

E-Support for Members – Meeting Expectations

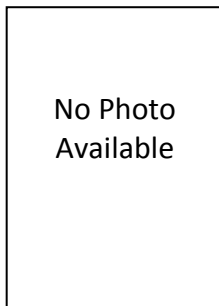


Interim Report of the ICT Working Party

August 2009

Report, together with formal minutes and written evidence

The ICT Working Party



Cllr Andrews
***(Ashby de la Zouch
Town Council)***



Cllr Jones
(Chairman)



Cllr Smith



Cllr Stevenson

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Summary, conclusions and recommendations

The ICT Working Party endeavoured to investigate barriers to increased use of ICT by members and explore means of improving the ICT provision for members.

The working party had benefit of written evidence and discussion sessions with the Corporate Director and the ICT Manager.

We would also like to thank all those who have helped us with our work, particularly Councillors G Allman, C Bowley and A Saffell. This enabled us to assess members' experiences more widely.

It was clear from the beginning that there is a wider range of different experience, skill and interest in the use of ICT amongst members.

Generally the ICT provision for members works well and supports members where needed, in particular members recognised in a survey that the helpdesk had proved helpful and efficient at tackling members difficulties.

There were some concerns voiced that the security system in use acts as a barrier to quick and easy access to the council's system. In view of the nature of information stored on the council's system, we feel it right that the security employed is appropriate and reliable.

We feel that it is a recognisable and reasonable public expectation to communicate with their council and councillors by email and councillors must match that expectation.

Beyond this, there is the opportunity to further support members in dealing with their casework.

We feel that the political groups should take the lead in ensuring that all current councillors are able to use the council's email system and to access the minute records on the council's system.

R1 The political groups ensure that all members use the council computer system for email and access to minutes, exceptions only being made when this is not technically possible.

In the longer-term we feel that the political groups, through their party organisation should ensure that all candidates are aware of the requirement to access and use the council's computer system.

R2 The political groups ensure that by the elections in 2011 all councillors and candidates agree to make full use of the council computer system.

While it is reasonable to expect all councillors to use the council's computer, system it is incumbent upon the council to ensure that they are trained sufficiently to do so. The Member Development Working Party already organises training sessions but in view of poor attendance, we feel it advisable to review the manner in which this training is offered.

R3 The Member Development Working Party be asked to ensure that suitable training is available for all Councillors that need it.

We understand that money has been set aside for the installation of a permanent projection display system in the Council Chamber but that technical difficulties in the structure of the room have stalled progress.

In view of the embarrassment and damage done to the council's reputation by the failure of the current equipment delays public meetings, we feel that this project should be given a high priority.

R4 That steps are taken to ensure that a reliable and suitable projection system is installed in the Council Chamber.

Background

1. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee re-established this working party at the meeting on 17 February 2009 to investigate the provision of ICT support for Members.
2. The issue fulfilled the following criteria;
 - 🔍 An issue of importance to Councillors
3. The Working Party is comprised of Councillors C Andrews (Ashby de la Zouch Town Council), G Jones, N Smith and D Stevenson.
4. Other Councillors have expressed an interest in the work of the working party and attended our meetings. We are grateful to Councillors G Allman, C Bowley and A Saffell for their contributions to our work.

Areas of work

5. The Working Party has endeavoured to;
 - a. investigate barriers to increased use of ICT by members and;
 - b. explore means of improving the ICT provision for members

Evidence gathering

6. The Committee received an introductory report¹ that set the scene for the examination. This gave a background against which the group based its examination.

¹ EV1 Page 14

7. A recent significant impact on the way that ICT services are provided at the Council has been felt because of Government Connect.
8. This Government project provides the security standard under which the Department of Works and Pensions provides confidential claimant data.
9. We received a detailed report of the security implications of Government Connect from the ICT Manager².
10. In order to assess members' views we carried out a survey and the results were available to our first meeting³.
11. We tried to increase the member participation in a supplementary survey, the results of which were also available to our first meeting⁴.
12. We carried out a survey of other local authorities in order to assess the services provided against other, similar councils⁵.
13. During our second meeting, we arrived at some recommendations that we now present to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in this report.

