E-Government in Action
Volume 2

APSE
Association for Public Service Excellence

socitm

Foreward

Councillor Ron Manley, National Chair, Association for Public Service Excellence

Technological change in an increasingly globalised economy has transformed not only how producers and consumers behave in the private sector, but also the way in which citizens access services and interact with public sector bodies such as local councils. Since 1997, the Government has set challenging targets to local authorities with regard to electronic service delivery so that all local services should be accessible on-line by December 2005.

For many local authorities this has involved significant change to meet the demands of an increasingly demanding and discerning local population, whilst ensuring that access to services is available to all members of the local community regardless of their level of technological sophistication or their social and economic circumstances.

This latest report on E-Government in action from APSE and SOCITM investigates the progress made by local authorities not only in meeting the Government objectives on accessing services on-line, but also the efforts made by local government to improve the quality of services provided to the end user. It uses survey data and a range of case study material to highlight significant developments in electronic service delivery.

The report illustrates major transformational change in the way that local authority services are responding to the challenges posed by the E-government agenda. This has major implications not only for citizens and consumers, but also for local authority employees and the way in which they provide services.

APSE member Authorities have provided a great deal of both quantitative and qualitative information on the subject of electronic service delivery. I hope that

this report will provide you with much food for thought on the future direction of E-Government services and examples of some excellent initiatives and approaches to the provision of services.

Angela Waite, President, Socitm

This report comes at what could be considered the end of the local e-government programme. December is the deadline for Government to meet the target of 100% of services being available online. In England, authorities also have to meet the mandatory targets in the 'Priority Service Outcomes' specified last year by the ODPM. The central funding that has been available to local authorities for e-government in England and to a lesser extent in Scotland and NI draws to a close. No specific funding was made available in Wales. In England the LGOL (Local Government Online) Fund amounted to £679M.

And yet in many ways, 2005 may come to be seen as the year local e-government really got into its stride. Earlier this year Socitm launched its 'e2Government' campaign to promote a more radical and ambitious version of 'e-government', one that really would deliver the promised transformation of public services.

We argued that transformation has not generally happened in the UK because 'e-government' initiatives to date have been concerned more with technology than with change, more with access to services than with back office efficiencies.

In our view, transformation requires not just 'connecting' citizens through websites, but rethinking everything from a citizen point of view. Ultimately, this may mean completely redefining the business model and not simply re-engineering processes within an accepted business design. e2Government starts with thinking about the citizen and the business, and not with thinking about the technology.

The rewards for adopting a transformational approach are many. Not the least of them, as this report draws out, is the potential for significant efficiency gains. These gains, delivered through partnership working, shared services, mobile and flexible working, and better access by managers and staff to information, will in turn support the business case for further investment to support continued transformational change.

The case studies in this report provide encouraging examples of the sort of 'transformational' thinking that will sustain local e-government well beyond the end of 2005.

Report Researched and Written by:

Debbie Johns, Principal Advisor, APSE and Kate Mountain, Chief Executive, Socitm

Executive Summary

E-government is the electronic delivery of public services through electronic methods to improve the quality of service provided to the user. This APSE/SOCITM research document is aimed at reviewing the extent to which Local Authorities are likely to meet the e-government target, the impact of e-business on Local Authorities and examples of innovation within Local Authorities.

The APSE/SOCITM survey involved over 50 two-tier and Unitary Councils from throughout the UK, gaining a view from service managers of progress in the e-government field. When analysing the results compared to the original baseline survey conducted in 2002, the following trends emerged:

- The number of respondents who stated that the majority of their staff has Intranet and/or Internet access has almost doubled since 2002.
- Whilst the use of the Internet has increased for training purposes, its use for virtual training conferences has remained minimal, which may be due to the networking opportunities offered by face-to-face contact still being seen as more valuable.
- Approximately a third of respondents stated that they have a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system being used corporately, although of the other two-thirds, 87% are currently reviewing their CRM.
- There has been a large-scale increase in opening hours over the past three years, which will be reflective of a move to 24/7 call centres.
- There has been further growth since the survey in 2002, of the increased use of technology resulting in more staff being able to work from home (18% growth) and hotdesk (11% growth).
- However, very few Authorities responded that this increased use of technology has had an impact on staff terms and conditions.
- A common theme amongst respondents in looking to the future was focussing on customer needs and access to the Council, rather than

internal service-driven objectives, and in England, concentrating on meeting Priority Service Outcomes.

- Service improvements cited included reduced time taken, lower costs, improved communication, improved customer care and feedback mechanisms, accessibility, demand and usage of services and improved quality of life.

- Views on the future as a result of implementing e-government were positive. However, respondents commented on the need to bring other resources, processes and infrastructure up to the standards of improvements seen in technology in recent years.

- 69% of respondents considered that their authority/service area would meet the 100% 2005 deadline. However, for England (the only country in the UK where targets are monitored through Implementing Electronic Government Statements and where more specific priority service outcome targets have been set), this is 81%.

The Association then identified case studies of how e-government was being utilised within service delivery to drive forward continuous improvement:

Bracknell Forest Borough Council - SmartConnect: Efficiency through Technology

Bracknell Forest Borough Council has been developing and implementing smart card technology, which is helping improve access to services and modernise the way citizens interact with the Council. The smart card programme offers residents access to leisure and library services, cashless catering in four of its secondary schools, a CEPS e-purse, a PASS accredited national proof of age and loyalty discounts in borough-wide shops. SmartConnect has also been developed in such a way to enable delivery of Gershon efficiency targets.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council - Citizen Access to Transactional Services

The MyEastriding E-Access project has helped East Riding of Yorkshire Council to resolve the issues of rural isolation for the community and encourages the use of e-technology to improve access to facilities and services for everyone. Information displayed within MyEastriding includes information on environmental issues, refuse collection, schools and libraries. MyEastriding gives customers access to online services via an authenticated logon to personalised location-based information together with interaction to the Councils back office systems.

E-Government in Glasgow City Council - Applying Technology to Regeneration of the City

Addressing social exclusion remains a priority for Glasgow City Council and the Council have applied technology to the regeneration of the city. The Council have had successes in 4 key themes. This includes promoting ebusiness adoption to maintain the City's competitive position, elearning initiatives to make learning resources and ICT accessible to Glasgow's communities, major investment in ecommunities to address digital inclusion and the Access Glasgow egovernment programme.

