

# BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

## PUBLIC REPORT

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Interim Head of Paid Service</b>	
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> August 2005</b>	
<b>Relevant Forward Plan Ref:</b>	<b>103544/2005</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Corporate Web Services Replacement</b>	
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member(s):</b>	<b>Councillor Paul Tilsley – Deputy Leader</b>	
<b>Relevant O&amp;S Chair(s):</b>	<b>Cllr Michael Wilkes</b>	
<b>Wards affected:</b>	<b>All</b>	

### 1. Purpose of report:

This report provides details of the web services review and seeks approval for expenditure approval from the Policy Contingency Fund to allow for the procurement and implementation of an enterprise-wide web service solution.

This will include procurement of a new information content management system, building a transaction-enabled website (Birmingham.gov.uk) and intranet (Inline) with dramatically improved navigability, accessibility and flexibility, and supporting organisational improvements

Two pathfinder projects – People Solutions and Brasshouse Translation, Interpreting and accessibility information services ((BTIS) – are included.

### 2. Decision(s) recommended:

That Cabinet

- Authorises the Director of Business Solutions and IT to proceed with the procurement of an enterprise-wide content management system.
- Approve the procurement of the work stream requirements through mini-competitions within the catalogue framework (SCAT & GCAT) operated by the Office of Government Commerce.
- Approve the budget of £580,000 for the web services project (as detailed in Appendix 3) to be funded from the Policy Contingency Fund and subject to the approval of a full business case by Business Solutions Group.

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### **3. Brief Summary of Report:**

The [www.birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk) (. gov') site is central to the delivery of council services and to the Council's relationship with residents, businesses, visitors and other interested parties, both in Birmingham and worldwide. The intranet site, Inline has the potential to be central to the work of tens of thousands of staff. Both services at present are:

- unwieldy to use
- cumbersome to maintain
- lacking in resilience
- inaccessible to some users
- and insufficiently flexible to enable efficient integration of transactions

As a result there are a growing number of independent web sites (in excess of 35) operating under the Birmingham City Council banner, a fact that was highlighted in a recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Best Value and Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) report.

A web services review was commissioned which identified a need for a robust and easily accessible system to manage city wide information content, provide greater interactive on-line working capabilities (e.g. submission and response of services and activities electronically) and compliance with the requirements set by the Disability Discrimination Act for accessibility (e.g. facilities to allow people with visual impairments easy access and multi language facilities). This cannot be achieved with the current system.

The development and implementation of the new solution will not only underpin a large number of projects and strategies already underway, such as the Customer Services Strategy, but also provide a framework to achieve emerging programmes such as the 'Digital City' strategy for Birmingham City Council.

### **4. Compliance Issues:**

#### **4.1 Are Decisions consistent with relevant Council Policies, Plans or Strategies:**

Details of how this contract supports relevant Council policies, plans or strategies are included in Appendix 1.

#### **4.2 Relevant Officers/Members/ others consulted on this matter:**

- The Deputy Leader has been consulted regarding the contents of this report.
- Stephen Hughes, Acting Head of Paid Services has been consulted regarding the contents of this report.
- Cllr. Rudge, portfolio for Equalities and Human Resources has been consulted throughout the duration of this project.
- A report on this matter was considered by BTG on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005, reported to CMT on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2005, and presented to Cabinet Members and Senior Officers on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2005. The full business case will be subject to approval by Business Solutions Group.
- The Birmingham People's Panel, which is broadly representative of the profile of the population, were consulted as part of the web services review.
- Relevant parties were consulted as part of the Equality Impact Needs Assessment process included in the web services review.

#### **4.3 Relevant legal powers, including Financial, Personnel, Equalities and other resource implications (if any):**

Resource implications are detailed in Appendix 3.

#### **4.4 Main Risk Management and Equality Impact Assessment Issues (if any):**

An Equalities Impact Needs Assessment has been conducted as part of the web services review. The main risk identified is the current web sites non-compliance with the Disabilities Discrimination Act. This will be addressed with the implementation of an enterprise-wide web service solution.

## **5. Relevant background/chronology of key events:**

A review of the main web services, Birmingham.gov and Inline was conducted and overseen by a project board drawn from key officers engaged in web development work and from areas of activity that would be affected by such work, from across the Council.

Representative groups who would be affected by changes to the web services were consulted including the Birmingham People's Panel, which is broadly representative of the profile of the population of the city. As part of the review, an Equality Impact Needs Assessment was also conducted.

One of the key findings of the review is that the existing solution is not sustainable, and without any action, stands to become a liability for Birmingham City Council, specifically:

- Site is not compliant, and without fundamental change it cannot comply, with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act
- Inability to support the customer service strategy to make information and transactions more readily available online
- Cannot support the delivery of Excellence in People Management programme

The analysis approach taken involved rating the current provision of online services and the desired position against 12 'dimensions', using a scale of 0 to 5, 0 being 'poor' and 5 being 'reference site'. The current and future positions were analysed in this way resulting in identifying the gap analysis, attached as Appendix 2. In summary the current position falls a long way short of what is required.