Issues considered

Existing and additional services provision

14. Our surveys, oral and anecdotal evidence all show that there is a

² EV2 Page 17

³ EV3 Page 25

⁴ EV4 Page 37

⁵ EV5 Page 39

- wide range of experience and knowledge of ICT amongst members; some not using it at all, others highly experienced; often through work experiences⁶.
15. Consequently, expectations and aspirations differ widely, some resisting introduction of basic ICT facilities with others pushing for an ever-greater range of provision.
 16. The council has allocated all members a council email address and laptops are available to those who require them although several members have chosen to use their own equipment.
 17. Members who have chosen to use their own equipment have done so for a variety of reasons, some reflecting their personal circumstances some wishing avoid the restrictions placed by the council's system on council equipment.
 18. Members using their own equipment can access their council emails through a web interface, presented as a webpage, although some have made other arrangements.
 19. This can involve forwarding emails sent to a council address to a member's private email address.
 20. This, in turn, raises security and information protection, possibly legality, issues that need to be addressed.
 21. There can also be capacity and reliability issues with members' own service providers.
 22. In everyday dealing with businesses, the public is familiar with and expects to communicate with email. There is an expectation by the public that the council will operate in a modern and efficient manner.
 23. Several councillors appear not to receive emails sent to their council email address while others have arranged, with members' support, to print their emails and forward them in the post.
 24. The public also expects the council should be able to communicate in an efficient and cost effective manner.
 25. At present, officers and members circulate many communications as either hard copy alone or email followed by hard copy to cater for those members not using email.
 26. This situation prevents progress in making agenda, reports and other information available to members electronically.
 27. In the interest of efficiency and cost, we feel that all members should receive emails.
 28. There are also wide benefits to members in their handling of casework that they are not utilising fully.
 29. Generally, we do not feel that this meets the public's reasonable expectations of the council.
 30. Each member should, as a minimum, retrieve emails sent to them, be able to acknowledge receipt and access the internet.

⁶ EV3 Page 25

Software/hardware needs

31. The range of experience brings a range of expectations with the more experienced users expecting sometimes to be able to achieve more than present provision offers. This has led to some of these members preferring to use their own equipment.
32. It remains important that the software and hardware provided by the council remains accessible to all levels of user.
33. Software used and supplied by the council offers an industry standard format (Microsoft) for document, ensuring that recipients are able to read documents exchanged. It is important that any software packages used on private machines respect this standard.
34. Security and the inconvenience that this leads to arose several times.
35. There is a genuine need for security in dealing with information held by the council.
36. Some information is personal information relating to individuals and in specific areas of work, there is a requirement placed upon the council by government to meet set standards⁷.
37. We did try to investigate the possibility of common security mechanisms with the county council, with a view to easing the situation for members serving on county and district councils,
38. Unfortunately, we were unable to explore this at this time as the

county council is in the process of reviewing its ICT system⁸.

39. Overall, we believe that, with familiarity, the security system used by the council does not impose unreasonable demands or complications upon users. We feel that it is reasonable and necessary.
40. Members, including the Chairman of the Planning Committee identified a hardware need related to the display arrangements in the Council Chamber. This currently depends upon a laptop and projector arranged on a trolley on an ad hoc basis and projecting on to a screen that is not visible for all areas of the chamber.
41. The Chairman of the Planning Committee referred to two recent planning meetings when he had delayed the start of the meeting due to difficulty with the equipment. This did not reflect well on the council and he felt that a properly installed permanent system would avoid such difficulties.
42. The ICT Manager is aware of this problem and there appears to be adequate budget allocation for a suitable system but technical difficulties largely associated with the design and construction of the chamber are delaying progress.
43. We feel that this provision needs a higher priority.

