Chorley
Borough Council

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Information & Communication Technology (Introduced by the Executive Member for Resources)	Executive Cabinet	25th May 2006

IMPLEMENTING E-GOVERNMENT STATEMENT 2006 (IEG6)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To gain Member approval of the Councils IEG6 eGovernment return which details the Councils progress in terms of the Governments defined Priority Outcome programme, BVPI157 and efficiency targets.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2. The IEG Statement relates to a programme of work that will contribute directly to;

2.1 People
  a. Improving access to public services through
    - the development of additional access channels and the removal of barriers to their use
  b. Reducing pockets of inequality through
    - Improved equality of access to services
  c. Getting people involved in their communities through
    - Improved access to the decision making process

2.2 Performance
  a. Ensuring Chorley Borough Council is a performing organisation by
    - Improving the quality of services delivered through the use of technology
    - Reducing service costs through the use of technology

RISK ISSUES

3. The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	✓	Information	
Reputation	✓	Regulatory/Legal	
Financial	✓	Operational	✓
People	✓	Other	

4. Failure to deliver the Councils IEG programme would have a serious impact upon the delivery of its corporate efficiency and service improvement programme. This would impact upon the Council strategically, financially, operationally and in terms of reputation.

5. The implications of failing to meet the Governments Priority Outcome and BVPI targets are also significant. The Government have reserved the right to reclaim IEG funding for undelivered outcomes (although it is thought unlikely to happen) and future CPA assessments will incorporate Priority Outcome performance with 4 star status only being possible if all outcomes have been delivered.

BACKGROUND

6. BVPI157 is a measure of the Councils progress in delivering 100% availability of e-services.

7. Government requires all local authorities in England to submit an IEG return on an annual basis. The IEG statement is an essential part of the Government's national monitoring process for assessing electronic local service delivery capability against the 2005 target and supports the delivery of priority outcomes for local e-government. It is an important feedback mechanism for assessing progress towards realising the benefits from the investment in e-government and the use of IEG funding. The return is in a strict format determined by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

8. In December 2005 I reported to Executive Cabinet on the contents of the Councils' IEG5 return. At that time I expected to meet the 100% e-enabling of services target by the required date of 31st December 2005. In terms of Priority Outcomes, of the 29 'required' outcomes with a target date of 31 December 2005, we had achieved 27 (one is the responsibility of the County Council). The second category of outcomes, which are classed as 'Good' had a target date of the 31 March 2006. Of those 25, we had completed 16.

PROGRESS

9. We met the BVPI157 target of 100% e-enabled services by the target date of 31st December 2005.

10. In terms of Priority Outcomes, of the 29 'required' outcomes with a target date of 31 December 2005, we achieved 27. One of the two outstanding outcomes is the responsibility of the County Council (on-line application for school places) and the second relates to email and web-form enquiries receiving unique reference numbers to allow tracking. This is being considered as part of the Shared Services Contact Centre project.

The second category of outcomes, which are classed as "Good", had a target date of the 31 March 2006. Of the 25 we completed 23. The outstanding outcomes are the creation of a cross-departmental account for businesses and e-billing for Council Tax and business Rate Direct Debit payers. The first outcome is posing significant national issues in terms of numbering schemes, authentication etc. The Council is currently in the process of implementing the software necessary to deliver the second outcome.

The remaining 19 are classed as "excellent" and earlier in the programme, high performing local authorities that had already achieved, or largely achieved, the defined "required" and "good" e-government outcomes, were asked to agree a baseline and subsequent targets for promoting awareness and take-up of e-services. In the IEG6 submission the Council have been asked to comment on an increased number of the "excellent" outcomes. As mentioned, these focus mainly on establishing base-lines and targets for the take-up of e-enabled services. The Council recognises the importance of take-up to the success of its eGovernment programme and will put arrangements in place to take forward the issue as a central theme of the Customer Focussed Access and Service Design Strategy.

