

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 20 JANUARY 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. ACCESS TO ICT SYSTEM	3
Discussion relating to Members' reports of difficulties accessing the council's ICT system remotely.	
Attended by Phil Clark, ICT Manager Councillor J Legrys has agreed to attend to give oral evidence.	

Circulation:
Councillor C Andrews
Councillor G Jones (Chairman)

Councillor N Smith
Councillor D Stevenson

Written Evidence

1 *Email received from Councillor G Allman*

“No problems that are not sorted by the IT dept and non that keep re-occurring.”

G Allman

2 *Email received from Councillor R Bayliss*

“I make fairly limited use of the system: my Council e-mails are all forwarded to my own equipment and I am aware of no problems.”

R D Bayliss

3 *Email received from Councillor M Blain*

“I access the system on a regular basis for Webmail which I find easy and simple to do. All you need for this is your username and the token code.

I've long since given up accessing anything else as the password rules are too strict and I can never remember which letters are capitals, lowercase etc.

Hope this helps!”

M Blain

4 *Email received from Councillor C Bowley*

“I would just like to say that I have not had any problems lately although an issue I did have last year with my RSA key was resolved quickly by the IT team. I would also like to add that since the Council enabled us to connect to our council email through webmail this has really helped me and made my role as a Councillor easier and more effective when I am out and about.”

C Bowley

5 *Email received from Councillor F Fenning*

“I have never accessed the Council system as I cannot, or have not seen the point. I have email re-routed to my home computer. I have assumed that I am missing out on something special but have not been motivated by any good reason to use the system. This is out of pure ignorance so it may help new members in May 2011 to be guided through the purpose in accessing the main system.”

F Fenning

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 Blain 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.

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.

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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

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The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.

ICT SCRUTINY WORKING PARTY MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 16 February 2011 – 6.00 p.m.
Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville

Attendees

Councillors

G Jones (Chairman), N Smith and D Stevenson

Officers

Phil Clark, ICT Manager
Keith Gordon, Senior Scrutiny Officer

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Legrys.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

It was **AGREED** that, subject to the addition of the receipt of apologies for absence from Councillor D Stevenson, the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

3. Access to the ICT System

The ICT Manager reported on the issues raised by Members at the previous meeting.

- Changes had been made extending the 'timing-out' period from the previous ten minutes to thirty minutes. This should give adequate time to prevent the problems being experienced.
- The speed available on the Council's Internet connection had been tested and found to be in accordance with the anticipated provision.
- Tests had shown that large documents and images from the planning system did take a time to download. This was entirely due to the size of the files in question and little could be done to reduce the download times. The system itself was working correctly.
- Initial investigation had indicated that the low-cost video-conferencing would only be successful over the internet with few participants, effectively one-to-one. To achieve greater participants required more 'professional' systems. The county-wide pilot system to which reference had been made at the

previous meeting, was now due to be effective within two or three months. This would facilitate meetings involving six-to-eight people at each terminal over dedicated lines between the participating councils. The system was available due to £166,000 REIP funding providing equipment and the first year's running costs.

During general discussion, a member referred to a suggestion that the council no longer provide members with ICT equipment as a matter of course. Members supported this suggestion. Members felt it acceptable that councillors be expected to have suitable equipment available.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer confirmed that, in connection with the forthcoming elections, Members Services would be seeking the return of council equipment from members.

Members suggested the possible disposal of unwanted ICT equipment to charitable organisations

In response to Members reference to the disposal of unwanted and out-of-date equipment, the ICT Manager, confirmed that computer hard drives were 'wiped' and 'over-written' to remove any sensitive data before disposal. Most of the equipment would be below specification for re-use.

Members considered that the working party had completed its terms of reference and considered appropriate recommendations.

It is Recommended that;

1. The Council does not provide ICT equipment to all Elected Members after the 2011 district council elections with an assumption that each member provides equipment appropriate to their needs.
2. The possibility of offering unwanted ICT equipment to charitable organisations be explored.

The meeting closed at 6.25 p.m.