Training needs

44. Clearly, there are members who would benefit from ICT training at different levels. Sometimes this

⁷ EV2 Page 17

⁸ EV5 Page 39

may be provided best on a one-to-one basis to meet particular needs.

45. The Personal Development Plan process can identify also Members' individual training needs.
46. The Members Development Working Party does provide a variety of training sessions for members although these are often attended poorly.
47. Perhaps the Members Development Working Party could continue to keep the sessions available under review to ensure that they meet members' needs and interests and are presented in an accessible manner.
48. One member expressed this last point succinctly as, 'Experts don't always make good trainers'.

Support

49. The ICT service provides support to members through help desk as the point of contact.
50. The ICT support is able to give members one-to-one advice and support, when appropriate, including home visits, if necessary.
51. The survey of members⁹ showed that the support received is successful at resolving members' problems and is highly regarded by members.

Potential steps to alleviate problems

52. We feel that it is important that modern, efficient communication is available throughout the council.

While most members embrace modern technology those that do not are preventing the council from accessing the full benefit of investment in ICT.

53. We felt that the matter is one that the political groups can usefully take a lead, eventually making it a condition of candidature that, given accessible and comprehensive appropriate training, full use is made of email and internet access.

Conclusions

54. ICT helps the council meet public expectations of quality, efficiency and cost.
55. Poor communication can harm the council's reputation.
56. The public expect to be able to communicate by email.
57. All members should be available using email and be able to access the internet.
58. The political groups should take steps to ensure that all their members are able to be contacted using email, ultimately making full use of the council's computer system a condition of candidature at the next election.
59. Poor presentation display at committee meetings can also damage the council's reputation.
60. If the budget allocation is still available, as we understand, a suitable and appropriate display should be provided as soon as is practical.

⁹ EV3 Page 25

Recommendations

61. The Working Party recommends that;
- a. the political groups ensure that all members use the council computer system for email and access to minutes, exceptions only being made when this is not technically possible.
 - b. the political groups ensure that by the elections in 2011 all councillors and candidates agree to make full use of the council computer system.
 - c. the Member Development Working Party be asked to ensure that suitable training is available for all Councillors that need it.
 - d. that steps are taken to ensure that a reliable and suitable projection system is installed in the Council Chamber.

