

Harlow Council Partners with Kainos to Integrate EDRM System in its Planning Department

Submitted by: Sarum Consultancy

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- Harlow's new EDRM system now well underway as planning cases, complaints and applications are electronically captured and search-enabled for public access-

London, June 8th, 2009 – Kainos, (www.kainos.com) a leading IT consulting company, has today announced that its project to integrate an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) into Harlow Council's planning department is progressing well.

Harlow Council is a District Council that provides services such as refuse and recycling collection, housing, environmental health, electoral registration, planning and building control, parks and leisure. The town has around 80,000 residents in 37,000 households. Its planning department recognised the need to reduce its reliance on paper and invested in the Meridio document management system to hold letters of complaint and information requests. Harlow enlisted the help of specialist IT Services company Kainos to create the infrastructure, processes and necessary integrations to support electronic document management within the planning department.

Declan White, Senior ICT Manager at Harlow Council comments, "Kainos knows Meridio very well indeed and has extensive experience implementing EDRM solutions in UK councils including a number of planning departments. That experience has allowed us to progress the project at a rate that was hitherto impossible." Declan continues, "We have great confidence in Kainos and their advice and the support they have given us has exceeded our expectations and experience. 2009 promises to be our year to deliver on our EDRM goals."

Planning departments have come under close scrutiny for their service levels and an increasing number of government mandates are promoting improved information visibility. The Pendleton Report also suggested the need for planning departments to embrace electronic ways of working rather than relying on paper processes and the associated costs and inefficiencies.

Harlow is responding to these recommendations by using document management and search technologies from Meridio coupled with document scanning technology from Kofax to scan and store planning reference cases, complaints, consultation documents and the planning applications themselves. The system will eventually enable members of the public to search for planning applications online and this is expected to improve service levels, increase information accessibility and visibility and reduce the time consumed by specialist planning resource; time that can be diverted to other public service tasks.

Deirdre O'Neill, Head of ECM at Kainos adds, "We have worked on a number of EDRM projects in planning departments and they have produced very measurable results. Giving the public easy, online access to planning information and reducing the time planning departments spend wading through paper files, has a very positive and visible impact on public service improvement." Deirdre continues, "We are looking forward to delivering those same improvements at Harlow Council and then introducing EDRM to other areas such as Housing."

About Kainos

Kainos designs and implements IT solutions that make businesses perform better. As a specialist supplier of EDRM solutions to central and local government for more than 20 years, Kainos has an excellent track record of success. The company was founded in 1986 and is headquartered in Belfast with offices in Dublin, London and Gdansk. Kainos employs over 260 consultants and its customers include some of the biggest names in both private and public sector throughout the UK and Ireland. These include Northern Ireland Health, the UK Audit Commission, UK Information Commissioners Office, RICS and Cushman & Wakefield, as well as a number of UK local authorities. For more information, see www.kainos.com.

About Harlow Council

Harlow Council is a District Council that provides services such as refuse and recycling collection, housing, environmental health, electoral registration, planning and building control, parks and leisure. The town has around 80,000 residents in 37,000 households.

The Council has a Conservative administration and 33 elected members with 18 Conservative, 9 Liberal Democrat and 6 Labour member(s). The Council is elected by thirds each year. The Council underwent a Comprehensive Performance Assessment reassessment by the Audit Commission in July 2007 and was rated as a "Good" Council in November 2007.

For more information please visit www.harlow.gov.uk.

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