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## ICT - MEMBERS' REMOTE ACCESS

To: **Extraordinary Cabinet – 20 February 2014**

Portfolio Area: **Business Corporate & Regulatory Services (EK Services – Shared Services)**

By: **Donna Reed, Director of Shared Services, EK Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **Thanet wide**

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**Summary:** **Due to Central Government enforcing new regulations on secure access, Elected Members will no longer be able to use non-council equipment to access emails and Council information remotely. This report identifies the options that will be available.**

### **For Decision**

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#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In order to deliver some of the Council's statutory responsibilities and to communicate securely with other public sector bodies, we are required to access a secure government network called Public Sector Network (PSN). We must have access to this network in order to send and receive data from central government; the key data we receive allows the payment of local people's housing benefit claims.
- 1.2 Access to this network is only granted to organisations that have received a certificate of compliance issued by Central Government - the Cabinet Office. Previously this access had been controlled by Code of Connection (CoCo).
- 1.3 During the late summer of 2013 the new PSN regime was introduced with a more stringent set of criteria than CoCo. EKS have been working through these requirements on a stage by stage basis the remaining issue is remote access into the Council's network.
- 1.4 Members should also note that the PSN certification process is undertaken annually. Although we have attempted to be able to cope with future demands from the Cabinet Office, they are difficult to predict.

#### **2.0 Remote Access**

- 2.1 Currently staff and Members can access the Council's network with a personal or work device e.g. home computer, tablet etc. the new regulations do not allow **any** device to access the network that is not owned by the Council.
- 2.2 All Staff have Council owned equipment, but the majority of Members do not and if they do they may not be Windows 7 which is a key requirement. Therefore a solution is required to enable their continued access to emails and Council information.

### 3.0 Options

3.1 There are two main options;

(a) Provide Members with a Council owned laptop

Laptops operate on Microsoft operating systems. They can be used for originating and storing files in a number of applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc. They are also used for e-mailing and internet access. They can operate via WiFi when in range, or, at increased expense, they can be equipped with 3G or 4G to pick up data anywhere there is a signal. The proposals in this report are for the provision of WiFi solutions, not 3G or 4G.

(b) Provide Members with a Council owned tablet (an iPad)

Tablets are devices to carry / access documents, send e-mails and access the internet. They are not primarily designed for producing large or complex documents, or for document storage. Like laptops, they can operate via WiFi when in range, or, at increased expense, they can be equipped with 3G or 4G to pick up data anywhere there is a signal. The proposals in this report are for the provision of WiFi solutions, not 3G or 4G. WiFi will be available in the Council Chamber, Members' Room and the Executive Suite.

Tablets provide Members with the basic ICT capability, rather than the wider range for constituency work. However, they are very portable and provide a highly intuitive means to access email (and other features); hence their rapid adoption in the consumer market.

Two types of tablet provide the level of security required for PSN, Apple iPad and Samsung Galaxy Note. They are comparable in price, but the iPad is the market leader and there are more applications ("Apps") available, so for these reasons the iPad is the tablet under consideration.

As the corporate email account would be used, there would be immediate access to emails as well as automatic Outlook calendar integration - meeting dates and links would automatically appear in the attendee's Outlook Calendar. Tablets are not really designed to support printing of documents. They are designed to replace the paper.

(c) As Members will not be allowed to use their personal equipment to access the Council's network they will be required to attend Council offices to access e mails and continue to be issued with paper copies of agendas. As member's work is mainly community based this would be restrictive.

### 4.0 Evaluation of Options

4.1 The key factors in the decision are set out in the table below.

	<b>iPad</b>	<b>Laptop</b>
PSN Compliance	Yes, if Council owned	Yes, if Council owned

	<b>iPad</b>	<b>Laptop</b>
Cost	£360 per Member	£370 per Member to purchase, <b>plus</b> technical maintenance support for Microsoft Office (Word, Excel etc.,) and other licences (e.g. anti-virus, remote access), - £630 per Member approximate total £1,000 per Member
Technical maintenance required from EKS	Minimal	Potentially significant.
Suitability for purpose	The iPad provide access to agenda's, e-mail, diaries and internet	The laptop provides access to agenda's, e-mail, diaries and internet, but provides additional functionality such as Microsoft office i.e Word, Excel.
Access to agendas and reports <sup>1</sup>	iPads work well with the agenda publishing software Modern.gov which has its own App	It does not have specific tools to access Modern.gov
Ease of use	Mainly intuitive – some training needed	Some Members may have expertise, but a laptop does provide more chance for users to get into difficulties.
Home printing	Only available via a wiFi printer	Yes, but a printer at home is required.
Portability	Small, very portable. Ease of use in the Council Chamber.	Portable, but more cumbersome, unless top spec and price models are chosen. Limited desk space in Council Chamber.
Security / loading of unauthorised programmes /	The iPads are very secure. Only acceptable Apps could be loaded. Other than e-mail attachments, this is not really a	Based on past experience, unauthorised programmes and data have been loaded, leading to support problems. Laptops

