



SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REPORT

MEMBERS' ICT REVIEW

DECEMBER 2014

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members' ICT has come a long way since the early 2000s when council first applied for e government funding to enable the authority to issue laptops to its Members. ICT is now a part of all our lives and the council is keen to develop its use of ICT to enhance the effectiveness of both its staff and Members. It also aims to provide the public with improved facilities for accessing council services, inputting to the the democratic process and communicating with their elected representatives.
- 1.2 Details of the ICT services provided to Members and the expectation of Members in terms of its use, has always been covered in the Members induction pack and ICT training following their election. This has been extended to cover the use of remote access via Citrix and included the roll-out of iPads following the elections in May 2014.
- 1.3 As the iPad pilot progressed, it became clear that a document was needed which would set out clearly what was being provided for Members in terms of ICT and the expectation of them, particularly with regard to the loan of a council iPad and the move to paperless meetings.
- 1.4 The Democratic Services Manager worked with ICT, the Director of Resources and the Cabinet Member, Corporate Services, Councillor Jon Walklett, to produce a draft Members' ICT policy. In order to gain Members' support for the policy it was suggested that this could be reviewed by overview and srutiny and this would also provide an opportunity for the business case for the iPad roll out to be scrutinised.
- 1.5 A scrutiny task group was initiated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 3 November 2014 for this purpose.
- 1.6 This report sets out the findings and recommendations arising from the scrutiny review by the scrutiny task group.

2. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 Membership of the task group:-

- Councillor Matt Babbage (Chair)
- Councillor Max Wilkinson
- Councillor John Payne
- Councillor Dan Murch
- Councillor Chris Mason

2.2 Terms of reference agreed at our first meeting

- To review the Members' ICT policy
- To scrutinise the business case for iPads
- To make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate via the O&S Committee

3. HOW DID THE TASK GROUP GO ABOUT THIS REVIEW?

3.1 The task group met on one occasion when we reviewed the draft policy and the business case for iPads. The officers involved are listed below and we thank them for their support.

- Rosalind Reeves, Democratic Services Manager, facilitator for the task group supported by Tess Beck, Democracy Assistant
- Mark Sheldon, Director of Resources and sponsor of the policy
- Dan Hares ICT

3.2 We would also thank the Cabinet Member Councillor Walklett for his contribution to our meeting and subsequent comments on our report.

4. OUR FINDINGS

The Members' ICT Policy

4.1 The task group were fully supportive of the draft policy that was made available to us at our meeting. We felt it provided clarity on the ICT provision for Members and made it clear what was expected of Members in their use of ICT. We also welcomed the introduction of a signed agreement to support the issue of a council iPad.

4.2 The task group were aware that there had been some issues arising from the pilot roll out of council iPads with some Members still expecting paper copies. We asked for the policy to be strengthened in this respect so it is absolutely clear that Members accepting a council iPad should not ask for copies of papers which had been circulated electronically. We acknowledge that this will be a difficult adjustment to make for some Members but without this the business case is not sustainable. For this reason it is important we support all Member through the change.

4.3 With this amendment the revised Members' ICT policy is attached as appendix 1 to this report and we recommend that it is adopted.

Use of Modern.gov for viewing agendas and papers

- 4.4 The Members ICT policy covers the use of the modern.gov app which is essential for reviewing the agendas for papers and meetings and hence enables the move to more paperless meetings. The members of the scrutiny task group had been using this app for some time and our experience is that it is a very powerful tool enabling Members to review and annotate papers in a similar way that they would have done with a paper copy.
- 4.5 We do acknowledge that it needs a certain amount of investment of an individual's time to familiarise themselves with the new tool and to adjust to this new method of working. We commended the training that has been provided by ICT and Democratic Services to assist with this and we want to encourage all Members to avail themselves of this training. This will enable them to be fully aware of the functionality of their iPad and the modern.gov app and how it can support them in their work.
- 4.6 The scrutiny task group also noted that currently Members could not access task group and working group meetings via the modern.gov app and these could only be made available electronically via the circulation of agenda packs via e-mail. We were advised by officers that these could be available to Members in the future on their iPad via the intranet and this facility can be made available to Members if they are accessing the council network via Citrix.

