

Special Executive Meeting**On 18 January 2006**

Report Title: Tech Refresh Project - Review of Project Management

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable):

Report of: Max Caller, CBE, **Interim Chief Executive**Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: Non-key Decision

1. Purpose

1.1 To receive the report [at Appendix 1] of the Audit Commission on the Review of the Tech Refresh Project Management, which was commissioned by the Interim Chief in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Member [Organisational Development and Performance].

2. Introduction by Executive Member

2.1 This report was commissioned last year when the scale of spend on Tech Refresh (TR) was first made known to members.

2.2 The district auditor's report contains considerable learning points for the way in which the council commissions, manages, evaluates and assures large scale IT projects. This learning will need to be embedded into the daily work of the council as a matter of urgency. The Interim Chief Executive will be producing an action plan asap and we may wish to review existing IT projects to ensure good project management practices are being followed.

2.3 Since the change of supplier last year the Tech refresh project has been managed and delivered in-house. This has resulted in Tech Refresh being rolled out to over 94% of IT users to date. It is worth noting that TR has successfully enabled the meeting of our Priority Service Outcomes (as set down by government) and the requirements of BV157. Residents of the borough will experience improved service levels as a result of this project.

2.4 Finally, reporting of viral project information to members did not take place. This must be of great concern to the council and colleagues will want to be reassured that this was an isolated case.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to note and consider the report of the Audit Commission.
- 3.2 That Members instruct that the Interim Chief Executive produce a detailed action plan and report it back to the Executive.

Report Authorised by:

Interim Chief Executive

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4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Tech Refresh project commenced in June 2003, with a [then] planned finish in October 2004. Following a number of problems with the project, the Interim Chief Executive was asked to commission a review of the project management for Tech Refresh.
- 4.2 The Audit Commission was appointed to carry out this review in August 2005 following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Member [Organisational Development and Performance]
- 4.3 The scope and objectives of the review are set out at paragraph 5. of the appendix to this report.

5. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

5.1

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 6.1 Audit Commission Report: Tech Refresh Project - Review of Project Management, which is provided as an appendix to this report.

7. Background

- 7.1 The Council commenced the Tech Refresh programme in 2003. During the last 12 months significant overspends were reported compared to the original approved budget. In consultation with Members the District Auditor was commissioned to undertake a review, the outcome of which is attached.
- 7.2 Members will see that there were a number of systematic failures in managing a programme of this size.

7.3 The Interim Chief Executive considers that the review provides a helpful agenda to significantly improve the Council's performance in this area for the future. He recommends that the recommendations be accepted and that officers produce a detailed action plan for consideration by the Executive.

8. Comments of the Director of Finance

8.1 The report notes the need for a detailed action plan to be prepared in response to the recommendations. The Director of Finance has been consulted and has no further comments at this stage.

9. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

9.1 As the report notes significant failures in the Council's corporate governance arrangements in respect of this project, it is important that the report is considered and the lessons learnt are applied to all projects. The Council's constitution and procedures may need to be reviewed in the light of the findings of this report.

10. Equalities Implications

10.1 The provision of high quality technology is essential in enabling staff to carry out their work and deliver high quality services to all our residents.

11. Use of Appendices

11.1 Audit Commission report on the Review of Tech Refresh Project Management.