Staffordshire Connects: A Partnership Approach to E-Government

Staffordshire Connects is a unique sub-regional partnership of 10 local authorities committed to a shared Vision of "joined-up services delivered seamlessly to afford the customer a consistent, high-quality experience, irrespective of location". Staffordshire Connects has delivered products including a common Customer Relationship Management system; a shared e-Payments system, and a unique Joined-up Directory to facilitate first-time messaging across the Partnership.

Fareham Borough Council: Text the Council

Fareham Borough Council has been offering citizens a wide-ranging innovative 'Text the Council' service for more than a year. The service allows Fareham Borough Council to hear first hand about issues that that they are aiming to eliminate from Fareham by encouraging people using their mobile phones there and then when they see an incident. The SMS texting and MMS multimedia messaging service allows people to send a text message or photograph. The public can text the Council about Vandalism, Abandoned vehicles, Litter, Fly-tipping, Graffiti and much more.

Belfast City Council: Remote Working in Building Control

Belfast City Council's Building Control Service decided to take advantages in using mobile technology to bring further efficiencies to their business. The project was a significant investment in effort, time and money. The service benefits include exploiting 'hot desking', a reduction of input times for inspections, increased productivity and output per surveyor and greater staff satisfaction.

City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council: The First Council E-Auction in Wales – Groceries & Provisions

Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils working in collaboration in a strategic sourcing project have potentially saved £650,000 on the groceries bill over the next 5 years. This has been achieved by rationalising the shopping basket and undertaking the first e-auction by a local authority in Wales. Quality, variety and product choice was an essential element in the contract award criteria. Careful attention to the detail in the project planning ensured that this contract (awarded under the European Procurement rules) was successfully completed within six months from advertising to contract award.

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Introduction

E-government is the electronic delivery of public services through electronic methods to improve the quality of service provided to the user. The White Paper, Modernising Government (1999) set out the Government's plans for the greater use of technology in the delivery of government services. A major part of the document was directed towards e-government, which was about making available government and local government services electronically and called for 100% of services to be on-line by December 2005.

More recently the emphasis has been clarified (in England) in the ODPM's SR2002 PSA Target 4 charging authorities to **"improve the quality and efficiency of public services by assisting local authorities to achieve 100% capability in electronic delivery of priority services by 2005 in ways that people will use"**. This is expanded on in the national local e-government strategy published November 2002 and in a series of Priority Service Outcomes published in 2004. Progress towards these targets are actively monitored in annual Implementing Electronic Government statements (IEG) submitted by English councils and in the corresponding half year IEG claim for grant funding.

See http://www.localegov.gov.uk/en/1/localegov.html

November 2005 has also seen the publication of the Cabinet Office's 'Transformational Government – Enabled by Technology' strategy, the Government view of the way forward beyond e-government. The strategy has 3 themes:

(1) The transformation of public services for the benefit of citizens, businesses, taxpayers and front-line staff.

(2) The efficiency of the corporate services and infrastructure of government organisations, thus freeing resources for the front-line.

(3) The steps necessary to achieve the effective delivery of technology for government.

See http://www.cio.gov.uk/transformational_government/strategy/contents.

In January 2005 APSE and SOCITM sent out a survey to all APSE member authorities in order to review the extent to which Local Authorities are likely to meet this target of 100% and the impact of e-business on Local Authorities. This survey provides a view from the APSE members working in front-line service areas in local authorities and reflects their perception of progress in improving services and presents a possibly more realistic view of whether the targets will be met.

The survey is a follow up to the 2002, APSE survey (carried out in conjunction with Eversheds Solicitors) investigating through its member authorities to what extent Local Authorities have been able to achieve the interim target of 25% of services to be on-line by 2002.

Analysis of Responses

The survey was open to all APSE member authorities and 54 responses were received. They came from a wide geographical spread of Councils from throughout the UK and from different Council types, including both two-tier and Unitary Councils.

The following section includes an analysis of the responses received to this survey and a correlation with the results from the 2002 E-Government survey, for those questions that have remained consistent. It should be noted that the figures detailed in the following sections can only ever represent a snapshot of a given moment in time, such is the rapid pace of change in progress.

a) Analysis of Quantitative Responses and Correlation

Question 1 - What percentage of staff within your authority/service area have access to…
   - **The intranet?**
   - **The Internet?**

Of all the responses received:

- 58% of respondents stated that between 50% and 100% of their staff had _Intranet_ access (compared with 29% in 2002).
- 44% of respondents stated that between 50% and 100% of their staff had _Internet_ access (compared with 27% in 2002).
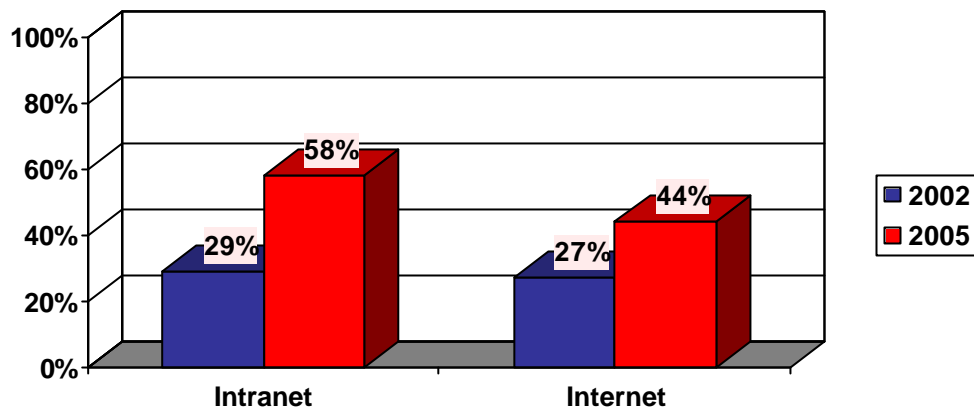
Therefore, as would be expected, there is a consistently higher percentage of staff using Intranet than Internet. This is likely to be due to access to the Internet being controlled on a much stricter basis and in line with identified security needs.

The second section of the survey looked at key business processes:

Question 2a - a. Are supplies ordered/purchased on-line?

- 55% respondents answered 'Yes' (compared to 30% in 2002)

Question 2b - What percentage (approx.) are ordered on-line?

- Average 36% supplies are ordered on-line

Question 2c - What percentage (approx.) are purchased on-line?

- Average 30% supplies are purchased on-line

The most frequent examples that were given included ICT hardware and software, IT equipment and stationary.

Question 2e - Are invoices received electronically?

- 51% of respondents answered 'Yes'

Question 2f - Are payments made on-line?