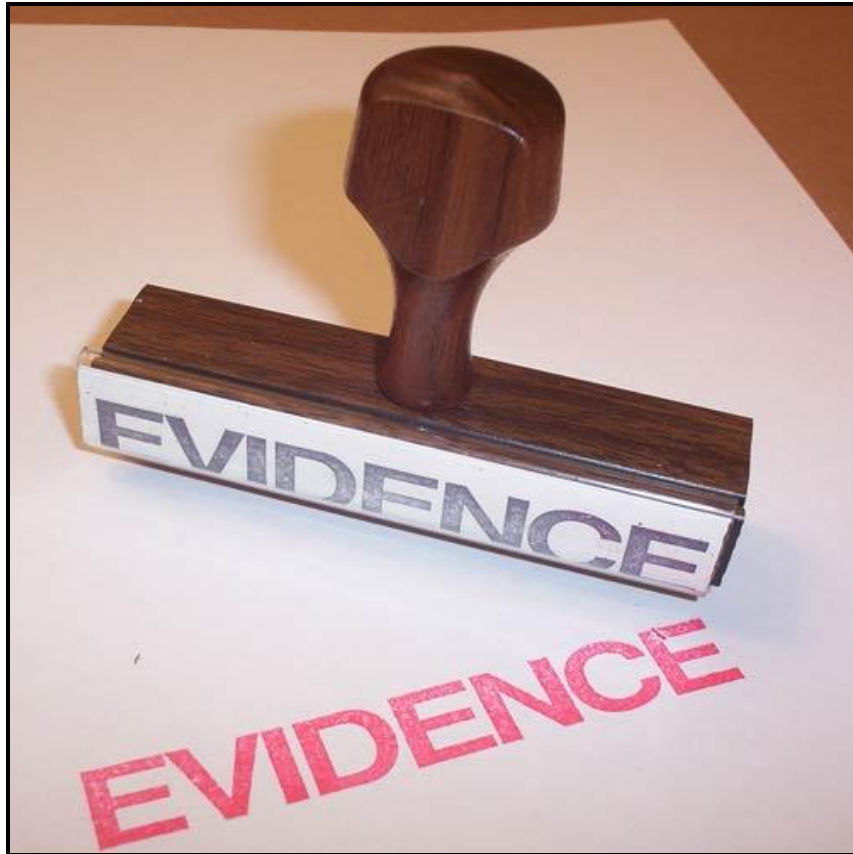
ICT Working Party

Keith Gordon

Senior Scrutiny Officer

August 2009

Appendices - Evidence





North West Leicestershire District Council

ICT Working Party – 25 March 2009

Provision of ICT for members – background report 25 March 2009

Background 2003-7

Following the installation of the new Council in 2003 the executive group decided to embrace the principles of e-Government and move towards greater electronic working for both staff & members. As a result of this decision it was agreed to provide basic ICT facilities for all members.

Each member was offered the option of using a Council owned laptop or desktop PC with capability of connecting to the Council's network to use the Council's e-mail system, intranet & network files.

The equipment/software package consisted of:-

Dell Optiplex desktop PC or Dell Inspiron laptop

MS Office XP software

'Groupwise' e-mail software

MS Internet explorer

CITRIX (remote access) software

Remote access security key fob (RSA token)

Of the 40 Councillors offered IT equipment 38 took up the offer.

Access to the Council's network was then possible via an internet connection. At this time broadband use was not widespread and a number of members did not have internet access at home so 'free' internet accounts were set up by ICT support for those who needed it. Since then the majority of members have invested in broadband connections at home (which dramatically improves the response speed of the remote access). Members are able to claim 50% contribution to their broadband costs.

All members were allocated a Council e-mail address

For those members who wished to make use of IT facilities whilst in the Council Offices PCs with all of the necessary software were installed in the members room & also in the leaders room

Background 2007

In May 2007 and new Council was elected and a significant number changes in membership occurred. The Cabinet continued with the policy of offering members the use of a laptop or PC and software to use at home, as before.

Members were offered the choice of a new laptop or desktop or to retain one the older ones from the previous scheme with the following results:

17 new laptops purchased

10 existing laptops retained

11 members opted to use own equipment

All members were allocated a Council e-mail address

All members were given the necessary software and security device (RSA SecurID token) to make use of the Council's e-mail, intranet & network file services.

An additional option of full wireless networking to the Council's internal network in the Council chamber, board room, leader room & group rooms was also considered at this time but rejected on cost grounds.

As a short term measure a broadband internet connection and wireless router was installed into the area of the leader's room. This enables members or other visitors to the offices to gain direct access to the internet without any security impacts on the internal network.

PCs with appropriate software are also installed in the group rooms for those members who may wish to use ICT facilities whilst in the offices.

Current Situation

Since May 2007, 2 'new' laptops and 1 'old' laptop have been returned to ICT because they were no longer required.

Many members have set up mail forwarding to immediately pass mail to their personal mail addresses.

(Note : this is not recommended by ICT because it may be in breach of the Council's ICT security policy)

Known Issues

The ICT Service desk has received a number of calls over the past year regarding faults or problems. These include:

Failure of hard disc – laptop replaced

Broken power cable – repaired

Unable to use wireless network – advice given

Password not accepted – password reset & advice given

ICT have also received indirect, anecdotal evidence that the system is difficult to use due to the security controls – the security token system used is a widely used

industry standard system and has been implemented to ensure that information is not accessed by any unauthorised person. (Note: no service desk requests have been raised on this matter).

The ICT Manager is currently working with the Democratic Services Manager to survey members to ascertain their use (or lack of) ICT facilities provided by the Council. From this initial survey an action plan will be put together to resolve outstanding issues.

