LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

EXECUTIVE – 14 SEPTEMBER 2004

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT TITLE: **E-GOVERNMENT PRIORITY OUTCOMES**

FP REF: Cor-04/05-66

FOR ACTION   **NAME OF WARDS**
                                                                          ALL

1   Summary

This report supplements the April 2004 report on the E-Government Programme and proposes the allocation of further funding to meet the requirements of the ODPM Priority Outcomes report.

2   Recommendations

2.1   That the Executive agrees to the proposed further funding arrangements for 2004/5 as detailed in section 7.

2.2   That the Director of Corporate Services is authorised to agree any necessary variations to the proposals to ensure best use of the available e-Government funding.

3   Financial Implications

In April 2004 the allocation of £1,195,406 was agreed for e-Government expenditure in 2004/5 but this did not include the allocation of residual unspent funding from 2003/4 or the £150,000 Priority Outcomes capital grant from the ODPM which has now been confirmed. This grant must be spent before 31 March 2005 and unspent money will need to be returned to the ODPM.

As of July 2004 the total unallocated funding available for further e-Government projects in 2004/5 is £323,353. This includes residual funding unspent from 2003/4, the Priority Outcomes grant from the ODPM, and repayments into the System Development Fund.

The e-Government Steering group has proposed the allocation of £137,000 for expenditure on projects to meet the Priority Outcome targets and £118,500 for expenditure on other BVPI 157 objectives - £255,500 in total.

There is currently insufficient information to make funding requests for projects to meet some of the Priority Outcomes and BVPI 157 targets and it is proposed that the Director of Corporate Services is authorised to approve the allocation of the remaining £67,853 for 2004/5 following recommendations by the e-Government Steering Group.

4   Staffing Implications

None.

5   Legal Implications

Expenditure incurred on the projects must be expenditure for capital purposes if it is to be eligible to be covered by capital grants. Expenditure for capital purposes is defined in section 40 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and in regulations made under that section. Section 40 designates expenditure on acquisition, installation or replacement of equipment as expenditure for capital purposes. Regulation 7 designates expenditure on acquisition or preparation of a computer program, including the acquisition of a right to use the program, as expenditure for capital purposes.

Some of the projects may have particular legal implications which will need to be addressed as they are progressed, for example, issues arising under the Data Protection Act where the project would involve processing of personal data.

6   Diversity Implications

Several areas within the e-Government Programme are related to the Council's Race Equality Scheme priorities for 2004-6.

The e-Government team is working with the Corporate Diversity team to review the equality issues arising from the overall e-Government programme. The equality impact of individual projects within the programme will be assessed by the officers responsible within the Service Areas concerned so as to ensure that any potential adverse implication is addressed during implementation.

7   Detail

7.1   Summary

The main sections of this report are follows :

- The ODPM Priority Outcomes report

- Proposed projects and funding to meet Priority Outcomes.

- Proposed projects and funding to meet BVPI 157 objectives.

- Areas for future expenditure or corporate action

- Appendices showing proposed projects and funding allocations

7.2   The ODPM Priority Outcomes report

At the end of April 2004 the ODPM published a paper entitled "Defining e-Government outcomes for 2005 to support the delivery of priority services & National Strategy transformation agenda for local authorities in England". This paper effectively provides a baseline definition of e-government and describes a number of specific facilities which must be in place. It lists 54 specific outcomes which must be addressed by the e-Government programmes in all English local authorities.

Of these 54 outcomes, 29 are termed "Required" which means that they must be completed by Dec 2005, 25 are termed "Good" and must be completed by April 2006 and the remaining 19 are termed "Excellent" and have no specified date but are expected to be addressed after the other outcomes have been achieved.

The ODPM has provided £150,000 capital grant in 2004/5 specifically for projects to achieve these outcomes.

Progress towards meeting the "priority outcomes" will be a part of the IEG4 (Implementing Electronic Government) statements in October 2004 and failure to meet these objectives will result in the loss of IEG funding for e-Government in 2005/6 from the ODPM.

7.3   Proposals to meet Priority Outcomes

Many of the priority outcome objectives have already been met thorough existing e-Government programme initiatives.   The e-Government Steering Group has agreed a series of proposals from the Service Areas for projects to address the outstanding unmet objectives. These total £137,000 and are described in Appendix A.

7.4   Proposals to meet BVPI 157 targets

BVPI 157 is the Audit Commission Corporate Health Best Value Performance Indicator.   It measures progress towards 100% e-enablement of services by December 2005. By March 2004 Brent had achieved 73%, our declared target for March 2005 is 80% and 100% by Dec 2005.

There are several areas of BVPI 157 where projects had either been given no funding or only partially funding in the past.   These were reviewed and projects totalling £118,500 are proposed for further funding in 2004/5 – these are described in Appendix B.

7.5   Areas for future expenditure or corporate action

There are several areas which will require significant future expenditure or more coordinated corporate action. These include –

1. Change of Address system. This will require further funding and cooperation between service areas to respond to notifications from the public.