<sup>1</sup> The Council already uses Modern.Gov to manage its committee agenda's, minutes etc. Both iPad and laptops can access these via the internet. However, there is a Modern.Gov app for iPads, which will enable Members to read, annotate, save and e-mail agendas and minutes easily, and during the meeting.

	<b>iPad</b>	<b>Laptop</b>
apps and data storage.	data storage device.  If the hardware is lost or stolen any data would be automatically removed.	will be locked down and restricted to Council business.  If the hardware is lost or stolen any data would be automatically removed.

4.2 The laptop does provide a wider range of functionality. However, the iPad is;

- i) Cheaper in terms of initial outlay and support costs
- ii) More portable and provides adequate functionality
- iii) More secure
- iv) Easier to use in meetings

## **5.0 Savings**

5.1 The immediate availability of papers electronically could negate the need for paper copies, generating annual savings against print and postage costs. An estimate of savings is identified in section 7; however, a project is underway to establish the exact level of savings.

## **6.0 Timescales**

6.1 Full compliance to the terms of PSN **must** be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014; failure to do so will mean the disconnection to the government network, resulting in us being unable to pay housing benefit claims.

6.2 Project plans are underway to ensure a successful role out and training programme, however, a decision is required as to the type of equipment needed.

6.3 The roll out of tablets will be overseen by ICT; there will be a number of workshops and drop-in sessions on a rolling basis to ensure that Members are fully acquainted with the technology.

## **7.0 E-mail Addresses**

7.1 Currently TDC provide all Councillors with a @Thanet.gov.uk e-mail address. Members have also been advised that they should not use private e-mail addresses for Council business and neither should they have auto-forwards set up to private e-mail addresses.

7.2 Auto forwarding creates a number of challenges when Freedom of Information and subject access request are required. The Information Commissioner has already written to the Council regarding such requests.

7.3 Whilst we appreciate why this practice was used, tablet technology will make accessing e-mails quicker and easier as it also incorporates the full functionality of

Outlook, removing the need to auto forward to personal accounts. Clarification of processes and procedures will be brought together in a policy document that will be considered by the Constitutional Review Working Party, Standards and agreed at a future meeting of Council.

## **8.0 Finance**

- 8.1 The cost of all 56 Members having iPads would be £20,160 compared to £56,000 if they were all to have laptops. Therefore, it would be more cost effective to go with the iPad option.
- 8.2 The Modern.Gov system would also need to be enabled and there may also be requirements for website certificates, a publishing server and software licences. A sum of £5,000 would need to be allowed for this.
- 8.3 The costs associated with this project will be covered from within the Council's ICT budget.
- 8.4 Moving to electronic agendas and papers will deliver savings in the region of £28,000 per annum; these are based on 2012/13 data and include a reduction in printing, postage and messenger costs. This project was part of a wider service review, but as the timescales have been moved it has been given a greater priority, further savings maybe identified as the review progress.

## **9.0 Recommendations**

- 9.1 To agree the use of Tablets for all Members based on a lower unit cost, portability and ease of use. But, with a review period after three months to identify further requirements e.g. training, accessories etc.
- 9.2 To move towards electronic agendas in a phased approach in order to deliver the ongoing savings identified.
- 9.3 To cease the use of auto forwarding to personal emails once council equipment has been issued to all Members.
- 9.4 To produce a policy document that identifies the processes and procedures required when using tablets and Councillor emails and for that policy to be considered by the Constitutional Review Working Party, Standards and Council.

## **10.0 Decision Making Process**

- 10.1 This is a Cabinet function whose decision is subject to call-in by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

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Reporting to:	Sue McGonigal, Chief Executive

## **Annex List**

None	N/A
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## Background Papers

Title	Where to Access Document
N/A	

## Corporate Consultation

Finance	Sarah Martin, Financial Services Manager
Legal	