

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 4 JUNE 2002**

#### **ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT PROGRESS REPORT**

##### **Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** To report progress on meeting targets for electronic service delivery within the Council.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Scottish Executive has set targets for electronic service delivery within the public sector which state that, where appropriate, 25% of Council services should be capable of being delivered electronically by 2002, and 100% by 2005.
- 2.2** These targets are, based upon the results of the February 2000 Residents Survey, set against a backdrop of approximately 16 % of residents within the Council area having home PC based Internet access.
- 2.3** The Council's e.Government Strategy was presented to, and approved by, Policy and Resources Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2001.
- 2.4** Through discussions at the Information and Communications Technology Strategy Officer Group (ICTSG), IT Services has, based upon the e.Government Strategy, developed an e.Government Action Plan which is being used to plan and facilitate the delivery of electronic government within the Council.
- 2.5** The Council has now been invited by the Scottish Executive to submit a detailed bid for funding under the Modernising Government Fund 2<sup>nd</sup> Round (MGF2). As a consequence a Detailed Scalable Bid will now be developed with the Council's partners for the delivery of secure and authenticated Web based access to services and information such as Council Tax, Housing Allocations and Repairs data.

### **3. OUTCOMES**

- 3.1** A number of objectives were identified within the e.Government Strategy, and these support the development of e.Government initiatives in the following areas ;
- e.Government "friendly" Corporate Web Site.
  - Electronic Payments.
  - Web based Geographic Information System.
  - Web Enablement of Applications.
  - Web based Forms.
  - A to Z of Services / Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's).
  - Public Access / Information Points.
  - Data Network.
  - Learning Centres.

Current progress on each of these objectives identified within the e.Government Strategy is outlined as follows ;

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Action(s)</u>	<u>Progress to Date</u>
Improve Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase/rationalise WAN bandwidth to acceptable level for data/voice/video-conferencing communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Fibre Network installed round Council sites in Kilmarnock. Bandwidth increased to a number of Local Offices, Libraries, SW Offices and Housing Offices.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rationalise ICT budgets associated with ICT provision to help maximise economies of scale and to be transparent at all times in the cost of our ICT initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget rationalisation is subject of on-going discussions with Service Departments as part of the current Service Review of IT Services.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and agree network data, infrastructure and security standards based on Information Age Government (IAG) Common Framework guidelines published by Scottish Executive in May 2002.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of standards subject of discussions with partners.</li> </ul>
Increase Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and co-ordinate the roll-out of new support and learning centres, public access terminals, and on-line access points and portals in libraries and other venues across Council area so that all communities and individuals have easy access to on-line services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Centres being installed in all Libraries.</li> <li>Public / On-Line Access projects being developed through initiatives such as AEC / NOF / Peoples Network.</li> <li>Eight Centres in addition to all Libraries now operational.</li> </ul>
Develop Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and co-ordinate the provision of teaching and tutoring at the network of ICT support and learning centres in East Ayrshire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established Dalmellington Business Technology Training Centre (BTTC) for training small businesses etc., in technology.</li> <li>Co-ordination of teaching being addressed through AEC, Libraries and Supporting Communities.</li> </ul>

Develop Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the ICT and business process skills of all council employees, but particularly community development staff who are in a strong position to support community groups and organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of staff skills on-going.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver further ICT training to long-term unemployed people through CONDUIT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded CONDUIT training on-going in Dalmellington and Kilmarnock and providing training up to European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) standard.</li> </ul>
Deliver On-line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create corporate e.Government business team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.Government objectives being co-ordinated through ICT Strategy Group (ICTSG).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise and re-launch the council's web presence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Web site scheduled for launch late-summer 2002.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop options for truly seamless access to council business systems through a common web browser interface.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development plans for seamless access incorporated within Council's MGF2 bid.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of public services that are available on-line or by video-conference in all partner and Council locations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video-conferencing plans being developed in consultation with Service Departments and based upon outcome of Awareness Day. Plans to target specialist groups eg., Deaf Clubs.</li> <li>Libraries Catalogue, Council Tax payments and on-line forms now operational. Further developments incorporated within Council's MGF2 bid.</li> </ul>
Sharing Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install connections to Local Government Secure Intranet (LGSi) network.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGSi connection subject to clarification of requirements.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and co-ordinate sharing of data between Council departments and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data sharing proposals incorporated within Council's MGF2 bid. Preliminary work underway to develop a Master Address Database (MAD) for the Council.</li> </ul>

