the PID.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Risk management			
<p>Is a risk log is available summarising the following?</p> <p>All the events that may adversely affect the project have been identified and their probability assessed.</p> <p>Actions have been taken to reduce the probability and/or impact, or contingency plans have been put in place for if the event should occur.</p> <p>Ownership has been allocated to each risk.</p>	<p>Risk management addresses the likelihood of undesirable events and their potential impact. By successfully managing risk it is possible to reduce the likelihood of the event happening and/or reduce the harm done.</p>	<p>No risk log available for review.</p>	<p>A risk log was included as part of the regular highlight reports to the Head of ICT and Director of Policy and Community. Ownership was assigned and mitigating actions taken.</p> <p>The HIT Programme Board, although nominally the project board does not receive detailed project communications but only the quarterly returns. This is not an issue in itself as long as the documents all deliver the same messages at a level appropriate to the audience.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Communication			
<p>Is there is a clear plan for communicating project objectives, tasks and progress to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corporate management; • the project sponsor and project board; • the project team; • users and stakeholders; • suppliers; • contractors; and • other third parties? 	<p>It is difficult to ensure that there is adequate communication on requirements, progress and problems. Explicit communication plans and reporting channels and frequencies are therefore needed.</p> <p>The PID should identify how and when communication is appropriate, for example, meetings, newsletters, intranet, awareness raising workshops.</p>	<p>Poor communication was ranked as the number one issue on the original project. Stakeholders interviewed stated that inadequate information was provided on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the project would deliver; • what services the project would make available; • who was responsible for specific elements of the project; • progress of the project and of work requested; and • reasons for delays or changing scope. 	<p>A decision was taken at the start of the Phase 2 project to limit communication with stakeholders to details of tangible deliveries in order to manage expectations.</p> <p>This is seen as an area for improvement (see Lessons learned in project closure report). The new project manager is to develop a communications plan but this is not yet available.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Change control			
<p>Have protocols for handling changes to the project or specification been defined and agreed?</p> <p>Are roles and responsibilities for assessing and authorising change controls clear?</p>	<p>Changes to the original plans and requirements will inevitably be required.</p> <p>In order to control this and avoid 'scope creep' the protocols for managing changes should be defined at PID stage.</p> <p>Each change should be logged and its priority assessed against others by individuals with specific responsibility for this by the Project Manager.</p> <p>Once outside tolerance the Project Board must agree to increase resources, change the requirements or close the project.</p>	<p>No documentation on change control known of.</p>	<p>The project manager had delegated responsibility for authorising changes. This was not within tolerance constraints.</p> <p>The project manager produced quarterly SRB plans for the project that were reviewed and agreed by the Herefordshire Partnership.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Project plan			
<p>Is there a high level project plan showing the major products of the project, when they will be delivered and at what cost?</p> <p>Is it included as part of the project initiation document (PID) for agreement?</p> <p>Does the project plan have short stages, each capable of delivering a product/service.</p> <p>Does the first stage show detail of resource, tasks, and deliverables?</p> <p>Is there a start and end date for each stage and for the project as a whole?</p> <p>Does the plan include milestone checkpoints for specific reviews of progress and risks?</p>	<p>The project plan is often produced initially as a high level document and then never amended.</p> <p>It should be monitored and updated throughout the lifecycle of the project and is a crucial document for the project board.</p>	<p>No project plan available to review.</p>	<p>A project plan was developed for the project that ran from July 2004 to March 2005. Delivery was made on target.</p> <p>For the project post-March there is a high level list of deliverables up to March 2006 and reporting is made to the funding bodies against these milestones.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Costs			
<p>Have proper mechanisms been established for the authorisation, coding and reporting of all project costs?</p>	<p>Project costs and forecasts must be monitored on a regular basis by the project manager to ensure that tolerance limits are not exceeded.</p>	<p>Spend against budget was detailed in the quarterly returns to the funding bodies. The strategic review found at the time of closure £583,790.80 had been spent on the project including IT services staff costs.</p>	<p>Spend against budget is detailed in the quarterly returns to the funding bodies.</p>
Documentation and filing			
<p>Is a filing system defined, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documented structure; • responsibility for project filing; • version control; and • audit trails. 	<p>Where a project is taking place over several sites, and where different groups and organisations are involved, it is easy for project documentation to become fragmented. Each version of a document should have a unique version number and date. Documentation should be easily accessible by the project management team.</p>	<p>Little project documentation was produced. This was confirmed by the Internal Audit report on the project in January 2004.</p>	<p>Project filing is maintained in a documentation library on the intranet. This is now standard procedure for all projects. The new SAP system will eventually be used for storing and using project documentation.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Project outcome			
<p>Has the project initiation document (and any approved updates to this) been examined to check the actual results and benefits of the project against expectations?</p> <p>Where a project has been closed prematurely, has what has been achieved been documented?</p> <p>Have follow on action recommendations been made, where appropriate?</p>	<p>In many projects the anticipated benefits are 'oversold' when developing the business case in order to secure funding. Project team members are then reluctant to compare actual outcomes against what they originally proposed. This does need to be done, however, as part of the process of 'continuous improvement'.</p>	<p>The outcomes of the original project were too high level and vague to be useful for measuring outcomes.</p> <p>There was no PID against which outcomes could be measured.</p> <p>When the project was closed in April 2004, only one website (PLEA) had been developed.</p>	<p>Achievement against milestones is reported to the funding bodies in the quarterly monitoring reports.</p>
Lessons learned report			
<p>Were lessons learned reports produced for each stage of the project?</p> <p>Following the internal review of the project, has a final report been prepared and made available outside the project (for example, to the organisation's quality assurance team)? This should be used by future projects.</p>	<p>Each organisation should learn from its experiences, both good and bad, in order to make continuous improvements.</p> <p>A corporate group should be responsible for maintaining lessons learned information from each project so that good practice and information on potential risks can be shared across the whole organisation.</p>	<p>No lessons learned report available for review from the original project that was closed in April 2004.</p> <p>However, the re-scoping exercise gathered together all the weaknesses of the original project and documented these in the strategic review document.</p>	<p>Included in the project closure report (May 2005). See below.</p>

