Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet   **Date: 26 April 2016**

Subject: Technology and Support Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Lion

Recommending:

That the report of the Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Support Services

HR/Payroll IT System

Members may recall that as part of the 2015/16 budget Council agreed a sum of £80,000 to purchase a replacement HR/Payroll Management System. Cabinet encouraged Officers to work with other authorities to jointly procure a system on a Shared Service basis. I am pleased to report that tender negotiations have now been completed, Epping Forest District Council has worked with Colchester and Braintree Councils to purchase a system with significant savings over an individually purchased system. The successful provider is Midland HR – iTrent System which is one of the leading systems in the market. The contract has been let on a 5 year basis with options for two further 1 year extensions. The cost to Epping of implementation will be £46,000 and annual licence fees will be £8,300. The annual license for our current system is £12,500. Further savings are likely to be achieved with the future introduction of the employee self-service features of the system. There are likely to be additional benefits by pooling knowledge and resources working with Colchester and Braintree Councils.

Facilities

Fire Safety Doors have been fitted at North Weald Airfield's Control Tower with small additional works to be carried out following the installation of the new doors.

Following the successful implementation and operation of payment kiosks at Waltham Abbey. New payment kiosks are being installed at The Civic Offices in front of the Cashiers windows in July. Preparation works are in place for the changeover and staff will be on hand to ensure a smooth introduction and to provide customer assistance.

As previously agreed, Facilities are currently working to fill two vacancies in the team. Firstly, an Electrician, which has been justified through the business Transformation Programme and secondly, following the post holders retirement, a Senior Building Services Engineer.

Technology

Windows 10 upgrade
ICT are taking advantage of the cost free upgrade from Windows 8 to Windows 10 and are planning to complete the 150 upgrades by the end of June 2016. This work is a priority as failing to complete it on time would incur additional cost. Beyond June 2016, the free upgrade will not be available so the capital budget requirements would increase by £30,000.

Superfast Broadband High Speed Internet

The construction of the ultrafast broadband Rural Challenge Project network continues throughout rural parts of the District. Since the network build began in November 2015, in excess of 23km of network has been constructed. This has seen over 280 customer connection points installed outside properties as the route progresses. The network for the first cabinet in the Bobbingworth area is now virtually complete and the focus here has moved to remedial works and the reinstatement of excavated land. Work continues elsewhere to establish further cabinets and network capacity in the Fyfield and Norton Heath areas. This has included specialist directional drilling beneath the River Roding at Fyfield Bridge. Work on the fourth cabinet in the Abbess Roding area is also due to commence shortly.

Transformation Programme

The Transformation Programme has set-out the Council's purpose, benefits and aims in our approach to managing change. Reports went to Cabinet in March showing scope and methodology on Transformation and agreeing to progress the Customer Contact Review.

A further report to the April Cabinet obtained Invest to Save funding for external support to produce a feasibility study taking forward the review of our accommodation.

A structure for Transformation has been determined and a Transformation Programme Board has been established. The initial meetings have identified key priority projects. These are:

1. **A Customer Contact Project**

    To plan and implement recommendations from the Customer Contact Review.

2. **A Service Accommodation Review**

    To establish whether the Council should remain in the Civic Offices and if so how the site can be better utilised.

3. **Establishment of Project and Programme Management**

    This will enable us to better manage the delivery of our projects.

4. **Corporate Communications**

    This will look at how we communicate with all our customers, better understand what they want and what improvements that can be made to deliver services to them.

Transformation Savings

The Transformation Programme Board has started to progress ideas from staff and Members that will contribute to the £100,000 savings for 2016/17.

A considerable amount of time is currently being spent supporting the initial set up of the projects specially the printer migration element of optimising Council operations. This project relates to the replacement of desktop printers with fewer, more powerful multi-functional devices (MFD's). It is planned to make annual savings of approximately £27,000. A number of scoping meetings have been held and the first corporate meeting is due to take place on 25th April. This meeting will firm up what is in and out of scope as well as producing a detailed specification and timeline.

Transformation Training
Key members of the priority projects will undertake 2 days of training on managing transformation projects, starting in April. Further training will be delivered once the initial training course has been fully evaluated.