

Public - No
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: The Future of Members' IT

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 10/04/2014

Executive Portfolio: Customer Services

Report by: IMD Service Manager

Ward(s) affected: All (indirectly)

Executive Summary:

On 03/03/2104 COMT considered the paper "Desktop Delivery Update - MyOffice (Remote Access) and IT for Members".

A presentation was given to ELSG on 25th March 2014 and the benefits of the proposal were highlighted:

1. Members have their own choice of IT equipment and have help to purchase an iPad (repaid through Member allowances)
2. Members have greater flexibility accessing Council reports
3. Members have greater flexibility when dealing with emails
4. Members will be able to access WiFi more readily than at present
5. Council saves circa £50k on IT and further savings will be made through the reduction of printed paper reports
6. Members use up-to-date technology

A further presentation to Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Wellbeing) – to which all Members are invited – has been arranged for 3rd April 2014.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is asked to approve:–

1. The withdrawal of Council-funded IT equipment (allowing for continued support in exceptional circumstances);
2. The promotion of the purchase of iPads from Members' allowances;
3. The future withdrawal of printed agendas and reports for Member meetings;
4. The principle that all Members should use non-HDC (but HDC approved) email addresses for Council business;
5. The withdrawal of HDC-funded broadband connections.

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To review the current IT provision for Members and outline the proposed way forward in conjunction with the Desktop Delivery Project and PSN compliance.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For a number of years Members have been provided with laptops or PCs to assist them in their work.

- 2.2 A number of related issues have arisen which require resolution:

- a) The Council's remote access system (MyOffice) is no longer sustainable; impacts 35 Members;
- b) XP-based PCs require urgent replacement; impacts 17 Members who use HDC-supplied IT;
- c) Good software is to be withdrawn to comply with PSN CoCo;
- d) An increasing number of Members want to use personal email addresses to conduct Council business; and
- e) An increasing number of Members want to use tablet devices/smart 'phones to access their information (e.g. through email and Modern.Gov)

This paper sets out a proposal to address all 5 issues and, as a result, avoid spending c £50k on new equipment for all 52 Members. A similar level of expenditure would be required periodically in the future each time an equipment "refresh" is required.

- 2.3 While the laptops and PCs have been used by Members to good effect they also have some major disadvantages which have become increasingly noticeable over recent years. In particular the current IT solution works by providing Members with access into the authority's IT infrastructure. Whilst this enables access to features such as email and the intranet it increases the burdens of ensuring effective IT security. A number of Members have found that the use of IT in its current form is increasingly complex and not intuitive.
- 2.4 The transition of Members' IT from Windows XP to Windows 7 and to achieve PSN compliance would entail significant cost, currently estimated at circa £50k. Whilst budgetary provision has been made to support this work, the Council's financial position means it is appropriate that this is revisited and, in the light of newer technologies and opportunities, alternative options investigated.
- 2.5 Current Member access to email and other Council IT resources is now somewhat cumbersome as it was designed around systems installed some 5 years ago. Modern technology means a much simpler and easier process is available providing all the functionality to access email, the Members' intranet site and Modern.gov..
- 2.6 Printed matter and paper consumption (e.g. meeting agendas and reports) and costs continue to rise. Modern technologies now allow for electronic copies to be made easily available and provide a timelier, cost effective and sustainable approach to the provision of information. The Council's Modern.Gov system is designed to work with electronic copies and provides Members with an intuitive and easy to use system.

2.7 Discussions with IT colleagues at South Cambridgeshire District Council confirm that the proposed approach has worked well for their Members and the proposal closely follows that model.

2.7 There are a number of key milestones within the desktop delivery project which mean that a decision on Member IT is required quite urgently:

- **08/04/14** - Support for Microsoft Office 2003 expires (this is the version of Office running on MyOffice); Office 2007 and above runs on desktop & laptop computers and it would cost circa £50k to upgrade the Office licences (for both Officers and Members) for MyOffice;
- **28/04/14** - HDC needs to have gained PSN compliance by this date - a month before our migration date (see final bullet point below);
- **30/04/14** - Signify fob renewal date which costs circa £13k (used as Two Factor authentication for MyOffice); this could be saved if we turn off MyOffice;
- **28/05/14** - Cabinet Office has given this date as our migration to PSN which is necessary to maintain electronic communication with the DWP.

3. MEMBER IT OPTIONS

3.1 Three options have been considered for Members' IT and these are as follows:

3.2 Option 1 (recommended) - Off HDC network - compliance with PSN not required

Members cease using HDC-supplied IT equipment and migrate to iPad tablets. These could be sourced by the Council (allowing a modest discount) and paid for (and owned) from Council Member allowances over the duration of their term of office. If a Member wanted other than a basic 16GB, WiFi model then they would need to fund the difference as an additional "up-front" payment. If a Member chose to use their own Android-based tablet, and not the iPad recommended by the Council, then they will be able to do so but support will be using reasonable endeavours only¹. Members would continue to use Council-supplied email "addresses" but these would automatically forward emails to their private email addresses. Members will then have the ability to access their emails on their own smartphones (thus removing the need for the Good software for Members). Provision would be made to encrypt Officer-supplied documents which were of a sensitive nature. Modern.gov information would be provided through an extranet version of the current software either on the Members' personal PC or iPad or other tablet. It is believed that this approach would be widely welcomed by Members and could save the Council in excess of £50k.

