

ICT SCRUTINY WORKING PARTY

North West Leicestershire

Scrutiny

Committed to Improvement

Senior Scrutiny Officer: Keith Gordon (01530 454538)

Next meeting: 6.00 p.m. on 16 FEBRUARY 2011

Venue: Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville

The Monitoring Officer would like to remind members that when they are considering whether the following items are exempt information under the relevant paragraph under part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 they must have regard to the public interest test. This means that members must consider, for each item, whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption from disclosure outweighs the public interest in making the item available to the public.

AGENDA

Item	Page
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	-
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	-
Members should remember that under the Code of Conduct, in declaring an interest, you should make clear the nature of that interest; whether it is 'personal' or 'prejudicial'.	
3. MINUTES	3
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2011 http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/scrutiny_current_projects	
4. ACCESS TO ICT SYSTEM	
Phil Clark, ICT Manager will report on his investigations of issues raised by members at the previous meeting.	

Circulation:

Councillor C Andrews
Councillor G Jones (Chairman)

Councillor N Smith
Councillor D Stevenson

Copies to
Councillor C Bowley

Councillor J Legrys

ICT SCRUTINY WORKING PARTY MEETING MINUTES

Thursday 20 January 2011 – 6.00 p.m.
Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville

Attendees

Councillors

G Jones (Chairman)

In attendance

Councillors C Bowley and J Legrys

Officers

Phil Clark, ICT Manager

Keith Gordon, Senior Scrutiny Officer

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nigel Smith.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Access to the ICT System

The ICT Manager stated that he was not aware of any significant issues beyond occasional individual issues. Most members used the system primarily for email only having emails forwarded to private email addresses or using the council's webmail. He recommended the use of the council's webmail for added security of email content. The 'Government Connect Secure Extranet' (A secure, private network which enables secure interactions between connected local authorities and other connected organisations) link to the system required the extent of the security measures for access to the main council system. There was very little additional identifiable cost associated with provision for members. Only two or three members made regular access to the full system.

Councillor Legrys outlined his experience of ICT use. He did use access to the council's intranet system. He also had emails forwarded to his private email address although; he did use the webmail for more sensitive matters. He found that webmail was prone to 'timing out' which resulted in loss of work. He experienced a similar problem when downloading large documents, such as plans from the planning system.

Councillor Legrys also felt that the council should make greater use of social networking enabling the public to contact officers and members. He also suggested the use of low cost video conferencing software to enable 'virtual meetings'.

He felt the main issue was one of speed and asked that the ICT Manager investigate the use of video conferencing for informal meetings.

Councillor Bowley stated that he had found webmail very worthwhile and useful, providing as it does access from anywhere, however he confirmed that he had also experienced 'timing-out' issues with the webmail. He felt that remote access to the system was extremely difficult and not user friendly.

The ICT Manager confirmed that he was not aware of 'timing-out' issues or that a time limit was set for the webmail but undertook to explore the situation. He was not aware previously of planning system issues. The planning system was on a separate server. When the council changed internet service provider recently it had increased the available bandwidth fivefold. He did not feel that speed of the council infrastructure was an issue but transmission across the intranet could introduce problems. He gave brief details of a future project for the provision of video conferencing facilities between the authorities within the county over a private network.

The ICT Manager undertook to investigate the issues raised and report his findings to the working party.

Subsequent to the meeting, the Senior Scrutiny Officer received an email from Councillor M Bain informing the working party that he had suffered 'timing-out' issues similar to those described by other members.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.