- 44% of respondents answered 'Yes' (compared to 30% in 2002)

From those respondents who answered 'Yes', the most frequent examples cited included BACs, using credit cards and invoices being received electronically. Other respondents stated that the public could make payments over the web, for Council Tax, Rates, Debts, Housing Rent and Parking Fines, for instance.

Question 2h - Are you able to submit tenders on-line?

- 29% respondents answered 'Yes' (compared to 23% in 2002)

Question 2i - **Do you let tenders on-line?**

- 25% respondents answered 'Yes'

Question 2j - Are employees and members of your authority/service area able to communicate…
- Internally via email?
- Externally via email?

Of the responses received:

- 100% of respondents stated that their employees and members could communicate *internally via email* (compared with 100% in 2002)
- 100% of respondents also stated that their employees and members could communicate *externally via email* (compared with 98.5% in 2002)

This demonstrates how email had become and has remained a primary means of communication both within the organisation and externally.

Question 2k - Are you able to track the progress of services to the public through an integrated database?

- 37% of respondents answered 'Yes'

Question 2l - Do you have the facility to update your own web pages?

- 80% of respondents answered 'Yes'

Question 2m - Have you organised or been involved in an e-auction?

- 15% of respondents answered 'Yes'

Section 3 then examined the impact of e-government on human resource management.

Question 3a - Has your recruitment process changed as a result of e-solutions?

- 70% of respondents answered 'Yes' (compared with 40% in 2002)

Question 3b - Do you use Internet based learning workshops for …
- E-training?
- E-conferences?

- 48% of respondents use Internet based learning workshops for _e-training_ (compared with 6% in 2002)
- However, the number of respondents who use this for _e-conferences_ has remained the same (6%)

Whilst the use of the Internet has increased for training purposes, its use for conferences has remained minimal. This may be due to the valuable

networking opportunities of face-to-face contact being well known as compared to the lesser experience of and access to teleconferencing facilities.

From all of the respondents, only one had indicated that they had evaluated the benefits of this approach and this respondent had used Internet-based learning workshops for both e-training and e-conferences.

Section four looked at the impact of e-government on customer services.

**Question 4a - Are your customers able to communicate electronically with you?**

- 100% of respondents answered 'Yes' (compared to 93% in 2002)

Question 4b - Do your customers receive a better service as a result?

- 92% answered 'Yes' (compared with 81% in 2002)

Question 4c - How do your customers contact you/access services…
- Website
- Integrated Call Centre (dealing with at least 80% of incoming calls)
- Telephoning relevant departments
- One-Stop Shop
- Email
- Smart Cards
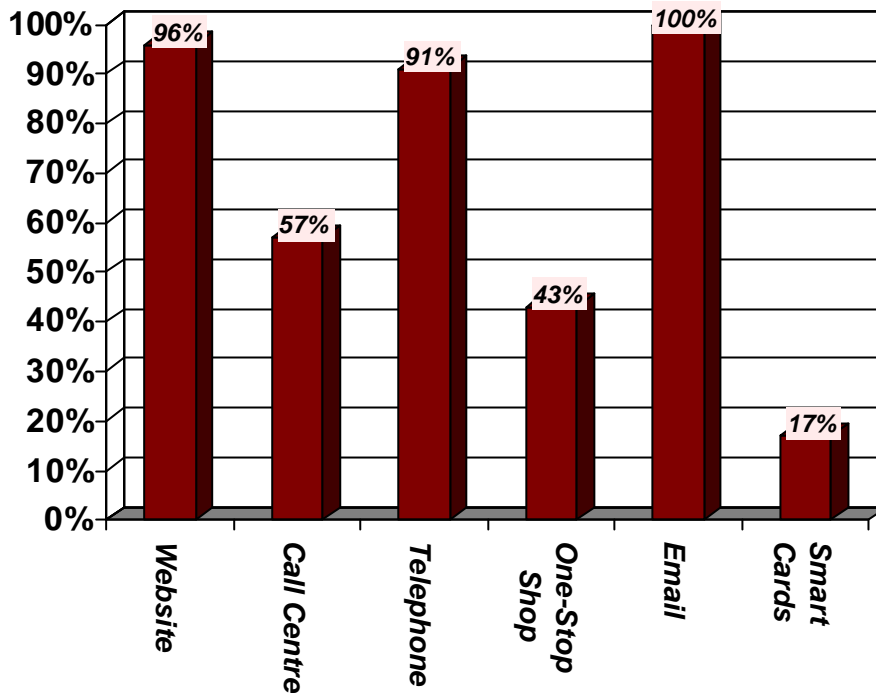
The reason why 'telephone' is not a 100% response is in our view because the question was about whether customers telephone the relevant service department and therefore where Councils have contact centres, this may no longer be appropriate. This figure may fall further in the future if the number of contact centres increases.

Question 4d - Do you have a CRM which is used corporately?

- 35% of respondents answered 'Yes'

Of those who answered 'No', 87% are reviewing their CRM

Question 4f - Has the collection of data and its' subsequent management changed as a result of e-business?

- 74% of respondents answered 'Yes'

Question 4g - Have your opening hours…

- **Increased as a result of e-business**

- **Decreased as a result of e-business?**

- 36% Increased (compared with 8% in 2002)
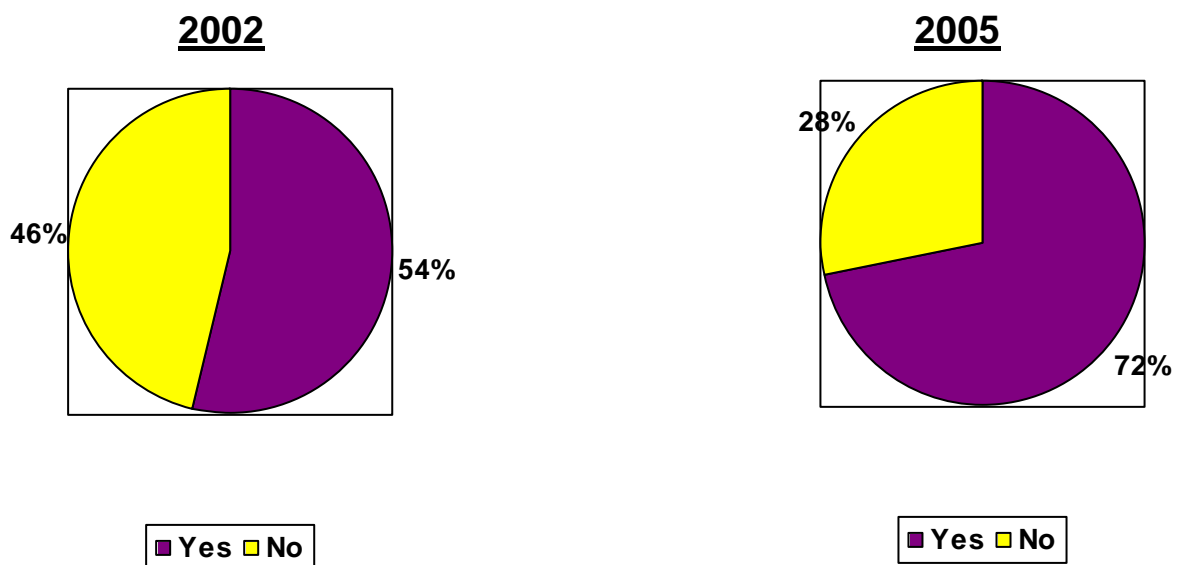- 2% Decreased (compared with 1.5% in 2002)

