

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee
held on Thursday 19 March 2015 at 6.00 pm in the
Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Councillors C Joyce (Chairman),
J Collop, P Foster, I Gourlay, J Loveless, A Lovett,
T C Manley, Mrs K Mellish, J M Tilbury and D Whitby

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor D Pope – Portfolio Holder for ICT, Leisure and Public Space
Councillor B Long – Deputy Leader (substitute for the Leader)

Management Team/Officers:

Ray Harding – Chief Executive
Dave Thomason – Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Godfrey – ICT Manager
Emma Duncan – Monitoring Officer
Debbie Gates – Executive Director, Central and Community Services

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Miss S Sandell

CSC115: MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 February 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CSC116: URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

There was no urgent business to report.

CSC117: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared.

CSC118: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Mrs J Leamon attended under Standing Order 34 to ask a question on the Proposed Members ICT Solution.

CSC119: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

CSC120: **RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no previous Committee recommendations.

CSC121: **CABINET REPORT – PROPOSED MEMBERS ICT SOLUTION**

The Chairman asked the Portfolio Holder if he was responsible for all IT or just for Members. In response, the Portfolio Holder explained that he was responsible for all IT. The proposal set out in the report would result in a cost reduction and instead of IT staff having to visit Members' houses to fix IT problems, it would free up their time to enable them to work on other projects. The proposal would therefore save money and be more efficient.

The Chairman asked what the recharge was per Councillor, because if there was a reduction in support for Members there should be a reduction in recharge.

Councillor Long raised a point of order, and highlighted that the report included financial implications. He added that how officers chose to recharge lines was not relevant to this meeting and was more relevant to the budget which was agreed at the last Council meeting.

The Chairman stated that he would like to know if it was a like for like comparison.

Councillor Mrs Mellish added that the Committee had a report in front of them which included financial implications. The Committee had the chance to scrutinise the budget but did not do so.

The Chief Executive suggested that the question could be phrased, "does this proposal impact upon ICT charges to Members and how?"

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the proposals would have an impact on ICT charges. In essence, less time would be spent by the technical team and would result in a reduced support services charge.

In response to a question from Councillor Manley regarding whether there would be spare iPads should one develop a fault, the Portfolio Holder explained that there would be around 6 spare iPads.

Councillor Gourlay stated that he had not been part of the trial and asked whether you would be able to scroll across or up and down with the iPads. It was confirmed that he would be able to scroll up/down with an iPad.

The Portfolio Holder explained that following the election there would be a number of new Councillors who had not been part of the trial either and there would be a number of training sessions provided for new Members and those would not have got an iPad. He also explained some of the features associated with the iPad. However, there would be

some documents that would still be sent out in hard copy, for example, the Planning Committee agenda.

Councillor Collop asked for clarification in relation to why Councillor Long was at the meeting. In response, the Chairman explained that Councillor Daubney had sent his apologies and Councillor Long was his substitute. In addition, Councillor Long had been present at the Cabinet meeting when the report had been discussed.

Councillor Gourlay referred to the current support network and asked whether any staff would be made redundant. In response, the Portfolio Holder explained that currently Councillors may have to wait for the IT problems to be fixed, whereas with the iPads there would not be any waiting time as Members could bring the iPad into the office. In relation to redundancies there was no reason why this would happen as there were a number of new projects for staff to be working on.

Councillor Loveless referred to the Capital costs, and asked whether the calculation allowed for the fact that Members had a line installed and Broadband, and asked whether the sum quoted would be multiplied by the number of Councillors (62).

The Portfolio Holder explained that the costs were at the moment a one-off cost for the first year. However, if Members wanted to use their own equipment then they would receive an allowance of £10.00 per month.

Councillor Loveless asked how many telephone lines had been projected for.

The ICT Manager explained that the proposal had been based on 62 Members getting new equipment and based on 62 iPads, although some Members already had iPads. He also explained that a sum of £1,674.00 for 3G cards had been included within the cost.

The Chairman referred to the revenue costs, and asked whether the Portfolio Holder was confident that the revenue cost of £136.00, including calls was correct.

The Portfolio Holder stated that he was confident with the figures within the report.

The ICT Manager further explained that the line rental of £11.50 per month was the current costs being paid to BT. The Council had achieved a reduced rate due to economies of scale.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder explained that the Good Software app was £40.00 for the year. He also explained that any equipment provided was for Council work, and the mobile sim card of £27.00 covered all calls and texts.

In accordance with Standing Order 34, Councillor Mrs Leamon referred to the security aspect of the iPad particularly when viewing confidential papers, and asked if there was some mechanism which would lock the iPad.

The ICT Manager explained that on the iPad there would be two apps – one for emails and calendar and a mod.gov app for agendas and minutes. It would require a password to get into the mod.gov software to allow access to confidential pages. Also, a time-out period could be set for 15 minutes of inactivity, which was the suggested amount by the Cabinet Office. Members of the public would be able to access the mod.gov app but not all of the site, as a log-in would be required to access the confidential pages.

Councillor Foster referred to the total on-going annual cost of £411 against the current solution of £495, and asked why there was an increase.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that this was an error and should read £411.

Councillor Foster also referred to the printing costs of £60 and asked whether this was per Member and also to page 53 where it referred to printing costs of £2,280 p.a.