2. Single Business Account. This will require further funding and a lead officer from one of the relevant service areas concerned.

3. Anti-Social Behaviour information. This will require cooperation between service areas to ensure consistent information management and statistics.

4. E-Procurement. This will require further funding and cooperation between service areas to use a common procurement system.

5. Home/remote working policies. This will require a lead from Human Resources to develop the policies and cooperation from service areas in taking them up.

6. Response to all emails within 1 working day. This will require a new policy to apply across all service units.

7. Electronic records management system to support improved information management and to met legislative requirements.

8   Background Information:

Brent Council e-Government Programme 2004/5
Brent Council e-Government Strategy January 2001
Brent Council IT Strategy - February 2002
Brent Council IEG3 Statement - October 2003
The National Strategy for Local e-Government - ODPM - Nov 2002
ODPM Priority Outcomes report – April 2004

These documents are available via the Brent website at
www.brent.gov.uk/egov.

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers can also contact

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Appendix A – Projects to meet Priority Service Outcomes

The following projects have been assigned a high priority towards meeting the Priority Service Outcomes. The 'Requested' column shows the funding that was originally requested. The 'Allocation' column shows what was allocated in order to meet the budget constraints. The Ref column codes and the Priority Outcome wording are taken directly from the ODPM document.

Several of these projects (shown by an * in the Ref column) were only partially funded so that initial work could commence on feasibility studies or pilot systems. Several proposals had insufficient detail for funding to be agreed at the present time. Other project areas will require clarification before any funding proposals can be considered. It is possible that certain project areas could be addressed by joint solutions being examined by the London Connects and the West London Alliance partnerships to which the authority subscribes.

	Ref	ODPM Priority Outcome	Requested	Allocation	Project Description
Corporate					
	R3	One stop direct access and deep linking to joined up A-Z information on all local authority services via website or shared telephone contact centre using the recognised taxonomy of the Local Government Category List	5,000	5,000	This work will enable the website to comply with the requirements use the LGCL classification scheme. This would initially be made available through the A-Z of council services and will enable deep linking within the A-Z, FAQs and online forms. It will provide a standard navigation system for the public and make the website easier to use.
	R5	Public access to reports, minutes and agendas from past council meetings, including future meetings diary updated daily	6,000	6,000	Work is needed to finish the project and will focus on three main areas: - Providing an e-mail alert when the minutes are ready for specific meetings. - Providing an e-mail alert allowing users to know when the minutes are ready for all meeting of their favourite Committees. - Streamlining the creation of report pages to allow Democratic Services officers to each provide the service related to their own meetings.
	R6	Providing every Councillor with the option to have an easy-to-manage set of public web pages (for community leadership purposes) that is either maintained for them, or that they can maintain themselves	10,500	10,500	The present webpages about Councillors can only be updated by Democratic Services staff and only contain a standard set of basic information. The new system will provide a facility for Members to update their own web pages and allow a much greater range of information to be held. Legal advice will be sought to ensure that restrictions on Council funding of political activity are followed.

Ref	ODPM Priority Outcome	Requested	Allocation	Project Description
R11	Delivery of 'added value' around online payment facilities, including ability to check Council Tax and Business Rate balances online or via touch tone telephone dialling	9,000	9,000	Work is required to develop new e-forms for online payments and to build new interfaces to back office systems to provide account balances.
R20	Email and Internet access provided for all Members and staff that establish a need for it	15,000	15,000	The IT for Members project envisaged a timescale of 2 years for providing all Members with laptops and broadband facilities. At Members' request the timescale is to be reduced to 6 months. This work has already commenced.
G3	Citizen participation and response to forthcoming consultations and decisions on matters of public interest (e-consultation), including facility for citizens to sign up for email and/or SMS text alerts on nominated topics	13,000	13,000	To enhance the current consultation database with the following: - Link to email alert system - Use of SMS for consultation - Development of e-forms to capture information
G15*	Mobile office service using technology to offer processing of Council Tax and Housing Benefit claims directly from citizens' homes.	60,000	10,000	This project will examine the feasibility of providing generic solutions for mobile working which could be utilised by several service areas including Revenues & Benefits.
G19	Adoption of ISO 15489 methodology for Electronic Document Records Management (ERDM) and identification of areas where current records management policies, procedures and systems need improvement to meet the requirements of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection legislation	5,000	5,000	Work required is to conduct a feasibility study on a records management solution. Records management is required to facilitate the FOI Act, which fully comes in to force in Jan 2005. It is anticipated that further funding will be required to purchase and implement an EDRM system in the future.
G22	Establishment of internal targets and measures for customer take-up of e-enabled access channels	5,000	5,000	A series of steps (which will include marketing and publicity) will be taken to help ensure that the targets are met. This will take the form of promoting the site through the youth, children & schools in the form of competitions and prizes, with entries being made available on the website. This will encourage further use of the Council website and allow improved baseline measurements.