Therefore, there has been a large-scale increase in opening hours over the past three years, which will be reflective of a move to 24/7 call centres (see responses to Question 12).

Question 4h - Do you consult with your customers/stakeholders in relation to improving e-business?

76% of respondents answered 'Yes'

Section five examined the impact on local authority terms and conditions and flexibility.

Question 5a - Has the increased use of technology resulted in more (or any) staff being able to work from home?

2002

2005

Question 5b - Has the increased use of technology resulted in more staff having to hotdesk?

- 29% of respondents answered 'Yes' (compared with 18% in 2002)

Question 5c - Has the increased used of technology had an impact on staff terms and conditions of service e.g. move to 24/7 services?

- 23% of respondents answered 'Yes' (compared with 12% in 2002)

In terms of the flexibilities that these changes have provided, respondents pointed to increased productivity, better use and reduction of office space, greater ability to fit work life into home life, reduction in transport and child care costs, improved staff morale, improved staff retention, more effective working, better allocation of responsibilities through a reduced number of queries being dealt with by the back office, the ability to update straight onto the main computer system remotely through the use of handhelds and working hours being consistent with public demand. Generally, many respondents commented that this has provided flexibilities in terms of how, when and where staff choose to work.

As with the previous survey in 2002, even though the majority of respondents indicated that more employees were able to work from home, very few Authorities have responded that this increased use of technology has had an impact on staff terms and conditions.

Question 6 - Has an officer been appointed who has specific responsibility for e-government?

- 83% of respondents answered 'Yes'

Question 7 - Has an elected member been appointed who has specific responsibility for e-government?

- 82% of respondents answered 'Yes'

In England all local authorities must report the name of their elected member and officer e-government champions to the ODPM. The response rate of less than 100% here probably reflects not only that all respondents were not from England but also reflects on the visibility and how well known the e-champions are in their authorities.

b) Experiences and Opportunities

The next section of the survey concentrated on respondents' views on the progress achieved to date, the improvements in service delivery outcomes and the barriers/challenges ahead.

Question 8 - In respect of e-business, what do you consider has been done particularly well?

There was a huge and positive range of responses to this question, including:

- Website development for advertising, on-line payments, on-line fault reporting/repairs, on-line mapping, Internet radio station, on-line stores, planning applications, advice to local businesses
- Management Information Systems
- Purchase cards/E-payments
- E-procurement
- E-tendering
- E-consultation
- Customer and Virtual Contact Centres/Call Centres
- One Stop Shops
- Public access kiosks

- Business process re-engineering
- Smart cards
- Cashless Catering
- Home care assessments
- Technology to assist vulnerable people

Some Council's commented on their development of a comprehensive and integrated ICT strategies, whilst other respondents have commented that e-business varies from service to service due to funding.

There will obviously be different approaches taken by different Councils and some respondents commented that they have focussed resources and change programmes on where they will have the most impact (as opposed to set targets or popular initiatives) and have recognised local community preferences for certain types of technology.

Question 9 - What problems have you met?

The range of responses included:
- Ensuring security of information
- Control and accessibility of e-documents sent and received by email including where held in individual rather than generic service email accounts
- Staff resistance to change and changing the culture of the workplace
- Supplier resistance to change/reluctance of providers to devise specific solutions
- Insufficient IT capacity/complexity of the task
- Lack of an overall strategy/integration between different systems
- Back-end systems need to be developed to support on-line services
- Lack of Funding
- Resource issues – staff and skills/knowledge
- Difficulties with citizen engagement due to deprivation and making the systems user-friendly (such as on the authentication of customers)

- Integration between different systems
- Legal implications such as accepting electronic signatures
- Prioritising alongside other e-government initiatives
- Increased expectation of productivity
- Slow progress in relation to flexible working

Question 10 - How have these been overcome?

The following methods are being used to overcome the problems identified in Question 9 above:

- Working Groups/User Groups
- Developing action plans/work programmes
- Working closer with corporate IT
- A new ICT structure
- Partnership working with other agencies
- Funding through efficiency savings
- Identifying external funding sources
- Prioritising with available resources/purchasing resources
- Road shows and presentations
- Staff training
- Implementing new back-end systems
- Use of broadband to encourage local participation in e-commerce
- Promoting good practice examples
- Copying line managers into electronic communications to gain control over information
- Developing local individual working arrangements due to speed of development for flexible working to be implemented corporately.

Question 11 - What is the next stage for your authority/service area?

- Work with other Local Authorities on e-procurement and authentication
- Improving Management Information Systems

- Respond to ODPM's priority outcomes
- Increase understanding/ownership of e-government targets
- Give citizens more access to technology
- Introduce e-consultation
- An increased focus on customer service rather than priorities being service-driven
- Introduction of kiosks, community portal, one-stop shops, contact centres, public access to electronic mapping
- Increased integration
- Promote flexible working and remote access
- Improve backend systems
- Corporate contact centre including CRM
- Website redevelopment
- E-payments/pilot e-orders/E-tendering
- Have web staff in all areas of the Council
- Business process re-engineering of services
- Workflow and e-documents and to make documents available to the public

A common theme amongst respondents was focussing on customer access to the Council and desired service improvements rather than objectives set internally by service areas. Among English respondents another theme was concentrating on meeting Priority Service Outcomes. Efficiency review targets and efficiency gains clearly influenced some of the responses in relation to the way that technology can be used to divert resources to the front line. Another influence on the responses was the Freedom of Information Act, with some respondents commenting on the potential to convert documents into an electronic format and making these available for the general public use.

