

# Item 7

## REPORT TO CABINET

16 February 2006

## REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

### Regeneration Portfolio

#### PLANNING SECTION PROCUREMENT OF DOCUMENT IMAGING SYSTEM

##### **1 Summary**

- 1.1 On 29 September 2005, Cabinet approved the procurement of a Document Imaging System through Planning Delivery Grant funding. This will assist in modernising the Planning Service by improving accessibility to planning information by both officers and the public, moving the authority forward with respect to e-Government and improve the office environment by removing large filing cabinets necessary for the storage of paper files.
- 1.2 Anite currently provide a Document Imaging System for Benefits and Council Tax. Other departments are considering systems to provide a similar service. The Head of ICT suggests that departments do not purchase separate Document Imaging System but utilise a tried and tested existing service provider facilitating ease of maintenance etc. Procuring a system from Anite will therefore result in financial and operational savings.

##### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Director of Neighbourhood Services enters into negotiation with Anite to procure a Document Imaging System for the Planning Service in accordance with procurement procedure rules.

### **3 Document Imaging Systems**

#### Background

- 3.1 A Document Imaging System is necessary in order for the Planning Services to transform the way it manages and retrieves planning application documents. Documents will be professionally scanned and indexed by an external service and made accessible to officers and the public through the imaging system. The system has many benefits including:
- a) Planning documents would be managed and retrieved in a sophisticated and more efficient way and made accessible to both officers and the public.
  - b) The office environment would be improved by the removal of filing cabinets. This would increase office space and provide greater floor area for additional staff.
  - c) It will assist in the Council's desire to move forward with the e-Government agenda.

#### Key Content

- 3.2 Anite are an existing supplier delivering document imaging requirements to Benefits and this is shortly to expand to include Council Tax. The Head of ICT would recommend that we adopt the same tried and tested system rather than another supplier with the additional resource and financial implication that would entail.
- 3.3 There are benefits both financially and operationally in adopting Anite for Document Imaging System. The actual hardware (server) and processes are already in place, for example the courier service for delivering document. Planning would simply "piggy-back" their system and processes onto the existing one. One system would assist in more corporate, joined-up service delivery.

#### Corporate Policy Implications

- 3.4 A Document Imaging System would assist in delivering Key Actions in the Corporate Plan including:
- Providing a high quality, efficient and customer-focused planning service.
  - Achieve continuous improvement and innovation in service delivery. The system has already demonstrated a significant improvement in the Benefits Section performance and it is believed the Planning Service could achieve similar improvements by reducing process times, improving overall performance (BV109), improved public access and also a possible administrative saving which could contribute to further service improvements and customer care.

## **4 Resource Implications**

- 4.1 The cost of the system will be in the order of £32,000, which although comparable to another system supplier, company x (£38,000), the back-scanning costs are substantially lower (£3.50 per file compared to £11 per file) and the day-to-day scanning service of current files is also substantially lower (approximately £3 per file compared to £23 per file). In addition ICT are already familiar with the system and have the necessary infrastructure in place. The impact would be minimum compared to setting up a completely new system with a new supplier and it is therefore considered that the Anite solution represents best value. The full cost of the system and back scanning can be accommodated within the capital element of the Planning Delivery Grant. Annual costs for the day-to-day scanning service are estimated to be in the order of £8K. Initially it is anticipated that Planning Delivery Grant will cover this additional cost with predicted increases in Planning fees offsetting fallout by 2008/09.

## **5 Consultations**

- 5.1 No external consultation has taken place.

## **6 Other Material Considerations**

- 6.1 The Corporate Plan sets out the authority's Ambitions and Community Outcomes. Improving towns, villages and the countryside is a fundamental outcome to achieving an Attractive Borough. Specifically, the plan aims to provide a high quality, efficient and customer focussed Planning Service that supports sustainable improvement of the built and natural environment. The department's Business Plan, the Section Service Improvement Plan and Actions Plans underpin this aim.

### **6.2 Risk Management**

The Key risk associated relates to the future of the Anite Document Imaging System and the corporate solutions. A new corporate system would need to be compatible with the Anite system to ensure effective communication between all departmental systems.

### **6.3 Health and Safety**

There are no additional health and safety implications over and above those for existing staff of the Borough Council.

### **6.4 Sustainability**

An effective Document Imaging System can contribute to an improved Planning Service, improving towns and villages and the countryside, contributing to the sustainability of communities.

### **6.5 Information Communications Technology**

The Head of ICT recommends that we adopt the same tried and tested system rather than another supplier to facilitate a more effective maintenance and back-up service.

## Equality and Diversity

Full account will be taken of the Borough Council's obligation to promote equality and diversity in the proposals.

### 6.6 Crime and Disorder

The provision of a Document Imaging System will assist in the Council's duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Act 1998 by enabling easier access to plans for consideration by the Police advisor with respect to safe by design.

### 6.7 Human Rights

There are no immediate Human Rights issues contained within the report.

### 6.8 Social Inclusion

There are no immediate Social Inclusion issues.

## **7 Overview and Scrutiny Implications**

7.1 None

## **8 List of Appendices**

8.1 None

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### **Ward(s)**

None

### **Background Papers**

Planning Delivery Grant Cabinet Report, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2005

### **Examination by Statutory Officers**

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>