

MEMBERS ICT UPDATE

REPORT OF THE COUNTY CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER

Reason for report

1. To update the Committee on progress with implementing the resolution of full Council on the 27 June 2013 to provide ICT devices (Tablets and smart phones) to save money and ensure proper up to date support for Members and to enable them to be less reliant on paper and work in a more mobile way.

Background

2. The Council's Corporate Plan 2013-17 includes the commitment to look at "new ways of delivering services" and specifically mentions the example of using technology to become a "paperless council", which would generate savings on paper and printing costs. Spending on printing reports and papers for Members has also been over budget for most of 2013/14. Spending and the administrative costs associated with Members' land telephones and broadband services has also been of concern.
3. As a consequence the Council agreed the Democratic Services Committee's recommendations for the provision of ICT mobile device equipment for all members following a Member Survey and noting the proposed savings this would provide.
4. A Project was set up to start in September 2013. However, it was suspended following a ruling from the UK Cabinet Office which regulates ICT security across the UK public sector. The Council is accredited to connect to the national Public Sector Network (PSN). This network joins a variety of public sector and national government agencies together, enabling data to be shared securely. The UK Cabinet Office has a new 'Zero Tolerance' policy for Public Sector Network (PSN) connectivity in relation to mobile devices.

5. The Project was further delayed in April by technical problems regarding the non-compatibility of the Tablet device with the encryption software issued by the Council and an unrelated issue regarding the use of USB devices and the compatibility of the Council's security/protection system 'safe-end'. These issues have now been resolved.
6. This delay has allowed more time to improve the devices which will now allow the SIM card to be delivered earlier than anticipated, enabling the Tablet to access the councils network whilst on the move. Initially the Tablet would only have worked on council premises or at Member's homes. Now they will work wherever you can get a mobile signal or access wireless securely. This will be a huge step forward in supporting Cardiff Members to have the improved facilities you need to engage with your communities and the Council.
7. The Launch of the "Cardiff Networked Councillor" Project, will be held on:

Date - Tuesday 24 June 2014
Time - 12:30 - 15:30
Venue - Technology Suite, Courtyard Building, County Hall
8. This launch aims to provide Members with an overview of digital engagement and the different ways in which they can connect with the public and local communities. At the end of this session, member will:
 - understand the aims of the Networked Councillor Project, and how it fits with the Council's aim of becoming a paper-light council;
 - understand the key public engagement priorities for Cardiff Council in relation to the "One Council" approach
 - have an understanding of the different ways in which to engage the public and local communities
 - have confidence that it is possible to actively manage a digital presence and set boundaries, even if the skills to do so have not yet been developed

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The business case for the revised specification indicates a potential saving of £56,204 over a three year period. The reduction in the amount of the saving is mainly due to the additional revenue costs of the SIM card, which will enable access to the Council's networks whilst on the move. Additional costs have also been built in for those members opting to retain their existing landlines and broadband.
10. The cost of the new equipment will be capitalised in the current year. As set out in the Budget report, this would be 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.

DELIVERY PLAN

12. The new equipment and software have been acquired and roll out of the new equipment with training and induction to Members to follow is now planned
13. All Members will be offered an initial set up meeting to ensure continuity of service and support as the new equipment is provided. Members will have to return existing ICT equipment in exchange for the new set up.
14. An updated Members protocol will need to be devised to deal with damaged and lost equipment, appropriate insurance provision and compliance with security standards and data protection.
15. The initial individual set up of the tablet will be via ICT who will also collect existing equipment. Training will be provided on an individual basis as required with small group follow on sessions being provided on a regular basis. A review of the implementation will be reported to the Democratic Services Committee during 2014/15.

CONCLUSION

16. Members remain committed to working in a more efficient mobile manner making increasing use of new technology and the internet. Delaying the implementation to deal with initial technical issues and ensure a PSN secure specification has caused inconvenience and additional cost in continuing the current arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee notes the current position and approves the approach to delivery and implementation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers are relevant to this report:

- Council Report, 27 June 2013 - Paperless Council Proposal
- Democratic Services Committee Report 19 June 2013 – Paperless Council Proposal
- Council Report, 28 March 2013 – Democratic Services Committee Proposal: ICT Provision for Members
- Democratic Services Committee Report, 22 January 2013 – ICT Provision for Members: Business Case
- Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2012