3.2 Option 2 – On HDC network - PSN compliance required.

This option would be used for those Members who do not have or do not chose to use their own equipment. It provides a very limited number of Members with Council-owned IT equipment (desktop PC, monitor and RAP²). This maintains existing connectivity to the Council's network and all associated services (such as HDC email addresses). This would cost between £500 and £1,000 dependent upon

¹ Android-based tablets come in many difficult versions and this makes support expensive

² Small box which provides a remote HDC PC to communicate securely with the HDC network

configuration. Numbers are to be confirmed but are expected to be very low (estimated to be 2-5 Members).

3.3 **Option 3 – On HDC network - PSN compliance required.**

This is option 2 applied to **all** members but allowing for some Desktop PCs to be laptops instead. The overall cost is likely to be in the region of £50k.

4. **ANALYSIS AND BENEFITS**

- 4.1 Options 1 is the recommended approach with option 2 for a minimal number of Members. Moving Members away from IT equipment provided by the Council would make an estimated saving of circa £50k. Final figures would be confirmed following any agreement to proceed.
- 4.2 Removal of HDC-based e-mail - Cambridgeshire County Council provides their Members with the **option** not to have **Cambridgeshire.gov.uk** e-mail addresses - instead Members use their own personal email accounts for Council communications. It is recommended that HDC does not give this as an option (as this is more difficult to manage) and that all Members use a personal email address in a prescribed format.
 - 4.2.1 With the use of personal email addresses Good would no longer be necessary although it will need to be removed for PSN compliance in any case.
 - 4.2.4 Most households nowadays already have broadband connections. Therefore, the justification for providing these at HDC cost is less sustainable and it is recommended that these are removed.
 - 4.2.5 A move to tablet devices – with the ability to annotate Council documents – will allow the Council to reduce, and eventually remove, the need to provide paper reports saving money (amount to be determined).

5.0 **DISADVANTAGES AND ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED FURTHER**

- 5.1 Strict rules would need to be applied to help ensure sensitive information was not emailed to private emails addresses by Officers. In particular the process of “protective marking” of emails – would need to be introduced, requiring the Officer sending the email to make a conscious decision about the sensitivity of the email being sent. Nevertheless there would be a residual, increased risk as non-HDC email systems are inherently less secure than the HDC system. A mechanism would need to be introduced (probably via encrypted PDF documents) for the minority of email attachments which justified encryption or some other means of introducing higher levels of security.
- 5.2 This would be culture change for some Members and this would need to be handled appropriately. Members are used to having a semi-dedicated IT support resource there to help and, in the case of 17 members, have HDC equipment provided for them.
- 5.3 Members would need to purchase their own tablet (from their allowance) or PC and also their broadband connection where the Council didn't provide an end-to-end managed device solution (option 2). There could be resistance from some Members.
- 5.5 Removal of HDC e-mail addresses. There is an increased risk of sensitive information being disclosed. However, with training, protective marking and the

introduction of some encryption this risk can be mitigated. The sending and receiving of secure email attachments is being investigated by the Help Desk.

- 5.6 Modern.Gov Access would need to be enhanced. There is a module that could be purchased to allow Members to access this information source from non-HDC equipment (tablet and PCs). Costs for this are believed to circa £3k a year. This cost would be met by Democratic Services and recouped through reduced printing and postage of documents for Members.
- 5.7 Without an HDC network account there would not be ability to view Members' diaries. However, it may be possible to provide this functionality in another way.

6.0 Member Benefits

- 6.1 Contribution to Facing the Future savings. Moving away from Council supplied IT equipment will result in a significant saving whilst at the same time providing Members with "ease of use" benefits.
- 6.2 Connection to Member information and data would be simpler and more convenient than the existing MyOffice connection model.
- 6.3 Connectivity to information via Wi-Fi in key HDC buildings initially³ and extended to all CPSN-enabled buildings in Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire in the near future.
- 6.4 Use of private email addresses allows greater flexibility.
- 6.6 Members will be able to send and receive their emails on their own personal smart 'phones. This would replace the software package GOOD for those Members on the pilot and also provide an additional facility for other Members.
- 6.7 Change of emphasis for IT support – the IT environment would become simpler and introduces a more modern platform taking advantage of relatively new technology.
- 6.8 Paperless meetings become a reality with the ability to annotate documents on tablet devices.
- 6.9 The proposed solution is based on close working with neighbours such as South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The positive experience of SCDC Members (as reported by IT officers at SCDC) should give confidence to HDC Members to adopt a similar model.

³ Temporary WiFi improvements can be made to service specific buildings eg Civic Suite, Members' Room until the new CPSN-wide network is available (in 2014-2015).

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Council must act quickly to gain PSN compliance and to respond to the XP support expiry deadline. Also other license expiries mean that decisions about the future of IT provision to Members needs to be urgently reviewed and decision made.
- 7.2 There is a demand from many Members for more flexible IT which allows them to integrate their processing of private and Council information in a convenient and secure manner.
- 7.3 Some Members may not be able to adapt to tablet-based working and will require specific support.
- 7.4 There is an opportunity to make significant savings of circa £50k.

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCES

COMT paper: "MyOffice and Members' IT (v2 1)" (03-03-2014)

CONTACT OFFICERS

Andrew Howes x8190, Desktop Delivery Project Manager (IMD Operations Manager)

Chris Hall x8116, Desktop Delivery Project Board Chairman (IMD Service Manager)