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
End project report			
Has an end project report been prepared for the project board?	<p>The end project report should set out how well the project has performed against the original PID, including in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost; • timescales; and • business case. 	There is no end project report for the original project and no PID against which to assess outcomes.	<p>An end project report (project closure) was produced in May 2005, even though further project stages are underway.</p> <p>This report documented the outcome of the project that was run by the external project manager up to 31 March 2005.</p> <p>It included an evaluation of the outcomes of the project against plans, lessons learned and follow on actions.</p>
Archiving files			
Have project records been archived for audit use or to inform future projects (for example, metrics)?	Metrics from the project can be used to inform and refine estimating on future projects.	Project documentation was scarce and fragmented.	Project filing is maintained in a documentation library on the intranet.

Issue	Good practice/information	Original project to April 2004	Current project July 2004
Post-project review			
<p>Has a date been set for a post-project review, usually three to six months after closure of the project?</p>	<p>A post-project review will assess the actual benefits of the product(s) against the business case (ie whether the expected benefits have been realised and if the product has caused any problems in use).</p>	<p>The re-scoping exercise gathered together all the weaknesses of the original project and documented these in the strategic review document.</p>	<p>End project reviews will take place for AWM (March 2006) and GOWM (March 2007) when their respective funding streams come to an end. There are no plans yet to carry out a post-project review at the Council, but this would be expected for compliance with its PRINCE2 standard.</p>

Appendix 2 – e-Gateway funding analysis

- 1 2001/02 to 2003/04 figures are taken from SRB reports.
- 2 2004/05 to 2006/07 are taken from PID, last updated April 2005.

		Phase 1				Phase 2			
		2001/02	2002/03	2003/04		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	
SRB capital				298,379		774,534	239,225		
SRB revenue		70,434	1,126	33,284					
Council		1,254	38,193	124,546		196,039	103,864	46,556	
ERDF capital						346,698	140,359		
ERDF revenue						308,434	263,691	263,820	
Other public funding			72,096	68,170					
Total per year		71,688	111,415	524,379		1,625,705	747,139	310,376	
Total per phase					707,482				2,683,220
Total project	3,390,702								

Appendix 3 – Programme outcomes and the impact on the citizens of Herefordshire

Are e-government services based on consultation with and the needs of the community?

