

Public
Key Decision – No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Members ICT Update

Meeting/Date: Corporate Governance Committee 18/03/2026

Executive Portfolio: Climate, Transformation and Workforce

Report by: Chief Digital Information Officer

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

A change to how Members are provisioned with ICT services, the support they receive, and the capabilities available is being proposed.

The change to the approach is supported by budget bids, which were approved at Full Council on 25 February 2026. The proposed approach requires agreement from all three 3C Partner Councils to be viable, and this is included in each Partner Council's MTFS. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have already approved the proposals.

Further details are to be provided once the final solution has been agreed, once confirmation of budgets being available is made. This will include a proposal for ongoing support levels after the election.

Recommendation(s):

The Committee is asked to note and provide feedback on the proposal.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update regarding Members' ICT provision post-elections 2026.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 3C Partner Councils have differing approaches to the way Members are provisioned ICT Services and the options for the equipment they can utilise
- 2.2 The differing approaches, alongside the significant difference between Members and Officer solutions, mean that support can often be unsatisfactory due to engineers being unfamiliar with the solutions in place.
- 2.3 The utilisation of differing licencing models, and treatment of Members as 'guests' of the Officer network and enterprise applications (such as Teams and SharePoint) leads to challenges with utilisation of office audio visual equipment, collaboration and sharing of documents, amongst other constraints.
- 2.4 There is a variance in IT skills across Member groups and across the Partner Councils. Historically, decisions regarding the solutions provided have been made by those with strong IT knowledge, which may not align with those without comparable skills, affecting the ability of some Members to fulfil their duties.
- 2.5 The model in place does not align with solutions utilised elsewhere within Local Government, and whilst there are some advantages to the current model from a governance perspective, the downsides outweigh these, and these are managed effectively elsewhere.
- 2.6 Whilst the 3C ICT Shared Service has invested in new technologies and continues to improve capabilities, training and cybersecurity for Officers, Members currently do not benefit from this investment or training.
- 2.7 The establishment of a CDIO role across the councils, and with accountability for the 3C ICT Shared Service, provides a new opportunity to coalesce approaches.
- 2.8 Elections in May 2026 provide an ideal opportunity for the introduction of a new approach to Members' ICT and enable training to ensure a common understanding of the solution available.
- 2.9 The proposal is for 3C ICT Shared Services to create a complete end-to-end set of solutions for Members, which caters for all usage needs and Council preferences for devices and budget management. All these options will be aligned with Officer technology capabilities and be fully supported.
- 2.10 Each council will be able to determine which solutions they wish to promote from the wider options available and make available to their

Members. Whilst this will be an Executive Decision, it is expected to be led by recommendations from the Member Development Working Group.

- 2.11 If devices are to be provisioned, these will be aligned with those provisioned to Officers, and 'locked down' and managed as per an Officer device, with all applications available, and with support available from the 3C ICT Service Desk.
- 2.12 Where devices are not provisioned, several access methods will be presented to Members. It is intended that this will include access to Teams (virtual meetings, SharePoint documents and chat) and Outlook (email) via any mobile device utilising BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) methods. In addition, a new 'virtual desktop' solution is proposed, whereby Members can click a link and a desktop, similar to a laptop, becomes available, mimicking the use of a council-provided laptop. All of these will be standardised solutions that can be fully supported remotely, using standard support methods and supporting colleagues' knowledge.
- 2.13 Members will be provided with the same licences and access to Microsoft M365 solutions as per the Officers. Whilst there is a cost uplift for this licensing, the benefits are considerable, especially given the cybersecurity and data loss prevention improvements now made possible.
- 2.14 Security and access controls will be implemented so that access to documentation, address books, SharePoint, etc., is appropriate to meet governance controls. However, Members will have individual access to these solutions for shared use. Where appropriate, Members and Officers will have access to the same document repositories and systems for data sharing and collaboration. The discovery of these requirements is underway with colleagues in the democratic service team.
- 2.15 Appropriate training and support will be provided to Members. The level of support offered will be in line with the technology option selected; e.g. for those with a full staff laptop provision, support would be as per the Officer support model. Those using their own devices would only receive support for authentication of the necessary applications and access, not for the Member's personal device. This will be finalised pre-election.
- 2.16 However, the review does not intend to seek to remediate issues with Member-specific applications.
- 2.17 Most Local Authorities utilise a version of the modern.gov solution, either in its locally hosted or web-hosted versions. Both versions differ and have distinct pros and cons, so the choice is based on the 'best fit' rather than full functionality. The CDIO continues to champion the much-needed improvements to this platform with the vendor and will work with democratic service officers to assist with issue remediation.
- 2.18 The utilisation of the council's officer-based technology solutions may now offer new opportunities to develop improved solutions based on technologies that will now become available to Members.

- 2.19 The CDIO will seek to develop potential solutions and opportunities for improvements post-election, although it is recognised that this may be hampered by the prioritisation of LGR, and limited return on investment opportunities pre-vestment day.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The option to continue with the existing arrangements was considered, although this was not deemed to be acceptable to Members, considering ongoing frustrations with functionality and support. Remaining 'as is' prevents the benefits from wider investments in tools and cybersecurity being provided to Members.

4. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Proof of concept prior to May elections, to be confirmed.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 5.1 Priority 3 – Doing our core work well.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Papers taken to Informal Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team. Discussions held with the Members Development Group and the Portfolio Holder.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Simon Oliver, Chief Digital Information Officer