AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee	**Resources, Performance & Development Overview & Scrutiny**
Date of Committee	**14 November 2006**
Report Title	**e-Government – Achievement to date, and the future**
Summary	This document reports on our achievements in this area, and future activities beyond the e-Government target dates, including the new Transformational Government initiative.
For further information please contact:	Tonino Ciuffini Head of ICT Tel: 01926 (41)2879 toninociuffini@warwickshire.gov.uk
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?	No.
Background papers	None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-   Details to be specified

Other Committees	☐	....
Local Member(s)	☒	Cllr David Booth – For Comment Cllr George Atkinson – For Comment Cllr Bob Hicks – For Comment
Other Elected Members	☐	....
Cabinet Member	☒	Cllr Alan Cockburn, For Information
Chief Executive	☐	....
Legal	☒	Sarah Duxbury – Comments included
Finance	☒	David Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources – No Comment
Other Chief Officers	☒	David Carter, Strategic Director Performance & Development

District Councils	☐	....
Health Authority	☐	....
Police	☐	....
Other Bodies/Individuals	☐	Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer, Performance & Development

FINAL DECISION   NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS: Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee	☐	....
To Council	☐	....
To Cabinet	☐	....
To an O & S Committee	☐	....
To an Area Committee	☐	....
Further Consultation	☐	....

Warwickshire
County Council

Resources, Performance & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

14th November 2006

e-Government – Achievement to date, and the future

Report of the Director of Resources

Executive Summary

In April 2006 Warwickshire along with other local Authorities submitted their Implementing e-Government Statement 6 (IEG6) reporting their achievements against the e-Government Targets set for December 2005 and March 2006. This document reports on our achievements in this area.

Resources, Performance & Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note our achievements in this area in the e-Government period, and to continue to monitor our progress in the future Transformational Government arena which is currently being defined for Local Government.

Resources, Performance & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

14th November 2006

e-Government – Achievement to date, and the future

Report of the Director of Resources

Recommendation

Resources, Performance & Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note our achievements in this area in the e-Government period, and to continue to monitor our progress in the future Transformational Government arena which is currently being defined for Local Government.

---

1. Introduction

1.1 In April 2006 Warwickshire along with other local Authorities submitted their Implementing e-Government Statement 6 (IEG6) reporting their achievements against the e-Government Targets set for December 2005 and March 2006. A copy of the document is available at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/e-government .

1.2 The document was agreed by the Portfolio Holder and party spokespersons. As the IEG6 was a Government Pro-forma and not particularly 'reader friendly' it was agreed that the Head of ICT would provide a report later in the year reporting on our e-Government achievements. This document reports on our achievements in this area.

2. e-Government Period Achievements

2.1 Over the e-Government period of 2001 to 2006 Warwickshire County Council introduced a wide range of new electronic services for our citizens, customers and staff.

2.2 We have seen tremendous improvements in our web site, which is now one of the most heavily used local Authority sites.

- 97% of our services are available via our web site.

Warwickshire
County Council

- We offer transactional services 24 hours a day in areas such as paying invoices online, joining the library, renewing library books, reporting faults, applying for fire certificates and a range of other services available at **http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/doitonline**.

- We are one of only 60 local authorities to have been awarded the top category "transactional" status in the 2006 SOCITM (Society of Information Technology Management) "Better Connected" survey, and we are also placed in the top 9 county sites.

- We were awarded the maximum 21 points in the latest Pendleton Survey of online planning facilities.

- Our website was selected as the 'Best Environmental Website' at the 2006 British Environment and Media Awards presented by the World Wildlife Fund.

- Our site has been recognised by the SOCITM "Working with Business Review" as being in the top 5 of both County Council web sites, and West Midlands web sites in terms of providing services to businesses.

2.3   We long held the view that just offering services electronically was more than just a target, and was not the most important measure of the effectiveness of our e-services. The benefits from our investment are only realised if we can encourage the use of the web site and other channels by our citizens.

- Our web site usage is rising; there was a 57% increase in the numbers of Web Pages viewed in 2005/6 compared with the previous financial year.

- Through our work leading the national I&DeA esd-toolkit workstream on measuring the take-up of electronic services, we were identified as the 12th most visited council web site nationally and the second most visited in the West Midlands.

2.4   We have also looked to more formally identify efficiency savings as a result of the use of our web site, and have been the subject of a SOCITM Insight Case Study reporting how we have demonstrated over £700,000 non-cashable efficiency savings in this area. Thanks to our participation in the SOCITM Web site Take-up Survey, we have been able to establish that 55% of visitors to our web site would otherwise have contacted the authority, and taking conservative estimates of the costs avoided as result of this we are now claiming over £1,000,000 of non cashable savings in this area for 2005/06. Our work in this area is now being referenced by DCLG as part of their national electronic service take-up campaign.

Warwickshire
County Council

2.5   The use of our delegated web content management system by service directorate staff continues to contribute to the overall success of the site, and over the four years of our programme we have moved from the central web team having to encourage services to use the web site, to staff now viewing the site as a key, and integrated part of their service delivery.

2.6   The web site is at the heart of e-Government in terms of offering the 24x7 self service access to services, and consistent information for use by WCC staff across all customer access channels. However, our consultation via our Citizen Panel and other fora has identified that the telephone is, and is likely to remain the main access channel for citizens for the immediate future. As a result of this we developed a Customer Service Centre (CSC) which now offers:-

- Contact Centre style services in the areas of Social Care, Libraries, Heritage, Trading Standards, Highways and Fire & Rescue.   It is planned to extend the range of services covered by the Customer Service Centre as part of the roll-out of our access strategy.

- Significantly extended telephone contact hours in line with citizens' requirements; the CSC is open 8-8 weekdays, and Saturday mornings.