2008 Update

The ICT support team completed a project to migrate the Council's e-mail system from Novell GroupWise to Microsoft Exchange in May 2008 and this has been widely welcomed as an improved service.

All staff & members were offered basic training on the use of the new e-mail software and several members attended the internal training courses. Many members were already familiar with the software and chose not to attend.

During 2008 all Councils were mandated to connect their IT networks to central government's secure extranet. In brief this provides a secure direct link between NWLDC and central government departments such as DWP. This has been driven by a number of well publicised losses of Government data.

Before NWLDC can connect to the network we have to meet a very stringent security standard known as the 'Code of Connection'. A major review of the Council's IT security has been undertaken and more stringent security policy document has been agreed by CLT.

The immediate impact will be on those staff handling sensitive DWP information but over a period of time it is expected that much more sensitive information exchange between local & Government departments will be handled via IT systems so all staff and Members will need to be aware of the increased security procedures



North West Leicestershire District Council

ICT Working Party – 25 March 2009

Security implications of Government Connect

1. Introduction

The Government announced in 2008 that as of April 2009 that the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) would only provide confidential claimant data to Councils such as North West Leics. D.C. via a secure network connect. This project is called Government Connect and when complete will create a wide area network with physical connections from all District, Unitary & County Council offices into the Central Government secure network.

Before they will allow Councils to make the physical connection they require us to comply with a strict security code, known as the Code of Connection or CoCo. This has had a significant impact on the way that ICT services are provided at the Council and significant investment has been made in security hardware, software and services has been made in the past 6 months. Whilst the Council has always taken data security very seriously we have not needed to meet the specific requirements of Central Government. The Government Connect network will be accredited to carry information up to including the RESTRICTED classification. At present most of the information exchanged with DWP will be classified under the lower rating of PROTECT but the network is being developed to allow for further future uses.

The following table explains the classification rating used by Government departments:

2. The National Protective Marking Scheme

The National Protective Marking System provides a framework for users to share and protect information in an appropriate manner. As can be seen from the table, each protective marking is allocated an appropriate Impact Level (IL). Each IL describes a severity of impact to the UK of protectively marked information being released outside of normal government handling channels. The IL value is used by security officers when performing a risk assessment on protectively marked information in order to determine how much protection these assets should be given

Protective Marking	e-Gov Impact Level
TOP SECRET	6
SECRET	5
CONFIDENTIAL	4

RESTRICTED	3
PROTECT	2 1
Unclassified	0

On 28 February 2007 the new sub-national caveat, PROTECT, was introduced. The purpose of PROTECT is to provide a difference in terms of the handling official information which needs to be protected from compromise of confidentiality, integrity and availability to a known level of assurance, but for which the measures required to safeguard National Security information at RESTRICTED are considered not to always meet the direct business need of the organisation. It is envisaged that in some organisations the use of RESTRICTED will be reduced as a consequence. At the LA level and for users of Government Connect it is envisaged that most protectively marked information will be of 'PROTECT' in nature.

At a working level the baseline security objectives for PROTECT will be the same as for RESTRICTED, which are:

- Handle, use and transmit with care.
- Take basic precautions against accidental compromise or opportunist attack.

The distinction between the two markings is that PROTECT is not a National Security marking, and there is a revised calculation for asset value, or consequence of compromise. Depending on the severity of the circumstances either RESTRICTED or PROTECT may apply where compromise would be likely to:

- Cause financial loss or loss of earning potential to, or facilitate improper gain or advantage for, individuals or companies.
- Prejudice the investigation or facilitate the commission of crime.
- Disadvantage government in commercial or policy negotiations with others.

N.B. Within the UK Government, CONFIDENTIAL is an explicit marking with clearly defined handling requirements. Sometimes, within certain local authorities 'Confidential' is used as a marking to indicate that information has a requirement for protection (in UK Government terms it is protectively marked). Care should be taken to ensure that information protectively marked with the national CONFIDENTIAL marking should be handled accordingly.

