

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 14 MARCH 2005
REPORT ON: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL WEBSITE AND DUNDEE.COM
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
REPORT NO: 69-2005

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To recommend a three year plan for the development of the Council's Website dundeecity.gov.uk.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee approves:

- 1 the requirements of the Council's Website and 3 year objectives
- 2 the appointment of two-year temporary posts – 3 in total - to accelerate the corporate customer self service transactions projects
- 3 that the remaining monies within the dundee.com project be allocated to resolve the issues of the transfer of dundee.com to Dundee City Council IT facilities and to resolving the technical issues around the box office function. Any residual funds to be directed at the further development of the dundeecity.gov.uk website as proposed in this report.
- 4 to invite tenders for a content management system

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed fixed term appointments will be funded within the Council's MGF3 grant. The procurement of content management software will be met from the ICT capital budget and is estimated to cost £40,000. The self service capability on the Website will lead to long term efficiency savings.

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The development of the website will deliver best practice in electronic access for people with disabilities.

6.0 BACKGROUND

Dundee City Council's Website (dundeecity.gov.uk) is now a mainstream method of Council communication and customer service alongside telephone and council offices. The award winning Website is expected to meet a number of increasing demands and this report considers a 3-year plan and resources for the site to meet the Council Plan Customer First strategy.

This report considers the demand for growth, the Council's requirements for its Website, the key projects to improve the site, the resources available and the roles and responsibilities for managing the site.

7.0 DEMAND AND GROWTH OF THE WEBSITE

The following figures represent the growing trend of using the Council's Website:

- average visitors per day between 2001-2004 has trebled
- current average visitors per day 3,300 approximately
- 48% of visitors to the site are repeat visitors
- 49% of visitors visit more than one page
- 13% of Dundee citizens have used the site (Annual Consumer Survey 2004) and this is up from 6% in 2002
- 36% of annual consumer survey respondents would use the Council's Website to request a service
- 40% of Dundee citizens have household access to the Internet (Annual Consumer Survey 2004) and the UK average is 52%
- Dundee household access to the Internet has doubled since 2002
- 18% of Dundee citizens have used the free Internet access provided in city-wide Library and Learning centres (Annual Consumer Survey 2004)
- £3M in online payments through the Website is forecast for 2004/2005, a threefold increase from the previous year
- Another survey, more focused on local Internet users, shows a high level of use (77%) of the Council's site for information about public services and the city (Web Steering Group August 2004).
- As might be expected there is a bias of use of the Website towards younger and ABC1 groups in the population. However, it is growing in all age ranges and population groups.

It can be concluded from the above statistics that the number of users of the Council's Website will continue to grow. The number of repeat visitors and transactions prove that the Website is providing a valuable and trusted service. The current levels have been achieved without significant promotion. Therefore by continuing the current trends it can safely be estimated that usage of the Website will at least double over the next two years.

8.0 THE COUNCIL'S REQUIREMENTS

The Web Steering Group has developed a 'Statement of Requirements' to guide the ongoing development of the site.

The main business purposes of the Website are:

- a) to provide a self-service delivery mechanism for 24 hour, 7 day per week access to Council services
- b) to provide advice and guidance on making use of public services
- c) to facilitate communication and consultation on Council policies and strategies
- d) to serve as the main public performance reporting publication
- e) to provide community information which responds to the needs of the citizens, including "What's On" and the Directory of Local Organisations
- f) to promote the city

These headings are broken down further in the full statement of requirements in Appendix 1.

As part of the Modernising Government programme, the Government and Scottish Executive are setting national standards to facilitate e-government. These are included in the Open Scotland Information Age framework. The Council's Website is not yet fully compliant with the relevant standards regarding the software language and metadata. This will be addressed in one of the key projects referred to later in the report.

The Council's Website has to include online transactions for all its services. However, a national group led by the Scottish Executive has prioritised 48 services to be fully interactive on local government Websites. Consultation is underway on establishing the online status of these services as a national performance indicator for the Council to publish. The full list and the current status of each is attached as Appendix 2.

Part of the national framework is the development of a Citizen Account identifier and online authentication. The aim is to provide a citizen with a simple way of logging on to all national public sector websites as well as their local government website and telephone contact service.