- 1 The Council's consultation programme has limited influence over its investment in e-government. The HIT (Herefordshire in Touch) programme carried out a MORI poll which highlighted the need for one stop shops, an e-Gateway, wider access to broadband and improved ICT skills in the workforce. However, since then there has been little e-government related consultation directly with citizens. As part of the strategic review of the e-Gateway project stakeholders were canvassed as to their expectations from the project, but this revealed that poor communication had meant stakeholders were unclear about fundamental aspects of the project. Social care clients are being consulted on their views of the use of tablet PCs for recording assessments. There is a risk that the Council's investment in e-government does not deliver services that meet the changing needs of its citizens.
- 2 Where relevant consultation has taken place there is evidence that it has informed decision-making. Stakeholder analysis played a key role in the creation of the initial stages of the e-Gateway project. Lessons learned from the strategic review of the e-Gateway included the need for improved communication with stakeholders and a communications strategy is to be produced. Discussions with rural community groups about the implementation of kiosks have led to the consideration of placing them in pubs rather than schools.
- 3 There are processes in place to keep intelligence up-to-date for the Council and its partners, but this information is not yet being consistently used to evaluate the impact of specific e-government investments on citizens. Mechanisms have been put in place to monitor the uptake of information and services online, although these are in the early stages of development. The Council has a wealth of information about Herefordshire, collected by the research team, and the corporate GIS project is intended to deliver the capability to maintain, search for and access all GIS based data across the council through a web-based interface.
- 4 The Council works with partners in the Herefordshire Partnership to share information to improve its understanding of community need. The Herefordshire Information and Research Network (HIRN) provides expertise and help for a variety of tasks including development of databases, survey design, mapping of information and statistical analysis and makes available data and research findings about Herefordshire. The revised community involvement strategy requires departments to log consultations and share information and this is available to partner organisations.
- 5 The consultation finder that was due to be introduced during 2005 will also provide a platform for partners to share information.

Does the e-government programme improve access to services that citizens need in ways that they will use?

- 6 There is a range of access channels, both mediated and self service, available including:
 - telephone;
 - written;
 - face-to-face;
 - web; and
 - email.
- 7 There are also proposals for a contact centre and kiosks. However, to date, the approach to the development of these has not been co-ordinated which means that access may not always be made available via the most effective channels.
- 8 INFO is a customer service initiative that aims to provide easier access to information and services for the residents and visitors to Herefordshire. Primarily, INFO deals with requests for Herefordshire Council services and can also signpost customers to the other local organisations. Access to INFO can be via a dedicated telephone number, email address or the INFO Shops and points located across the county.
- 9 The integration of the INFO shops with other services, for example with the library and leisure facilities at Bromyard, enhances the ability to offer longer opening hours and is a good model for sustaining access.
- 10 The Council still has a number of websites, such as education, which have not been consolidated on to the e-Gateway platform, and not all services are available at all one-stop shops. The provision of email contact addresses on the website is not consistent. This can be confusing for the citizen and makes it difficult to access information.
- 11 There is a customer charter for INFO, which is being revisited as part of the development of the customer services strategy, and is published on the website, although it does not cover the electronic provision of services. However, performance against the charter is not available and it is not clear if the charter applies across all services.
- 12 Currently standards are monitored by performance managers in individual services and monitoring is not consistent across the authority. So the Council does not have an accurate view of performance against the standards.
- 13 The INFO shops have carried out customer satisfaction surveys, both exit and on street, and results for surveys carried out in summer 2005 indicated that nearly all users were satisfied with the service received, the majority rating them as good or excellent.

- 14 The Council's own analysis of the telephone statistics has revealed that callers are receiving a poor service from some departments. The Council has problems with answering Direct Dial (DDI) calls and the percentage of missed calls is at least 50 per cent in two departments. Overall, across the Council in the first quarter 2005/06, the DDI loss rate on all calls was 19 per cent.
- 15 The Council uses a number of channels to publicise information on its services to the communities and citizens that it serves. These include the Council and Herefordshire Partnership websites, Herefordshire Matters, which is sent to all citizens and has featured promotion of the website, local area forums and Herefordshire Partnership Newsletters. Promotion of online services through the website has been supplemented by directing users to pay online in their council tax statements. Citizens should be aware of the various access channels available to them.
- 16 The Council considers that until broadband is more widely available across Herefordshire increased promotion of electronic services is unlikely to deliver increased take up.
- 17 While the e-Gateway project has been created by the Herefordshire Partnership to give citizens electronic access to services regardless of organisational boundaries, there is currently limited use of e-government to break down departmental barriers in favour of the user citizen experience. Although the website is now organised around the LGOL categories, information provision is still very service specific and partner information is not yet readily available on the Council's website. For example the information relating to care for older people provided on the website is hard to find and does not include NHS related information.

Does e-government provision lead to improved service delivery?