Market research identified the possible options as outlined in section 6 of this document.

Of the mid-market solutions, consideration was given to the content management system used by Birmingham Grid for Learning, where existing relationships with BCC are good. The amount of bespoke work required was seen as a disadvantage.

The open-source solution Aplaws+ (part of an ODPM-funded national project) was considered as representing good-value local-authority-targeted solution. The nature of open-source products is such that upfront savings are often outweighed by greater expenditure in implementation and maintenance. The Aplaws+ solution was considered most appropriate for smaller authorities than BCC.

The project board agreed to move forward by developing a business case for an enterprise-wide solution.

### Contribution to Efficiency Agenda

Delivery of a web infrastructure framework can provide a clear scope for efficiency gains. These can be divided in accordance with Gershon principles into cashable and non-cashable gains.

The principle cashable benefits of a new web service should result from:

- Reduced customer enquiries in person and by phone as information becomes more readily accessible online
- Reduced use of in-person, mail and phone access channels as transactional functionality becomes available
- Increased productivity council wide through electronic workflow and more readily available information and services on-line

The proposed patherfinder project, People Solutions, will contribute to the savings (estimated in excess of £3m) that will result from the 'Excellence in People Management' project, though these should be regarded as a long-term goal rather than a 'quick win'.

The non-cashable benefits include:

- Greatly enhanced customer service through ease, speed, reliability and flexibility of access to information and services via the web and other channels, both traditional and evolving
- Reduction of misinformation through out-of-date web pages, achieved by devolving responsibility for information on the website and the intranet to individual service areas
- Improved accessibility both internally and externally, which is not only a benefit in itself but also reduces the risk of litigation under qualities legislation
- Improvement to BCC's image through more attractive and modern website, and greater control of branding through formalised relationships with partner sites.

The indicative cost of the development is £580,000. A breakdown of this figure and the work involved is attached as Appendix 3. It is proposed to fund this from Policy Contingency. On-going maintenance costs will be broadly in line with existing costs. It is anticipated that the project from start to finish will take 7 months.

## **6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):**

The options for development that were considered were:

- a) Mid-market solution – Tried and tested solution that would still require substantial bespoke work at considerable cost
- b) Open source – Nominally free solution, though no costs savings can be guaranteed as bespoke and support work can be substantial.
- c) Enterprise wide solution – High-end multi-functional suites aimed at large organisations

All three options considered would, with different degrees of difficulty, potentially achieve the required scores against the 12 dimensions depicted in the spider graph in Appendix 2. A weighted assessment of the options, based around the scope for rapid improvement gave a clear lead for the enterprise-wide solution.

The Project Board was unanimous in agreeing to move forward to develop a full costed business case focusing on an enterprise-wide solution.

**7. Reasons for Decision(s):**

The current web service is unsustainable in the medium term. The procurement of an enterprise-wide solution will enable the City to address the issues with the current solution as identified in section 3. The two pathfinder projects allow for the implementation of a much-needed People Solutions internal site to be expedited, which offers substantial potential for efficiency savings, and for the new .gov site to be built in a fully accessible way from the outset.

**Signatures (or Cabinet Member(s) approval to adopt recommendations):**

**Chief Officer(s):** .....

**Cabinet Member(s):** .....

**List of background documents:**

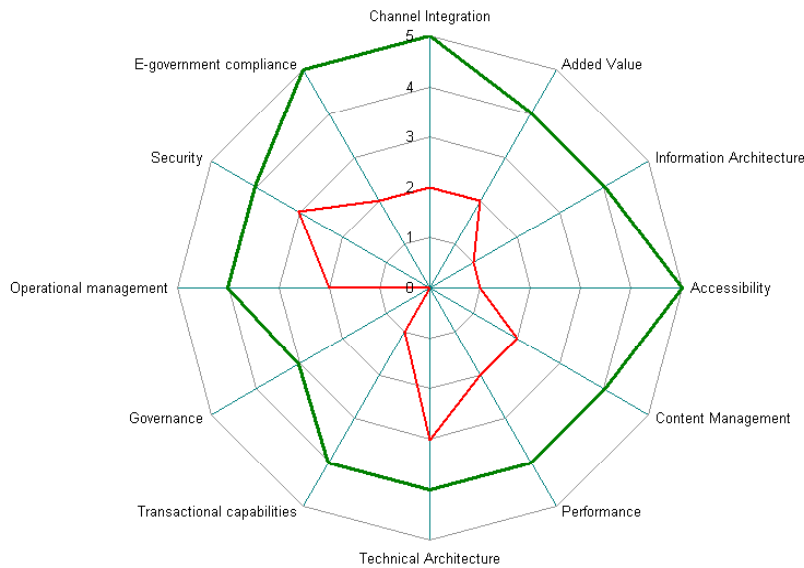
Business Case for Web Services Implementation v2.0 11 July 2005

