

Report of Chief Officer (ICT)

Report to Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services)

Date: 24th February 2014

Subject: Members ICT service provision

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Following the successful conclusion of the Members ICT Upgrade Project, Councillors were surveyed to determine if they considered that had met its intended aims.
2. The project, supported by the responses to the survey received, has also highlighted that the changes in ICT Service provision has also necessitated further changes in the nature of support.
3. In particular, a view from Members is sought on the data charges associated with using Council-provided tablets for conducting Council business when abroad and also in relation to the new proposed ICT support arrangements

Recommendations (following input from Scrutiny Board in December)

4. Scrutiny Board is recommended to accept the conclusions of this report.
5. It is recommended that some of the savings resulting from the Members ICT Upgrade project be used to meet the data charges associated with the use of the Council-provided tablets abroad when the device is used to conduct Council business.
6. It is further recommended that the following changes to ICT support arrangements are introduced:
 - 6.1. The appointment of a dedicated Member ICT Support Officer to provide enhanced support as outlined between 3.3.12 and 3.3.14 of this report, and,

6.2. The opening hours of the Drop-In Centre within Civic Hall be extended to reflect those of the Service Centre i.e. 0800 to 1730, Monday to Friday

1 Purpose of this report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with a summary of the survey of Members following the ICT Upgrade Project and, following direction from Members at Scrutiny Board in December, to seek a view on recommendations in the following areas :

- The costs associated with the use of the Council-provided tablet device when used abroad, and,
- The proposed revised ICT support arrangements for Councillors

2 Background information

- 2.1 Following the completion of the rollout under the Members ICT Upgrade Project, Councillors were surveyed to determine whether the changes made had met the intended aim of providing them with an improved ICT service; enabling technologies which better support the various ways that they choose and need to work at a lower overall cost to the Council.
- 2.2 Members will recall that as part of the upgrade project they were provided with a choice of a laptop or a Council-provided tablet device together with associated peripherals such as a choice of printer. Alternatively, Councillors could opt to use their own equipment to securely access appropriate services.
- 2.3 The Members Upgrade project, in conjunction with ESP, (the Council's Essential Services Programme), has provided more up-to-date hardware and software and a more robust technical environment.
- 2.4 The principal savings of the project resulted from the removal of the Council-funded ADSL broadband provision to Members homes and of the option of a Council-provided PDA (personal Digital Assistant) device. The major saving around the latter being that there would be no expense associated with the need to upgrade the PDAs in favour of more advanced and reliable alternatives.
- 2.5 ICT services recognise that the changes in the ICT Service provision necessitated changes in certain areas. To this end a paper was submitted to the November meeting of Member Management Committee. The paper sought a view from Members around the use of the Council-provided tablet whilst abroad and in particular around how the associated data charges should be met. It also requested support for the creation of a dedicated ICT Support Officer role.
- 2.6 Member Management Committee indicated that the costs associated with the use of tablet devices abroad should be met by the individual member and deferred the proposed revised support arrangements pending further consultation across the groups.

- 2.7 In December this committee proposed that Members should not be charged for the data connection charges associated with Council-provided tablets when used abroad for dealing with issues in their capacity as a Member of Leeds City Council. This view was also reflected to the January meeting of Member Management Committee.

3 Main issues

3.1 Survey results

- 3.1.1 At the conclusion of the Members ICT Upgrade project, all Councillors were surveyed to determine if the project had met its intended aim of providing an improved ICT service to Members, designed to better support them in the way they need and choose to work
- 3.1.2 The questions asked in the survey were similar to those contained in a survey issued before the project began, the responses to which were used to inform the approaches taken.
- 3.1.3 28 Members responded and generally the results to each question were an improvement over the previous survey.
- 3.1.4 Around 80% of those who responded indicated that the equipment and software provided met their needs and enabled them to work effectively from home and from other locations.
- 3.1.5 Around 75% of the respondents were happy with the upgraded software and were comfortable using it and a similar percentage indicated that they were aware how to access additional training if required.
- 3.1.6 The one area where there was no perceived improvement was in relation to the question around the support arrangements with 60% of respondents being happy with the current arrangements.
- 3.1.7 However, in the free form areas of the survey, where Members were asked to comment generically on the ICT service provision, a number of Members specifically singled out the Drop-In Centre for special mention as well as indicating that they would welcome demonstrations on the appropriate use of equipment and software.

3.2 Use of Council-provided tablet devices abroad

- 3.2.1 The tablet devices provided to councillors allow connectivity from within Civic Hall and also from other locations where a wifi service is available including within Members homes. The devices also have a 3G SIM installed to provide connectivity where wifi is not available.

