Report of: Herbie Burwood, Business Systems Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 16th January, 2006   **Item No**:

Title of Report :   Implementing Electronic Government Statement (5)

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister requires all IEG statements to go through the Council's Executive Board.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor W.J. Baker

Scrutiny Responsibility: Finance

Ward(s) affected: Not applicable

Report Approved by:
Jeremy Thomas, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Mark Luntley, Strategic Director Finance and Corporate Services

Policy Framework: This report is consistent with Oxford City Council's e-government strategy.
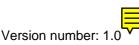
Recommendation:
1. Note the progress that Oxford City Council has made in e-Government.
2. Agree Oxford City Council's IEG 5 statement.

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1. Summary

As the Board will be aware, e-Government is not just about information technology, but also about putting the citizen at the heart of everything that Oxford City Council does. It is about looking at services and changing the way that we do things to make them more accessible to

the customer. IEG 5 provides information about how the council is progressing with its e-Government programme.

2. Progress Since IEG 4.5

2.1 Mobile Working

Use of the mobile working infrastructure continues to grow, with more staff and Members taking advantage of being able to work flexibly via the remote access token system.

OBS have deployed handheld technology in order to promote more efficient working, a project has been commissioned to implement a similar solution at City Works.

Mobile technology is still successfully being deployed within the Benefits unit, bringing the service to the homes of vulnerable customers.

2.2 Network Infrastructure

In order to improve the ICT network and enable more effective mobile working, the network infrastructure has been significantly upgraded. This investment has resulted in a much more robust infrastructure with Increased bandwidth.

2.3 Oxford City Council Website

Phase 1 of the website development project has come to an end and has delivered an attractive and transactional product. Resources have allocated to phase 2 which will concentrate on a full integration of the web and intranet sites. There will be a central library of Frequently Asked Questions and the intranet will be the gateway to the entire main corporate systems.

2.4 Planning and Regulatory Services Online

Oxford City Council continues to lead the way amongst its Oxfordshire partners in this area with many looking to us as best practice. Planning applications can be submitted online, and end2end licensing go live is imminent. The Local Plan will be going live on the web GIS system in January 2006.

2.5 Leisure Online Bookings

All of the remote leisure sites have been networked and resources are being allocated to upgrade the current bookings system to enable online and central bookings. The upgrade will also facilitate accurate and more comprehensive management reporting.

2.6 Systems Integration

This project, which is currently in the investigative stage, looks to deliver an address based 'Client Index' in order to provide contact centre staff with ready access to key contact based information such as planning applications, repairs and cleansing information. This will help to create a positive one-stop customer experience.

3. Efficiency Gains

Oxford City Council's e-Government programme, like those of all other local authorities, has been driven by central Government's requirement that we deliver key priority outcomes – for example:
- the online receipt and processing of planning and building control applications
- having appropriate e-procurement solutions in place

This has improved access to services (for example numbers of people using the website as a source of information) and has the potential to streamline existing ways of working. However, ODPM and other commentators such as PSF, now acknowledge that these improvements have not translated, as originally hoped, into impressive cashable efficiency gains. Oxford City Council can demonstrate clear productivity gains (for example in OBS's use of mobile technology; also information accessed over the web costs the Council less than if accessed over the phone or given by a face-to face service) However, it is not anticipated that the e-Government programme will significantly contribute toward the savings stated in the Gershon efficiency review. Similar findings have also been reported in the IEG partners IEG5 submissions.

4. Funding

Oxford City Council has received the last IEG grant, worth £150,000, and that money has been allocated / spent on the above listed projects. A report detailing a 3 year IT investment strategy was presented at Finance Overview and Scrutiny on 8th December 2005. That report details the investment needed to sustain progress in IT and e-Government.

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Background papers: IEG 5, Business Systems – IT Investment Strategy (Finance Overview and Scrutiny 08 December 2005)