

SECOND INTERIM MANAGEMENT LETTER 2000/01 – I.T. UPDATE

On the 11th October 2002, the Department of Information Technology provided an update to the outstanding items on the Second Interim Management Letter 2000/01. This paper provides supplementary information for consideration by the Audit Committee and explains the current workload position within the department.

The recommendations from the 2000/01 PWC audit resulted in a significant programme of works for the I.T. department at a time when other pressures and Council priorities had also to be addressed. The modernising agenda and 21st Century Government initiatives have added to an already burgeoning remit. Despite the increase in workload, the Department has successfully concluded much of the audit recommendations and continues to provide support for an ever increasing list of core services.

I.T. management and staff have led successful projects such as the Three Islands Partnership, Digital Communities, the NGfL Online Learning Community, the People's Network and the Broadband Pathfinder. At the same time our core support service has grown to cover 1300 corporate users accessing numerous corporate and departmental applications – many of which are new or have been recently upgraded. We have improved the efficiency of all services by implementing new systems such as our I.T. Service Desk, Central I.T. purchasing, Committee Document Management System, and the Oracle Financials upgrade.

KPMG recognised all of the above in their audit of I.T. dated July 2002. Below are two extracts from the audit report highlighting the need to address the lack of resources should the Council continue to expect the department to maintain support for core services *and* lead the way in developing successful 21st Century Government proposals.

2.1.2 IT skills and resources

The IT department is resourced adequately for core business activity, however staff time and resource is often stretched due to project work, including many 21st Century government initiatives. We understand staff turnover is limited and a training budget exists for on-going development. The Council does, however, have some difficulties in attracting staff given its remote location.

2.2.1 IT strategy and activity

There is no formal IT strategy linked to the overall Council strategy. Whilst IT is a major element in the 21st Century government initiative there is no formal IT strategy

covering both core activities and such government initiatives prevalent at present. Indeed, the departmental structure is not designed or resourced to provide both the critical core business activities and the ad hoc modernising government initiatives

Work continues on implementing all of the agreed recommendations from the various audits over the last two years, but members should be aware of the significant resource implications which may result from those recommendations. For example, there is no doubt that a comprehensive Disaster Recovery plan is urgently required and the risks identified following analysis of the proposed fire-fighters strike have underlined that need, but the Council should expect to set aside a six figure sum to pay for this additional major service.

Finally, the recommendations from the latest KPMG audit are under review and our latest response will include details of the cost implications of each proposal. This will allow the Council to identify and plan for the priority issues raised by the KPMG recommendations.

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