E-Government is about exploiting the power of information and communication technologies to help transform the accessibility, quality and cost effectiveness of public services. It is about placing citizens and customers at the heart of the Council and building service access, delivery and democratic accountability around them. Following our Customer Access and Focus Best Value inspection in August of last year the Audit Commission reported that the Council *'provides a good range of access channels that fit well with local needs. These include well-developed electronic access and a modern, one-stop shop with excellent facilities. Standards are high and there is a strong customer-focused culture across the Council with staff and Councillors clearly committed to continuously improving the experience of service users.'*

11.   Significant progress has been made in transforming service delivery mechanisms within the Council and, importantly, delivering changes that our customers see as beneficial. Examples of this include;

- the increase in use made of our on-line and telephone payments systems. In 2003/4 we received 5,135 payments via these channels. In the 2005/6, we received 13,708.
- The new telephone contact centre has taken an average of over 10,000 calls a month during the last 3 months with an overall satisfaction level averaging 95%.

It should also be noted that each of the above transactions results in an improvement in efficiency through a reduction in service delivery costs.

External recognition of the effective application of technology can be seen in our 'Use of Resources' feedback document in which the Audit Commission comment that '*there is evidence that the Council is making effective use of IT as a means of managing and improving VFM in its internal management processes, back office functions and frontline service delivery'.*

There is still a good deal of work to do as the remaining outcomes are very likely to be the most difficult, encompassing national issues such as authentication and numbering schemes to identify businesses.

12.   The work we have done to achieve our eGovernment targets has already contributed to the delivery of high quality services. In August 2005 the Council achieved the highest possible inspection rating for Customer Access and Focus following a Best Value Inspection. In their report that detailed their decision to award the Council a 3 star rating with excellent prospects for improvement, the Audit Commission commented that;

'Sophisticated technology and e-government initiatives provide high quality access and speedy response and deliver efficiency savings which are passed onto the customer in the form of improvements.'

LOOKING FORWARD

13.   As mentioned previously, the work required to deliver the remaining Priority Outcomes is significant and in some cases wide-ranging with national perspectives to consider. Our work to deliver these outcomes will continue.

14.   The Audit Commission has stated that Councils aspiring to achieve 4 stars must have achieved all Priority Outcomes.

15.   It is expected that there will be no further IEG grant funding for remaining Priority Outcomes work.

16.   As detailed in paragraph 8, our customers are making increasing use of the new facilities available. Our aim is to accelerate this transition through promotion campaigns and by further improving the quality and accessibility of the services on offer. The Customer Focused Access and Service Design Strategy will be central to this work.

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

17.   There are no apparent Human Resource implications of this report.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

18.   The report demonstrates the progress made on delivering electronic government. The building blocks for further success are now in place but the very nature of delivering services electronically ultimately means that the council must continue to invest in this area. It is likely that the no further government grant will be available and there is still more to be done particularly around the integration of systems and ensuring the IT infrastructure is fit for purpose. Any further request for resources over and above that already included in the Councils budget will follow the normal route of the business case being considered and then member approval.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

19.   It is recommended that Executive Cabinet approve the Council's IEG6 Statement.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)
(If the recommendations are accepted)

20.   Guidance states that Council should approve the IEG6 statement.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

21.   None

TIM MURPHY

DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Background Papers			
Document	**Date**	**File**	**Place of Inspection**
IEG6 Statement	10 April 2006	ChorleyIEG6Statement.pdf	http://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.asp?sch=doc&cat=326&path=0&J=2
IEG5 Statement	19 December 2005	Chorley IEG5 Statement1.pdf	http://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.asp?sch=doc&cat=326&path=0&J=2
Use of Resources Audit Score Feedback	March 2006	Use_of_Resources_Audit_Score_Feedback__FINAL12.pdf	http://www.chorley.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/228/CH010_Use_of_Resources_Audit_Score_Feedback__FINAL12.pdf

| Customer Focus and Access Best Value Inspection | August 2005 | Customer_Access_and_Focus_Inspection_Report.pdf | http://www.chorley.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/219/Customer_Access_and_Focus_Inspection_Report.pdf |

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Tim Murphy	5455	28 April 2006	Executive Report IEG6 May06