

Meeting: Council

Date: Wednesday 20 November 2013

Subject: Information Technology Provision for Elected Members

Report of: Councillor Troy Tester on behalf of the Cabinet

The Council is asked to consider the minute and resolution of the Cabinet meeting held on 23 October 2013 as set out below.

Further copies of the report to Cabinet are available on request – please see end of this report. A copy may be seen on the Council's website by following the link below:

<http://democracy.eastbourne.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=125&MId=899&Ver=4>

The Council is recommended to:-

(1) Adopt the new options for councillors IT provision as detailed in the report to Cabinet.

(2) Continue the IT allowance scheme for all councillors to contribute towards broadband and printing costs.

(3) Adopt of the new Protocol for Councillors in an Agile Working environment and associated policy changes.

45 * Information Technology Provision for Elected Members

45.1 Cabinet considered the report of the Senior Head of Infrastructure following detailed work undertaken to examine the future IT requirements of Councillors in the light of the Council's move to agile and other new working methods. Councillors had participated in a workshop event and a group of councillors were trialling the use of tablet devices. A new committee management system had recently been implemented and part of this work had also involved exploring how committee documents could be delivered electronically to the tablet devices via an app.

45.2 Councillors and officers needed access regularly to confidential information, i.e. any information that was 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, required the Council to ensure that such data and information was properly secured in accordance with a detailed set of standards.

45.3 The current IT options available to councillors were approved by Council in 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 had opted for Option 1 and six for Option 2.

45.4 As a result of the security requirements mentioned above, the Council was required to withdraw Option 1. All councillors would need to be provided with council equipment to ensure that the Council maintained its PSN accreditation. In this context, the proposed new options were 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.

45.5 As part of these changes it would be necessary to temporarily withdraw the use of Outlook Web Access, which currently enabled councillors to access their council email from non-council equipment, such as home computers, smartphones and personal tablets. It was hoped 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.

45.6 The options approved 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 was given to the impact of the new options on the IT allowance for members. Much had changed since the 2007 report. Most homes now had broadband provision, wi-fi was widely available and many people now used 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 had radically reduced the use of paper across the organisation and the intention was that councillors would rely less on paper over time.

45.7 It was therefore proposed that, irrespective of the option selected, the council would not provide broadband or printing facilities at councillors' homes. Since most councillors had selected to use their own broadband anyway, the impact of this would be limited. In recognition of the fact that councillors would be using their own broadband and, if required, printing facilities, it was proposed to retain the IT allowance at the existing level for all councillors, irrespective of which option they chose. Councillors who currently did not claim the IT allowance would in future receive it, and this cost could be met from within existing budgets.

45.8 As with all members of staff, councillors would be required to adhere to the council's IT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Under the Agile Working Programme an 'Agile Ways of Working' handbook was developed to support staff in the transition to new ways of working. A similar guide had been developed, called 'Guidance for Councillors in an Agile Working Environment'.

45.9 The one-off costs of implementing the new policy were built into the Agile Working Phase 2 budget and would be met from existing capital funding. The annual costs would be met from existing revenue budgets.

45.10 * Resolved: That full Council be recommended to:

- (a) Adopt the new options for councillors IT provision as detailed in the report.
- (b) Continue the IT allowance scheme for all councillors to contribute towards broadband and printing costs.
- (c) Adopt of the new Protocol for Councillors in an Agile Working environment and associated policy changes.

Note: The Monitoring Officer reported that dispensations had been granted to all Councillors on 9 October 2013 to enable them to participate in discussions and in voting on all matters relating to the above minute.

For a copy of the report please contact Local Democracy at 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW. Tel. (01323) 415022 or 415021.
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