



AGENDA ITEM: 9

SUMMARY

Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	20 January 2014
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Member IT Provision
Contact:	Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services Author/Responsible Officer: David Major/Jim Doyle
Purpose of report:	To seek approval for the introduction of a digitalised solution to Member Support and, in particular, to set out proposals to introduce tablet computers for Members and an online Member support application 'Modern.gov'.
Recommendations	That Cabinet approve the following: 1. The introduction of tablet computers and member support software for use by Members 2. The increased use of 'Digital' hardware at meetings of Council, Committees and the Cabinet to facilitate the move towards 'paperless' meetings.
Corporate Objectives:	Dacorum Delivers, Public Access, Flexible Working, Customer Focus
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> See Background
'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Value for Money</u> By using a software application on a tablet there will be a number of financial and non financial benefits. There will also be savings in the improved efficiency of Democratic Services.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed/reviewed December 2014.
Community Impact	Community Impact Assessment carried out.

Assessment	
Health And Safety Implications	None.
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p>Monitoring Officer: No comments to add to the report.</p> <p>S.151 Officer No comments to add to the report.</p>
Consultees:	<p>Herts Administrators Group</p> <p>North Herts District Council</p> <p>Various software / hardware providers.</p>
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>MSS – Members Support Software</p> <p>GfE – good for Enterprise</p> <p>App – Application</p>

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the introduction of a digitalised solution to member support. In particular it sets out proposals to introduce tablet computers and an online member support application (Modern.gov) and it outlines the benefits and costs of the project.

The Project

Tablet Computers

2. As part of the Council's broader move to modern and flexible working 14 tablet computers have been purchased which will be provided to the four main user groups listed below for configuration and testing:
 - 6 Members
 - 2 Democratic Services Team members
 - 4 members of the Council's Leadership Team
 - 2 members of the Council's ICT Team
3. The tablets are:
 - a. Apple iPad Air 32Gb (13)
 - b. Apple iPad Mini 32Gb (1)

Modern.gov

4. Modern.gov is an online software application that allows users to access committee reports and websites and in doing so, it supports open decision-making and increases accountability and inclusiveness.

This includes the following:

- Contact information
 - Executive responsibilities
 - Committee memberships
 - Membership of external bodies
 - Biographical information
 - Election results
 - Attendance records
 - Register of interest
 - Gifts and hospitalities
 - Declaration at meetings
 - Call-in
5. It is a workflow driven product for local government and it is currently being successfully used by over 150 councils and other organisations.

The Benefits

Non Financial Benefits

6. The introduction of tablets and Modern.gov which is a modern digital software solution, will provide member support with many features to support the meeting management process. Some of the features included are:
- Comprehensive database for forward plans, agendas, minutes, decisions, call ins and reports
 - Ability to create electronic document packs
 - Automatic report format conversion
 - Comprehensive security allowing for publication of information securely
 - Selective internet/intranet publishing
 - Officer submission of forward plan items via web based wizard
 - Creation, editing, review and sign off of web based reports
 - Workflow features

7. This includes having easy access to historical documents, the ability to privately annotate documents and ensuring that members benefit from more regular updates.
8. It is also beneficial for member support to act as exemplars for change to encourage the wider organisation to embrace our new digital vision (Digital Dacorum).
9. Reductions in paperwork and administration can release resources to focus on more value adding activities including improved support and training.
10. The Modern Gov system can also be used to support the Corporate Meeting Manager process. The meeting calendar feature can be utilised for corporate meetings with integration to outlook which will enhance resilience of existing systems; allow for common templates to be utilised and improve workflow systems.
11. It will align the Council with similar county wide initiatives and other local council practices.
12. Other features of the software enable members of the public to subscribe to topical updates, the publication of online consultations. The software can also support the move to 'smart' devices.
13. It also provides easier access for the public to their elected members with improved visibility of their activities on behalf of the residents.

Financial Benefits

14. At present the Council spend's between £8k – £10k on printing and mailing for member services.
15. However by using this software and tablet solution we could significantly reduce the levels of printing and achieve sizeable annual savings.

The Costs

16. The budget for the project has been considered by CSSG and is incorporated within the proposed budget for member approval as part of the budget setting exercise in February.
17. The budget is broken down into three core elements which would be financed through the Democratic Services & IT Capital Budgets for 2014/15 and 2015/16.
18. £10k has already been allocated in the 2014/15 budget for testing and configuration of the tablet computers and Good for Enterprise.
19. £53,500 is awaiting approval in the 2015/16 budget round and this will cover the broader roll-out of tablets and Good for Enterprise as well as implementation of Modern.gov.

Roll-Out Approach

20. In order to implement this approach in the most effective way it is proposed that the changes be trialled with Members and the Senior Leadership Team.
21. This will enable us to configure the tablets and the systems to ensure that the support is tailored to the specific needs of our Members.
22. The proposed time-frame for testing would take place between December 2014 and April 2015 with final roll-out in May/June 2015.

Recommendation

23. It is recommended that Members approve the following:
 - (i) The introduction of tablet computers and Modern.gov software for Councillors
 - (ii) The increased use of 'Digital' hardware at meetings of Council, Committee and the Cabinet to facilitate the move towards 'paperless' meetings.