The PROTECT Classification PROTECT	Compromise of information would be likely to affect individuals in an adverse manner
Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause substantial distress to individuals. • Breach proper undertakings to maintain the confidence of information provided by third parties. • Breach statutory restrictions on the disclosure of information.

Principles and Clearance Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information classified as PROTECT should be held, processed, transmitted and destroyed with discretion to make compromise highly unlikely. • Only staff cleared by the organisation to access PROTECT level or above are authorised to handle the information. This includes all staff involved with transmission, storage and disposal.
Electronic Transmission	PROTECT information transmitted across public networks within the UK or across any networks overseas should be encrypted using an approved system.
Electronic Storage	<p>Electronic files (including databases) must be protected against illicit internal use or intrusion by external parties through a judicious selection of two or more of the following mechanisms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. User challenge and authentication (username/password or digital ID/Certificate) b. Logging use at level of individual c. Firewalls and intrusion-detection systems and procedures; server authentication d. OS-specific/application-specific security measures.
Electronic Disposal	Electronic files should be disposed of in a way that makes reconstruction highly unlikely.
Voice Telephone Conversation	Information protectively marked with PROTECT can be spoken about over the telephone.
Manual Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a single physical location. As determined by the department security officer. • Transfer between establishments within or outside UK: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. May be carried by ordinary postal service or commercial courier firms, provided the envelope/package is closed and the word PROTECT is not visible. b. The outer envelope should be addressed to an individual by name and title. PROTECT mail for/from overseas posts should be carried by diplomatic airfreight c. The outer envelope must clearly show a return address in case delivery is unsuccessful. d. In some cases due to the nature of the contents, identifying the originating organisation may be inappropriate and a return PO Box alone should be used.

Manual Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In an office environment, PROTECT material should be held in a lockable storage area or cabinet. ▪ In a storage facility, all material should be protected through controlled access to the storage areas, and through a secure physical environment.
Manual Disposal	Disposed of or destroyed in a way that makes reconstruction highly

Further descriptors must be used to ensure the marking is correctly applied:-

- APPOINTMENTS e.g. a visit to the LA from the HRH Queen Elizabeth II.
- HONOURS e.g. a member of the staff being given an award.
- LOCSEN e.g. locally sensitive information.
- MANAGEMENT e.g. information for the LA senior management team.
- MEDICAL e.g. medial information on an individual.
- PERSONAL e.g. personal information.
- REGULATORY e.g. white papers etc.
- STAFF e.g. organisational staff only.
- ORGANISATIONAL e.g. organisation staff and contractors.

Example: PROTECT LOCSEN would mean that information would have to be protected under the PROTECT marking and the information it contained would be Locally Sensitive (LOCSEN) e.g. closure of a local hospital.

From the above examples it is clear that much of the day to day business of the Council falls within the PROTECT classification.

The higher level RESTRICTED is less likely to be used regularly by NWLDC but is included for completeness and as an indication of the increased security controls that are required when handling such information:

The RESTRICTED Classification RESTRICTED	Compromise of information would be likely to affect the national interests in an adverse manner
Guidelines	<p style="text-align: center;">Affect diplomatic relations adversely. Hinder the operational effectiveness or security of the UK or friendly forces. Affect the internal stability or economic well-being of the UK or friendly countries adversely.</p>

Principles and Clearance Levels	Information classified as RESTRICTED should be held, processed, transmitted and destroyed with discretion to make compromise highly unlikely. Only staff cleared by the organisation to access RESTRICTED level or above is authorised to handle the information. This includes all staff involved with transmission, storage and disposal.
Electronic Transmission	All RESTRICTED information transmitted across public networks within the UK or across any networks overseas must be encrypted using an approved system.
Electronic Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic files (including databases) must be protected against illicit internal use or intrusion by external parties through a judicious selection of two or more of the following mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. User challenge and authentication (username/password or digital ID/Certificate) b. Logging use at level of individual c. Firewalls and intrusion-detection systems and procedures; server authentication d. OS-specific/application-specific security measures.
Electronic Disposal	Electronic files should be disposed of in a way that makes reconstruction highly unlikely.
Voice Telephone Conversation	Organisations should already be aware from S(E)N 06-10 issued on 22 September 2006 that telecommunications made at RESTRICTED (Confidentially IL 3) level can no longer be guaranteed as secure. Appropriate secure communications should be used.

