
REPORT OF THE COUNTY CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER

MEMBER ICT PROJECT

Reason for this Report

1. To report on ICT related issues raised by Committee on 17 December 2015 (Min No 20) and other associated matters.

Background

2. The roll-out of the Members ICT Project aimed at delivering a new way of working for Members using technology, and to generate savings on paper and printing costs was closed down on 30 November 2014.
3. The project outperformed the original target to equip up to 35 Councillors. 55 tablets were purchased and 46 Councillors have taken up the option and are now users; with 28 Councillors retaining their existing equipment for the time being.
4. As part of the County Clerk and Monitoring Officer Directorate Plan the budget line relating to printing has been monitored on a monthly basis to quantify savings in printing costs.

Issues

5. The Committee raised a number of technical matters in relation to the tablet provision at its meeting 17 December, and sought clarification of these matters at this meeting. The ICT Service Manager will be in attendance to respond to Members questions.
6. Councillors in signing up to the ICT Member Project agreed to support the 'paper-lite' Council by opting not to receive hard copy papers and the Business Case was signed off on this basis.
7. The Democratic Services performance indicator on printing costs is anticipated to show a savings for 2014/15 of approximately 50% circa £20,000. See tabled attached as Appendix 1.
- 8.

Legal Implications

9. The relevant requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 are referred to in the body of this report. There are no other direct legal implications arising from the content of this report.

Financial Implications

10. The business case indicates a potential saving of £56,204 over a three year period. The cost of the new equipment has been capitalised in the current year. This has been undertaken as an invest to save scheme with the initial cost of the equipment and other facilities being financed from reductions in the cost of printing and other associated revenue budgets.
11. There is a risk that should Member requirements change then this will impact on the model and could result in increased costs. If this occurs, then any additional costs would have to be met from within existing Council budgets or by a drawdown from reserves.

Recommendations

To consider and comment the information received and discuss any measures to improve the service effectiveness and efficiencies.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL
COUNTY CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

The following Appendices are attached:

Appendix 1: Printing Monitoring Report

Appendix A

Analysis of faults and issues to date

Hardware issues

The Members tablets are currently under 3 year warranty with Dell.

All hardware failures and replacements required to date have been rectified under warranty.

One key issue has been with the wireless network cards for the tablets not functioning correctly and causing issues when docking and un docking the device. Although this was not affecting all devices we asked for, and Dell supplied, replacement cards for all devices.

We have now replaced 35 out of 55 cards to date and are continuing to replace the remainder when ICT get the devices back to do any work on them – the remaining ones have not exhibited faults but we are replacing them anyway as a precaution.

A more recent issue has been a fault affecting the charging port on the tablets and around 25% of tablets have been identified to date as faulty and again all have been replaced under warranty by Dell.

There has been a further issue reported by users regarding some personally purchased charging cables but this has been identified as an issue purchasing non Dell parts (or grey import). Attempting to use these on the tablets has also caused some issues as these have not always worked correctly.

We remain in discussion with our Dell Account Manager as to the issues Cardiff has experienced to date and have requested confirmation that we can still replace the devices should we be unhappy with their reliability.

Password issues

Another key and recurring issue to date has been password related problems.

Tablets have passwords for disk encryption (Becrypt), the normal network logon and for connecting securely to the council network and this has caused significant confusion for Members with uncertainty over which password is used for each stage.

Members have experienced issues particularly when required to change the passwords in line with security requirements.

In most cases a password reset and a synchronisation with Becrypt has resolved the issue but this has understandably caused significant frustration for members.

ICT are reviewing both the security mechanisms used for the tablets to see if we can streamline the processes involved as well the support options available to Members to support and guide them through the password issues.

ICT are working with Member Services to ensure their support staff are fully familiar with the issues and their resolution to help both avoid the problems in future but also to solve the issues for Members in a timely fashion should they occur.

Microsoft Patching Issue

Microsoft issued a Windows security patch as part of their regular monthly patching protocol. ICT rolled this out following our Patch Management Policy to a group of test devices, and once this had no perceived adverse effects we deployed globally to the councils devices.

This is in line with industry standards and best practice and required for the council's PSN & PCI compliance. Only after a much wider deployment did it start to affect some, but not all devices with Windows 8.1 operating systems, and as soon as we became aware of the problem we halted installation of this patch.

Unfortunately removing the patch was made more complicated by the encryption software, in that the device needed to be decrypted first which took a significant time for each device. Members that had no local data that required saving had their devices rebuilt as this was quicker than decrypting and uninstalling the patch then re encrypting.

A few weeks later the same situation occurred again with another Microsoft patch. We have subsequently altered the base-build of Windows 8.1 that we use which has resolved the current problem but no guarantee can be given of a similar situation arising in the future should Microsoft patches prove faulty as in this instance it only affected some and not all Windows 8.1 devices – even identical models.

As a result of the variety of issues experienced to date ICT have had to rebuild around 25 tablets to date.

Summary

Although we have experienced significant teething problems during this project, and more than is typical when introducing a new technology in our experience, in discussion with the Vale and other authorities this is not untypical of their experiences with tablets from a variety of vendors which could be indicative of a more rushed approach by suppliers to bring new models to market.

The hardware now appears to be more stable but issues remain around the understanding of the password process which needs further work between ICT, Members Services and Members to improve.