CABINET
7 JUNE 2005

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06
IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Don Bristow,
Resource Management Portfolio

Responsible Director(s) - Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for the release of Capital Grant funds awarded to the Council for successfully producing a suitable Implementing Electronic Government 2004 (IEG4) statement.

Information and Analysis

2. As Members will be aware the government's Implementing Electronic Government programme has already resulted in the award of £200,000 in each of the financial years 2002/2003 and 2003/2004, with an additional £350,000 awarded in 2004/2005.

3. This grant has been used to assist with the achievement of the governments target of having 100% of services available electronically by the end of 2005, primarily through the development of the Council's website, but also by the purchase and development of IT system modules across the Council.

4. The development of the website has been a joint project between the Council and Waterstons of Durham who were appointed after a European tender process.

5. The 2004/2005 IEG3 grant was used to assist with the purchase of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) computer system for use within the council and was also used to further develop the website and related ICT systems. A brief description of some of the system and website improvements is attached as **Appendix 1**.

6. The Council submitted its IEG4 statement in December 2004 and was subsequently informed that the submission had been accepted and that we would qualify for funding of £150,000 in 2005/6.

7. Award of the grant is dependant upon continuing progress against the Council's IEG statements and the governments identified priority services.

8. Lead departmental officers on the Corporate IT Working Group are currently assessing how the priority targets that their department has involvement with can be delivered.

9. The following areas for the potential allocation of the £150,000 have currently been identified, with more detailed work required by the Corporate ICT Working Group to make a final recommendation on the exact split of the grant.

   (a) E-procurement development.
   (b) Self service capability for the CRM system (this would allow citizen's to enter service request directly into the CRM system via our website and monitor progress of their request)
   (c) Further development of website functionality
   (d) Development or acquisition of e-enabling IT system modules for delivery of the government's priority outcomes.

10. The work that Waterstons have already done for the Council has been to a very high standard and delivered on time and within budget. As the original work identified in the contract for the website development has now been completed, their current daily rate is now £595, which is an acceptable figure, as it is at the bottom of the range for ICT consultants used by the Council. These rates are normally within the range of £595 to £1,500. An extremely good working relationship between staff from both organisations has also developed.

11. Given that the structure of the website has been developed by Waterstons and the fact that they have continued to work alongside Council staff to deliver further improvements, it would be sensible to have any further development work also carried out by them.

12. To allow the work to be progressed by Waterstons it will be necessary to ask Council to waive Contract Procedure Rules.

13. To summarise the position, it is proposed that the IEG4 funding be allocated to: e-procurement £50,000, CRM self help £21,000, further website development (£20,000) and the remaining balance to be used to deliver the governments priority services by the development and/or the acquisition of suitable IT solutions, as identified by the Corporate ICT Working Group.

Financial Implications

14. Members may recall that additional annual revenue funding of £20,000 was agreed in 2001 for website initiatives (Minute C383/May/01 refers). To date, this has been sufficient to pay for the annual recurring costs of the Website and other related software. There is however a need to increase this amount to £30,000 per annum as more recurring costs are inevitably being incurred.

Legal Implications

15. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

16. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

17. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

18. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Recommendation

19. It is recommended that :-

(a) The £150,000 IEG4 Capital Grant be released for the following purposes :-

   (i) Assist with the Implementation of the e-procurement strategy £50,000
   (ii) CRM system enhancements £21,000
   (iii) Further website development £20,000
   (iv) Achievement of the governments priority services £59,000

(b) Council be asked to Waive Contract Procedure Rules to allow any further website development work identified with regard to achieving the government's priority services to be negotiated with the Council's current website development partner Waterstons.

(c) Provision be made for an additional £10,000 revenue budget for recurring ICT costs related to the implementation of e-government.

Reasons

20. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

(a) It supports the Council's Electronic Government Strategy and IEG statements.

(b) It will allow the Council to deliver the priority services as identified by the government.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers
IEG4 statement

Ken Walker : Extension 2367

ICT System acquisitions

On-line booking systems for:
- Civic Theatre and Art Centre (Galithea system)
- Leisure (Torex system)

A contribution (£100,000) to the CRM system

GIS software to enhance Internet and Intranet capability

Website and related systems developments

eServices Platform
Citizens can securely subscribe to view their Council tax balance, housing tenancy rent statement, and view detailed planning decisions within a vicinity of their postcode. User details are cross checked against Electoral Roll data and system source data for the relevant services. A secure management system allows Council staff to monitor subscriptions, manually authenticate users and highlight suspicious activity.

Electronic Forms
Launched approximately 20 forms, allowing citizens to complete online transactions including enrolling at the library, appealing parking penalties, enrolling for fitness courses and requesting information across several departments.

Register Office Searching System
Enables citizens to search for and buy birth, death and marriage certificates, and research their genealogy.

Record of Democratic Decision (Delegated Powers)
Web site visitors can search the database of democratic decisions by type of delegated power, effected wards and Members. Council staff can add delegated powers to the system using an electronic form, which allows the selection of wards, Members and powers using drop down lists.

Schools Extranet
Secure Schools Extranet developed to allow Education to post files, notices and events for consumption by borough schools. Content can be restricted to a specific school or published to all schools. Schools can subscribe to be notified of content changes in topic areas which interest them.

Meeting Agendas, Minutes and Reports
Browse or search Council agendas, minutes and reports across all public committees. System includes a management interface for Democratic Services staff to securely add content.

Search Facility
Search updated for better content indexing, and now divides search results into web pages, documents and meeting agendas, minutes and reports, with a new 'top 5' best bets system.

Recruitment
Visitors can browse job vacancies online, download an application pack or apply directly using an electronic form. Online applications are formatted to look the same as paper based applications when received by Recruitment staff. Staff can also use a management system to automatically generate the 'Job Scene' paper-based vacancy information brochure.

eGIF Compliance Report

The report focused on compliance areas in the current eGIF/ Technical Standards Catalogue which affect the website, and website auxiliary systems (such as eServices and data imports). The report concluded there was no immediate need to implement eGIF changes. The web site broadly conforms to the egad policy and technical standards.

Forward Plan

The web-enabled Forward Plan sets out all the matters that are likely to be the subject of a key decision by the Council's Cabinet during the following four month period, and is searchable by Citizens.

Site Passes RNIB

After extensive redevelopment, the site passes the strict RNIB assessment and is allowed to host the RNIB logo for a year.

eConsultation

Waterstons release the eConsultation framework, a collection of electronic forms and explanatory information to guide departments in hosting their own electronic consultations via the site.

Redesigned Site Launches

- Fresh look and feel for 2005, with improved navigation requested by users through the site survey conducted earlier in the year
- Even more accessible for text based browsers, non-Microsoft browsers and when printing pages
- New and updated content section showcases recent additions

- RSS feeds allow desktop news reader software and third-party sites access to Council news; events information; Council job vacancies; meeting agendas, minutes and reports.
- Content categorised under new Government Category Listings, broadly based around the old theme system
- Government-standard content meta-data on every page

Text Messaging System

Development of the first phase of the text messaging system is completed and integrated into eServices. No Council departments elect to use the system, but two pilot programs are suggested which would require changes to the existing features. The changes are to be completed in April 2005.

Forward Plan Extensions

More features added to the forward plan system as requested by Democratic Services.

Freedom of Information Tracking System

Electronic form submission and a management system to handle Freedom of Information requests, Data Protection Subject Access Requests and requests made under the new Environmental Information Regulations. The management system allows the Information Manager to charge departmental coordinators with research tasks and view progress and results on a single screen.