3. How this affects NWLDC

3.1 ICT Systems & equipment

Significant investment has been made in technical changes in our network infrastructure and the introduction of additional security software and hardware products:-

- software to control use of removable storage such as USB storage devices
- encryption of hard discs on all Council owned PCs, Laptops & PDAs used away from the Council offices (including members laptops)
- multiple anti-virus software products to check e-mail and internet access
- maintenance of detailed logs of activity within the Council's network
- purchase & installation of new hardware to enable remote access to Council systems
- purchase & installation of firewall specifically for the Government Connect network connection
- compulsory use of 'Dual factor authentication' i.e. RSA SecurID tokens for all remote access to Council systems
- purchase & configuration of a secondary e-mail server specifically to handle RESTRICTED e-mails
- annual security testing of the Council's network by an external assessor organisation

3.2 Revised policies & procedures

Much time and effort has been spent on updating and strengthening existing policies and procedures:-

- new ICT Security policy
- new policy & procedure for reporting of security incidents
- new procedure for verification of staff credentials at appointment
- new personal commitment statements for staff using classified information
- new business case procedures before certain software products can be used within the Council network

3.3 Staff & Members

The majority of the work completed so far has been to meet the technical & procedural requirements but we are entering the stage where both staff and members using RESTRICTED information will be affected by:-

- new methods of working for staff handling DWP data
- training in new policies & procedures
- training in security awareness
- further restrictions on how staff handle information e.g. RESTRICTED e-mail cannot be accessed by any non-Council equipment
- RESTRICTED e-mails cannot be auto-forwarded to personal e-mail accounts

4. Costs

DWP have funded the initial set up costs which covers the installation of the physical network link and some equipment specifically required for transferring data between DWP and NWLDC.

They have also agreed to fund the on-going costs of the network connection (line rental & support) for 2008/9, 2009/10 & 2010/11.

All other costs including those items detailed in section 3 above have had to be funded by NWLDC

Major items of expenditure include:-

Control of removable data storage devices & disc encryption	£9000
Additional firewall	£7500
Security testing by external assessor	£9000
Remote access additional hardware & software	£4500
Secondary e-mail server	£3000
Total cost in 2008/9	£33,000



Member IT Survey



FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Response Report - Revised

October 2008

Background

2. During September 2008 a basic survey was undertaken of members' views and needs on IT.
3. The survey consisted of a simple form that was circulated in hard copy to all members with a subsequent reminder to those who had not responded.
4. The questions are attached as an appendix at page 35.

Responses

5. Of the 38 members of council a total of 12 responses were received, 31.6%. A low percentage response reduces the reliability of the survey results.
6. This represents an increase of 3 responses received after the final version of the response was published. This revised report reflects the overall position including the additional responses.
7. Not every respondent has answered every question or every section of each question.
8. Some of the responses reported outstanding difficulties;
 - a. One stated that the member did not know how to use a computer and had no wish to do so.
 - b. Several members raised issues that were not directly connected with the terms of the survey;
 - i. One did not feel that the council system was adequate to enable him to access electronic media.
 - ii. Another reported problems in setting-up a new computer and receiving emails.
 - iii. A member stated that she would like to access the secure network from her home computer.

In each case the IT section responded, contacted the member concerned and helped address the issues.

