Select Committee on Economic Regeneration 16th February 2006

Joint Report of the Director of Finance and the Corporate e-Champion

E-Government Progress Report

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the Council's position regarding the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) programme for 'Priority Services and Transformation Outcomes'.

2. To provide Members with information about the drafting of a national strategy by the Cabinet Office for transforming government with the use of technology.

Background

   Priority Outcomes

3. The ODPM programme is now nearing its conclusion, with the target to complete all 'Good' Priority Outcomes by the end of March 2006.

4. We continue to remain on target to successfully complete the programme, with ten of the twenty five good outcomes still being developed for completion. See Appendix A

5. For some of these good outcomes, it is relatively easy to provide evidence for 'completion' – which is defined by the ODPM as meaning that certain standards have been achieved with plans for extended roll-out. This applies, for example to G15 (Mobile assessment of Housing Benefit) in Appendix A. As soon as the first assessment has been carried out, this can be considered complete.

6. For other good outcomes, it is much more difficult to provide evidence for 'completion'. For example, G24 (Customer Relationship Management Integration through workflow). This is a long term strategic goal of our CATS project and Dudley Council Plus, and therefore it is difficult to judge at what stage the outcome can be considered 'complete', particularly given the short timescale of the ODPM programme. Therefore we have taken into account what other Councils have said in their IEG returns in order to make a judgement about our own case for claiming 'completion' for some of these more strategic priority outcomes.

7. We therefore anticipate completing all the "good" priority outcomes, either on the basis of clear evidence, or on the basis of having established secure foundations or milestones and having plans to deliver the long term strategic aims.

Transformational Government – Enabled Through Technology

8. A cross Government strategy that sets out how effective use of technology can transform the way public services are delivered to make a real difference to people's daily lives is currently being developed.

9. Building on the success of the e-government programme and the target for getting public services online, it is not simply about the internet but goes to the heart of public service delivery. The strategy identifies three key areas for transformation:

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

    - 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.

    - There must be broadening and deepening of government's ***professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and   governance*** of IT enabled change, so that there are more successful outcomes and fewer costly delivery failures.

10. The publication is available on the cabinet office website: www.cio.gov.uk/transformational_government/strategy/

11. The Government will produce plans by April 2006 on how it intends to take forward the strategy, across all aspects of public service delivery. We understand there will be a discussion paper for Local Government produced after the local elections.

Finance

12. The costs of meeting ODPM priorities will have to be met from within existing resources or bid for from new funding streams. To date, much of the funding for projects has come from a combination of departmental funds, ICT corporate strategy fund and IEG monies. IEG4 has attracted further funding of £150,000 for 2005/6. We do not anticipate any further IEG funding beyond this. The take-up of electronic channels provides scope for efficiency savings which will contribute to our Gershon efficiency targets.
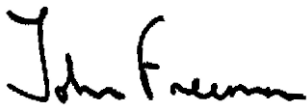
Law

13. Section III of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything which is incidental to, conductive to or which facilitates the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

14. The introduction of electronic services and the ability for people to access the Council from free facilities such as PCs in Libraries, and PCs in their own homes 24 hours per day 7 days per week is intended to make the council more accessible and transparent. Some of the Priority Outcomes are directly relevant to those with disabilities, for example the Council Website has to meet national and international accessibility standards for those with impaired eyesight.

15. The government's initial marketing campaign is deliberately targeted at those who are already using the Internet to self-serve by booking holidays, making enquiries, paying bills etc. However, this is intended to free up channels such as telephones and face-to-face to become more available to those who perhaps will benefit the most from a more personal contact with the council.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that:-

 • Members consider the remaining 10 ''Good' Priority Outcomes and determine whether they wish to make their own assessment of progress in any specific areas.

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List of Background Papers

 • The ODPM Priority Outcomes can be viewed on the Internet at www.localegov.gov.uk and our own performance management system can be viewed on the Intranet at http://vpqd/poc .

 • Appendix B contains a glossary of terms.

Outstanding Good Priority Outcomes

POC Ref.	Description	Owner	Comment
G2	Community Websites	DELL	There is already information on our website. The release of the new version of the software (CIVIS2) will meet this outcome.
G8	Single Business Account	DUE	We have done a lot of work and concluded that an initial step should be taken first. There are firm plans to deliver this first step which will meet the target.
G12	Smartcards	DELL	We have done a lot of work involving partners and the first smartcards are almost ready for use on a pilot basis.
G14	GIS-based presentation of information on roadworks	DUE	Roadworks are already published on our website. We are in the process of adding in the mapping capabilities which will complete this outcome.
G15	Mobile processing of Benefit claims directly from citizens' homes	Finance	We have carried out all the preparatory work and the first pilots will be taking place shortly.
G17	Joint Assessments using Mobile Technology	SSD	We have all the components in place, particularly for vulnerable adults. We should shortly be at a stage where we can claim completion
G18	E-Skills Training	C Execs	We have been investing in e-skills over many years, culminating with the successful pilot of the ECDL scheme so completion is imminent
G22	Internet Targets and Measures For electronic channels	DC Plus	Dudley Council Plus and electronic channels mean we can now measure, set targets, market and promote access to services across the main channels.
G24	Customer Relationship Management Integration through workflow	CATS	Most components of CATS/Dudley Council Plus are now in place. The transfer of the cash office functions at the end of February will provide a milestone to enable us to complete this outcome.
G25	Single Notification of Change of Address	CATS	A prototype has been produced and this is in the final stages of completion.

ICT Glossary

(Access) Channels	The means by which citizens can access information or services from the council, such as phone, walk-in centre, Internet etc
Authentication	The process of ensuring that someone, often a computer user is the person they claim to be and therefore entitled to a specific services
Broadband	A service which enables high speed connection between computers
BVPI 157	An Audit Commission indicator which tracks an authority's performance in making its services capable of electronic delivery and access.
Change Management	The process by which organisations develop and improve and the means by which that change is managed.
e-democracy	The process of allowing citizens to contribute to the democratic process electronically. Include consultation, registration and voting.
e-enablement	The process of making services electronically accessible, for instance through the Internet
e-procurement	Acquiring and transacting purchases and contracts electronically
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence – training & skills
ESD toolkit	A system set up by the IDEA for recording and measuring interactions with the public to assess progress towards developing electronic solutions
IEG Statement	Implementing Electronic Government, a report that Local Authorities have had to produce for the last 4 years to obtaining limited funding to support e-government initiatives
Infrastructure	The combination of equipment that an organisation uses to deliver services, in this case an electronic service.
Interaction	The point at which the citizen and Council come together - could be a payment or request for information or services etc
Modems	Equipment that links Computers together over voice telephone lines
Network	A physical structure which enables information and messages to flow between computers (usually in the form of a fibre-optic cable) and supported by appropriate programmes and hardware
Priority Outcomes	A set of 73 Specific targets that the ODPM requires local authorities to achieve. They are broken down in Required (29 targets) required by the 31/12/2005, Good (25 targets) required by 30/3/2006 and Excellent (19 targets) for high striving authorities.
Web Content Management	A system which allows dynamic web content to be generated and modified more efficiently by non technical staff.