**3.2** To date, significant progress has been made against each of the initiatives, and this progress is summarised as follows;

- 3.3.1 e.Government “friendly” Corporate Web Site. The design of the current Corporate Web site is based upon the Council's hierarchical structure. Feedback indicated that this design is proving difficult for users to navigate and source required information. Hence in order to simplify navigation and access to information, the Web site has been re-designed with details on information and services accessed through categories, such as “Living”, “Learning”, “Leisure”, “Working” and “Communities” and “Life Episodes”. It is planned that the launch of this new site will take place in the Autumn of 2002.

It is planned that the on-going development of the new Corporate Web site will be supplemented and strengthened by the establishment of new community feedback mechanisms via the Ayrshire Electronic Community (AEC), Local Forums, “Silver Surfers”, Learning Centres in addition to the establishment of a community based “Digital Panel”.

- 3.3.2 Electronic Payments. The Corporate Web site currently supports Council Tax payments through GiroBank. A new combined e.Payments/Cash Receipting system is currently being implemented to enable the new Corporate Web site to support the processing of all payments to the Council, eg., Rents, Non-Domestic Rates, ad-hoc payments etc., via Credit / Debit Card. It is anticipated that these new facilities will become operational by late-Autumn of 2002.
- 3.3.3 Web based Geographic Information System. Development is currently underway to enable the Corporate Web site to support access to demographic and geographic information. This will include “point and click” type access to maps and community information, eg., locating schools, doctors, dentists, Council offices etc. It is anticipated that limited “pilot” facilities will become operational by the end-2002.
- 3.3.4 Web Enablement of Applications. Direct access to the Libraries catalogue has now been made available through the Corporate Web site. This facility provides users with the ability to make enquiries in respect of the availability and location of books and, if required, to reserve books for borrowing.

As indicated in Section 2.4 of this Report, proposals for the delivery of secure and authenticated Web based access to services and information such as Council Tax, Housing Allocations and Repairs data will be contained within the Council's Detailed Bid for the allocation of additional funding under the Scottish Executive's Modernising Government Fund 2<sup>nd</sup> Round (MGF2). The precise timescales for the delivery of Web based access are dependant upon the degree of available funding which will be known once the result of the MGF2 bidding process is announced, and upon the scope of the project which is currently the subject of discussions with our partners and Service Departments.

- 3.3.5 Web based Forms. Numerous Council forms can now be accessed electronically via the Corporate Web site. These include Building Warrant Applications, Job Applications, Planning Applications and Reporting Roads & Street Lighting faults. Secure authentication and authorisation procedures will be required in cases where user interaction is desirable. It is proposed that these security procedures will be developed as part of the aforementioned Web based access project outlined in section 3.3.4 of this Report.

In addition Inland Revenue forms can now be accessed via the Corporate Web site. Developments are currently underway to increase the number of forms available through the Corporate Web site.

- 3.3.6 A to Z of Services / Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's). A comprehensive database of A-Z of Services and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are currently being developed to facilitate electronic access to the full range of services provided by the Council and some of its partner public organisations. This database will allow users to navigate via services organised alphabetically, or via search facilities using keywords.

The on-going development of the A-Z of Services is the subject of discussions with Service Departments and the community based groups outlined in Section 3.3.1 of this Report.

- 3.3.7 Public Access / Information Points. A total of twelve "touch screen" Information Points have now been implemented in the following locations ;

Auchinleck Local Office	Dick Institute	Greenholm Street
North West Youth Project	Civic Centre	Crosshouse Library
Cumnock Community Hospital	London Road	Lugar Office
Dalmellington Area Centre	Planning, Croft Street	
New Cumnock Local Office		

A further twelve units are planned for installation, five of which will be located in Housing Offices. It is planned that the remaining seven units will, subject to discussions, be installed in the following locations ;

Drongan Resource Centre	Stewarton Library	Newmilns Library
Galston Library	Darvel Local Office	
Cumnock Shopping Centre	Kilmarnock Bus Station	

These Information Points provide electronic access to the same information and services that are available through the Council's Web site.

