CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 24th November 2011
Report of: Caroline Simpson, Head of Development
Title: Development Management Transformation Project
Portfolio Holder Cllr Rachel Bailey

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 This report informs and updates Members about progress on the Development Management Transformation Project. As identified within the Work Programme.

2.0 Decision Required

2.1 That the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee notes the content of the Development Management Transformation Project report.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 To ensure fairness and consistency of practice in accordance with existing practice.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 None
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7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The funding for much of the Project has already been secured via a capital sum agreed in 2010, and also via grants from the Cheshire & Warrington Improvement and Efficiency Commission (CWIEC)

7.2   Additional funding for the project has come from former legacy authorities Housing & Planning Delivery Grants (HPDG)

8.0   Legal Implications

8.1   Many aspects of planning and related services such as Land Charges are statutory functions of the Council. There is a need to provide such functions in accordance with statutory requirements and timescales, and therefore any failings due to inadequate systems can expose the Council to appeals and legal challenges.

9.0   Risk Management Implications

9.1   The Council risks failing in its statutory duties if appropriate systems are not in place to adequately deal with its functions.

10.0   Background

10.1   The Development Management Transformation Project (DMTP) has been a programme of work which has been on-going for a period of about 18 months to review all of the existing systems and procedures, to introduce new robust IT hardware and to standardise all of the historic records onto one IT system. It was also concerned with transforming our working practices to make them more efficient, and to deliver a new staffing structure that would be fit for purpose as well as meeting budget targets.

10.2   To enable delivery of the whole Programme the work was organised into 4 work streams which included the following:

- *Process:* to standardise working practices and procedures; provide system requirements and to implement new ways of working.
- *IT:* Implement a new updated planning system and associated modules for enforcement, pre-application and Land Charges; Migration of old legacy application data onto one system; Website improvements; integration with Corporate GIS (digital mapping) solution.
- *Human Resources:* Managing business "Change" process & communications; new job descriptions; staff engagement
- *Organisational Development:* Defining and delivering training & development needs; Customer contact processes

A Project Manager from Shared Services was appointed to manage the IT aspects of the project, while a Programme Manager was appointed to oversee the project as a whole. Completion of the project was scheduled for April 2011 to tie in with a staffing restructure which was also due to be completed by that time.

10.3   The project suffered a number of delays, particularly around the Process and IT workstream as the scale of what was being asked for

became apparent. Unfortunately as a result a number of project milestones were missed which had a knock on effect for the project as a whole. Results finally began to be delivered during March/April 2011, albeit not maybe the 'business transformation' as originally envisaged. It also came at a cost to service delivery which suffered badly due to the necessitated down time period while new systems were implemented.

10.4 The work that has been undertaken however, and now largely completed, should not be underestimated in terms of its scale and complexity. The migration of existing legacy planning data onto one system is a significant achievement in its own right. Completed work therefore includes:

- New IT hardware infrastructure built and configured (servers that IT systems are located on) Completed January 2011

- Planning System upgrade & New Module Software Implementation, including single systems for enforcement and the new pre-applications module Completed March 2011

- Single consolidated Document Management System. Completed April 2011

- New staffing structure Completed April 2011 and on budget.

- Existing legacy data from Crewe & Nantwich/Congleton/County IT systems converted onto the one system (Swift APAS) Completed June 2011

- The 'Desk Top Refresh' of existing IT equipment, although run as a separate project' has now been completed (September 2011).

- Customer Contact Model rolled out April 2011, and subsequently reviewed October 2011

10.5 Notwithstanding the amount of work done there are still a number of outstanding issues and work which has yet to be delivered. These have been logged and are being dealt with accordingly. Integration with the Corporate GIS (digital mapping) solution has been particularly problematic; while there have also been a number of problems which have impacted on maximising the benefits of the improvements that have taken place.

10.6 Re-planned work is now underway via separate mini-projects to deal with improvements to the website and to put Land Charges onto one single system. Work is on-going in respect of the GIS issues, and other smaller problems have been identified and logged to ensure that they are resolved within an agreed timescale.

10.7 Delivery of the benefits from the project has already taking place in respect of the staffing restructure which has delivered budget savings. Further cost savings from the decommissioning of existing legacy systems should take place in early 2012

10.8 There have clearly been successes and failures with the project, and a Post Implementation Review (PIR) has already been done in draft. This will identify lessons learnt from this project which will help other projects throughout the Council. However, until some of the outstanding issues have been resolved it is difficult to conclude this piece of work.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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Background Documentation:

Appendix 1: DMTP Update November 2011