

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 14 JUNE 2001

MODERNISING GOVERNMENT FUND PROJECT

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

0.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 0.1** To seek approval of the action plan for implementing the Modernising Government Funded project promoted by East Ayrshire Council and its partners.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1** At its meeting on 22 February 2001, the Policy and Resources Committee welcomed the award of £592,000 by the Scottish Executive to the East Ayrshire Council led bid for the 'Closing the Digital Divide' project. The Policy and Resources Committee noted the general arrangements for securing implementation of the project and agreed that a detailed report would be considered at a later stage.
- 1.2** The project is designed to encourage easily accessible public services, delivered electronically. It aims to increase and improve access to all levels of government and public services within all areas of Ayrshire. It combines investment in information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and innovation with support and training for local people.
- 1.3** Specifically, the bid to the Modernising Government Fund was for support to:
- install new ICT infrastructure in local and area offices;
 - provide video conference links to government agencies, health services and all council departments;
 - take the first steps towards developing a user-friendly interface to provide seamless interaction with all council business systems, and
 - provide support and training through new centres and access and information points to those people who are currently excluded from, or at the risk of being excluded from, the information society.
- 1.4** The project builds on the success that has been made in certain communities locally by the Ayrshire Electronic Community and the advances that have been secured directly by council investment in ICT services.

2.0 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1** East Ayrshire Council is the lead partner in the project and is the funding recipient. The council is also responsible for agreeing, and then auditing and evaluating, an implementation plan for the project.

- 2.2 Sixteen public and voluntary sector organisations are partners in the project and are committed to provide content and information. There are also direct financial contributions from Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, Microsoft Limited, Ayr College, Kilmarnock College, and the Ayrshire and Arran Primary Care NHS Trust.
- 2.3 The attached implementation plan (Appendix 1) has been considered by the partners involved in the project and is proposed to Policy and Resources Committee for approval.
- 2.4 The plan is based on the best possible estimates of costs associated with the project elements. However, the relevant technologies and their costs continue to vary greatly and costs of any particular task may rise or fall over the course of the project. Similarly, the exact needs of the council and its partners may also vary. However, the total cost of the project will be kept to that authorised by the Scottish Executive and the overall objectives of the MGF project will be achieved.
- 2.5 The tasks in the implementation plan are not set out in chronological or any other order.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The implementation plan can be completely funded within the overall MGF project budget.
- 3.2 There are ongoing revenue costs associated with some elements of the project. For many elements, particularly improvements to the network infrastructure, the MGF investment now will secure overall revenue savings in the medium term. The revenue implications of all capital investment will be carefully managed so as not to adversely affect council budgets.
- 3.3 Wherever possible, the council's costs in developing and implementing the project will be recovered.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Nil arising from this report.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Modernising Government Fund Project is an important part of delivering social inclusion across the whole of East Ayrshire. In addition, the training and support in new technology skills will have a positive impact on the marketability of the local workforce and the piloting of e-health services will help to increase opportunities for good health.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The committee is asked to:

- i)** endorse the implementation plan for securing the East Ayrshire Council led 'Closing the Digital Divide' project outlined at Appendix 1, and
- ii)** otherwise note the contents of the report.

Fiona Lees

Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

29 May 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Modernising Government Fund report to Policy and Resources Committee 22
February 2001.

For further information please contact Douglas I Campbell, Head of Corporate Development and Communication. Tel. No. (01563) 576165 Fax. No. (01563) 576525.

ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Task1 - Corporate Wide Area Network Estimated Cost: £140,500

A series of improvements are required to the council's corporate wide area network to provide increased bandwidth. This is the foundation of the council's network and increased capacity here is a fundamental pre-requisite for implementing almost all of the other aspects of the Modernising Government Fund project.

Improvements include optical fibre link from Civic Centre North to Dick Institute and Council Headquarters and an assessment of the possibility of linking to other council or partner premises along the route (for example, the Gateway Centre in Kilmarnock).

Task 2 – Network Links with Partners Estimated Cost: £20,000

Install firewall to provide security to permit links between council network and partner networks.

Task 3 – Establish Communications Link with CAB Estimated Cost: £600

Establish communications link with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Kilmarnock to integrate voice and data traffic with council network and provide the potential for video-conferencing between the Citizen's Advice Bureau and other partners.

Task 4 – Upgrade Council Area & Local Offices Links Estimated Cost: £168,000

Provide improved and extended access via broadband communications and desktops to local and other council offices. Provide minimum 2 Mb bandwidth links to Darvel, Newmilns, Patna, Mauchline, Bellfield, Kilmaurs, Stewarton, Muirkirk, New Farm Loch, New Cumnock, Cumnock, Auchinleck, Catrine, Drongan, and Galston.

Task 5 - Contractor Costs for the above installation Estimated Cost: £5,000

Task 6 - Improve Local Office Hardware Estimated Cost: £25,000

Improve PCs, printers, and screens in local offices in Catrine, Drongan, Mauchline, Muirkirk, New Cumnock and Auchinleck to support roll out of video-conferencing and other council business systems.

Task 7 – Video-Conferencing Pilot Estimated Costs: £50,000

Develop pilot proposals for video-conferencing between the council and the Citizens Advice Bureau, Benefits Agency and Ayrshire and Health Board/Ayrshire and Arran Primary Care NHS Trust and the Scottish Executive.

Designate resource room in council headquarters for video-conference use. Investigate similar resources for Dick Institute and Dalmellington Area Centre.

Task 8 – Dalmellington Area Centre Estimated Cost: £189,000

ICT links and networking to support multi-agency area centre including East Ayrshire Council, AAPCT, Police, Business Centre. Delivering video conferencing and direct access to public services.

Task 9 – Access and Information Point Locations Estimated Cost: £20,000

Install public facing touch screens or rugged terminals in a range of council and partners locations to give access to on-line services. Initially 10 in total.

Task 10 – Develop basis for joint e- service delivery Estimated Cost: £25,000

Meet standards for joining Local Government Secure Intranet and increase capacity of internet gateway.

Task 11 – Council Web development Estimated Cost: £25,000

Review, refocus and re-launch council web presence to promote interactive services and links with partners.

Task 12 – Seamless access to public sector services Estimated Cost: £30,000

Scope and specification of business system 'portal' in partnership with Microsoft and others.

Task 13 – Community Planing Partner Connectivity Estimated Cost: £60,000

Hardware and security to link with broad-band network, develop e-health service pilot and corporate roll out of GIS system for Community Planning.

Task 14 – Multi-purpose learning centres Estimated Cost: £400,000

Support and develop Shortlees Family Learning Centre.
 Support and develop North West Kilmarnock Family Learning Centre.
 Investigate the development of additional learning centres in locations in or close to Stewarton, Hurlford, Kilmaurs, Crosshouse, Galston. Complementing existing provision in the same.
 Investigate supplementary services at Mauchline library to increase ICT support and training provision.
 Co-locate services where possible. Increase support for ethnic minority communities.

Task 15 – Youth Centre Estimated Cost: £60,000

Develop proposals for a training and support centre targeted specifically at young people.

Task 16 – Project Implementation and Development Estimated Cost: £43,000

Designate account manager as Project Manager for MGF and e-Government initiatives. Backfill this post and secure appropriate support to protect current services. Appoint 2 new web developers.

Contingencies/Other Costs

Estimated Cost : £49,000

Task 17 – Out-of-hours telephone access

Estimated Cost: £14,000

Consider improvements and enhancements to current out-of-hours telephone access.

AGENDA