INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE - PREPARATIONS FOR THE MILLENNIUM

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1.   Purpose

1.1   To update the Committee regarding the progress of preparing the Council's Information Technology systems for the Millennium .

2.   Summary

2.1   Progress continues to be generally satisfactory in preparing the Council's IT systems for the millennium. Further new systems have successfully gone live although timescales and resources remain tight.

2.2   The intensity of this work continues to cause difficulties in providing Information Technology services for new projects around the Council. Members and officers will need to continue to be conscious of this limitation during 1999 and wherever possible plan new projects for next year and beyond.

3.   Recommendations

3.1   The Committee is recommended to note the progress made to date.

4.   Background

4.1   On 22 July 1998 (Minute PR51/99 refers), this Committee approved funds to prepare the Council's Information Technology Systems for the Millennium. Progress was last reported to this Committee on 13 July 1999.

5.   Progress

5.1   The first three modules of the new Housing Management system successfully went live during August thanks to considerable commitment from staff in Neighbourhood Services and IT. There is more work to do to implement further modules of this system throughout 1999 but all millennium compliance issues are expected to be resolved by the end of October.

5.2   The system used by the Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages has now been upgraded and the system is now millennium compliant.

5.3   Progress has been made in replacing the Social Care system. This will remain a very difficult project which is hoped to go live on 1 December. Considerable additional effort from Neighbourhood Services and IT staff has got this project off to as good a start as could be hoped for, but this must be maintained to achieve this very tight deadline.

5.4   The **Annex** summarises progress to date for the projects approved by this Committee and provides progress information regarding some other projects where additional funding was not required. A further project has been added to this **Annex** due to a change in information from the supplier. The Uniform system used by Planning and Building Control within the Environment Directorate is now known to be non-compliant in its current form. The replacement is due to be installed and operational during November. This is not expected to cause any budget problems but will put considerable additional pressures on both Environment and IT staff.

6.   Issues

6.1   The PCs which were reported to the last meeting as being non-compliant are gradually being replaced and the Office '95 licences are gradually being upgraded to Office '97. This is expected to be completed before Christmas but has put significant strain on technician resources. Staff have been very understanding about the knock on difficulties that this is causing.

7.   Implications

7.1   Environmental

        The only system with identified environmental implications is the Crematorium (Annex - No.17). This project is now complete.

7.2   Equalities

Some Council systems are used to support the provision of services to some of the most vulnerable members of our community, failure of such systems could limit the Council's ability to deliver services such as Community Alarms use the Housing Management system.

7.3   Financial

The year 2000 preparations for the Council's IT systems are currently expected to be completed within the budget approved by this Committee.

7.4   Legal

Failure of critical systems could leave the Council unable to carry out it's statutory duties. No specific risks are identified at this time.

7.5   Staff and Accommodation

The Payroll and Personnel system (no.10 in the **Annex**) is necessary to ensure that staff salaries and wages are paid. The change over from the old system to the new system will be timed to ensure continuity of payments to staff. The old system is millennium compliant.

8.   Conclusions

8.1   Progress continues to be generally satisfactory in preparing the Council's IT systems for the millennium. Further new systems have successfully gone live although timescales and resources remain tight.

8.2   The intensity of this work continues to cause difficulties in providing Information Technology services for new projects around the Council. Members and officers will need to continue to be conscious of this limitation during 1999 and wherever possible plan new projects for next year and beyond.

Background Papers: None.