Question 12 - Have there been any noticeable service improvements as a result of providing services on-line?

Responses to this question included:

- A reduction in costs: cashable and non-cashable efficiency gains, reduction in cashier points
- A reduction in time taken for service delivery, finance/payments, answering calls 1st time, streamlining of services through workflow and document imaging
- Therefore, staff time being freed up to undertake other duties
- Better quality of service: improved communications internally and with customers, clients and stakeholders, improved customer care and feedback
- Increase in demand for and usage of services
- Improved accessibility of the services with 24/7 contact centres and more diverse ways of communicating
- Improved access to information
- Improvements against BVPI's/ability to monitor performance
- Cashless Catering has removed the stigma (for those on free school meals)
- Improved quality of life for vulnerable people

Question 13 - How do you view your future as a result of implementation of this new technology?

- Better, more responsive, flexible, customer-focussed services
- Easier links with certain sections of the community
- Improve quality of life for the public
- Greater access to information for customers and staff
- Ability to focus more attention on technical and operational aspects of the service as opposed to doing repetitive tasks
- A more self-sufficient workforce

- Make efficiency savings, reduce costs and divert resources to the front line
- Improved cash collection
- Greater co-ordination between services
- Greater reliability of information
- Improved communication
- Future challenges in terms of bringing more resources to bear to improve process and facilities in line with the new standards of technology and expectations of users
- Better auditing of performance but information needs to be controlled
- IT now needs to be combined with other aspects such as process and infrastructure improvements.

Question 14 - Do you consider your authority/service area will meet the 2005 deadlines?

69% of respondents considered that their authority/service area would meet the 2005 deadlines. However, for England (the only country in the UK where the PSO targets apply and are monitored), this was 81%.

From those who answered 'No', we asked them to estimate what percentage of their authority/service would meet the deadline. The average percentage for this was 69%. For England, of the 19% that answered 'No', half of these Councils expected to achieve 90% e-enablement by the deadline.

If this data is correlated with other sources, in December 2004 the IEG4 returns for England showed that the _average_ Council was 79% e-enabled and expects to be 98% e-enabled by December 2005 deadline. July's Implementing Electronic Government (IEG4.5) returns show that e-government is expected to make a significant contribution to Local Government. E-government is contributing around 15 per cent (£115m) of total backward look efficiency gains in Annual Efficiency Statements of £750m for 2004-05. There will be £115m efficiency gains in 2004/05 as a direct result

of investment in Local e-Government, rising to £277m in 2005-06, £307m in 2006-07 and £362 million in 2007-08. This amounts to total efficiency gains from investment in Local e-Government of £1.1 billion from 2004-05 to 2007/08.

Reasons given for not expecting to meet the deadline included:

- A slow start due to focussing on other priorities
- Complexity of the task
- Lack of funding
- Lack of specific targets, guidance and funding for Wales
- A desire to create efficient electronic processes rather than meeting targets per se

Question 15 - Are you aware of central government targets/priority service outcomes overall and for your service area?

- 89% of respondents answered 'Yes'

All of those respondents who answered 'No' were from Scotland or Wales, as priority service outcomes only apply to England.

Other comments included that although the Government targets may be met, respondents thought that there is still scope for overall service improvement. Also, that there are issues that relate to the circumstances of individual authorities, for example deprivation, IT ownership and the relevance of electronic communications to some staff.

A number of respondents thought that authorities should have been given more time to achieve the targets once guidance was issued and that there should be more showcasing of best practice examples, with more progressive local authorities taking the lead.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council
SmartConnect: Efficiency through Technology

For the past five years Bracknell Forest Borough Council has been developing and implementing smart card technology which is helping improve access to services and modernise the way citizens interact with the council.

Bracknell has been at the forefront of pioneering the use of smart cards and today the **edge** – Bracknell's smart card programme – offers residents access to leisure and library services, cashless catering in four of its secondary schools, a Common Electronic Purse Specification (CEPS) e-purse, a PASS accredited national proof of age and loyalty discounts in borough-wide shops.

Future developments for the card include travel and parking applications, extended uses within schools including security and online payments, physical and logical access to the council's new accommodation in the regenerated town centre and promotion of the national organ donor scheme.

Bracknell Forest's experience in the smart card arena saw it leading the ODPM-funded National Smartcard Project to produce a model framework for functional smart card solutions.

Working with other leading edge local authorities and Government departments Bracknell Forest has built on and developed the existing expertise and experience to provide local authorities with products which will help them implement smart card technology. Following the completion of the project earlier this year, Bracknell Forest has taken responsibility for these products and is making them available to others.

Vincent Paliczka, Bracknell Forest Borough Council's **edge** programme sponsor and Programme Director of SmartConnect, the next phase of the National Smartcard Project said: "The National Smartcard Project's advice has always been to encourage councils to position their smart card investment within an overall strategy for modernising services for citizens."

"Moving forward with the outputs of the project our advice remains the same and with SmartConnect we feel we have a real product which enables councils to do just that – move forward with new technologies at their own pace in order to achieve real results."

SmartConnect is a citizen registration database and card management system developed by local authorities for local authorities. Available through licence the software can register citizens and authenticate them, track data and record entitlements, issue cards, which can be smart, magnetic stripe or bar code and store scanned documents.

Not only can SmartConnect help local authorities deliver Priority Service Outcome G12 - 'to ensure the consistent delivery of services based on e-enabled back office and smart cards interfaces for council library, sports and leisure services' but it has been developed in such a way that it can also enable local authorities to align with Government Connect and the Citizen Account structure and unify membership schemes to enable delivery of Gershon efficiency targets.

Paliczka continues: "SmartConnect provides a low-risk migration path from existing card solutions which provides a pathway to modernising services that can meet all current and forthcoming Government requirements."

The software is compatible with proven IT platforms and does not require a high level technical expertise to deploy. But, importantly it is compatible with the ITSO transport interoperability specifications and anticipates the potential future need to deploy youth opportunity cards meaning local authorities can use it to expand and develop their schemes as they need to.

SmartConnect is already active in Chester, Mid Suffolk, Bolton and Cambridgeshire, with a further eight more local authorities interested in deploying the software and with version 3 of the software due to become available later this year the ability for even more local authorities to recognise efficiencies through technology is looking promising.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council is located in the North East of England and is a large, rural Authority comprised of a population of 323,000 over 241,641 hectares. The MyEastriding E-Access project helps to resolve the issues of rural isolation for the community and encourages the use of e-technology, in a supported environment, to improve access to facilities and services for everyone.