The national requirements for common Scottish Executive standards, online transactions and the Citizen Account are all being managed under the Customer First programme. The council ICT Strategy will include this and council staff are engaged in the national programme through the modernising government projects of Citizen Account Smartcard and Master Address file. As these programmes develop, their requirements will need to be met by the Council's Website i.e. it will need to enable secure transactions using the Citizen Account.

9.0 RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT

Management and Strategic Direction

The overall management of the website has been led by the Community Information Team based in the Communities Department since the inception of the website. Strategic direction is provided by a Steering Group chaired by the Communities Department Senior Manager and including managers from Public Relations, Corporate Planning and Information Technology, and the Community Information Team Leader. Staff from the Community Information Team, Design Services staff in Public Relations and a representative from Information Technology work together to update and maintain the site. This group forms the Website Implementation Group, chaired by the Team Leader of the Community Information Team.

The existing groupings of staff have developed the capability to produce an information rich and quality designed website. This is evidenced by the growing numbers of repeat visitors to the site. The Council's Website also won the award for the best local government site in Scotland three years in a row (Society of IT Managers) from 2000-2003.

The staff from the Community Information Team input and maintain information on the website. Design Services staff post newly designed pages and Public Relations staff post press releases while IT manage the online transactions. It is also the case that a critical success factor in delivering "*popular*" content in local government websites has been the high involvement of Library and Information Staff (SOCITM Annual Report). The Community Information Team has several members of staff with expertise in library and information provision and it is therefore recommended to maintain the existing management role of the Communities Department with the involvement of the Web Steering Group and Implementation Group. At the end of this period of this plan a further organisational review should be considered.

The alternative method of maintaining and developing the Website is to install software which allows a number of staff in each department to install and maintain their own service pages. Evidence from other councils suggests that this leads to a poorer standard of publication and lack of consistency.

Electronic Service Delivery

The Electronic Services Delivery group is chaired by the Organisational Development Section Leader. Managers from Corporate Planning and IT are members of the group. The focus of this group is to develop the service department transactions on the site. This requires each transaction to undergo some process review in order to achieve genuine self service transactions rather than replicating the existing process. Due to other priorities and reductions in staffing numbers this process review work has not received adequate attention.

Out of the 48 national priorities 15 have an interactive service on the Website but 18 have not yet been started as projects. The remaining 15 are either part of a national web strategy such as the e-planning compact or are projects identified through other parts of the Customer First ICT strategy such as the housing repairs contact centre going online or the Citizen Account authorisation.

Prior to the publication of a national list of transactions the Electronic Service Delivery group had identified, in consultation with Directors, 47 priority online transactions. Of these 20 have been delivered by the IT department.

Resources are being bid for within the Council's Modernising Government Budget to appoint **2** additional staff in IT and **1** in the Organisational Development Team to accelerate this area of Website development. These will be 2 year fixed term appointments. If this is approved by Committee a specific bid will require to be made to the national Citizen Account board to fund this.

dundee.com

The Council effectively operates two public websites: dundeecity.gov.uk and dundee.com. A corporate group chaired over the past two years by the Economic Development Department has been considering how to develop dundee.com. That group has concluded that dundee.com in its present form should not be developed further as nothing new can be developed due to the constraints of cost and the

restrictions inherent in the current software. It has been agreed that the existing arrangement with Scotland Online be terminated and that dundee.com is transferred to Dundee City Council's own facilities. The costs for this will be met from the budget currently allocated to Dundee.com.

dundee.com was launched in 2002 as a city-wide resource. The Modernising Government Fund 1 funded the project. The current software does not allow accurate page usage information though since its inception there have been about 212 items read each day and average monthly Box Office sales of around £1000. However, there is no evidence of the site growing in popularity and the original aim that other organisations in the City would contribute to dundee.com has not materialised. The original concept of a commercial city portal has not proved attractive enough to cover the ongoing costs and the content will be reviewed with the aim of dundee.com continuing to provide a City portal with links to other websites such as dundee.city.gov.uk.

As part of this review the box office function will be reviewed as the current system is not fully flexible and has some transactional difficulties that need to be overcome. Some additional work is required and it is recommended that the remaining monies within the dundee.com project be allocated to resolve the issues of the transfer of dundee.com to Dundee City Council facilities and to resolving the technical issues around the box office function. Thereafter any residual funds should be directed at the further development of the dundee.city.gov.uk website as proposed in this report.

