CABINET

16 July 2003

PROPOSAL FOR A CORPORATE CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB501: Implementing Electronic Government Statement, 16th October, 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At present, the website is controlled and updated manually, primarily through the Webmaster, within the IT Client Section. New software, a Content Management System, is proposed that will devolve responsibility for Web pages to individuals within service departments.

Eastleigh Borough Council contacted Winchester seeking another local council to partner them in their search for a suitable system. Together a specification has been drawn up by officers from both councils and some initial work has been done on researching what systems are in use in other authorities within Hampshire that would be suitable for an authority of the City Council's size and budget.

A tender process will be followed and evaluation criteria reflecting both quality and price will be used: a spilt of 60:40 respectively is recommended. The tender process will be structured so that the two councils can choose the same or different suppliers but there is an expectation that if the same supplier is chosen there will be cost savings through a discount process. Implementation of the systems will be done together as far as possible to gain maximum benefit from the joint approach.

The cost of the project is estimated to be no more than £50,000, plus annual support costs. The costs would include some project management, design, implementation and training but not staff time in implementation. This estimate does not include the cost of data transfer or upgrades, and any additional equipment.

It is proposed that this should be met from the ICT reserve and Principal Scrutiny Committee will have the right to call in the matter for review.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Content Management Procurement Project as outlined in this report be endorsed.

2. The procurement process (including the proposed evaluation criteria of 60% quality: 40% price) be approved.

3. £50,000 be approved from the ICT reserve, subject to Principal Scrutiny Committee considering the matter under its powers of call in.

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DETAIL:

1.0   Introduction

1.1   A Content Management System is computer software that provides a framework for providing information on the website, both internally and externally. At present, the website is controlled and updated manually, primarily through the Webmaster, within the IT Client Section. The new software will devolve responsibility for Web pages to individuals within service departments.

1.2   A corporate officer group, the Content Management Group, was set up at the end of 2001. The terms of reference and objectives of the group were:

    •   departmental responsibility for co-ordination of website content and keeping the content up to date

    •   to suggest new pages and improvements for the website

    •   to contribute to major ICT projects

    •   to promote the website to the public

    •   to help the Council achieve 100% electronic service delivery by 2005

    •   to encourage residents, visitors, businesses and other interested parties to use the WCC website and communicate electronically with the Council.

1.3   In the time that the group has been meeting the website has been redesigned and a new web design and editing tool, Dreamweaver, has been introduced. This makes page design, development and editing possible for all officers to carry out with some training but without specialist knowledge.

1.4   Since the group's formation the Internet website has grown by 400%. Similar figures can be shown for the growth of the Intranet, the content and usage of which has increased considerably in recent months. This has led to difficulties for the Webmaster loading information onto the sites and to exercise control over content. It is now time for the management of the site to be automated with responsibility for and ownership of the content being devolved to department level.

1.5   The officer ICT group has considered and approved a project brief for a content management system.

2   Key Objectives

2.1   The key objectives of introducing a Content Management System within the Council are:

- To provide the foundation for meeting the Council's stated objectives for E-Government;

- To improve process efficiencies and effectiveness (using technology and business process re-engineering);

- To help to improve the quality and timeliness of electronic information and services provided by the Council;

- To improve the quality and integrity of data published on the website;

- To remove the constraints of webmaster control;

- To minimise the need for additional staff resources;

- To empower staff within the Council to take ownership and responsibility for the content and interactions they have on the Internet and Intranet;

- To prepare the foundations for service delivery using other access channels.

2.2   It is not the intention to change the design of the web pages at this stage, as this has only recently been done. The new system will provide templates for the pages and a new design could be imposed through these templates (unless a radical change was required) that would not require significant work to be done on data transfer.

3   Partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council

3.1   Eastleigh Borough Council contacted Winchester seeking another local council to partner them in their search for a suitable system. Exploratory meetings proved that it was possible to work together on such a project and that there could be considerable benefits in doing so. (This has also been the experience in other joint projects undertaken recently).

3.2   A specification has been drawn up by officers from each council and some initial work has been done on researching what systems are in use in other authorities within Hampshire that would be suitable for an authority of the City Council's size and budget. This has made it possible to compile a short list of packages that could be considered.

4   Procurement Process

4.1   Following review of the systems used locally a questionnaire has been sent to ten companies. The responses to this questionnaire will be evaluated to determine a short list for tendering. It is hoped that a short list of between three and four companies can be produced. The evaluation of this questionnaire will be done by staff from both councils.

4.2   Tenders will be requested from the short listed companies for evaluation against pre-set criteria. An inter-departmental officer group will review the systems in the light of their departmental needs and add comments to the evaluation process.

4.3   It is considered that the evaluation criteria should reflect both quality and price and a spilt of 60:40 respectively is recommended. This is in line with most other projects that the Council has undertaken recently. It is not known at this stage whether Eastleigh will wish to use the same ratio, or whether they may wish to have different weightings to elements within the evaluation. Divergence in this way will not matter. The tender process will be structured so that the two councils can choose the same or different suppliers but there is an expectation that if the same supplier is chosen there will be cost savings through a discount process. Implementation of the systems will be done together as far as possible to gain maximum benefit from the joint approach.

4.4   Following selection of the supplier, the pilot project for implementation should commence by the end of 2003. A post-implementation review and report will be carried out at the end of implementation early in 2004.

4.5   The principles of PRINCE2 will be adopted for project management. A project board, headed by the Director of Community Services, has been formed to oversee the procurement and implementation. Reports will be made to officer and Member groups as appropriate.

5   The Wider Context

5.1   The Government's "Modernising Local Government" agenda requires improvement in the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of local authority services, and greater accountability to the local community. This project would take forward the Council's electronic governance initiative.

5.2   The guidance issued by the DTLR states that *all* services should be considered capable of being enabled for electronic delivery, unless there is a legal or operational reason for not doing so. Implementation of a Content Management System will help to achieve this goal by enabling the content of what is delivered electronically to be monitored and audited automatically.

6   Summary of Key Benefits

6.1   Benefits are assessed to be non-financial in terms of performance improvement and customer service impact.

6.2   The Implementation of such a system will move the "ownership" of web pages to the departments and officers.

6.3   Improvements in ICT should improve service delivery/turnaround times and costs. Currently there can be a duplication of information, and time and effort wasted on its access, creation and maintenance.

6.4   Improved customer service should result from faster more accurate information provided on the Council's Internet and Intranet to the public, Members and other Departments and on other access channels that may be provided in the future.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

7   CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

7.1   The proposal will support the two key tenets: *to maintain budget stability through strong performance and resource management while accommodating the requirements of new legislation and duties* and *to improve access to the Council's information services, especially for rural communities, taking full advantage of new technology.*

8   Resource Implications

8.1   The cost of the project is estimated to be no more than £50,000, plus annual support costs. The costs would include some project management, design, implementation and training but not staff time in implementation. This estimate does not include the cost of data transfer (which will be handled internally), upgrades or any additional equipment (the requirements for which will not be known until after tender submission).

8.2   It is proposed that this should be met from the ICT reserve and Principal Scrutiny Committee will have the right to call in the matter for review.

8.3   Staff within departments spend a varying amount of their time on preparing information for the website. Whilst some of the time spent is from dedicated support, much is done as additional duties. It is likely that the pressure for this will increase but no additional resources are being allocated for maintaining or developing the web.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Working papers held within Finance Department

APPENDICES

None

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