MyEastriding's primary focus is to enable 24/7/365 access for the customer to request services and information from the Authority when they want to and with a guarantee, through the use of Authority's CRM solution, that their requests will be attended to, and monitored, in accordance with the Authority's service level agreements. MyEastriding gives customers access to online services via an authenticated logon to personalised location-based information together with integration to the Councils back office systems. This provides customers with the ability to make requests for services that will immediately notify the relevant Council department.

An illustration of the MyEastriding Process is shown below:
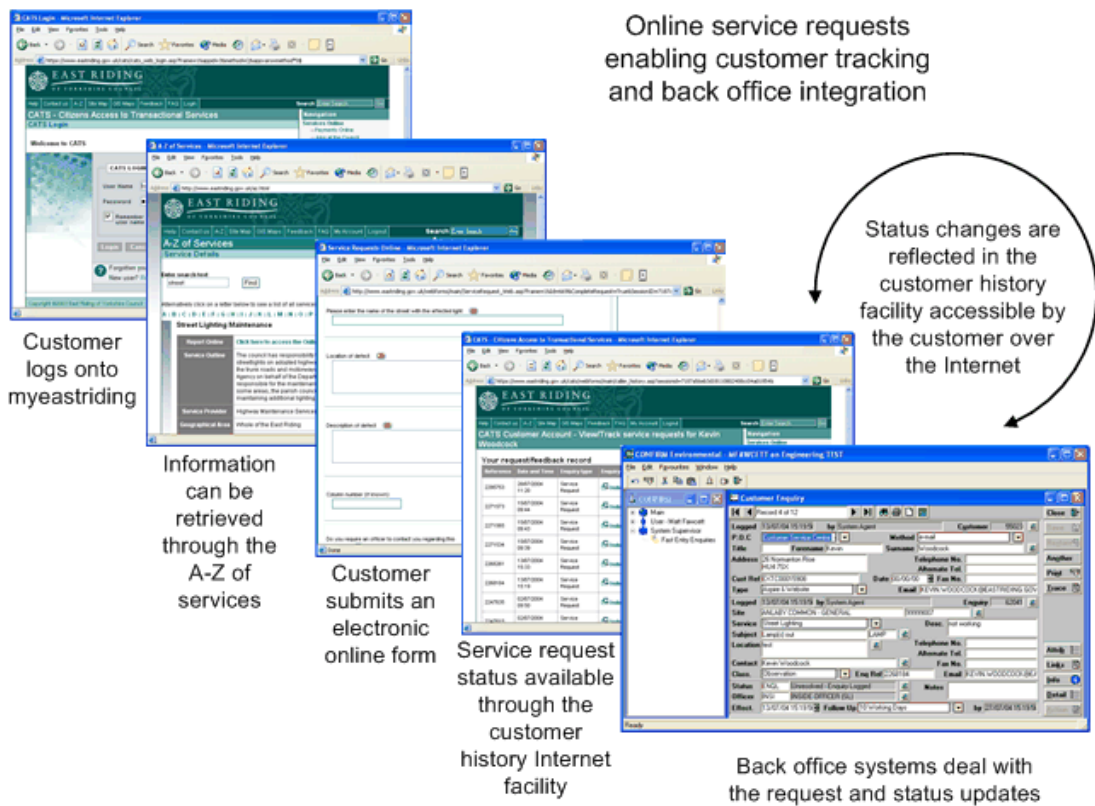
Information displayed within MyEastriding includes information on environmental issues, refuse collection, schools and libraries.

All service requests are recorded in the Authority's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and the same system is used in all the Contact Centres and Customer Service Centres. In addition, there is the ability to make payments on line, to track identifiable service requests and link to pertinent local information held on other web sites.

Enabling access to the Authority's CRM is a key feature of MyEastriding and is enabled through an online registration process, thereafter enabling the customer to personally interact with the Authority. The key benefits of this result are:

- A personalised view of East Riding services enriching the customer experience
- Transparent service delivery making East Riding more accountable
- Services available when the customer wish to access information or request a service
- A Single repository for all interaction through the Authority's Customer Services Network and Internet
- Promotion of self service, enabling reallocation of resource within East Riding to provide better and extended services
- East Riding Services available 24/7/365
- Promotion of social inclusion across a large rural Authority.

Glasgow City Council
Applying Technology to Regeneration of the City

Glasgow is Scotland's largest city and has succeeded in the transition from an economy based on shipbuilding and heavy engineering to one that reflects the modern world. It has seen strong economic growth in recent years, resulting from strengths in financial services, software, opto-electronics, bioscience, creative industries, business services and construction. Glasgow is also a recognised centre of excellence for higher education, research and professional skills in information and communications technologies (ICT).

However, despite its buoyant economy, unemployment remains high. Glasgow's growth has benefited the wider metropolitan area, with local residents unable to fully exploit the opportunities. Engaging the inactive in the labour pool and addressing social exclusion remain a priority.

This case study provides an overview of Glasgow's successes in 4 key themes: elearning, ecommunities, ebusiness and egovernment.

Promoting **ebusiness** adoption is a priority to maintain the City's competitive position. Initiatives have included a broadband demonstrator, website and

incentive fund. These are integrated with the services provided by Targeting Innovation, the eBusinessClub eBusinessAdvisers, their associated sectoral programmes and the W@W competition. Key strategic investments are being made in the Pacific Quay Digital Campus, eInstitute, Communications Technology & Digital Media Intermediary Technology Institute and eScience programme. High-speed broadband communications infrastructure lies at the heart of these investments.

Key **elearning** initiatives include the Glasgow Schools Network, Glasgow Telecolleges, Network and Clydenet each of which have involved major investment in ICT infrastructure. Real Learning and learndirect have also been instrumental in making learning resources and ICT accessible to Glasgow's communities. ICT modules within the Training for Work programme are benefiting Glasgow's long-term unemployed and online resources and services have been created by Learning & Teaching Scotland, Glasgow Digital Library and Clyde Virtual University.

Major investment in **ecommunities** has also been made to address digital inclusion. The digital divide is not generally related to a lack of telecommunications infrastructure, but to poverty, lack of awareness, and low skill levels. Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIP) and local economic development companies play an important part in engaging local people in various ICT initiatives together with the creation of cyber-cafés in the Pollok and Gorbals areas. Hills Trust Community Learning Academy was the first Cisco Community Networking Academy to be established in Europe, bringing the latest in vocational learning to a deprived area.