The Portfolio Holder advised that both figures were correct. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Planning Committee agenda would continue to be printed in hard copy, but it was envisaged not to print other agendas so there would be a saving. There would also be a saving of £1,400 in relation to ink cartridges.

Councillor Manley asked why out of the 14 people who had been involved with the trial only 9 people had responded to the questionnaire. He expressed concern that not all who had taken part had filled out the questionnaire.

Councillor Pope explained that all Cabinet Members had taken part and one or two other Members.

Councillor Manley suggested that a 3G card should be provided with an iPad to enable Members to be able to use it wherever they were.

Councillor Long stated that with the mod.gov software, documents would automatically appear where there was a wifi signal, therefore 3G would not be required.

The ICT Manager explained that with 3G a certain amount of data which would allow downloads was provided, and each Councillor would get 2 GB limit and it was not expected that they would exceed that limit. However, if on the occasion that the limit was exceeded then there could be a small charge, but the Council could look to increase that limit.

Councillor Mrs Mellish asked if Members could be monitored to see if they were using the iPad correctly. In response the ICT Manager explained that if the Council had supplied the device, then it could be possible to do that, but if a Member used their own iPad then it would not be appropriate to do so.

Councillor Manley stated that he had a 2GB limit, and if he went over that limit, he was cut off, and asked whether something similar could be arranged for other users.

The ICT Manager explained to the Committee that Cabinet had decided that not all Councillors would get a 3G card.

Councillor Tilbury stated that the Council had a duty to provide the public with agendas for a meeting, and asked if the Council would still have to provide hard copies for a meeting.

Councillor Long advised that the County Council did not provide any printed agendas for the public, but did have screens in the meeting and scrolled down to the relevant item of business.

Councillor Tilbury commented that this would not allow the public to be able to look at agendas prior to a meeting.

The Chief Executive explained that it was the view of officers that paper copies would still be made available for the public for a limited amount of time.

The Monitoring Officer advised that it in most cases paper copies would still be provided for meetings particularly for the Planning Committee, although the Council was not legally required to do so.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that large agendas would still be printed in the early days, but it was eventually hoped to be able to move to paperless meetings. There would not be a significant saving in print costs to start with.

Councillor Foster made reference to page 50 of the agenda where it referred to the fact that there were areas of unreliable connectivity. The ICT Manager explained that laptops from an IT view were difficult to secure and were governed by Central Office, whereas iPads were easier to secure and portable.

In response to a comment from the Chairman regarding how secure the iPads were, the ICT Manager explained that a virus warning had recently got through the SPAM filter, but iPads did not tend to have that issue.

Councillor Tilbury in accepting that this was the way forward, made reference to the emails received where 85% was junk, 5-10% were about courses and only 5-10% related to the Borough Council. He

referred to the fact that the SPAM emails seemed to be increasing and asked whether the system would be able to cope with the increased pressure.

The ICT Manager explained that this would be a new system using the same technology. A number of emails were detected and stopped before the three levels of SPAM filter. He further explained that the Council had to follow the industry and put the strongest security in place as possible. The Council's IT Department recently had a health-check and the company employed to carry out the check tried to attack the Council's systems. The company gave the Council's systems a clean bill of health.

Councillor Mrs Mellish stated that she had a filter set on her machine so that any SPAM went straight to her deleted box. The ICT Manager explained that there was a mechanism within the system to report repeated SPAM email and this would be covered within a training sessions for Members.

Councillor Foster referred to page 75 where it stated 'all of those surveyed would be prepared to use their own broadband/wireless routers to access Council services ...', and asked whether this referred to all 14 or just the 9 who responded. The Portfolio Holder advised that referred to the 9 Councillors who responded to the survey.

Councillor Foster also asked if there were any tax implications for Members, in particular if the mobile/smart phone could be classed as a taxable benefit.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the Council equipment was for Council work and not a benefit.

Councillor Foster added that page 68 of the report stated that 'it was recognised that at times computer equipment may be used for private purposes...'. He also asked if the £10 monthly allowance for broadband was taxable. The Deputy Chief Executive undertook to check this issue.

The Chairman asked what would happen if a Councillor did not have a telephone line and their own private broadband system. In response, the Portfolio Holder explained that in exceptional circumstances a 3G card could be issued.

In referring to Health and Safety requirements, Councillor Foster asked if these had been taken into consideration when Cabinet made their decision.

Councillor Tilbury added that Public and Individual legislation needed to be taken into consideration for example eye damage.

The Monitoring Officer explained that a generic risk assessment was usually carried out as required. She added that the Council's Insurance Policy would cover Members as well as staff.

The Chief Executive advised that he would check with the Council's Health and Safety Advisor and email Councillors.

Councillor Foster added that Members were not told that they could have an eye test. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that this was because they were not an employee.

It was proposed and seconded that the following recommendations be made to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That the Committee made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

(1) That recommendation 2) should be amended to read that 'a 3G card would be provided on request' rather than on an exceptions basis.

(2) That the Health and Safety impact on Councillors be examined.

(3) That the tax and benefit implications for Members on the proposals as a whole be examined.

CSC122: **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' DECISIONS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

There were none.

CSC123: **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held on **Thursday 16 April 2015 at 6.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court.**

Meeting closed at 7.15 pm