- 3.3.8 Data Network. The Corporate Data and Voice Network (WAN) has been, and continues to be, upgraded to provide sufficient bandwidth to meet the demands of Web based access to business applications and information. A new high bandwidth fibre network has been installed between the Council's London Road, Greenholm Street, Dick Institute, Burnside Street and Civic Centre offices. Network bandwidth has also been increased to a number of Local Offices, Libraries, SW Offices and Housing Offices.

The bandwidth available through the Corporate Internet Gateway has also been significantly increased to support the on-going implementation of Web based services.

In addition, desktop equipment, such as PCs and printers have been upgraded within the majority of Local Offices and Libraries.

3.3.9 Learning Centres. A number of centres have already been established which provide the public and businesses with access to technology, training and learning materials. These include Ayrshire Electronic Community (AEC) centres, the Dalmellington Business Technology Training Centre (BTTC), the CONDUIT centres and the Shortlees Centre. Plans are being developed to increase the number of such Centres, notably in all Libraries and in the North West area of Kilmarnock.

3.4 Within the e.Government Action Plan, a total of 1650 services have been identified as capable of being developed to support electronic delivery. These services have been categorised based upon national guidelines and are summarised as follows ;

- Provision of Information (how to contact the Council, what services the Council provides etc.).
- Provision of Grants (electronic application for Benefits / Bursaries / Clothing Grants / School Meal Grants and potentially the electronic payment of same).
- Collect Revenue (electronic collection of Rents / Council Tax / NDR / Fines etc.).
- Consult Citizens / Communities (Community feedback on Council services potentially through on-line questionnaires etc.).
- Apply for Services (Citizens applying for a Council House / Housing Repairs School Placements / Refuse Uplift etc.).
- Book Services / Facilities (Citizens booking Leisure Facilities / Library Books / Theatre Seats etc.).
- Pay for Services / Facilities (Payment for Leisure Facilities / Theatre Seats etc.).
- Access External Service (On-line access to other Web sites including Health Board, Inland Revenue etc., for the purpose of the categories outlined above).
- Procurement (Electronic procurement of goods and services provided to the Council by approved suppliers).

In summary, to date, of the 1650 identified services, a total of 450, representing **27%** of the total, will be delivered electronically by the Council through the new Corporate Web site thus meeting the Scottish Executive target of 25% by 2002.

#### **4. PROGRESS ON MGF1 FUNDED PROJECT**

4.1 At its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2001, 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.

4.2 Through discussions with partners and Service Departments, IT Services has, based upon the original Bid, developed an MGF Implementation Plan which identifies a number of discrete tasks that required to be undertaken, and which is being used to plan and facilitate the delivery of the 'Closing the Digital Divide' project within the Council.

**4.3** Appendix A of this Report provides Members with an detailed update on progress on each of the individual tasks identified within the Implementation Plan.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** The costs associated with e.Government projects currently underway, and identified within the aforementioned Corporate e.Government Action Plan, are being met from a combination of the Council's allocation of funding from the Modernising Government Fund (1<sup>st</sup> Round), New Opportunities Fund, Peoples Network, EEC backed projects such as AEC, and the Council's Capital Programme.

**5.2** The Council has been invited to submit a Detailed Bid to the Scottish Executive for the allocation of additional funding under the Modernising Government Fund (2<sup>nd</sup> Round) which, if successful, will be used to fund further e.Government projects identified within the Corporate e.Government Action Plan.

**5.3** In addition, £ 55,000 has been allocated from within the 2002/03 Capital Programme (IT Requirements) to e.Government and the Web Enablement of Applications.

## **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Enhancing the electronic delivery of services is an important part of the Council's strategy of decentralisation and will contribute towards closing the digital divide within East Ayrshire.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1** It is recommended that Committee:-

- (i) note the progress being made to meet the targets for the delivery of e.Government within the Council;
- (ii) note the progress made on the implementation of the MGF1 projects;
- (iii) note the Council's initial success in reaching the final detailed bidding stage of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Modernising Government Fund (MGF2) and agrees to the development and submission of a Detailed Bid in accordance with Executive guidelines; and
- (iv) otherwise, note the contents of this report.

