

Scrutiny Briefing paper on Digitalisation for Members

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As part of our Business transformation programme to modernise our working practices and to ensure we are efficient and making best use of information available to us, a range of new services have been provided to Members over the past 18 months.

This has included issuing Members with new ICT equipment and moving to Modern.Gov as the administrative system for Member Services.

Modern.Gov

Modern.Gov is a highly integrated process for preparing agendas and minutes in a database, all the information for the decision making process is gathered in one place, reports identified by the various departments are created as issues and are tracked through the system until the decision is made, the system will highlight the pathway for the decision, any key decisions and publishes all decisions where appropriate, either by Committee/PDG or Cabinet or individuals. The Forward Plan is also produced through the system thereby abiding by the Access to Information Regulations 2012. The integrated process for preparing agendas and minutes eliminates any separate effort required to publish material to the website, this saves a serious amount of officer time.

The system also feeds the website which allows members of the public to find their Councillor, provides a full list of contact details, highlights their political party, identifies their attendance details and their involvement in specific outside organisations. Freedom of Information statistics are also available on the website via the system, providing information on declarations of interest and officers decisions.

The system was originally funded through reduced training in the last year of the previous Council and is sustained by the reduction in hours of one of the Member Services Officers.

The introduction of Modern.Gov has enabled ongoing savings in more efficient use of officers' time which is now allowing for Town and Parish Council liaison work to take place alongside Member Support.

Ipads

Since May 2015, 30 members have been issued with iPads; only 12 have not taken up this option. Through the Modern.Gov app the system improves the way in which Members access meeting content either on the move, in a meeting or at home. Its allows the user to easily navigate through agendas, bookmark particular points and annotate documents, all electronically; after initial connection to the system users are then able to work offline.

Members also have instant access to other websites for research, use of email, social media etc. Senior Members of Management Team have also been supplied with iPads (reducing the amount of paper used) which allows them to work whilst mobile; this will continue to be encouraged amongst officers through the digital transformation programme.

The chart at the end of this paper shows the number of Members who still receive paper copies of Agendas and those that are now using electronic communications.

This change has also enabled savings in printing, postage and officer time in producing the paper copies. The cost to provide Agenda's in April and May 2014-15 was £1140.54 in the same period 2015/16 this reduced to £337.94, if this was a full year the estimated saving would be in excess of £4,000.

Although the iPads will need to be replaced or updated the savings in postage and printing will cover this expenditure. The cost of the initial purchase of Ipads was £11,529, it is anticipated that new or replacement tablets would be needed every 4 years.

Savings in staff time have been used to support the Customer First call centre and front line services when resource was reduced by 17 hours a week following redundancies at the start of the financial year.

Paper copies of Agendas are currently still provided for Members that do not have an Ipad and a few additional copies are printed for members of the public.

Help with using your Ipad or tablet

If you need any help using your Ipad, for example if you are having problems with connecting to the internet in Phoenix House or have any other questions, please contact Member Services or ICT.

Table 1

Committee	Number of delegates	Number still receiving paper agendas
Cabinet	7	2
Scrutiny	12	5
Planning	11	3
Community Well Being	9	2
Decent & Affordable Homes	9	4
Managing the Environment	9	1
Economy	9	1
Standards	9	2
Audit	7	1
Licensing	12	4
Regulatory	12	3