The Access Glasgow **egovernment** programme includes investments in healthcare, education, regeneration, social and business services. It is recognised that the delivery of electronic public services will increase citizen's interest in the use of the Internet and ultimately stimulate the growth of the knowledge economy. Initiatives include the I:XSEED Learning Disability Partnership website, Urban Quest children's safety game, Greater Glasgow independent living equipment service, Glasgow Young Scot and Kidz cards,

eCare, online payment of Council tax, health information and language services.

Glasgow is committed to exploiting ICTs for the benefit of its citizens. This is vital to developing a skilled population, healthy community and competitive business base.

Staffordshire Connects
A Partnership Approach to E-Government

Local government in Staffordshire recognised in 2001 that customer expectations were growing and that customers required better quality services and greater choice. As a result, the Staffordshire Connects partnership was formed. It is a unique sub-regional partnership of 10 local authorities committed to a shared Vision of "joined-up services delivered seamlessly to afford the customer a consistent, high-quality experience, irrespective of location". The Partnership is considered to be the most ambitious in England and Wales in terms of joining services together and one of the most successful in terms of developing solutions for convenient service delivery via multiple access channels.

The Partnership's first project was a major public consultation that provided the evidence on which a portfolio was assembled. With the Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) and PRINCE2 methods applied rigorously, Staffordshire Connects has delivered products including a common Customer Relationship Management system believed to be the most comprehensive local government implementation of CRM in the UK; a shared e-Payments system, and a unique Joined-up Directory to facilitate first-time messaging across the Partnership. Joint Security Standards have also been established, working towards BS7799 and ISO 17799. Without a collaborative approach,

the development of these products would have been beyond the means of district partners.

The Partnership's sustainability is demonstrated by the fact that a new portfolio of projects has been agreed for 2005/06 and beyond, with projects including the joint development of common service requests to deliver 100 per cent e-enablement of services across partners by December 2005. Staffordshire Connects recognised that the local community needed access to local government outside business hours. As a result, a joint telephony system is being developed to ultimately allow partners to accept service requests for each other out of hours.

The trust engendered by successful partnership working has been the catalyst for a string of spin-off collaborations including:

- Development of three one-stop shops by Staffordshire County and Staffordshire Moorlands to improve access to services and local government by the rural community
- Establishment of Local Links first-stop shops by Stoke-on-Trent
- Creation of NuLinks one-stop shops by Newcastle-under-Lyme and the voluntary sector
- Sharing of out-of-hours emergency services by Cannock Chase and Lichfield
- Successful e-Innovations bid by Tamworth, supported by Cannock Chase, Lichfield and Staffordshire Moorlands
- Development of two one-stop shops at Cannock Chase
- Lichfield leading on West Midlands Regional "Business Matters" project which is ODPM funded
- Countywide roll out of Community Services Directory developed via an Invest to Save Bid by Stoke-on-Trent.

Staffordshire Connects' achievements were summed up by Nigel Pursey, Chief Executive of Staffordshire County Council: "Local authorities in Staffordshire have a vision of joined-up and responsive public services

delivered through a shared front door. It's vitally important that customers receive seamless services delivered through access channels that meet their needs".

Staffordshire Connects won the Partnership Working category of the Association for Public Service Excellence awards 2005 where the judges were impressed not only by the Partnership's own projects but also by the way in which the success of partnership working had encouraged further collaborations.

At the heart of the drive for improved customer access is a Customer Services Managers' Group that consults customer service advisors to establish empirical evidence of citizen satisfaction with services. Such evidence is then underpinned by the findings of customer satisfaction surveys and the opinions of service advisors as CRM users. This evidence provides the basis for enhancement of the common data capture system and other improvements to front-office service delivery, e.g. additional private interview rooms and better signposting.

A monthly Information Security Forum has been established to engage system users in the delivery and refinement of information Security Standards, Policies and Guidelines.

The results of BVPI triennial surveys are shared Partnership wide to identify low satisfaction levels that Partnership working may be able to address.

The fundamental challenge to the Partnership has lain in securing sufficient momentum for collaborative working without coercing partners into supporting projects which may not have offered strategic best fit in every case. The difficulty was obviated by recognising constitutionally the right of partners to opt out of projects which did not accord with local need or corporate priorities. For example, one partner remained outside the implementation of the shared infrastructure for data capture until early 2005. Another challenge was to engage the member and officer e-champions of each authority to secure them

as ambassadors for shared service delivery. Engagement was achieved through the constitutional mechanism of rotating the chair of the executive Joint Committee and the director of Programme Board. Finally, the Partnership employed a communications manager to meet the significant challenge of promoting services publicly while keeping stakeholders informed of progress against targets.

Fareham Borough Council
Text the Council

Fareham Borough Council has been offering citizens a wide-ranging innovative 'Text the Council' service for more than a year.

The service allows Fareham Borough Council to hear first hand about issues that they are aiming to eliminate from Fareham by encouraging people using their mobile phones there and then when they see an incident. The SMS texting and MMS multimedia messaging service allows people to send a text message or photograph.

The public can text the Council about:

- Vandalism
- Abandoned vehicles
- Litter
- Fly-tipping
- Graffiti
- Stray dogs
- Dog fouling
- Recycling bins
- Public toilets
- Refuse collection
- Trees / shrubs
- Grass cutting
- Street cleaning

- Street nameplates

- Street Lights

- Street furniture

- Roads

- Manhole covers

- Kerbing / footpaths

To use the service you text 07876 131415 and preferably save the number in your phone for the next time it is needed. Citizens are asked to be as descriptive as possible and to include the word 'REPLY' in their message if they want a reply back.

Examples of what people have used the service for include:
- Benches at the memorial garden in Osborne road vandalised

- Bandstand in West Street vandalised

- Rubbish dumped in the Titchfield children's park

- Meters at the High street car park north entrance smashed

- Abandoned Car at the back of a Council Property

The service can also accept photographs if the mobile phone has the capability to send photographs, sometimes called 'photo messaging' and where some mobile phones are able to record and send video clips these too can be received by the Council.

Young People are also encouraged to use the service. On its web page the council says:

Tell us what you think about Fareham, how you think we can improve things for young people, tell us what we do well, or simply just tell us your ideas. Please prefix your message with 'YOUTH'.

The text and multimedia messages go directly to Fareham's Customer Services Department who then inform the relevant Department of the problem.