Fiona Lees  
**Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources**

15 May 2002

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**NIL**

For further information on this Report, please contact Malcolm Roulston, Head of Information Technology (Tel : 01563 576809).

## **APPENDIX A**

### **MODERNISING GOVERNMENT FUND Round 1 (MGF1)**

#### **IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE SUMMARY**

##### **Task1 Corporate Wide Area Network**

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 and e.Government projects.

Improvements completed include optical fibre links from Civic Centre North, Dick Institute, Greenholm Street, Burnside Street and Council Headquarters.

##### **Task 2 Network Links with Partners**

Installation of firewalls to provide security to permit links between Council network partner networks and the Internet, have been completed. In addition improved Internet bandwidth to schools has been implemented.

##### **Task 3 Establish Communications Link with CAB**

Establishment of 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, is scheduled for completion in June 2002.

##### **Task 4 Upgrade Council Area & Local Offices Links**

Provision of improved and extended access via broadband communications to local and other council offices, has been implemented at the Homeless Persons Unit in Kilmarnock, John Finnie Street, Crosshouse and Civic Centre South. Provision of the minimum 2 Mb bandwidth links to Auchinleck, Galston, Muirkirk, Stewarton Catrine, Mauchline and Newmilns is scheduled for completion in June 2002.

##### **Task 5 Contractor Costs in respect of the above installation**

##### **Task 6 Improve Local Office Hardware**

Provision of upgraded PCs, printers, and screens in local offices in Catrine, Drongan, Cumnock, Galston, Kilmarnock Registrars, Mauchline, Hurlford, New Cumnock and

Auchinleck to support role out of video-conferencing and other council business systems, have been implemented.

#### Task 7 Video-Conferencing Pilot

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.

Video-conferencing plans being developed in consultation with Service Departments and based upon outcome of Awareness Day. Plans to target specialist groups eg., Deaf Clubs.

#### Task 8 Dalmellington Area Centre

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

Centre is fully operational.

#### Task 9 Access and Information Point Locations

Install additional public facing touch screens or rugged terminals in a range of council and partners locations to give access to on-line services. New units have been installed in the Dalmellington Area Centre, Planning in Croft Street and H&TS in Civic Centre North.

Discussions are underway with the Council's service departments to finalise the locations for the additional units.

#### Task 10 Develop basis for Joint e.Service Delivery

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

The Internet gateway bandwidth capacity has been increased to service Council corporate users and users of the learning facilities within the Libraries.

On-line payments of Council Tax has been implemented via the Council's Web site in partnership with Girobank. On-line access the library catalogue has been implemented.

#### Task 11 Council Web Development

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

The development of the Council's new Web site is underway with a targeted completion date of August 2002.

#### Task 12 Seamless access to Public Sector Services

Scope and specification of business system 'portal' in partnership with Microsoft and other external organisations.

Workshop meetings have taken place between Council officers and private organisations such as Microsoft and BT. The basis of the full business specification will form part of the Council's MGF2 project.

Discounted software licence costs have been negotiated with Microsoft for use in Learning Centres.

#### Task 13 Community Planning Partner Connectivity

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

Links to health services are being developed as part of the Council's new Web site.

Pilot Web GIS system is currently under development.

#### Task 14 Multi-purpose Learning Centres

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.

Shortlees Family Learning Centre is fully operational. North West Kilmarnock Centre is subject to ongoing discussions with the department of Education & Social Services (ESS) as is proposals for other locations and support of minority groups.

All libraries are currently undergoing ICT upgrades to provide Learning Centre facilities.

#### Task 15 Youth Centre

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

North West Kilmarnock Centre is subject to ongoing discussions with ESS.

Task 16 Project Implementation and Development

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 as temporary staff.

Task 17 Out-of-hours Telephone Access

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

Upgraded Desktop machines have been installed at Ross Court. The development of an Intranet based procedure and information bulletin has been completed.

**AGENDA**