Proposal for Electronic Document Management in Milton Keynes Council

1. What is Electronic Document Management (EDM)

EDM begins with the conversion of paper documents into electronic images on a computer system. Once on the system, these documents can be retrieved effortlessly in seconds. Thousands of organisations around the world use document imaging every day instead of paper filing systems. The reasons for this change are simple;

- To prevent lost records
- To save storage space
- To manage records easily
- To find documents quickly
- To makes documents centrally available
- To eliminate the need for filing cabinets (including storage rooms/buildings)
- To make the information safe (computer 'data' can be readily duplicated 'off site')

Documents are scanned into the system. The EDM system stores them somewhere on a hard drive or optical disk. The documents then get indexed. When a person later wants to read a document, they use the retrieval tools available in the EDM system. Which documents can be read and what actions performed on these documents is dependent on the access provided by the EDM system. A complete EDM system comprises five elements;

- Scanning - Major advancements in scanning technology make paper document conversion fast, inexpensive, and easy. Existing Scanners (Konica Document Centres) could be used

- Storage - The storage system provides long-term and reliable storage for documents. A good storage system will accommodate changing documents, growing volumes and advancing technology.

- Indexing - The index system creates an organised document filing system and makes future retrieval simple and efficient. A good indexing system will make existing procedures and systems more effective.

- Retrieval - The retrieval system uses information about the documents, including index and text, to find images stored in the system. A good retrieval system will make finding the right documents fast and easy.

- <u>Access</u> - Document viewing should be readily available to those who need it, with the flexibility to control access to the system. A good access system will make documents viewable to authorised personnel, whether in the office, at different locations, or over the Internet.

2. How will it benefit Milton Keynes Council

How often do we hear that space is a major issue? Everywhere you look within MKC buildings you see filing cabinets. In addition to these filing cabinets, specific rooms (and even buildings) are set aside for the storage of documents. This brief does not attempt to put an actual financial cost to this element, but will say these storage costs alone must be substantial (and are constantly growing). Electronic storage costs grow at a significantly lower rate than physical storage costs. In addition, the physical space required for electronic storage is insignificant by comparison, freeing it up for other uses.

How often do we all receive Emails saying that a particular file has been 'mislaid'? This cannot happen when the documents are stored electronically. An 'image' is made available (under system control) to whoever is authorised to access those documents, whilst the original is always securely retained.

What happens if we have a fire in any of the buildings, and documents are destroyed? Most paper documents do not have copies, or those copies are kept in the same building as the originals. What are the consequences of losing that information. If it is minimal, why do we keep it. If not, why don't we take greater measures to secure it. All MKC electronic data is currently 'backed up', and at least one copy is stored off site in a secure location, allowing for full recovery of information.

How long might it take me to find a physical document? This answer could be anywhere between minutes and days, depending on many factors, but I'm sure we've all experienced the occasional 'few days' wait whilst it is found and then passed to us. MKC even employs staff specifically to search through massive document archives to find specific documents. ANY electronically stored document can be found in seconds. Even multiple document searches can be completed in a maximum of minutes.

How do I satisfy a request from a MK Citizen for 'a copy of all of the information held by MKC on me' A request of this type is currently impractical (perhaps impossible) to satisfy. With all of that citizen's information stored electronically in a Document Management System, the request could be satisfied quite readily.

Many more questions could be posed, but it is unlikely that any functional or procedural disadvantages to MKC could be found. The advantages to bringing in Electronic Document Management to MKC should perhaps be obvious.

3. What are the risks in introducing this technology

This project could be large, therefore carries with it all of the risks associated with large projects. The requirement is in every department within MKC (A system currently exists within the Revenues and Benefits Area, known as 'Comino', but it is felt this has limited capability, therefore a new approach should be made to the 'market place'). The risks can be significantly reduced by running a pilot project with one department who is used to working with technology. This would reduce the (perhaps largest) risk associated with the requirement to change the culture of that department. Any investment made in the pilot would be used as the core infrastructure for corporate implementation.

The PPP proposal does no t currently mention investment in this area, although it is understood that any introduction of technology would need to be compatible with agreed strategies

4. What is it likely to cost (for the pilot)

Costs can be broken down into the following areas;

- • Hardware Costs **£65k** (scanners, storage stems)
- • Software Costs **£20k** (Operating Systems and the Document Management System)
- • Consultancy **£10k** (including the skills transfer from the supplier to MKC)
- • Training **£10k** (both for technical staff and system users)
- • Temporary Staff **£10k** (to convert paper documents to electronic documents)

Hardware costs and Temporary Staff costs are dependant upon the volume of information to be stored. Software costs and training costs are dependant on the number of users of the systems. Consultancy costs are likely to be required during the pilot only.

The total cost of this pilot project is **£115k**