What is SMS and MMS messaging?

Short Message Service (SMS), is a text based messaging service for mobile phones. SMS messages can be sent between mobile phones (even across phone networks), and can also be sent from the World Wide Web. The number of characters in the message is usually 128-160 characters.

With Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS), you can combine photographs, images, video clips, text and sound in a single message. The number of characters in a text message is usually 500 characters. Like SMS messages, MMS messages can also be sent between mobile phones and from the World Wide Web. To use these facilities on your mobile phone, it must be MMS compatible and your mobile network service provider needs to provide the service. Contact your mobile network service provider for further details on sending MMS messages. MMS messaging is sometimes referred to as 'photo messaging', 'picture messaging', 'media messaging' and 'picture and video messaging'.

Belfast City Council
Remote Working in Building Control

Belfast City Council's Building Control Service decided to take advantage of using mobile technology to bring further efficiencies to their business. The service was already heavily dependant on technology and could see that there was an opportunity to have a say in the future by collaborating with the Council's own ISB arm (Information Systems Belfast) and with private sector firms Northgate and Vodafone to develop a service ideal for building control but also with the potential for wider application.

The Council was looking to:
- Give direction to future ICT purchases and work with third party software suppliers
- Free up office space and lose less time in travel
- Give a more proactive response to customers
- Be able to carry out more inspections and update files more quickly

- And involve staff in developing the future operation of the service.

But the Council was also aware that it would need to take care because:
- It was a step into the unknown
- New technology and software, some of it at the beta testing stage, would be introduced when the existing system was just bedding down
- It would mean an additional workload on staff to make the change and cope with the teething problems
- It would need new protocols developed for people management in a remote working environment.

The project was a significant investment in effort, time and money. The service set about finding computer literate surveyors from its team who wanted to work on the pilot and included people who were less convinced of a successful outcome as well as those who were.

The technology involved is an Access database with the 'back end' held on remote units. It has a web browser 'front end'. It is driven by Tomcat and Apache web servers with VPN (virtual private network) connections to an iBuild server. Staff use notebook and tablet PCs (advanced forms of laptop computers). The telecommunications facilities use 3G and GPRS services.

The configuration of the servers, secure user accounts and VPN services proved relatively easy to do and were successful in use. There were issues to deal with to do with human resource management and health and safety. But it has provided the right environment to move forward and staff using the new facilities are selling them to other staff.

The service benefits Belfast is experiencing include:
- Exploiting 'hot desking' to reduce office overheads and mileage claims
- Input times for inspections have reduced to less than 24 hours
- Digital images can be used and stored to enhance the quality of the work

- There is increased productivity and output per surveyor
- And greater staff satisfaction.

After further refinement in the software Belfast has now rolled out the project to selected surveyors. Procedures, practices and cultural attitudes are being continually reviewed so as the new technology is in keeping with HR good practice. It is taking some effort to quantify the efficiency gains made and to produce a formal business case, however we know that there will be inherent benefits to both staff and customers. The project has buy in from the Service and corporately and Belfast intends to go on pushing the boundaries and evolving the service to meet demand.

City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council: The First Council E-Auction in Wales – Groceries & Provisions

Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils working in collaboration in a strategic sourcing project have potentially saved £650,000 on the groceries bill over the next 5 years. This has been achieved by rationalising the shopping basket and undertaking the first e-auction by a local authority in Wales. Quality, variety and product choice was an essential element in the contract award criteria. Careful attention to the detail in the project planning ensured that this contract (awarded under the European Procurement rules) was successfully completed within six months from advertising to contract award. The key issues are addressed below.

This is a joint contract managed by City and County of Swansea (CCS) in partnership with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPT). Support with the e-technology element was provided by the National Assembly's Value Wales (Procurement) Unit. The combined contract value is split approximately 60% CCS and 40% NPT. This involves approximately 240 individual delivery sites (140 CCS; 100 NPT). Early investigations indicated that not all sections were buying through the existing corporate contract and therefore the maximum contract savings were not being achieved. Scope

was also identified for rationalisation of the existing product list without compromising quality, variety or product choice.

A procurement project team was created involving all interested parties from CCS, NPT and Value Wales (Procurement). This team rationalised the number of line items and ensured that the contract would deliver the needs of all kitchens. Key to ensuring 'buy-in' by users, was the involvement at all stages of the departments and venues, which would be using the contract. This included Education, Social Services, Culture and Tourism venues and Civic Buildings. Standard project management procedures were applied to the project to ensure that timelines were maintained and targets achieved. This was essential with the involvement of several internal and external stakeholders.

The number of line items in the shopping basket was reduced from approximately 2,700 to 880. Rigorous sample testing to ensure maintenance of the specified quality, variety and product choice was undertaken in mid-August 2005. This exercise involved all user departments and ensured that all Tenderers at the final e-auction stage met with the minimum acceptable qualitative standards.

The tender exercise (including the e-auction) coupled with the extensive work in rationalising the schedule of line items and quality control, resulted in contract savings of approximately 9% and therefore will result in a total financial saving to the two authorities of approximately £130,000 per annum (potentially £650,000 over 5 years).

The contract period is for 3 years commencing 1st November 2005, with the option to extend for up to a further 24 months. Local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will be able to supply goods as sub-contractors to the successful wholesaler who will be the prime contractor, thus ensuring that locally produced Welsh foodstuffs can be provided when required. Additionally the contract specifies Fair Trade tea, coffee, cocoa and sugar and

allows for the provision of other Fair Trade produce considered appropriate over the life of the contract.

The three companies on the tender short-list (two national and one local), were all based in South Wales; it is therefore reasonable to expect local economic development to be supported and that environmental impacts have been minimised.

Commercial support for all potential Tenderers (including SMEs) was provided through the *Business Centre* based in Swansea. To ensure probity, staff involved in the business development and support aspects of the procurement exercise, were not involved in the tender bid assessment process.

CCS held a successful e-auction on Wednesday 14th September. The event was part of the authority's e-government programme and was the first live e-auction to be held by a Local Authority in Wales. The e-auction received financial support from Value Wales (Procurement), through the provision of the IT interface by Bravo the Assembly's contracted supplier. The *Business Centre* provided independent supplier support up to the e-auction stage. Bravo conducted the Tenderer e-auction access training and support, as the independent link between the Authority and Tenderers.

Contract supplier management and development will be co-ordinated by CCS, supported by a user group representing all the sections and venues, which will access this collaborative contract.

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