- 18 The e-government programme is aligned with the Council's improvement plans and is being used to deliver service improvements, although this is under development.
- 19 The Information Policy Group (IPG), chaired by the Director of Policy and Community, has a corporate overview. It meets on a monthly basis to consider all IT/e-government related business cases and all projects must demonstrate how each project will help achieve both e-government and service improvement targets and what benefits will ensue. A new benefits tracking method has been introduced to improve the monitoring of benefits delivery. As part of PRINCE2 project closure, an assessment is made of project delivery against the business case although currently not all project closures complete this activity.

- 20 There are some examples of business process re-engineering (BPR) being used to drive service improvement. As part of the implementation of Academy within revenues and benefits, processes and structures were redesigned to provide more emphasis on front line staff. The time taken for new claims to be processed was reduced from 40 days to just over 10 days. However, BPR in relation to customer relationship management (CRM) and INFO shops, is only just starting in the rest of the Council, with environmental health and social services. In the latter customer service officers have been introduced to reduce the number of unnecessary assessments by social workers thus freeing them up to spend more time with vulnerable people.
- 21 Although the Council is using CRM techniques to a limited extent within certain departments this is fragmented, inconsistent and not applied corporately leading to duplication and higher costs. The CRM system has only been implemented within the one-stop shops and across a limited number of services. It is not integrated with back office services and there are constraints with reporting from the system. For example, there is no direct link to the social services system and social care offices do not have the CRM system.
- 22 Some of the right building blocks to enable future improvements are being put in place. A £3 million investment is currently being undertaken to upgrade the Council's network. Over 18 person training weeks have been delivered since the HIT project began, with another 15 planned for this financial year. Due to the current economic climate within Herefordshire and the impact of job evaluation, the permanent recruitment of IT professional for support has proved challenging. However, a number of contract IT staff have been engaged to augment the permanent staff where skills and experience were deemed lacking and to work with permanent staff to ensure skills transfer for future sustainability.
- 23 Capacity has not been a business critical issue in the sense that ICT have made good progress in terms of its direction of travel delivering a number of key initiatives. We recognise there is still work to be done and staff and management alike are optimistic that the strategic priorities of Herefordshire Council and its partners will be achieved to plan.
- 24 While the Cabinet is already involved with the e-government agenda and member engagement with e-government has increased over the last 12 months it is not clear whether there is wholehearted support from the wider membership for some of the structural changes that are required to lever the maximum benefits from investment in e-government. To date scrutiny has not been concerned with IT or e-government issues but the Strategic Monitoring Committee will now receive regular reports. This will allow members to monitor the progress of the programme and the delivery of benefits.

- 25 The approach to the management and use of service user and customer information to configure e-government services effectively is under development. The Council can check key metrics such as on online payment figures and online jobs application figures. However it is not clear how this information is used to configure services. To increase the robustness of the usage statistics for the web, new reporting software is being implemented. It is intended that will be used to inform decision-making. Telephone answering statistics reports are produced and analysed as are INFO shop surveys.

Is e-government used to improve consultation with and the engagement of key stakeholders, service users and citizens?

- 26 The Council is making use of e-government to improve communication with service users, citizens, partners and stakeholders.
- 27 There are a number of examples of web-based consultation. The review of the Herefordshire Plan in 2005 was used as a pilot for the use of electronic consultation techniques. The 2004 council tax consultation was also available on the web. The LTP consultation pages provide details of other relevant consultations and feed back where appropriate. However, information about the various consultations is not effectively co-ordinated across the website. This should change following the implementation of a software package which has recently been procured to track consultations and ensure an effective feedback loop on the web.
- 28 The web also has been used to promote face to face consultations such as the budget and UDP consultations at Local Area Fora (2004) and the review of the community strategy (via the partnership website).
- 29 Access to democratic information is good. All councillors have an email address, it is possible to search for a councillor on the website and it is anticipated that each member will have a webpage by the end of the year. All agendas, papers and decisions are available on the Council's website.

Does e-government investment increase social inclusion?

- 30 ICT and e-government have been used in a number of ways to address social inclusion. However the approach is not co-ordinated with various projects being developed by different parts of the Council. This means that scarce resources may not be used effectively and learning may not be shared.
- 31 Accessibility has been improved across the website which is now compliant with eGMS and eGIF standards as well as the Disability Discrimination Act. The website is monitored for DDA infringements with a view to ensuring that all citizens within Herefordshire can access the site. However, although Herefordshire has many seasonal workers, mainly from Eastern Europe and Portugal, who are heavy users of the internet facilities in libraries at weekends and in the evenings, there is no use of any language other than English on the website.