10.0 KEY PROJECTS

Electronic Service Delivery

- Develop and deploy 20 priority services to meet the national priorities for online self service transactions.

Project Management – Information Technology Department

Resources - MGF3 project plus dundee.com funds

Target - £6m per annum in payments and 5,000 online orders/request for service.

Exit strategy for the dundee.com project

- This will require a reworking of the Box Office, Business and Community Channel by IT to fit the Council's website.

Project Management – IT Department/ Steering Group

Resources - Internal and remaining dundee.com budget

Target - Transfer complete by December 2005

Procure and Deploy a Content Management Solution

- This will meet the requirements of managing the growth and complexity of content on the Website and meet national standards.

Project Management - Communities Department/ I.T Department /Steering Group

Resources - ICT Capital Budget

Targets - deployed by April 2006

Integrate the Citizen Account Projects onto the Website

- Customer authentication of secure transactions
- Dundee Discovery card registration

Project Management - Corporate Planning
Resources - MGF Funded Projects
Targets - in line with national programmes

Community Channels

- Develop a community news and information section on the Council's Website.

Project Management - Communities
Resources - Community Information Team
Targets - In line with the statement of requirements.

These projects will be spread over 2005-2007 to manage the growth of the Council's Website. The ongoing service will continue to meet the needs of the Council, Departments and the public.

11.0 CONSULTATION

All chief officers have been consulted on the content of this report.

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Modernising Government Fund Report No 202-2004
Council Plan 2003-2007 Report No 685-2003
Information and Communication Strategy Report No 710-2000

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Chief Executive

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08/03/2005

Website Development : Statement of Requirements 2003-2007

- 1 The main business purposes of the website are:
 - 1.1 A self-service delivery mechanism for 24 hour, 7 day per week access to council services.
 - 1.2 To provide advice and guidance on making use of public services.
 - 1.3 Facilitating communication and consultation on council policies and strategies for the well-being of the city.
 - 1.4 A public performance reporting vehicle.
 - 1.5 To provide web services for "not for profit" community based organisations
 - 1.6 To promote the city.

2 Self-service capability

The self-service functions will be based on:

- answering frequently asked questions about public service access, entitlements
- an easy to search A-Z of services
- a citizen account number and authentication security for accessing personal information (CRM/Smartcard integration)
- easy to complete online forms for each A-Z service which will also be required in a life events section to join up related services
- the electronic forms will access personal data where authentication is provided from the citizen account
- the electronic forms will be workflowed to ensure standards of delivery are maintained
- service managers must be able to point their customers to their transaction and information pages on service specific printed documentation
- the A-Z transactions and information should also link to the intranet as the main tool to support staff in Customer Contact Centres i.e. they will also use it as a call management gateway
- recruitment advertising and process

3 Advice and guidance on using public services:

- linking to frequently asked questions, A-Z and life events more detailed advice and public information should be presented to help the public understand their access and entitlements to public services

- promoting special messages about council services
- 4 Facilitating Communication and Consultation on Council policies and strategies:
- provide contact details and promote dialogue with Councillors and Chief Officers
 - a dynamic news services on Council related activity
 - an easy to access and search Council minutes, agendas and reports to Committee
 - a forum on current consultations with downloadable papers/briefings and options for submitting feedback, discussion forum and online polls/questionnaires (Department can supplement this by offering phonelines to complete polls over the phone if people don't have web access)
 - a corporate complaints and comments service
- 5 A public performance reporting vehicle
- drop down topic list of key policy documents and service plans
 - drop down selection of required key performance statistics, annual account information and strategic statistics
 - links to Committee Minutes/Papers and consultations above
- 6 Provide web space and support for "not for profit" community organisations:
- publish organisational listing and community newsletters (with appropriate editorial precautions)
 - facilitate advertising events and amateur arts, sports, charitable and political events through electronic media
- 7 Promote the City
- provide service for Dundee visitors (virtual or actual) i.e. visitor attractions, arts collection, archive material, registrar information
 - promote visitor events and e-commerce facilities
 - host economic development; inward investment and business development services as required
 - ensure attractive home page to global best practice standards
 - design and implement an internet marketing strategy to attract citizen's and business to Dundee City council websites

