

Public - Yes
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: THE FUTURE OF MEMBERS' IT – CALL IN

Meeting/Date: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) – 6TH MAY 2014

Executive Portfolio: Councillor B S Chapman

Report by: Scrutiny and Review Manager

Wards affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and following publication of the Cabinet's decision relating to The Future of Members' IT, the decision has been Called-In by three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). The grounds for the Call-In are indicated at paragraph 2.4 of the report.

Recommendation(s):

The Panel is invited to consider how to respond to the Call-In of the decision by the Cabinet relating to The Future of Members' IT.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this item is to enable the Panel to give further consideration to the Cabinet's decision on The Future of Members' IT, which has been Called-In.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 10th April 2014, considered a report by the IMD Service Manager containing details of a proposal to withdraw Council funded IT equipment for Members and promote the use of their own IT equipment. A copy of the report is attached at **Appendix 1**.

- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) had received a presentation on 3rd April 2014 on the proposals and the Panel's comments were conveyed to the Cabinet by way of the report attached at **Appendix 2**.

- 2.3 The Cabinet approved the following:-

- (a) that Council-funded IT equipment for Members be withdrawn, with continued support only being provided in exceptional circumstances;
- (b) that the purchase of iPads from Members allowances be approved;
- (c) that, where possible, printed agendas and reports for Members meetings be withdrawn;
- (d) that the principle that all Members should use non-HDC (but HDC approved) email addresses for Council business be supported;
- (e) that HDC funded broadband connections be withdrawn; and
- (f) that, with effect from 1st May 2014, it be compulsory for newly elected Members to participate in the iPad scheme.

The Cabinet also RECOMMENDED to Council that the Members' IT and telephone support guidelines in the Council's Constitution be varied accordingly to reflect the above.

The draft Minute is attached at **Appendix 3**.

- 2.4 Following publication of the Cabinet's decision, Councillors K J Churchill, S Greenall and M F Shellens have Called-In the decision on the grounds that:-

"The decision will have a negative impact on the willingness of members of the public to stand for election to the detriment of local democracy and could also harm the eyesight of Councillors. It would also dramatically increase the costs of printing at home. This decision should be subject to scrutiny by the whole Council and not just made by a coterie of Councillors from a single party." – [Councillor M F Shellens]

"A decision which has far reaching implications for Councillor communications has not been given sufficiently detailed consideration and has been taken contrary to the normal decision making requirements." – [Councillor K J Churchill]

“There has not been enough time to consider this item. On reflection, the size of print on the iPad will be smaller than on a paper version. I have concerns over the cost burden it will place on Councillors now and in the future. Having a hardcopy is more useful.” – [Councillor S Greenall]

2.5 The Panel is, therefore, invited to consider the decision of the Cabinet. The appropriate Executive Councillor, Councillor B S Chapman, has been invited to attend the Panel’s meeting.

3. CALL-IN

3.1 Members are reminded of the guidance for Call-In as set out in paragraph 14 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules of the Council’s Constitution.

3.2 The Panel has various options, which are as follows:-

- if, having considered the matter, the Panel is still concerned about the decision, then it may be referred back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of the concerns. Alternatively, the Panel can refer the matter to full Council. If referred back to Cabinet, they would then be required to reconsider their decision within 10 working days, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision;
- if the Panel decides not to refer the matter back to the Cabinet, the decision shall take effect from the date of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting;
- if the matter is referred to full Council and the Council does not object to the decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting; or
- if the matter is referred to full Council and they decide to object, the Council have no ability to make decisions in respect of an executive decision unless it is contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the budget. Unless this is the case, the Council can refer any decision to which they object back to the Cabinet, together with the Council’s views on the decision. The Cabinet can then decide whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Panel is invited to consider how to respond to the Call-In of the decision by the Cabinet relating to The Future of Members’ IT.

5. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

- Appendix 1** – The Future of Members’ IT – report by the IMD Service Manager
- Appendix 2** – Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) Comments to Cabinet on The Future of Members’ IT
- Appendix 3** – Draft Cabinet Minute – Meeting held on 10th April 2014

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council Constitution

The Future of Members' IT – Report by the IMD Service Manager

Comments by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and draft Cabinet Minute attached as appendices.

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