- 32** All young people in care have access to a PC. However, carers' concerns regarding vulnerable children having direct access to the Internet mean that not all of them can access the web or run their own email address from home. For those that do, or can use email via a pc at school or college, the 'Voices' group has its own email address and phone number. These details are supplied to carers, social workers and all children in care and messages are regularly picked up by the Voices workers. All young people in care also have access to the mobile number of the children's rights and advocacy worker. In addition, many workers text and/or call young people they are working with via mobile phone.
- 33** Social care staff have been trialling the use of tablet PCs to record SAP assessments of older people in their homes. This has enabled social workers to spend more time with the clients and less on administration as they are able to print the assessment as entered.
- 34** The Council's future plans to address social exclusion through investment in e-government are not well defined. However, the Herefordshire In Touch Programme's community access point project is investigating the provision of subsidised broadband access, learning opportunities and online advice via the e-Gateway with a view to reducing social exclusion. Community access points (CAP) will be set up through consultation with community groups, dependent on them being able to meet criteria for access and sustainability. An investigation of INFO Shop's requirements for mobile usage in connection with mobile libraries is also being undertaken.
- 35** The InSITE website, supported by the Council, is part of Youth Times, a publishing, training and local democracy scheme for young people and aims to improve their engagement with democratic processes. This site has recently been migrated to the e-Gateway.

Appendix 4 – Action plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
7	R1 Ensure that the project management arrangements for the latest stage of the e-Gateway project comply with the Council's PRINCE 2 standards.	2	SW RK MF MT	Yes	<p>The Council contends that project management arrangements do comply with PRINCE2 standards. An action plan is now in place to ensure the continual update of key documentation.</p> <p>Links will be placed in the PID to update its content to the working documents including SRB returns, benefits realisation etc.</p> <p>Change control procedures are now in place for all projects in accordance with PRINCE2 guidelines.</p> <p>The project manager is to undergo PRINCE2 training and the formal project review process that is in place with the Head of Information, Technology and Customer Services and senior managers acts as a means of capturing any potential issues that may arise.</p>	Active from 1 January 2006. Expected completion end of April 2006.

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
7	R2 Develop and implement an e-government communications plan to ensure that all stakeholders are appropriately informed and consulted.	2	RK	Yes	<p>An action plan is underway to involve even more closely Partnership stakeholders. Part of this will include an updated centralised communication plan. In addition, the Herefordshire Connects Programme, customer access points and customer services strategy implementation projects are being aligned with the e-Gateway programme to ensure better communication to all stakeholders with a clear and consistent message.</p> <p>Stakeholder management will be revisited during the e-Gateway strategy work. Alignment of CAPS, e-Gateway and the Herefordshire Connects programme will include a citizen consultation to determine priorities.</p>	<p>Active from 1 January 2006. Communications plan completed 20 February 2006.</p> <p>Scheduled meetings with stakeholders for mid-March.</p> <p>Herefordshire Connects Phase 1 complete April 2006.</p>

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
8	R3 Develop a strategic approach to the use of access channels across the Council to ensure appropriate, clear and consistent methods of access are available to citizens.	2	PD EP RK	Yes	Contained within draft customer service strategy.	Strategy approved 2005. Herefordshire Connects Programme Phase 1 completes April 2006 to determine sequencing of projects.
8	R4 Ensure that appropriate partner information is easily accessible from the Council website.	2	JH EP	Yes	The authority will ensure that Partnerships be made more visible on the site by moving the link to the homepage. Organisational responsibility will be allocated to appoint a department to ensure Partnership information is up-to-date and correct.	Complete.
8	R5 Provide a means of electronic communication with all relevant services.	3	JH RB Directorate heads	Yes	Email addresses for all services available on site. Herefordshire Connects to determine priorities for e-enablement.	Emails 1 February 2006. Herefordshire Connects April 2006.

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
8	R6 Develop and implement a corporate approach to the performance management of customer services to drive service improvement.	3	JH	Yes	This is already underway. The corporate performance management project is underway to ensure a consistent approach to improvement. Herefordshire Connects has identified performance management as one of three key streams of work to be undertaken.	Herefordshire Connects April 2006.
8	R7 Review the implementation of the CRM system and assess the benefits of integration with back office systems.	3	JH	Yes	CRM requirements gathering has now been completed across the entire organisation. (Herefordshire Connects) is underway and some of these requirements may alter.	Kicked off 1 November 2005.
9	R8 Develop a corporate approach to the use of ICT and e-government to address social inclusion that allows for shared learning and economies of scale.	2	JH	Yes	The Authority will incorporate this into the corporate ICT strategy project already underway.	Current.