

**Report of City Solicitor**

**Report to Member Management Committee**

**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Subject: Progress in progressing the Council's long-term ambition to move to paper free distribution of Committee agendas**

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

**1 Purpose of this report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present an update to Member Management Committee following previous reports to this Committee in November 2018 and March 2019 looking at options to reduce the cost of printed agenda distribution and the associated environmental impact.

**2 Background**

2.1 When Members considered and discussed this matter in March the following resolution was agreed;

- a) That all Members be contacted to request their preference in regards electronic or paper agenda packs, for all Committees, and for their preference to be actioned for all future Committees.

2.2 In addition to the formal resolution above Members also discussed the following areas;

- the benefits of the Member Development Working Group looking at the current ICT equipment offer for Members and see whether this supports Members to access their committee papers electronically,
- the benefits of training on the modern.gov app becoming an essential feature of the Member Development Strategy for newly elected members,

- the benefits of offering refresher training on the modern.gov app to existing Members as part of the Member Development Strategy,
- the inconsistency of page numbering between an electronic agenda and a paper copy of an agenda

### 3 Main issues

- 3.1 Recognising existing limitations Members will recall that this committee agreed to a long term ambition of the Council to be to move towards paper free distribution of committee agendas.
- 3.2 Set out below is the current position in respect of the resolution made by this Committee in March and the discussion points that took place at the last meeting to further that ambition.

**a) That all Members be contacted to request their preference in regards electronic or paper agenda packs, for all Committees, and for their preference to be actioned for all future Committees.**

At the request of this Committee an exercise was carried out in December 2018 that looked at how Members would prefer to access their Full Council meeting agenda and as a result of a resolution of this Committee in March 2019 all Members of Council were contacted in March with a reminder in June to ascertain how they would prefer to receive their agenda packs for the Committees, Boards and Panels they were appointed to by Council.

At the time of writing this report 29 Members have confirmed that they would prefer to receive some or all of their agendas electronically resulting in a reduction of approx.50,000 pieces of paper in a Municipal Year , this will mean to date there has been a total reduction of approx. 230,000 pieces of paper as a result of this Committees initiative as well as the reduction in van deliveries of the agendas.

**b) The benefits of the Member Development Working Group looking at the current ICT equipment offer for Members and see whether this supports Members to access their committee papers electronically.**

The Member Development Officer is working with the Chair of the Member Development Working Group to again look at the current ICT equipment offered to elected members and to consider whether this is adequate to allow Members to access committee papers through the use of the ModernGov app.

A report elsewhere on this agenda will set out these arrangements in more detail.

**c) The benefits of training on the moderngov app becoming an essential feature of the Member Development Strategy for newly elected members/ the benefits of offering refresher training on the moderngov app to existing Members as part of the Member Development Strategy.**

The Member Development Officer is currently working on this proposal by Member Management Committee and the new proposed Terms of Reference for the Member Development Working Group will incorporate the elements set out

above in order that all Members both new and existing will have the opportunity to benefit from bespoke training on how to access Committee papers electronically should they wish.

A report elsewhere on this agenda will set out these arrangements in more detail.

**d) The inconsistency of page numbering between an electronic agenda and a paper copy of an agenda**

Members raised an issue at the last meeting that page numbers were inconsistent between the paper copy agendas and those accessible electronically.

Following investigation of this matter the inconsistency was identified and the matter raised at a meeting of the Regional User Group attended by the system provider and other local authorities in the region who use the system.

Following a discussion on this point it was recognised as an issue and work is being carried out to put in place arrangements to overcome the inconsistencies.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 Discussion has taken place between officers and Members to ascertain the preferences of Members and then how best to accommodate those preferences.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 There are no equality and diversity or cohesion and integration issues arising from this report – committee Members will continue to be able to access agenda packs in a paper format if that is their wish.

### **4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 There are no specific implications for council policy in relation to this report, however reducing the number of printed agendas will support the Council's environmental policy objectives by reducing the Council's use of paper, toner, and electricity. Environmental savings will also be accrued by reducing the number of vehicle movements in the City arising from the delivery of agendas to Members' homes.

### **4.4 Resources and Value for Money**

4.4.1 The current position will generate a saving of approximately £16k per annum in 2019-20 and, if all print agendas were distributed electronically this could generate up to £65k savings per annum plus other as yet unqualified savings arising from print distribution.

4.4.2 In addition to the print costs, the cost of the distribution of printed agendas to Members' homes amounts to a further £21k per annum. This figure will reduce as less deliveries of hard copy agendas are required.

## 4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972(2) (meetings and proceedings of local authorities), in paragraph 4 (principal councils), at sub-paragraph (1A), states that Five clear days at least before a meeting of a principal council in England —

(a) notice of the time and place of the intended meeting shall be published at the council's offices and, where the meeting is called by members of the council, the notice shall be signed by those members and shall specify the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting; and

(b) a summons to attend the meeting, specifying the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting, and authenticated by the proper officer of the council, shall be sent to every member of the council by an appropriate method.

4.5.2 At sub-paragraph (1B) the Act States - In sub-paragraph (1A) "the reference to sending the summons to a member by an appropriate method is to —

(i) leaving it at, or sending it by post to, the member's usual place of residence, or

(ii) where the member has specified an address other than the member's usual place of residence, leaving it at, or sending it by post to, that different address, or

(iii) where the member has given consent for the summons to be transmitted in electronic form to a particular electronic address (and consent has not been withdrawn), sending it in electronic form to that address.

4.5.3 Given that the alternative arrangements proposed in the report in November 2018 had general implications for Members it was appropriate to seek a view in the first instance from Members before determining how this matter was progressed. The terms of reference for Member Management Committee include a function "to act as an Advisory Body for the purposes of implementing practices and procedures affecting Elected Members."

## 4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There are no significant risks arising from this report, however should Members opt to access their agendas via electronic means, access to those documents will inevitably rely on the robustness of the ICT infrastructure.

4.6.2 Those Members choosing to access documents via the App will be able to download agenda documents to their tablet device in advance of the meeting. However Members accessing their agenda documents at meetings via a laptop device will currently be reliant on accessing to the document via Leeds.gov.uk.

## 5 Conclusions

5.1 Following consideration of the matter by this Committee in November 2018 and March 2019 and by working with Members and providing support where required this authority has achieved a significant reduction in the number of paper agendas it produces and this will allow both a financial saving to the authority as well as having a positive environmental impact.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Members are requested to;

(a) note the progress made to date in supporting this Committees long term ambition to move towards paper free distribution of Committee agendas in line with the recommendations made by this Committee in both November 2018 and March 2019.

(b) request further updates to this Committee as appropriate.

## **7 Background Documents**

7.1 None.