Operational Values

- Develop in compliance with the electronic Government Inter-Operability Framework (and eGIF), Open Scotland Information Age Framework (OSIAF) and integrate national online service data when possible

- Benchmark with SOCITM/SPIN survey
- Benchmark with best practice guidance on disabled person web usability
- Ensure integration of content with other relevant electronic media
- Provide clear channels (back end templates where practical) for Council staff to update and monitor their information on the site
- Regularly test usability and satisfaction with key stakeholders
- Provide monitoring statistics for corporate indicators and marketing strategy and develop a statistical return for departmental service pages
- Prepare a service plan and budget for the website

Stage codes

1. **Online information about public services**
 2. **Downloading of form, e-mail advertised**
 3. **Forms returned electronically, e-mail response**
 4. **Full electronic interactive order, delivery, payment**
- t – by phone only p - partial*

Appendix 2

	National Service Activity	Generic Categorisation	Service Activity Description	DCC Project	Stage
1	Leisure & Recreation - Booking and Payment of facilities	Leisure Services	The booking and payment of all sporting activities provided by the Council or managed services supplied by an external service provider on behalf of the Council	Not started	2t
2	Public Library - loans renewal/extending and reserving	Leisure Services	Access to the full range of Council's Library Service for the loan, renewal and extending and reserving of all materials and products	Started	4p
3	Council Tax - making a payment	Financial Services	The payment of Council Tax through multiple channels - e.g. direct debit, Internet payment, voucher book, paypoint, over the telephone etc	Fully achieved	4
4	Council Tax - finding out about entitlement to benefit/discounts/exemptions/relief	Financial Services	Citizens making specific Council Tax enquiries about entitlement to benefit/discounts/exemptions and relief	Started	2p
5	Council Tax - enquiries (i.e. banding enquiry, balance enquiry, direct debit or payment due date)	Financial Services	Citizens making general Council Tax enquiries	Not started	3
6	Council Tax - applications for benefit, discount, exemption, relief and direct debit	Financial Services	Citizens making application for Council Tax benefit, discount, exemption, relief and to pay using direct debit	Transaction live for application for single person discount	2p
7	Housing Benefit - enquiries (i.e. entitlement query, next payment due, claim fully processed, notify change of circumstance)	Housing Services	Citizens making general enquiries against housing benefit	Not started	3
8	Housing Benefit - applications	Housing Services	Citizens making application for housing benefit	Not started	1
9	Housing - repairs reporting	Housing Services	The request and processing of a housing repair	Started	3t
10	Housing - repairs (status of a repair)	Housing Services	The request advising on status of a housing repair	Not started	3t
11	Housing - general advice	Housing Services	A request received for information and advice about any housing issue or problem	Not started	0
12	Housing Rent - making a payment	Housing Services	The payment of rent for Council house property	Full achieved	4
13	Housing - applying for a house	Housing Services	The application for the request to obtain a Council property	Not started	0

	National Service Activity	Generic Categorisation	Service Activity Description	DCC Project	Stage
14	Housing - waiting list enquiry (including points)	Housing Services	A request received for information about the status of a waiting list for a Council house property. Also specific information on the allocation of points in terms of an application	Not started	3t
15	Planning - making an application and payment	Land and Property Services	The process for making a planning application to the Council	Forms currently available as PDF/Word (with software in front to 'bundle' them according to what is being applied for	2
16	Planning - enquiring about the status of an application	Land and Property Services	The request received advising on status of a planning application	List available on website just now of planning applications received but no status updates shown	3
17	Refuse Collection - when is the refuse collected?	Land and Property Services	Enquiries received and information provided on the collection of business and residential waste refuse	Not started	0
18	Refuse Collection - complaint (collection has been missed)	Land and Property Services	Complaint about the business and residential waste refuse not collected on a regular basis (collection not made as per Council's schedule)	Not started	0
19	Street Light Fault Reporting	Land and Property Services	Reporting of any defects and street lighting issues	Fully achieved	3
20	Roads and Pavements Fault - reporting potholes/pavements	Land and Property Services	Reporting of any defects and faults relating to roads and pavements	Fully achieved	3
21	Special Uplift - requesting and tracking to completion (including payment where appropriate)	Land and Property Services	Request made to the Council in respect of a Special Uplift. Full service provision includes completions of the request	Not started	3r
22	Building Control - making an application and payment	Land and Property Services	The process for making a building control application to the Council. The primary objective being the processing of building warrants and completion certificates	Forms currently available as PDF/Word (with software in front to 'bundle' them according to what is being applied for	2

