

Report to :	Finance & Performance Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee
Report of:	Corporate Director Business Change
Date of Report:	10th July 2009
SUBJECT:	PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NEW COUNCIL WEBSITE
Wards Affected:	All

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides a summary of the progress of the new Council Website (FatWire Web Content Management System [Web CMS]) project to date; particularly in relation to the dependencies with two business transformation programmes; namely Customer First and Excellence in People Management.

Overview & Issues

2. There are two aspects to this project, both based on the FatWire content management system – **Birmingham.gov.uk**, which is the external/outward facing internet site and **Inline**, which is the internal/inward facing intranet site for council staff.
3. It is acknowledged that there has been considerable delay to the implementation of Web CMS, as a result of both business and technical challenges.
4. In terms of the current status of the Web CMS system, a number of functional defects and performance problems have been identified and are currently being addressed and indeed, most are now resolved. Additional development resources have been brought in to expedite the resolution of these defects and improve performance.
5. Website content from the current system (around 10,000 pages) has been migrated across into the new application, BCC authors and editors are in the process of validating and publishing the web pages. A bug in the migration meant that some characters (for example certain types of quotes and apostrophes; pound and Euro signs, accented letters) were omitted, along with the following character. All pages are currently being reviewed and amended by BCC authors and editors, supported by the Corporate Web Team.

6. At the start of June the content publishing was not progressing at the required rate. However, this situation has improved considerably since that time and directorates have ensured that resources have been targeted at this task.

Dependencies

7. The new web site is critical to two of the business transformation programmes; namely Excellence in People Management and Customer First.

Excellence in People Management(EPM)

8. EPM is dependent on the internal facing aspect of the Fatwire project to give access to HR People Solutions via the intranet portal. The portal enables both manager self service and employees to have access to People Solutions, which gives access to employment policies and guidance, management information, e-learning and access to manage, update and maintain appropriate workforce data. This includes the new PDR process and forms. Fatwire is fundamental to the success of EPM.

Customer First(CF)

9. CF is dependent on the external/ Internet facing aspects of the Fatwire Project. Integration is required for web front end technology utilised by CF, this essentially concerns the need for BCC's new website to be live to provide access to the public to carry out transactions in the new customer service model/organisation. CF assumes that there will be greatly increased use of the web by the public and therefore savings in the cost of providing customer services.

Current Position (30th June 2009)

10. The project is working towards an anticipated go-live at the end of July or possibly the first week of August 2009. Whilst this date is achievable, risks remain due to the complexity of the Web CMS solution and the dependency on directorates to check and publish content.
11. The Corporate Web Team, senior managers and Service Birmingham are acutely aware of the issues and have significantly increased resource levels in an attempt to mitigate risk. As a result of actions taken, there has been significant progress on defect resolution over the last few weeks and increased focus on content publishing. I am assured by the directorates that all critical content identified by them will be published prior to the go live date.
12. Security testing and performance testing has started this week and the outcomes of this testing may impact the ability to achieve the anticipated go-live date. As will failure to resolve any outstanding or new critical defect

that is identified between now and the expected go-live date.

13. Existing arrangements with Service Birmingham are based on a fixed price agreement. Some indications from Service Birmingham suggest that work in addition to that covered by the fixed price agreement has been undertaken; this is currently under discussion including, the identification, if necessary, of funding sources. As has always been the case, the Council is responsible for populating the content of the system.

Summary

14. Service Birmingham and the Council are working towards the new web site being available as soon as possible and I anticipate this will be at the end of July or possibly the first week of August 2009. However, this will be the first phase of an ongoing process.
15. Users will notice immediately a new design and layout (the "look and feel") for the site. The underlying code will be much closer to being fully standards compliant and correspondingly more accessible to people with disabilities *; with the intention to become fully compliant as soon as possible after the launch. There will also be new tools to allow users to add address and event details directly from web pages into their electronic address books or calendars. A new, Google, search facility will make it much easier to find content on the site.
16. The major changes will be visible once Customer First is able to offer a personalised account for monitoring the progress of specific service requests later in the year.
17. It is my intention that a full 'lessons learnt' review is completed once both aspects of the project are live and stabilised.

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*Note: It is a statutory requirement for the external facing web site to comply with the Disabilities Discrimination Act.