

REPORT TO: **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 15 AUGUST 2005**

REPORT ON: **CORPORATE GIS STRATEGY**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION**

REPORT NO: **432-2005**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Council's approval of the proposed GIS Strategy for the Council.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the draft Corporate GIS Strategy be approved (a copy of which has been emailed to members).

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

- 3.1 The initial start-up costs identified in the Strategy will be fully contained within the Planning & Transportation Department Revenue Plan allocation 2005-08 and the Capital Plan 2005-08

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are the software, hardware, people and procedures that allow the storage, manipulation and presentation of geographic information. Around 80% of local government information has a geographic dimension, from the location of social work client to the route of a cleansing vehicle. Geography can be used to integrate disparate data and the business processes reliant on it.

- 6.2 This strategy sets out an approach that will help the Council exploit geographic information and GIS in order to meet a diverse range of objectives, from each of the community planning themes defined in the Council Plan to modernising service delivery. There is also a synergy with the Customer First initiative, incorporating the Corporate Address Gazetteer and Citizen Account Database. Integrating these two with a corporate geographic database will increase the sum value of all the datasets beyond their individual worth.

- 6.3 When fully implemented this strategy will create an environment conducive to self sufficient use and management of geographic information; each of the departments, with proper support and guidance, will be responsible for their own geographic information, as they are currently for other information.

- 6.4 The success of this corporate GIS project will be measured by the extent to which this self sufficiency occurs and by the degree to which the use of geographic information becomes embedded into core Council business.

7 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 All Council Departments have been contacted and consulted during the preparation of this strategy. A GIS Contact Group of the Departments using GIS have also been consulted in detail and are in agreement with the draft strategy.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this strategy is to make the systematic and effective use of geographic information central to the operations of the Council.

Geography is a powerful common thread running through approximately 80% of the Council's information. It presents a unique opportunity to integrate disparate data and the business processes reliant on that data. Information as diverse as the licensing of premises and occurrence of noise complaints can be integrated using their common geography, allowing patterns or relationship between the data to be identified. Equally, geographic information can be used on an operational basis to improve service delivery for example by optimising the routes of winter gritting vehicles.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are the software, hardware, people and procedures that allow the storage, manipulation and presentation of all this geographic information.

Geographic information and GIS will help the Council to meet a diverse range of its objectives, from each of the five community planning themes defined in the Council plan to modernising service delivery. They will be used for example to integrate a range of demographic and socio-economic indicators to monitor the impact of regeneration strategies in priority areas or to modernise service delivery by supporting on-line consultation and submission of planning applications.

There are also links to other major Council initiatives: Customer First incorporating the Corporate Address Gazetteer and the Citizen's Account Database. Integrating these two with a corporate geographic database will increase the sum value of all the datasets well beyond their individual worth, for example by providing a call centre operator with a comprehensive range of information pertinent to a particular customer.

This strategy sets out a number of recommendations that, when fully implemented, will create a robust central database in which to properly manage the Council's geographic information and be accessible to all those who need access to it, either inside or outside the Council. A variety of tools will give access to this data ranging from easy to use web enabled GIS to more powerful desktop GIS software. Crucially, GIS will no longer be considered a specialised tool reserved for highly trained personnel, but will become as common place as other modern office software.

These steps together with defined procedures and responsibilities and adequate resources will create an environment conducive to self sufficient use and management of geographic information; each of the departments, with proper support and guidance, will be responsible for their own geographic information, just as they are for the rest of their information.

Such an environment requires commitment from all the departments, particularly those that have no prior experience of GIS, and recognition of the benefits geographic information and GIS can bring.

The success of the corporate GIS project will be measured by the extent to which this self sufficiency occurs and by the degree to which the use of geographic information becomes embedded into core Council business.