	Ref	ODPM Priority Outcome	Requested	Allocation	Project Description
	G25*	Facilities to support the single notification of a change of address, i.e. a citizen should only have to tell the council they have moved on one occasion and the council should then be able to update all records relating to that person to include the new address	30,000	10,000	A new system and new procedures covering all service areas will be required to allow single change of address notification. The funding will allow initial work to commence.
Education Arts & Libraries					
	R1*	Parents/guardians to apply online for school places for children for the 2007 school year.	52,500	10,000	The quote from Foundation Software for a solution to provide online submissions is £52,500. Alternative solutions will be investigated using e-Forms with links to the existing system.
Environmental Services					
	R7	Public reporting/applications, procurement and tracking of environmental services, includes waste management and street scene (e.g. abandoned cars, graffiti removal, bulky waste removal, recycling)	2,000	2,000	Customers will be able to use SMS to send their requests for services to StreetCare. Online requests, payments and tracking references are already in place but SMS functionality needs to be developed.
	R8	Receipt and processing of planning and building control applications	20,000	20,000	Development of e-forms to integrate with Acolaid for Planning and Building Control Applications. This will allow XML data to be exchanged between the systems. This will reduce the work involved in data entry and allow customers to track the status of their applications/requests/objections.
	R15	Public e-consultation facilities for new proposals on traffic management (e.g. controlled parking zones (CPZs), traffic calming schemes), including publication of consultation survey results	3,500	3,500	This will allow electronic consultation on traffic management scheme on website and though email alert. It will require digitising and uploading of data to the website.
	G5	Public access to corporate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for map-based data presentation of property-related information	5,000	5,000	Electronic mapping facilities will allow residents to search for spatial information. It will require development and uploading information to the internet mapping software

	Ref	ODPM Priority Outcome	Requested	Allocation	Project Description
	G14	GIS-based presentation of information on roadworks in the local area, including contact details and updated daily	8,000	8,000	This will allow Internet mapping of proposed road works. Residents will able to view the location of planned roadwork on a map. It will require links between the back-office system and the mapping solution and development of the Internet mapping site.
Totals			**£249,500**	**£137,000**	

Appendix B – Projects to meet BVPI 157 and CPA Excellence targets

The following projects have been assigned a high priority towards meeting BVPI 157 (which is a factor in CPA assessment). The 'Requested' column shows the funding that was originally requested and the 'Allocation' column shows what was proposed to be allocated. The reference numbers from the Projects Database on the Intranet.

SA	Ref	Project	Requested	Allocation	Description
Corporate					
	1278	Public awareness of e-Government	2,500	2,500	Recent research by Transversal has shown that public awareness of e-government is very low. 73% said that they hadn't noticed the impact of the investment made in e-government. Specific promotions and publicity will be organised to raise the current perception of e-government in order to ensure Brent's citizens are aware of improvements in online systems.
	1222	Web Access in One Stop Shops	12,000	12,000	Provide public access to the Internet in One Stop Shops. This will reduce waiting times in One Stop Shops through improved self-service and provide greater access to the Internet for the public.
	1210	Internet resilience	16,000	16,000	New internet links have been purchased. £16K was retained from the original allocation to provide upgrades to the internet servers.
	1298	Digitisation of Council owned Land & Property	10,000	10,000	All the council owned land will be shown on the Intranet. Approximately 100 days of time are required to digitise council property records. This will assist in dealing with encroachment on Council land and help to safeguard council assets. It will allow GIS systems to help in identifying which service is responsible for maintenance of council owned land.

SA	Ref	Project	Requested	Allocation	Description
Education, Arts & Libraries					
	1252	New Tourism Zone on BRAIN Website	30,000	30,000	This will act as a tourism portal for Brent., vital for the borough, as it becomes more of a tourist destination with the future opening of the new national stadium and the proposed regeneration of Wembley. It will contain tourist information such as accommodation, local attractions, Brent's historic and ethnically diverse buildings and a 'what's on in Brent' listing. It will replace the current Brent tourism information website which was originally complied several years ago and is now out of date.
	1253	New Mentoring Schemes on BRAIN Website	20,000	20,000	Using BRAIN's link with organisations to develop a portal area for all mentoring schemes in Brent (to include community and voluntary groups, online guidance & advice).
	1254	New Young People Zone on BRAIN Website	50,000	10,000	To create a portal for young people, with discussion boards, links, information on education, health (including drugs), relationships, careers, and online consultation.
	1265	Central Pupil database – Support Module	25,000	10,000	The purchase and implementation of the Pupil Support Services module. This module supports and informs the case management functions of Educational Psychologists, the Education Welfare Service, EMTAS and Exclusions Officers. It enables electronic links with Social Services systems and facilitates joined up case management across all services.
Housing					
	1229	Public Web access points in MG House	8,000	8,000	HRC have been considering a number of improvements to our reception area and believe that it would be feasible to provide 4 PCs for the public to use to get information on housing related issues. We would like customers to be able to bid on-line for locating properties and we would also explore providing access to other housing related sites, such as HomeFinders and Shelter, as well as the Council's own Housing website.
Totals			**£173,500**	**£118,500**	