

C REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

Contracts

- 1 A step by step guide for all Council purchasers is in the final stages of compilation. It has been structured to be used in conjunction with the Council's intranet. The target date for going live is October this year. This is the first phase of a programme to link procurement to the e agenda. Future developments will include electronic links to best practice guides and other relevant information.
- 2 A general procurement training programme has been developed for Council staff. Courses will be held during the course of the year. We shall also be arranging tailored training programme to meet service specific needs. For example, this autumn, procurement and commissioning training has been arranged to meet the specific needs of staff involved in the procurement of social care
- 3 Since the last report of the Cabinet Member Resources, a Government Taskforce (headed by Sir Ian Byatt) has issued a report on its investigation in to the effectiveness of Local Authority procurement. The report makes 39 recommendations for improving performance. We meet, or have made progress towards, many of these recommendations. However, for those areas where we specifically need to improve, an action plan is being drawn up. Progress will be monitored and the situation reviewed in 6 months time.
- 4 Advice and assistance from the contracts team resulted in the Royal Latin school achieving a saving of over £7,000 in updating IT facilities.
- 5 Resourcing through competitive tendering and use of related CBC contracts will result in savings in excess on £40,000 on the winter maintenance equipment replacement programme for the coming winter.

ICT

- 6 Our Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statement was approved by Cabinet on the 30 July 2001 and submitted to the DTLR as our initial response

to achieving 100% electronic service delivery by 2005.

- 7 Initial meetings have been held with District Councils to identify projects that are of mutual interest that we can take forward jointly to meet our e-government programmes. It has been agreed that the group should be working to achieve a joint IEG statement by the end of the year so that the benefits and money available for investment in ICT solutions were maximized for the people of Buckinghamshire.
- 8 The projects to replace a number of key systems including SWIFT (Social Services) and Sims-EMS (Education) have commenced. To support these projects, comprehensive training programmes for staff are underway.
- 9 The project to re-cable the central complex has been completed and all local area networks are now fully operational with enhanced performance and greater resilience.
- 10 Following the move to make services more accessible through an increased use of the Internet, a project to improve our network security has commenced. This will concentrate initially on authentication of user access permissions and encryption of data passing across the Internet.
- 11 Potential suppliers of replacement core financial systems have been reduced to two and detailed discussions and assessments are currently taking place.

Legal/Admin

- 12 The past year has been a busy time for the small Appeals Section of Committee Services, which administers the appeals process for primary and secondary transfers, selection and exclusions. Whilst the number of appeals (all types) lodged for the academic year 2001/02 (1067) is slightly down on the previous year (1102) they are increasing in complexity each year.

- 13 Of the appeals reaching the formal Hearing stage, and not being either settled or withdrawn, the number of successful appeals for 2001/02 totalled 232 against 510 unsuccessful. For 2000/01 the figures were 283 successful against 496 unsuccessful.
- 14 In addition to thanking the staff for the work they do, I should like to pay tribute to the voluntary members of the Panels who hear the appeals.

Property Management

- 15 Following an intense period of construction activity over the school holiday period, buildings have reopened without any major difficulties. Planned Maintenance programmes and other projects involving "New Deal" Capital allocations are well underway. The Education Transportable Building programme, involving installing classrooms at eleven sites around the County to meet accommodation needs for the Autumn term is nearing successful completion. The programme involving the siting and installation of some 20 classroom buildings is double the usual size and required firm contract administration.

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CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES