

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group
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Item No. 12

REPORT AUTHOR: HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT

SUBJECT: PROVISION OF ICT EQUIPMENT FOR PAPERLESS MEETINGS TRIAL

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Background Papers:

Minutes of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority Meeting 17 December 2015.

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	✓
ORGANISATIONAL RISK	✓	OTHER (please specify)	
		CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE

To present to the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge further information in relation to the provision of ICT equipment for use in paperless meeting trials

RECOMMENDATION

Members of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group review and note the provision and plans.

1. Introduction

In the Fire and Rescue Authority's meeting held on 17 December 2015, Members resolved that a report on the provision of standard ICT equipment which is capable of running the Authority's preferred solution for the electronic publication of agendas and minutes be submitted to the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group.

This report provides Members with information gathered from a survey of ICT equipment used by Members and outlines the plan for provision of ICT equipment to support the trial of paperless meetings and associated deployment of the Service's committee meeting software, Modern.Gov.

2. Background

The Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group is continuing to trial paperless meetings which began in 2015.

The current system for distributing the electronic papers during the paperless meeting trial uses email with papers in the Adobe .pdf format.

Members access their meeting papers using a variety of ICT hardware and operating systems including laptop PC (Windows), iPads (IOS), Surface Books (Windows), smart phones (including Android, Apple IOS and Windows).

The Service is embarking on a project to deploy software for managing and publishing agenda, minutes and other papers. This software is Modern.Gov, a web-based system already in use by both Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire councils. It is anticipated that the implementation of this system will begin in the first quarter of 2016/17 with deployment over 12 months.

3. Current Provision of ICT Equipment for use in Paperless Meeting Trials

The ICT equipment used by members to access their papers during meetings covers a variety of device types, operating systems, and software versions. A survey of Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group Members established that ICT equipment was available and used through two arrangements.

Number of members surveyed:	8	
Provided directly by local authority	2	25%
Provided by local authority allowance	4	50%
No device provided	2	25% (1= device can be requested from LA)

Whilst some Members make use of their ICT equipment for paperless meetings (4), others prefer not to use their own equipment (3) or have no equipment available to them (1).

The Service makes a number of the Fire Service Training Centre laptops available to Members for the paperless trial meetings of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group. However, the availability of these laptops is constrained by the exigencies of service training.

4. Intermediate Provision of ICT Equipment for use in Paperless Meeting Trials.

The variety of devices, operating systems and application versions can prove problematic for Members to consistently access their meeting papers.

The planned deployment of Modern.Gov meeting software over the next twelve months is expected to improve the consistency of access for Members on any ICT platform. However, there is an intermediate requirement to support a better experience for

members in their paperless meeting trial. To address this a number of Service corporate ipads will be dedicated for use in paperless meetings replacing the Service Training Laptops. Additionally, we are establishing Local Authority security policies to gain a more consistent experience for users of Local Authority provided laptops.

The survey identified opportunities for the Service to support Members in their familiarity and use of their ICT equipment (whether provided directly or indirectly by their Local Authority). 50% of members indicated they would like to receive a form of training or familiarisation with a blend of group sessions and one to one guidance supported by “How-to” guides and Tips. This is now being planned and will be rolled out alongside the ipads for meetings which is expected by the end of April 2016. In the meantime the Service will arrange one to one sessions to address any immediate needs.

5. Future Arrangements for Paperless Meetings

As the trial of paperless meetings progresses and Modern.Gov is deployed, a further review of requirements will be undertaken to identify any refinement needed to enhance Member’s experience of paperless meetings. This will be done in consultation with the Local Authority Democratic Services to ensure any arrangements remain consistent with their security policies as well as our own.

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