

INFORMATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Information Services Committee held within the Council Offices, Clydebank on Wednesday, 26th June, 1996

Present: Councillors James McCallum (LAB), Jun McElhill (SNP), Mary Campbell (LAB), Daniel McCafferty (LAB), Andrew White (LAB), Alistair Macdonald (LAB), James Doherty (LAB), George Cairney (LAB), Provost Patrick O'Neill (LAB), John Wailes (SNP), Craig McLaughlin (SNP), and Ronald McColl (SNP).

Attending: Michael J. Watters, Chief Executive; Ian Leitch, Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council, Mary Cullen, Head of Corporate Policy and Public Relations and Angela Clements, Head of Information Services.

Apologies Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors James Flynn
for Absence: (LAB) and Duncan Mills (LAB).

Councillor James McCallum in the Chair

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

There was submitted report by the Head of Information Services giving a brief update on the Corporate issues affecting all departments within the Council in relation to Infrastructure Information Technology.

After hearing the Head of Information Services the Committee noted the report.

The Chair informed Members that the Head of Information Services had agreed to explain the technical working, or demonstrate the technology referred to in the report.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

There was submitted report by the Head of Information Services updating Members on the status of voice networks within West Dunbartonshire Council.

The Head of Information services informed Members that:-

- (a) as part of the new telephone network tenders have been invited for a replacement Call Analysis and Directory system to replace the previous system which, at reorganisation, had ceased due to licensing restrictions. At present there are not sufficient funds remaining from the Capital Consent for Information Technology to purchase a Directory System for 1995/96, and consequently the telephonists are now relying on the Hardcopy Internal Directory listing for redirecting calls;

- (b) Information Services has provided intra-departmental grouping and sequencing logic to give shape to each department's own telephone directory entries, and version 1 of the Internal Telephone Directory will be issued by the end of June 1996; and
- (c) the Radio Communications licences inherited from the predecessor authorities require updating and Information Services were currently talking to the Radio Communications Agency about this issue.

After discussion the Committee noted the report.

INFORMATION SERVICES STEERING GROUP

There was submitted report by the Head of Information Services in respect of the formation of an Information Services Steering Group, as agreed by the Management Team, and consisting of senior management representation from each department. The Group would prioritise the Information Technology and Telecommunications Capital Plan; would have three main functions, Exploration, Selection of Projects and Project Oversight; and submit report and recommendations to the Management Team.

After discussion the Committee

- (a) agreed the report;
- (b) noted that the first meeting of the Group would take place in July; and
- (c) that the question of Members being involved in the Group would be a matter for future consideration.

I.T. APPLICATION PORTFOLIO

There was submitted and noted report by the Head of Information Services indicating the types of computer systems inherited on 1st April 1996, which were currently supported by Information Services and informing Members that a corporate procedure for identifying and prioritising new applications was currently under development via the Information Services Steering Group referred to in the previous item.

HARDWARE SERVER STRATEGY

There was submitted report by the Head of Information Services outlining some of the technical considerations which would influence the strategy for procurement of larger computer hardware, known as applications servers, for West Dunbartonshire Council. The report provided a framework for the initial procurement of Corporate Server technology to be established within the Council.

Having heard the Head of Information Services, the Committee

- (a) noted the report and approved the development of a strategy for application Servers, based on the principles outlined in the report; and
- (b) noted that more specific recommendations would be submitted at a later date as part of an overall Information Technology Strategy.

INFORMATION SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET 1996/97: UPDATE OF CUTS IMPLEMENTATION

With reference to the minute of this Committee of 8th May 1996 (Volume page 445 refers) there was submitted report by the Head of Information Services informing Members of the progress made in implementing cuts in each of the five options mentioned in the first report which were selectively to delay the replacement of necessary support staff; reduction in quantity of hardware covered under maintenance; exclusion of particular software from maintenance agreement; reduction of printing and stationery costs by limiting hardcopy computer output; and reduction of telephone costs by the planned installation of more cost-effective communications.

After discussion the Committee

- (a) noted the report; and commended the Head of Information Services on achieving the many savings to date; and
- (b) noted that update reports would continue to be submitted to the Committee as further savings are identified and cuts made.

MEMBERS INFORMATION SYSTEMS PILOT UPDATE

With reference to the minute of this Committee of 8th May 1996 (Volume page 446 refers) there was submitted report by the Head of Information Services detailing further progress on the service, providing usage statistics, patterns of usage, distribution mechanisms, feedback from pilot participants and comparisons with another Information Service.

Having heard the Head of Information Services the Committee

- (a) approved the method for feedback from pilot participants and the proposed comparison with another Information System; and
- (b) noted the report, and that the final progress report submitted to the next meeting will describe ongoing usage statistics, the feedback obtained from the questionnaire, and a comparison with the Reuters Business Briefing system, which would be available at no subscription cost to Council during the evaluation period.

ELECTRONIC MAIL PILOT UPDATE

With reference to the minute of this Committee of 13th March 1996 (Volume page 327 refers) there was submitted a report by the Head of Information Services updating Members

on the project to link all Information Services staff by Email and advising that, because of the number of sites, this project was seen to have significant value in terms of disseminating information throughout Information Services and keeping staff in close contact.

The Head of Information Services advised that no capital cost had been incurred to date as the server and software have been identified from within existing assets; that all members of Information Services have access to a Personal Computer, that another significant benefit expected from this project is the integration of Email with the Helpdesk software, and that future update reports will be periodically reported to this Committee.

The Committee noted the report.

INFORMATION STRATEGY

There was submitted and agreed report by the Head of Corporate Policy and Public Relations providing an update on the development of the Council's Information Strategy, identifying key aims and current developments taking into account information issues arising from West Dunbartonshire Council's services such as community care, education and economic development, and informing Members that an interdepartmental working group would be set up to identify these and other issues, and that a more detailed report would be submitted in September.