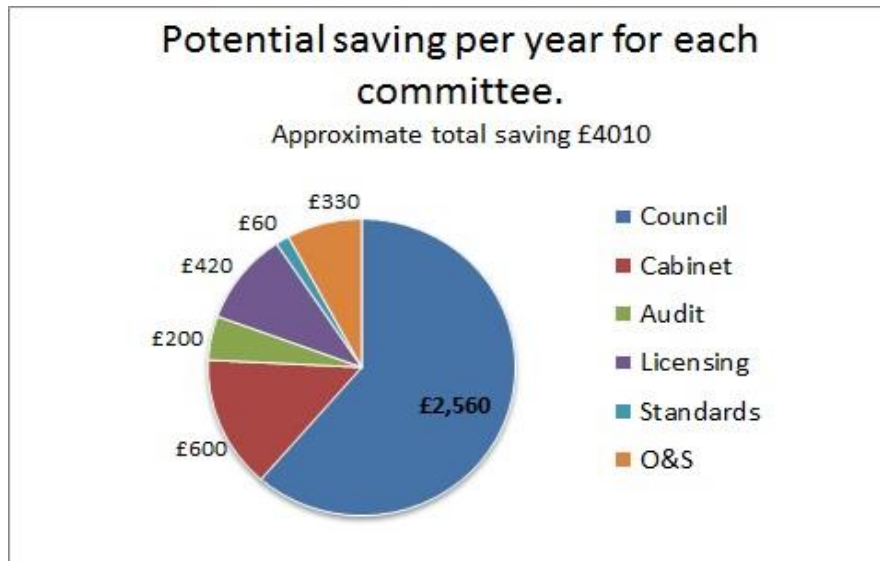
The iPad Business case

- 4.7 The scrutiny task group reviewed the business case for the roll-out of council iPads. This was quite straightforward and in summary the outlay of the cost in purchasing the council iPads is balanced by the savings in printing costs. The details are as follows:
- 4.8 The current cost of an iPad with the software is about £400 (with no 3G connectivity i.e. needs WiFi to connect to the internet) and has an expected life span of 3-4 years

On that basis the revenue cost of iPads on a rolling 3-4 year life cycle would be the cost of replacing an lpad for each member every 3.5 years on a rolling 4 year program
i.e. £400 every 3.5 years/3.5 * 40 Members per annum = £4570 per year.

With some contingency for lost or stolen equipment the replacement budget would need to be in the order of £5000 in the Democratic Services budget. It is assumed that any licensing costs would be picked up by ICT which has been the current practice.

4.9 An approximation of the number of sets of committee papers printed per annum can be estimated by looking at the number of Members and meetings for each of our main committees. It is difficult to assess the exact cost of printing committee papers as a lot of printing is done in-house and it is not directly itemised in the budget. However the potential savings from external off site printing across Council and its committees administered by Democratic Services is in the order of £4000.



4.10 These figures demonstrate a simple break-even point and if all Members were to receive electronic copies of committee papers there would be scope for achieving a saving in excess of £4000 per annum which would be sufficient to cover the costs of the iPad maintenance budget required. All of these committee papers could be viewed via the Modern.gov app.

4.11 These figures do not include the cost of printing Planning Committee papers. Currently this is done by Planning Administration rather than Democratic Services and they do all the printing in house rather than send them off site. This would be a lot cheaper than the off-site printing but involves more staff effort. They estimate that they do about 25 copies of papers each month with an average of 160 sides of printing. Initial discussions have been held with the service manager responsible for planning and they are committed to reviewing the situation in 2015.

4.12 The case for iPads is further enhanced when you consider the non-financial benefits:

- Ease of access to emails without having to log into Citrix, which improves Members' communication with both colleagues, officers and constituents
- Access to other applications approved by the council to support Members in their work
- Ability to save annotations and ease of navigation within the modern.gov app

- 4.13 It should be noted that paper copies would still need to be printed for the public, external representatives and officers attending the meeting. Currently there are no facilities for viewing confidential papers on the iPad so these would continue to be printed on pink paper hard copy. There is a modern.gov app available which will enable Members to view restricted papers on their iPad but this currently has a cost of £6,000 per annum whereas the modern.gov app to view public papers is available free to any councillor or member of the public. We would suggest this is looked at again so see if the price can be negotiated.

Future development

- 4.14 Technology never stands still so the task group identified the need for officers to keep abreast of new developments which could further support Members in their work and roll these out as appropriate.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 During the course of this review we have consulted with officers involved in this issue. The Cabinet Member Corporate Services attended our meeting and had the opportunity to review our draft report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Taking all our findings into consideration, the task group agreed a number of recommendations, namely that
- i. **The Members' ICT Policy is endorsed by Cabinet and publicised to all Members, thereby supporting the move to paperless meetings**
 - ii. **Members are required to sign up to the policy before accepting a council iPad and all Members currently in possession of one should be asked to sign up retrospectively to demonstrate their commitment to go paperless**
 - iii. **Members are encouraged to participate in training and development designed to enhance their use of ICT equipment and applications provided**
 - iv. **Members' ICT provision is kept under review in order to take advantage of new developments in technology**

7. PROGRESSING THE SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The scrutiny task group acknowledged that the roll-out of Members' iPads had been temporarily halted whilst this review of the policy took place. We were conscious that the timing of this review meant that our recommendations would not go to O&S until the meeting on 12 January 2015 and Cabinet in February 2015. We did not wish the roll-out to be delayed until then. Therefore we indicated to the Cabinet Member that we would be supportive of the rollout continuing, but it should be emphasised to Members that when accepting an iPad they were committing to go paperless and they would be asked to retrospectively sign up to the policy once it has been agreed by Cabinet in February.

7.2 In conclusion the task group were confident that we had met our terms of reference are and we commend our recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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| Appendices | 1. The Members' ICT Policy |
| Background information | 1. None |