

Body:	Cabinet
Date:	23 October 2013
Subject:	Information Technology Provision for Elected Members
Report Of:	Senior Head of Infrastructure
Ward(s)	ALL
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve new options for information technology provision for councillors enabling the Council to retain its Government Connect accreditation. • Approve changes to existing policies, allowance schemes and guidance related to the use of information technology by councillors.
Recommendation(s):	<p>Cabinet is asked to agree the following recommendations to Full Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of new options for councillors IT provision as detailed in the report. • Continuation of the IT allowance scheme for all councillors to contribute towards broadband and printing costs. • Adoption of the new Protocol for Councillors in an Agile Working environment and associated policy changes.
Contact:	<p>Henry Branson (Senior Head of Infrastructure), Telephone 01323 415155 or internally on extension 5155 E-mail address henry.branson@eastbourne.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Background/Introduction

- 1.1 In October 2011 Cabinet approved Phase 2 of the Agile Working Programme which included a specific workstream on agile working for councillors. A workshop involving councillors from both groups was held and the outcomes from the workshop were included in the Cabinet report:
- Councillors require secure access to council systems regardless of location (key locations include home, Eastbourne Town Hall

and East Sussex County Hall)

- Email is the critical application for councillors, and many councillors would benefit from mobile access to email.
- Councillors would benefit from fewer devices and in particular effort should be made to seek integrated solutions for members of both the borough and county councils.
- Councillors should move towards more electronic, less paper based processes over time, with an initial focus on electronic delivery of post and electronic circulation of draft committee papers.
- Guidance for councillors in their use of technology, particularly communication via email and use of electronic calendars, should be written and training programmes developed to ensure all councillors are supported to optimise their use of new technology.

1.2 The agile working for councillors workstream has involved testing a range of technology with the aim of delivering the outcomes above.

A group of councillors have taken part in a trial of tablet devices and different software solutions to ensure the devices can provide the functionality Councillors require and also be managed centrally and secured in line with Government security requirements.

We have also been implementing a new committee management system to enable improved public access to committee documents. Part of this work has also involved exploring how committee documents can be delivered electronically to the tablet devices via an app.

We now have a technical solution which meets most of the key requirements outlined in the October 2011 report. The only major requirement we have been unable to meet is to provide an integrated solution for councillors who sit on both the borough and county council. This is because none of the systems available could provide a secure email facility for multiple organisations that was compliant with the Government security standards.

2.0 Proposed Technical Solution

2.1 Councillors and officers need access regularly to confidential information, i.e. any information that is not in the public domain, to enable them to fulfil their role. Government security requirements, mandated by the Public Services Network (PSN) Code of Connection, as well as data protection legislation, requires us to ensure that council such data and information is properly secured in accordance with a detailed set of standards.

This includes ensuring that data held on mobile devices is encrypted in line with certain technical standards and that mobile devices can be managed centrally by the IT service and remotely wiped if lost or stolen. The council has also been required to commit to phasing out remote access to the network from personal computer equipment. This recent requirement will apply to all councils as their PSN accreditation is renewed. Eastbourne Borough Council's accreditation is currently being reviewed as part of a rolling programme across the country and is the reason why the standards are being introduced now.

2.2 The current IT options available to councillors were approved by Cabinet on 23 July 2007. Option 1 involved councillors providing their own IT equipment. Option 2 involved the council delivering a full solution including laptop and broadband. Currently 21 councillors have opted for Option 1 and six for Option 2.

2.3 As a result of the security requirements detailed above, we are now required to withdraw Option 1. All councillors will need to be provided with council equipment to ensure that the Council maintains its PSN accreditation. In this context, the proposed new options are as follows:

Option 1 – a portable tablet solution enabling secure mobile access to email, council documents and committee papers.

Option 2 – a standard council laptop, of the same model issued to council staff with a flexible work style.

It is important to note that as part of these changes it will be necessary to temporarily withdraw the use of Outlook Web Access, which currently enables councillors to access their council email from non-council equipment, such as home computers, smartphones and personal tablets. We will aim to reinstate Outlook Web Access from non-council devices following an upgrade of the email server and the installation of some additional security in 2014.

2.4 All councillors will have the opportunity to review both options before making a choice. Once a choice is made, the councillor is committed to that option until the next borough election.

3.0 Changes to Policies and Members' Allowances

3.1 The options approved by Cabinet in 2007 made provision for an IT allowance to be given to councillors who selected Option 1. Councillors who selected Option 2 did not receive an allowance. Consideration has to be given to the impact of the new options on the IT allowance for members.

- 3.2 Much has changed since the 2007 report. Most homes now have broadband provision, wi-fi is widely available and many people now use tablet computers instead of laptops and e-book readers or tablets instead of reading hard copy books and newspapers. The council's own agile working programme has radically reduced the use of paper across the organisation, and, as stated in the 2011 report, the intention is that councillors will rely less on paper over time.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that, irrespective of the option selected, the council will not provide broadband or printing facilities at councillors' homes. Since most councillors have selected to use their own broadband anyway, the impact of this is limited.
- 3.4 In recognition of the fact that councillors will be using their own broadband and, if required, printing facilities, it is proposed to retain the IT allowance at the existing level for all councillors, irrespective of which option they choose.

Councillors who currently do not claim the IT allowance will receive it, and this is included in existing budgets..

- 3.5 As with all members of staff, councillors will be required to adhere to the council's IT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which has been amended to include a paragraph related to the installation of apps on council tablet devices.
- 3.6 Under the Agile Working Programme and 'Agile Ways of Working' handbook was developing to support staff in the transition to new ways of working.

A similar guide has been developed, called 'Guidance for Councillors in an Agile Working Environment'. Some aspects of the protocol simply reinforce points which are covered in the IT AUP, but attention is drawn to the following proposed standards:

- There are restrictions relating to use for party political purposes which is consistent with the use of other Council resources..
- It is good practice to keep up to date with email messages by checking your Outlook inbox regularly.
- Take advantage of the "out of office" function when you know that you will be unavailable for a period of time to let the sender know.
- If you have a social media page and it is in any way facilitated by or promoted by the Council, the Members' Code of Conduct will apply to content.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 Councillors from both groups have been involved in workshops, trials and ongoing discussions of options.

4.0 Resource Implications

- 4.1 The one-off costs of implementing the new policy was built into the Agile Working Phase 2 budget and will be met from existing capital funding.

The annual costs will be met from existing revenue budgets.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Government security requirements are becoming stricter and will prevent remote access to the council's network from personal equipment. Eastbourne Borough Council's accreditation is currently being reviewed and to keep our PSN accreditation all members and staff are required to meet the new security requirements.
- 6.2 Councillors require a more mobile option for accessing council email and documents to enable them to fulfil their duties in line with agile working practices.
- 6.3 The new options outlined in the report meet these requirements while keeping our security accreditation. The IT allowances scheme will be retained to contribute towards councillors' broadband and printing costs.

Henry Branson
Senior Head of Infrastructure

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Cabinet report, July 2007 – Information Technology Support for Councillors
Cabinet report October 2011 – Agile Working Phase 2
Eastbourne Borough Council IT Acceptable Use Policy v1.10
Guidance for Councillors in an Agile Working environment

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.