- 3.2.2 There is a monthly data allowance of 2GB when using the device in this country, the charges for which were included in the original business case for the project. Members will receive notifications to the device if they approach the monthly limit. Naturally if the 3G data limit is reached the device can continue to be used via wifi (where available).
- 3.2.3 The devices provided are capable of accessing a variety of content, including activities such as video streaming. Such activity uses significant amounts of data very quickly therefore the recommendation is that the device should be used for such purposes when connected to the internet over wifi rather than 3G.
- 3.2.4 It is recognised that some members may choose to use their tablet whilst abroad. Guidance has been provided to Members on using the device abroad. Principally, the recommendation is to turn off the data roaming function when not in use to avoid inadvertently incurring data charges and that wherever possible, free wifi should be used for connectivity.
- 3.2.5 It is also accepted that some Members may need to use their tablet for Council business where wifi is not available and, under these circumstances, it is recommended that the Council meets the full cost of the data charges incurred.
- 3.2.6 The standard charges for using data abroad is £40 per month for each month in which it is used. This entitles the user to 100MB within Europe and 50MB elsewhere. Notifications will be provided to the device as the data limit is approached..

3.3 Revised Support Arrangements

- 3.3.7 The current support arrangements for Elected Members are that from 0800 until 1730 each week day, the dedicated Members ICT support telephone number (0113 247 4866) is staffed by the ICT Service Centre. Outside of these hours the same support number is answered by officers who work on a shift basis within the Network Management Centre.
- 3.3.8 The aim at all times is, wherever possible, to resolve an issue at the first point of contact. However, if this is not possible, the same level of 2nd and 3rd tier support is not available outside standard hours (largely because key elements of the service, are provided under contract by Third Party suppliers). Where an issue cannot be resolved therefore, the NMC officer passes the support call to colleagues in the Service Centre for it to be progressed the following morning.
- 3.3.9 These out of hours support arrangements are available except between 1900 on Saturday evenings and 0800 on Sunday morning (when resources are concentrated on duties associated with the main weekly processing and back-up routines), and over Bank Holidays.
- 3.3.10 In addition to these arrangements, the opening hours of the Drop-In Centre, on the Second Floor Link Corridor within Civic Hall, have been extended from 0800 to 1730, Monday to Friday in order to provide a better level of service both to

elected Members and also to the increasing numbers of mobile workers resulting from the Council's Changing the Workplace strategy.

- 3.3.11 It is recognised that the improvements introduced as part of the Members ICT Upgrade Project and the on-going developments under the Council's Essential Services Programme, has resulted in a discernible improvement in the reliability of the equipment and the technical infrastructure which has meant that the nature of supporting Members is evolving. The emphasis is now less on issues associated with system failure and more around exploiting the technology.
- 3.3.12 It is envisaged that this trend will continue as the technical environment is further enhanced and new software and applications are introduced.
- 3.3.13 During the Members ICT Upgrade Project, an officer, based within the Drop-In Centre, provided dedicated support to Members to assist with the transition. It is now proposed that this role is continued to provide support in areas such as assisting with future technical developments.
- 3.3.14 The added value is that the individual undertaking this role would be mindful as to how future developments will impact, or could be exploited by, Councillors, as well as providing enhanced business as usual support. Planned changes to the technical environment which will have a bearing on Members ICT service provision in the near future include:
- An upgrade to Microsoft Exchange 2010;
 - The introduction of electronic corporate calendar, and'
 - Upgrade of the Council's VPN (Virtual Private Network – the service which enables secure connectivity to the Council's network from home and other locations)

Each of these upgrades needs to be managed effectively due to the unique and multifarious ways in which Members need to work.

- 3.3.15 It is anticipated that this new role would also add significant value by:
- Providing a single point of contact for issue resolution and inventory maintenance between the ICT Service Centre and Group Support offices to offer a more seamless service to Members
 - Providing a quick "go to" resource for hints, tips and techniques and a sign-posting service for more in-depth assistance and training, for example, in the exploitation of use of Social Media tools (Facebook, Twitter, Blogging) and in the updated software available on the Council desktop (Sharepoint, Instant Messaging, One Note etc.) as well as on the use of the Council-provided tablet.
 - Managing the ICT elements relating to incoming and outgoing Members (in particular around elections) to ensure the transition is handled as expediently

as possible. This was previously undertaken by a dedicated ICT Project Lead.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 A number of techniques (including surveys, site visits and reports to Member Committees) were utilised to assist in developing and defining the Members ICT Upgrade project and the associated service offerings.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The flexibility of ICT offerings available to Members mean that each individual Councillor can select the hardware and software which best meets their needs.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 There are no implications

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The removal of the Council-funded broadband provision to Members homes and the replacement of PDA devices with more sustainable offerings have resulted in better options at a reduced cost to the Council.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 There are no Legal implications resulting from this report.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There are no Risk Management implications.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The Members ICT Upgrade project, in conjunction with improvements under the Council's Essential Service Programme, has improved the ICT service provision to Members.

5.2 These improvements have also changed the nature of support and therefore require changes to the current ICT support model.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Scrutiny Board is recommended to accept the conclusions of this report.

6.2 It is recommended that some of the savings resulting from the Members ICT Upgrade project be used to meet the data charges associated with the use of the

Council-provided tablets abroad when the device is used to conduct Council business.

6.3 It is further recommended that the following changes to ICT support arrangements are introduced:

6.3.1 The appointment of a dedicated Member ICT Support Officer to provide enhanced support as outlined between 3.3.12 and 3.3.14 of this report and,

6.3.2 The opening hours of the Drop-In Centre within Civic Hall be extended to reflect those of the Service Centre i.e. 0800 to 1730, Monday to Friday

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.