

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by the Chief Executive

Corporate Services Committee: 26 April 2006

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**Subject: Online Publication of Committee Reports**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the launch of a new online information service which is now available to members of the public via the Council's Website.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1** Members will be aware that in 2003, the Council purchased a Committee Management Information System (CMIS) which enables members of the public to access Council Minutes via the Council's Website on the Internet. During 2003/2004, the Council's Committee Administration Team input all of the Council's minutes dating back to April 1995 and made these available to the public in September 2004. Since then all new Council minutes have been made available to the public at the same time as the Council Volume of Minutes is produced in hardcopy.

### **3. Main Issues**

#### Online Publication of Committee Reports

- 3.1** Following a series of tests on the system, it was decided to proceed with the publication of all new Council/Committee reports and agendas with effect from 1st March 2006. This has now been implemented successfully and therefore members of the public, council officers and elected members are now able to access all new reports via the internet or the intranet.
- 3.2** In addition to the main benefit of improved public accessibility to Council decision making, CMIS has enabled the Council to review the numbers of hard copies of committee papers it currently produces. In order to achieve this, all recipients of committee papers were informed of the availability of the new service and consequently there has been a significant reduction in demand for hard copies. So far, most distribution lists have been reduced by approximately 32% which represents a significant reduction in paper and saving to the Council.

#### Other facilities on CMIS

- 3.3** In addition to storing documents, CMIS has an advanced search facility which helps the user to find a specific decision or document.

**3.4** CMIS also holds useful information on elected members, committees and outside bodies and has an area for storing other documents such as the Council's Standing Orders and the committee timetable.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

**4.1** The Committee Administration Team now has responsibility for keeping CMIS up to date. In addition to this a number of key officers, including library staff, have been trained in the use of CMIS and a copy of the new procedures for the submission of electronic reports together with guidance on the use of CMIS is available to all officers on the Council's Intranet.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

**5.1** In 2004/2005, the cost of printing Council/Committee papers was approximately £32,000 per annum. It is therefore estimated that a 32% reduction in printing costs could lead to a saving of approximately £10,240 per annum. Please note that this figure does not include any savings made in respect of postage.

#### **6. Conclusions**

**6.1** It is clear that this new service has many benefits; members of the public, elected members and officers of the Council have better and easier access to Council reports which fits well with the Council's Corporate Value of "openness and accessibility". Furthermore, the overall reduction in the use of paper makes both economical and environmental sense and should be encouraged.

#### **7. Recommendations**

**7.1** The Committee is asked to note the terms of the report and welcome the new online information service.

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Tim Huntingford  
Chief Executive

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**Wards Affected:** All Council Wards.