<u>**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**</u>

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny Committee   **DATE:** 16th April 2009

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WARD(S):   All

<u>**PART I**</u>
<u>**FOR DECISION**</u>

<u>**MEMBER CALL – IN: THE COUNCIL'S IT SYSTEMS**</u>

1   <u>**Purpose of Report**</u>

1.1   To advise the Committee of a call-in received and for the Committee to consider what action it wishes to take in response to the issue.

2   <u>**Recommendations**</u>

The Committee is requested note the call-in submitted on the Council's IT and consider what action it wishes to take in response to it.

3   <u>**Key Priority Implications**</u>

There are no implications for the Council's key priorities as this report is administrative in nature.

4   <u>**Legal, Human Rights and Other Implications**</u>

None as the report is administrative in nature.

5.   <u>**Supporting Information**</u>

5.1   Councillor Plimmer has submitted a call-in for the Committee's consideration in the following terms -

"As the raft of ICT problems in the Council has not abated, with network failures and slow IT performance becoming a regular occurrence, this Council needs to take a long hard look at ICT in the Council.

With intermittent IT problems, our officers' time and Council resources are wasted, making it very difficult for the Council to perform at a high level. I would specifically like to examine what we can do to resolve this issue.

I do not blame IT because I believe blaming people is a 'mug's game' and I know they must meet a number of increasingly tough challenges in an increasingly challenging fiscal environment, including work around shared services.

It has been voiced before that a small council like Slough may not have sufficient resources or economies of scale to achieve the service levels that are now required in local government. I would like some thoughts from officers on whether IT itself might be better delivered as a shared service between neighbouring councils and public bodies (including People 1st). I am very open to any thoughts they might have.

I am not suggesting necessarily that any cost savings could be made, as we need to protect officers who actually back-up core services (although potentially this might reduce management levels and reduce the need for computer rooms). I am also wary about officer's rights, including pensions and benefits, which is why I have not asked about straight outsourcing.

However, we could have dedicated teams focussed on different challenges (24 hour call-out, GIS, off-site access, et cetera). Obviously, we would need to standardize software and this might take time.

Therefore, I would like an update on the budget and staffing levels in IT, a list of each directorate's needs in IT, a list of challenges going forth and what measures are being made to meet those challenges. An update on the member's IT situation would also be welcome.

It is time to open this debate."

5.2   The Committee may take the following action on the call-in:-

- Agree to take no further action on the call-in (the reason for that decision to be recorded in the minutes and the Member calling-in advised).
- Consider the call-in at this meeting and pass comments or recommendations to the Cabinet or other appropriate body.
- Decide to consider the call-in at a future meeting and seek additional information, where necessary.

The Committee's instructions are requested.

6.   Background Papers

Call-in form submitted by Councillor Plimmer.