## **Appendix 1**

### **Relevant Council Policies, Plans and Strategies**

1. Corporate Policy Priorities
  - 1.1 The web services infrastructure will supports the following:
    - Investing in Improvement
    - Improving services – aspiring for excellence in all our services
    - A city of vibrant urban villages
  
2. Service Specific Priorities
  - 2.1 The new web services infrastructure will provide a framework to achieve a number of planned programmes that are already underway, such as the Customer Service Strategy, the 'Digital City' strategy and the Excellence in People Management programme of work.
  
3. Equalities
  - 3.1 The current web service does not support the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This will be addressed with the implementation of an enterprise-wide solution.
  - 3.2 The pathfinder project will address the accessibility issues by demonstrating work being done at Brasshouse Translation, Interpreting and accessible information Services (BTIS), particularly around signing and multiple languages.
  
4. Environment
  - 4.1 No specific health and environmental implications have been identified.

## **Appendix 2**



High-level description of the dimensions used to measure the gap between the current web service and the required web service.

### **Channel Integration**

A consistent approach to delivering services across multiple information channels

### **Added Value**

Additional features over and above on-line services e.g. interactive services (submission and response of services and activities electronically), personalisation facilities so that users can organise how information is presented to them

### **Information Architecture**

How information is structured i.e. the grouping of information and navigability so that users can steer their way through information dynamically

### **Accessibility**

Usability and access for all user-groups, which includes compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and support for different languages

### **Content Management**

The process and technologies behind creating, modifying, authorising, distributing and maintaining information content

### **Performance**

The performance of the web site including response times once a button has been pressed, availability of the on-line service

### **Technical Architecture**

The scalability and flexibility of the service to add additional on-line services and activities

### **Transactional Capabilities**

Provision of interactive on-line services and activities from the start of a process in a service area to the presentation to the customer.

### **Governance**

The decision making framework to support and manage service priorities including setting up arrangements with service areas to devolve responsibility for management of their specific information content.

**Operational Management**

The means and methods by which the website is managed and delivered

**Security**

The setting up of policies and rules to protect the web services against security attacks

**E-government Compliance**

The extent to which the site is/could be managed in respect of emerging standards from central government and national project products.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Indicative Costs**

<b>Work stream *</b>	<b>BCC staff</b>	<b>External</b>	<b>Total</b>
Partnership SLA's and liaison with programmed Strategies	£ 9,000	£ 21,000	£ 30,000
Organisation and Change Management	£25,000	£ 26,000	£ 51,000
Content Design and Delivery	£14,000	£ 18,000	£ 32,000
Pathfinder workflows	£27,000	£ 47,000	£ 74,000
Procurement – design and implementation	£20,000	£106,000	£126,000
Project Management	£25,000	£ 35,000	£ 60,000
<b>Total Work stream Costs</b>			<b>£373,000</b>

Hardware Upgrade	£ 10,000
Application Architecture	£35,000
Core Products	£86,000
Non-Core Products	£23,000
<b>Total Purchase Costs</b>	<b>£154,000</b>

<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£527,000</b>
<b>Contingency 10%</b>	<b>£ 53,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£580,000</b>

\* A description of each work stream content is attached as Appendix 4.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Workstream Descriptions**

#### Partnership SLA's and liaison with Programmed Strategies

- Partnership Framework Terms of Reference and Agreement (SLA's)
- Governance model appropriate to support Programmed strategies

#### Organisation & Change Management

- Revised Web Team Structure
- Web Team – Business Plan
- Implementing authoring and publishing workflows that allow a controlled but delegated structure
- HR support for internal changes required – Job description amendments
- Training to implement and utilise the new content management system and integrated applications

#### Content Design, Delivery and Migration

- Customer expectations report
- Information architecture to support accessibility and usability requirements
- Migration strategy, action plan and data cleansing

#### Pathfinder Projects

- Workflow development for People Solutions
- Workflow developments for Brasshouse Translation, Interpreting and accessible information services (BTIS)

#### Procurement – Design and Implementation

- Business requirements
- Planning, procurement and selection process
- Contract supplier
- Analysis
- Development and build
- Functional testing
- Handover

#### Project Management

- Project management

#### Hardware

- Environments for production, development, testing and training

#### Application Architecture

- Middleware

#### Core Products

- Content Management System
- Operating System
- Communications Applications
- Business Process Solutions
- Data Management Applications

#### Non-Core Products

- Search engine
- Accelerators
- Client-tailored plug-ins