	National Service Activity	Generic Categorisation	Service Activity Description	DCC Project	Stage
23	Pest Control - request service (including payment where appropriate)	Environmental Services	Request from citizens and businesses to deal with pests that are harmful to public health and well being	Not started	1
24	Pest Control - reporting instances of	Environmental Services	General reporting from citizens and businesses of pests that may be harmful to public health and well being	Not started	1
25	Education Grants - application of clothing	Education Services	Application for education - clothing grant to assist with the cost of school clothing for state-maintained school pupils whose families are receiving particular state benefits or have a low income	Not started	1
26	Education Grants - application for free school meals	Education Services	Free school meals provided to children of families who are in receipt of appropriate social benefits	Not started	2
27	Education Grants - application for education maintenance allowances	Education Services	Education maintenance allowances (EMA's) are a government funded scheme which will enable young people from lower income families to stay on in school for further education	Not started	1
28	Education - transfer of pupil information	Education Services	Transfer and exchange of pupil information within a specific school and between schools using electronic mediation i.e. electronic data management	Started	3
29	Education - information for parents	Education Services	Provision of information to parents specific to Education services		1
30	Education - pupil registration and attendance management	Education Services	Recording pupil attendance using registers facilitated by electronic mediation	Pilot currently in St Johns	4
31	Education - lifelong learning enquiries	Education Services	Enquiries received by the Council specific to learning activities that are available within council facilities	Not started	1
32	Education - lifelong learning bookings and payments	Education Services	Bookings received by the Council specific to learning activities that are available within council facilities	Not started	0

	National Service Activity	Generic Categorisation	Service Activity Description	DCC Project	Stage
33	Social Work- ordering and supplying aids and adaptations to the home	Social Work and Health Services	The process for making changes and obtaining aids for people who need help around the home		1
34	Social Work - single case assessment	Social Work and Health Services	The process to assess and determine the social care requirements for an individual	Started	1
35	Social Work - domiciliary care (tracking)	Social Work and Health Services	Provision of home care and support to eligible people in their own home. This service may be provided by council staff or by a third party		1
36	Social Work - receiving services - initial referral/ enquiries	Social Work and Health Services	The process required to action referrals/ enquiries through to provision of social services		1
37	Blue Badge - application for	Social Work and Health Services	Application for people with severe walking difficulties, who are registered blind or who have severe disabilities and may be eligible for a blue badge to allow vehicle parking in appropriate areas		0
38	Corporate - complaints	Corporate Services	The process for dealing with corporate complaints received from receipt of enquiry to resolution of complaint	Reports can already be made via an online transaction which goes into the Helpline system	3
39	Council - notification change of address	Corporate Services	The process to inform the Council about a citizen's change of address	Transaction live for informing this for council tax purposes - info is then retrieved electronically by revenues staff which then is entered into the SX3 system	3
40	Council - vacancies and recruitment	Corporate Services	The process for publication of council vacancies and managing recruitment through electronic mediation	Fully achieved (XPT system)	4
41	Registration - births, deaths and marriages (including payments)	Corporate Services	The processes involved with the registration of births, deaths and marriages using electronic mediation where feasible		4p

	National Service Activity	Generic Categorisation	Service Activity Description	DCC Project	Stage
42	Licensing - taxi driver (application and payment)	Corporate Services	The process for any person to be authorised to drive a licensed private hire vehicle	Forms currently available as PDF/Word software in front to 'bundle' them according to what is being applied for	1
43	Licensing - street trader (application and payment)	Corporate Services	The process for any street trading to be authorised before the selling or offering for sale of any article in the street	Forms currently available as PDF/Word software in front to 'bundle' them according to what is being applied for	1
44	Licensing - liquor licence (application and payment)	Corporate Services	The process for application to sell alcohol in hotels, pubs, discos, restaurants and shops	Forms currently available as PDF/Word software in front to 'bundle' them according to what is being applied for	2
45	Business Development Grants	Economic Services	The process for the provision of grants to assist business development need requirements within the council boundary	Not started	0
46	Parking Fine - payments	Transportation Services	The process to facilitate the payment of parking fines	Fully achieved	4