- A joint Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and advanced telephony facilities in partnership with all the District Councils in Warwickshire via the successful Warwickshire Direct Partnership (WDP).

2.7   A further example of our improved partnership working via WDP is in the area of our face-to-face access channel work. In October 2005 we opened a pilot One-Stop Shop jointly with Warwick District Council. Located in a library, the team of staff from both councils are using the same CRM facility for all service calls so that the customer can follow up any query via either the One-Stop Shop or the Customer Service Centre. Further One-Stop Shops are now being investigated with other District Council partners as part of our Access strategy.

2.8   As well as the above direct service improvements to the public, as part of our e-Government programme we significantly invested in our infrastructure and back-office systems to ensure that they will be able to offer high quality information and services to our citizens for extended hours of service and with the high availability required. Projects in this area included: -

- A Warwickshire Broadband Network offering broadband connectivity to schools, and public facilities in libraries. This

Warwickshire
County Council

facility is also now being used by our District Council partners to access our joint, remotely hosted CRM system.

- A contract with Research Machines PLC for the delivery of a 'managed ICT service' to further improve standards in our schools. The project includes: provision and installation of a range of ICT hardware into 186 schools across the county; a range of e-learning, digital materials; and a comprehensive programme of professional development for teachers.

- The implementation of a new HR and Payroll system that will offer self service facilities to staff.

- Remote access facilities for staff to access key systems and information from home or other remote locations.

- Increased availability of information systems to staff via the implementation of improved resilience through new facilities to reduce downtime and support costs.

2.9 In terms of digital inclusion we have looked to increase access to e-services via facilities such as the People's Network, ICT Learning Centres and our schools investment.   We have also focussed on increasing access to our site for people with disabilities, e.g. by offering the Browsealoud service which reads out the on-screen text for site visitors.

3. Beyond e-Government – Warwickshire Perspective

3.1 While we should be proud of the achievements of our e-Government programme, for all local authorities it is still early days in terms of delivering electronic services to our citizens. As we did both prior to, and during the e-government period, we must continue to invest in and exploit the potential that ICT can offer to organisations such as ourselves to realise the further benefits we aspire to as part of our New Ways of Working programme. We want to continue to improve our services to our customers, and be smarter in how we work.

3.2 In the Council re-organisation of April 2006, the responsibility for both the Website and Access Channel Strategy were mainstreamed by locating them in the Performance & Development Department. From an ICT perspective we will continue to support these and other Corporate priority areas, and will look to build on and extend the previous achievements of our e-Government programme. ICT has been identified as a critical enabling resource for our modernisation plan, and as such has been identified as a specific workstream in our New Ways of Working programme. We will continue to report on progress in these areas via that programme.

Warwickshire
County Council

4.   Beyond e-Government – National Perspective

4.1   Following the e-Government era the Government has now launched the Transformational Government initiative. Although this initiative was launched by the Cabinet Office in November 2005 with a document 'Transformational Government – enabled by Technology' available at www.cio.gov.uk/transformational_government/strategy/ ,this initial document was primarily central Government focussed, and this autumn the Cabinet Office is holding regional meetings to further define what it means for Local Government.

4.2   While this definition stage is still underway, it is clear that it has three main themes:-

i)   Services must be ***designed around the citizen or business***, not the provider, and provided through modern, co-ordinated delivery channels. This will improve the customer experience, achieve better policy outcomes, reduce paperwork burdens and improve efficiency by reducing duplication and routine processing, leveraging delivery capacity and streamlining processes.

ii)   Government must ***move to a shared services culture*** - in the front-office, in the back-office, in information and in infrastructure - and release efficiencies by standardisation, simplification and sharing.

iii)   There must be broadening and deepening of government's ***professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and governance*** of IT enabled change. This will result in more successful outcomes; fewer costly delivery failures; and increased confidence by citizens and politicians in the delivery of change by the public services.

4.3   To date it does not involve the additional funding and targets that were associated with e-Government.

While we await the further definition of Transformational Government, we can accept the three principles as they are all areas that we are currently operating in.

- Redesigning Services – this is precisely what our New Ways of Working initiative is seeking to do as discussed above.

- Shared Services – while this is the least defined of the three areas at present, and in local government terms is being presented in aspirational terms, early work into this area has led to our joint operation of our Contact Centres facilities being identified as an example of good practice in this area. Warwickshire County Council has been identified as a key case in a SOCITM report on Shared Services, and the Warwickshire

Direct Partnership work in this area is also being developed as a Case Study by the DCLG.

- Government IT Profession – following the Strategic Review of ICT in 2005, we are looking to implement a skills framework for ICT staff and are looking to adopt the framework behind this initiative. As a result our Head of ICT has been asked to be involved in the Government IT Profession Local Government Steering Group.

4.4   We will continue to monitor and engage with this initiative. We expect further guidance on the wider Transformational Government initiative later this year, and some specific plans for shared services for the Local Government sector in November 2006. We will report back to O&S as these areas develop.

5.   Conclusion

5.1   Warwickshire engaged positively in the national e-Government initiative because we viewed it as investing in technology, not for technology's sake, but in order to improve the services that we offer to our citizens and customers. As this e-Government period comes to an end we will via the New Ways of Working programme and Transformational Government initiative continue to :-

- Look to obtain the maximum return on our investment to date, by encouraging the take-up of appropriate more cost effective e-service delivery channels.

- Exploit technology to further transform and improve the services we offer to the customers and citizens of Warwickshire.

Resources, Performance & Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note our achievements in this area in the e-Government period, and to continue to monitor our progress in the future Transformational Government arena which is currently being defined for Local Government.

DAVID CLARKE
Strategic Director of
Resources

Shire Hall
Warwick

16 October 2006

Warwickshire
County Council