COMMITTEE: ADMINISTRATION

DATE: 16TH OCTOBER, 2002

SUBJECT: STAFFING PROPOSAL - INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

CONTACT OFFICER: ICT MANAGER - C E KADWILL   (01582) 546138

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL		COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	✓	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL		CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	✓	OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

PURPOSE

1.   To appraise the committee of the resource and service issues affecting the Information and Communication Technology service provided to Operational Departments.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.   **Administration Committee is recommended to:-**

      (i)   Approve the attached report of the ICT service.

      (ii)   Support the increase in staffing levels.

      (iii)   Approve the refocusing of the funding stream to accommodate the change.

BACKGROUND

3.   The Computer Section (as was; now known as Information & Communication Technology – ICT) migrated from the District Borough Council with 34 staff, grew to 40 in 1997 – 98 to accommodate LGR reorganisation and has remained at that level ever since. Today, in late 2002 with the growing demands for service

availability, more complex systems supporting public facing services, the eGovernment and Customer Service initiative the service can not sustain and provide a quality service unless staff numbers are addressed.

REPORT

4.   Attached is a detailed background report (Appendix 1), which highlights the growth in infrastructure, and service management needs. The highlights of the report are set out below;

   36% growth in desktop hardware – with an annual 8% increase in population.
   Business critical applications grown from 15 to over 100 within the new larger authority.
   Operational window extended from 5 days 08:00 to 17:30 to 7 days and an average 12-hour day.
   Public access to services via electronic means growing rapidly.
   The hardware estate currently in two server farms growing to a third location within six months.
   Following a SOCITM benchmarking exercise conducted in Feb – April 2002 Luton's ration of ICT specialists to employees at 1:60 was the highest the mean was approximately 1:35

5.   ICT at Luton has, over the past four to five years built a strong reputation for working with the local community participating in the Youth Trainee scheme, supporting Barnfield College where Luton has provided three Student's of the Year accolades and has in 2002 started a Advanced Modern Apprentice scheme with the support of HR. Building on this success part of this proposal is to offer permanent opportunities to the young people within the community as well as wishing to attract some additional skilled and experienced staff.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

6.   By realigning existing budgets for retention bonuses (Golden handcuffs) keen contract/lease replacement tendering, resulting in budget savings, and minor re-adjustments to account for part time working the proposal contain costs within existing budgets.

7.   The only two alternatives which could be considered if the resource position is not addressed:-

   To provide partial support for systems in the future. The consequence of this is that service users would have to find their own resources to provide support for their systems. This would create additional work for departments, the support is likely to cost considerably more and they would need to find additional budgets to cover the cost.

   Service departments to reduce their reliance on automated systems so that ICT workload can be accommodated within existing resources. Given the exponential increase in departmental ICT systems, the E Government agenda and the ability to use technology to improve efficiency it is suggested that this approach is not in the Council's best interests.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

8.   Staff number in the corporate central team will grow by nine to 49 – still well below the average in other SOCITM survey group. A mix of youth and experience is proposed to ensure a balanced approach to succession management and continuity is maintained.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.   The Council's normal recruitment procedures will be applied to the recruitment process and consideration to ensure appropriate appointments are made.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.   The full year impact of the nine additional posts is £200K per annum. Of this sum £148K is being funded by redistribution of the retention bonus budget which has been in place for the past five years and comes to an end in March 2003. Plus a reduction in the expected Functional Market Premium (FMP) budget, being reviewed by Human Resources by December 2002.
A further £40K is available following reductions in spend on Communications Infrastructure following tender replacement processes undertaken in 2002. This has resulted in improved performance of the network and significant reduction in ongoing costs.
The final £12K comes from minor adjustments resulting from changes to part time working of a member of staff.

Therefore no additional funding streams are being sought the entire proposal in effect being self-financing. Agreed by Finance Manager 13/09/02.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Detailed report of ICT Manager on resource levels and services published to HOS and Corporate Director April 2002.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D
There are no background papers relating to this report.