

**REPORT TO:** POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 26 JUNE 2006

**REPORT ON:** EU FUNDED PROJECT - WIDENING SETTING PROCESS FOR ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES (WSPES)

**REPORT BY:** ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY PLANNING)

**REPORT NO:** 370-2006

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek the Committee's approval for the Council to participate in a European Union funded project testing a European standard approach for Digital certificates.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee agrees to participating in the EU Widening Setting Process for Electronic Signatures (W-SPES)

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All costs of the Council's involvement in W-SPES will be met by the grant received from the EU.

4. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

None.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None

6. **THE PROJECT - ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES**

6.1 Dundee City Council was invited to join this project on the strength of its involvement and experience in several national and international initiatives relating to electronic service delivery such as the smartcard and online transactions.

6.2 Local Authorities' desire to implement Electronic Service Delivery is limited by security and the difficulty of establishing the identity of remote parties with any confidence.

As a result, Service Providers often:

- only provide services face-to-face
- use low-security artefacts such as passbooks, vouchers, or manual signatures
- restrict remote services to low-risk, low-value "anonymous" services

6.3 In electronic service provision, Service Providers (and their Customers) must have confidence in the identity of the other party and the data sent in order to give an enforceable contract. There are many ways to achieve these and currently the most robust and reliable methods use techniques known generally as Asymmetric Digital Cryptography and Digital certificate/signature. This infrastructure can be made very secure and can allow service providers to deliver even sensitive or high-value services electronically with confidence.

6.4 **SPES and W SPES**

SPES (Setting Processes for Electronic Signatures) was an EU project, supported through eTEN (Electronic Trans-European Networks). Begun in Nov 2002, it aimed to develop the core technology and business processes to allow Digital Signatures to be used by Public Administration services in secure Electronic Service Delivery.

6.5 W-SPES (Widening SPES) aims to consolidate and extend the work done under SPES and to integrate other EU-funded projects in this field. New members were invited to join a core of

original SPES partners to apply the expertise developed during the initial project and to pilot real-life applications.

6.6 W-SPES involves 15 partners:

Comune di Prato (Project Coordinator)	(Italy)
Comunità Montana Val di Bisenzio	(Italy)
Comune di Carmignano	(Italy)
Comune di Montemurlo	(Italy)
Comune di Poggio a Caiano	(Italy)
AXETEL Consulting SRL	(Romania)
Landeshauptstadt Saarbrücken	(Germany)
Sheffield City Council	(UK)
Provincia di Prato	(Italy)
Azienda USL 4 di Prato	(Italy)
City of Koper	(Slovenia)
Sunderland City Council	(UK)
Magistrat der Stadt Bremerhaven	(Germany)
Dundee City Council	(UK)
Provincia di Piacenza	(Italy)

6.7 Dundee City Council has secured up to €193,000. The eTEN programme awards up to 10% of expenditure in the related field. In Dundee's case the investment in the Customer First strategy and Modernising Government Fund. The overall budget across all partners is €1,200,000. The Council's participation will be managed by the Dundee Discovery Card Team.

6.8 **Objectives**

The project will run until early 2008 and is divided into 6 Work Packages:

- WP1 – Project Management & Administration
- WP2 – Refining the SPES technology and components
- WP3 – Selection of pilot applications by the partners
- WP4 – Customisation of technology for each partner's applications
- WP5 – Deployment to live services
- WP6 – Collations and dissemination of results

Dundee City Council will be involved in WP3 onwards and would identify our pilot use of electronic signatures later this year

7. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Depute Chief Executive (Finance).

Director of Economic Development, Head of Information Technology, Legal Manager

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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