

## Public Sector News

**Jane Inman, Technical Librarian, Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy, Warwickshire County Council**  
([janeinman@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:janeinman@warwickshire.gov.uk))

### E-government

The e-government targets for local government, to be 100% e-enabled by the end of 2005, were at 97% by 31 December 2005. A summary analysis of the status of authorities was published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in February and may be found on the local e-government web site: *Implementing Electronic Government Return 2005 (IEG5) "Meeting the targets for e-government" Summary analysis of IEG5 results (December 2005)*.

The emphasis now is on take-up and transformation. The Government published its IT strategy *Transformational government enabled by technology* in November, and in the foreword, Tony Blair says technology should be used to give citizens choice, and within public services to 'join up and share services rather than duplicate'. Consultation on this document closed on 3rd February, and an action plan is now expected to be published detailing how technology will be used to improve public services.

SOCITM, the Society of Council Information Technology Management has produced two reports looking at transformation.

To address the take-up of local e-government services the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has planned a campaign that will launch in March 2006 and run at a national level until May. In May and June the campaign will take on a regional focus and by July a 'toolbox of research and creative material' will be made available to all authorities for local branded activity.

As part of this a new Local Directgov system was launched on the Directgov web site ([www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)) From there you can now access basic local authority services such as renewing your library books, disposing of household waste, paying your council tax on line, paying and appealing against a parking fine or having graffiti removed.

A formal request for a fuller set of data has been sent to all English Local Authorities and has to be supplied by 17th March 2006. This is a long list which can be viewed at <http://www.localgov.gov.uk/en/1/1138185507885.html>

Information about the local e-government programme generally is on the ODPM's local e-government site [www.localgov.gov.uk](http://www.localgov.gov.uk)

### E-Planning

Targets had been set for local authorities to deliver planning services electronically, and the deadline for these was also December 31 2005.

All planning authorities were set criteria to meet and their compliance was checked by the ODPM. The authorities included districts, boroughs, unitaries (including the Welsh and Scottish unitaries), English counties, Scottish joint structure plan teams and the national parks of England and Wales. The checking work was done by a firm of planning consultants called Peter Pendleton Associates, and the criteria became known as the Pendleton Criteria. The results can be seen on their web site <http://www.pendleton-assoc.com>.

The Planning Portal was developed as one of the e-government National Projects and was designed to offer a one-stop-shop for planning information and services. All district level local planning authorities have now signed up to the Planning Portal, and of those 387 authorities, 377 are accepting applications submitted online via the Planning Portal while another ten will accept the form downloaded, completed and posted.

A map based National Planning Register is offered which, it claims, allows you to search for planning applications anywhere in England and Wales. In practice it as yet covers only 80% of applications and 40% of decisions. It should also be remembered that the applications managed by the English counties are not included on the Planning Portal yet. These are land use applications for waste and minerals as well as applications for development of an authority's own property such as schools.

The Portal carries links to planning policy documents back to February 2005. These are arranged by date, which will not be particularly helpful in finding them over time as the list grows.

Public Sector News is supplied by ALGIS (The Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists) which represents information professionals providing information services to local authority staff and elected members. Jane Inman is currently Chair of ALGIS. For more information go to [www.algis.org.uk](http://www.algis.org.uk)