



GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

9 September 2014

Subject Heading:

TRANSFORMATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY – 3G connection to i-pads for Members

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

ICT Member support
Customer Services Strategy

Financial summary:

The estimated cost of 3G connection for 54 Members is £4,750k per annum

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

In order to support the broader programme for transforming the delivery of services, i-pads were successfully introduced for use by Members in 2011. Since then, the Council has continued to explore alternative new technologies to support its commitment to resolving customer demands more efficiently.

The channel shift towards self-service and the recent introduction of the Members Portal has placed a greater emphasis on ensuring that Members have the technological means to support this transition. The report therefore proposes that all Members who use a Council-supported I-pad be provided with 3G access.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That 3G connectivity be made available to all Members who use a Council-supported i-pad and that the costs be made available to support this.

REPORT DETAIL

Introduction and use of i-pads

1. In 2011, as part of the transformation of service delivery resulting from increased spending reductions, the Council rolled-out i-pads to Members. The aim was to move from mainly paper-based production of Council, Cabinet and Committee agendas and Executive Decisions to electronic production.
2. The introduction of i-pads complimented the Committee Process Management software (*modern.gov*) used by Committee Administration. *Modern.gov* simplifies the production of documents for meetings and also acts as the web-host for a number of meeting-related articles and documents, such as those details about Members that must be publicly available. *Modern.gov* simplified in particular the means of ensuring that relevant and necessary information is placed on the website in a timely fashion.
3. Documents produced using *Modern.gov* are particularly “user-friendly” for people who wish to access them on-line during a meeting. Users access the documents by clicking on the ‘*mod.gov*’ app on the i-pad to download the relevant documents.
4. The sourcing of all agenda electronically (with the exception of exempt information) has reduced the volume of paper production. This has been reflected in the available budget for paper production of such documents and enabled the Council to make savings. For those members who have an i-pad, paper production of Council, Cabinet and Committee agendas is no longer available. For legal reasons, however, a limited number of paper copies will still be required, to enable members of the public who attend meetings to follow the agenda.
5. The i-pad has become an essential tool in helping to support Members in carrying out their duties. Of the 54 Members on the Council, 48 have a Council-supported i-pad. Given its everyday use by Members, it is important that the functionality of the i-pad is optimized and that Members are encouraged and provided with the means to achieve this.

Channel shift and the introduction of self-service

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6. The introduction of the i-pad and the increasing use of new forms of technology compliment and reinforce the ambition of the Council's Customer Services Strategy. At the heart of that Strategy is a commitment to improve the service the Council provides to its customers and to resolve customer demands more efficiently.
7. Customer access and service delivery methods are changing. New technology is facilitating access to services 24/7 in easy ways, which promote customer self service. There is an increasing demand and capability to grow the use of the Council's website and electronic forms, as a channel for doing business with the Council.
8. The development of the Council's transactional website, combined with important, accurate, up to date and useful Council information and its promotion is at the heart of the wider channel strategy. The Council has already begun to load integrated forms onto the website and, without any prompting, customers are finding and using them.
9. This emphasis on self-service was critical in the formulation of the Members Portal. The first of its kind anywhere in the country, the Portal allows Members to report and monitor service requests at a time which is convenient to the individual, provided the Member has the technological means to do so.
10. At present, 3G access on the i-pad is provided to only a limited number of Members, namely the Leader, Cabinet Members, Group Leaders and the Mayor. With an increased emphasis on Member self-service, it is essential that all Members are fully supported in their roles. It is therefore proposed that 3G access be rolled out to all Members who use a Council-supported i-pad. 3G access will enable Members to use the Portal when Wifi connection is not available.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

At time of reporting, the estimated cost of 3G access for Members using Council-supported i-pads would be approximately £4,750 per annum. This is the cost based on 3G connection to 54 i-pads and will be found within the overall IT budgets.

Legal implications and risks:

None arising from this report

Human Resources Implications and risks:

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The roll out of 3G to all Members will be met by existing ICT resources. There will be a minor impact as each i-pad has to be registered with 3G connectivity.

Equalities implications and risks:

None arising from this report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council's Customer Services Strategy