

ITEM 17(a)

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

15 SEPTEMBER 1999

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE - PREPARATIONS FOR THE MILLENNIUM

Accountable Officer: Penny Coveney (Strategic Director Resources)

Author: Judith Pears (Head of Information Technology) - MK254141

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, 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 programmed to go live on 1 December. Significant 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 There has been slippage in the implementation of the new Payroll and Personnel system (see **Annex**), this delays the benefits that the new system will bring but is no longer a millennium issue.
- 5.5 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 serious additional pressures on both Environment and IT staff.

6. Issues

- 6.1 There have been a number of late changes in information from suppliers regarding the millennium compliance of their products which increases risks at little or no notice. Officers are now looking into the possibility of an independent "certification" of the preparations that have taken place to support the Council's ability to show that "due diligence" has been applied in preparing for the millennium.
- 6.2 The information from the Government Office for the South East states that the 30th September is a particularly important date for the completion of business continuity and contingency plans. The Council currently has been defined as having "amber" status. The programme of preparation of IT systems has always been programmed to continue up to December 1999 and this is still expected. It is not yet clear how this will effect Milton Keynes Council status from 30 September 1999.

6.3 The PCs which were reported to the last meeting as being non-compliant are gradually being replaced and the Microsoft Office '95 licences are gradually being upgraded to Microsoft 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 its 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: Letter from the Government Office of the South East dated 29 July 1999