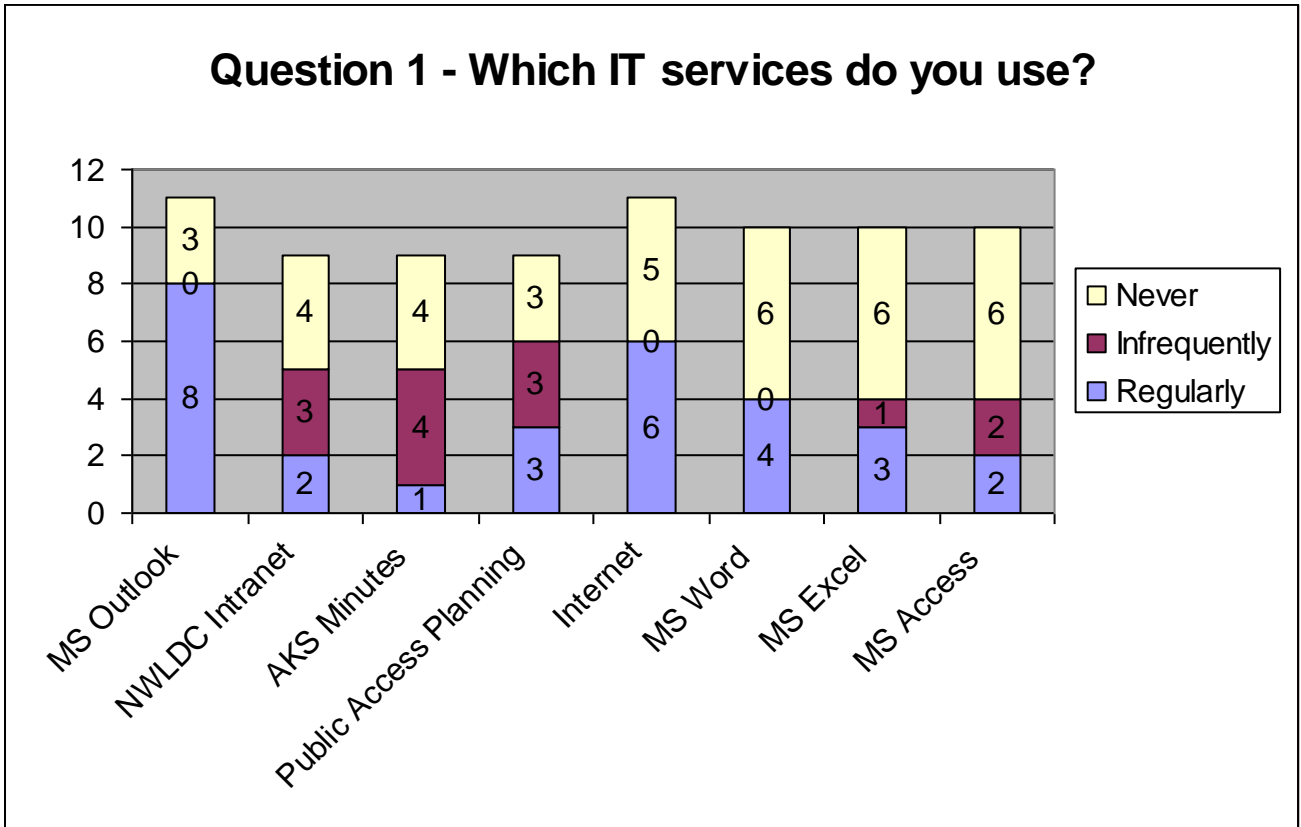
9. The responses to each question in the survey have been examined.

Question 1

10. Question 1 sought clarification of the use of services asking whether members used, MS Outlook, NWLDC Intranet, AKS Minute system, On-line planning, Internet, MS Word, MS Excel, MS Access, grouping use as 'Regularly', 'Infrequently' or 'Never'.
11. Unsurprisingly, the email software shows as most frequently used. Perhaps more surprisingly the majority of respondents said that they never used the Internet or the MS Office Suite. Although the availability of other computers (See Question 3) might mean that constituency work is undertaken using other software.

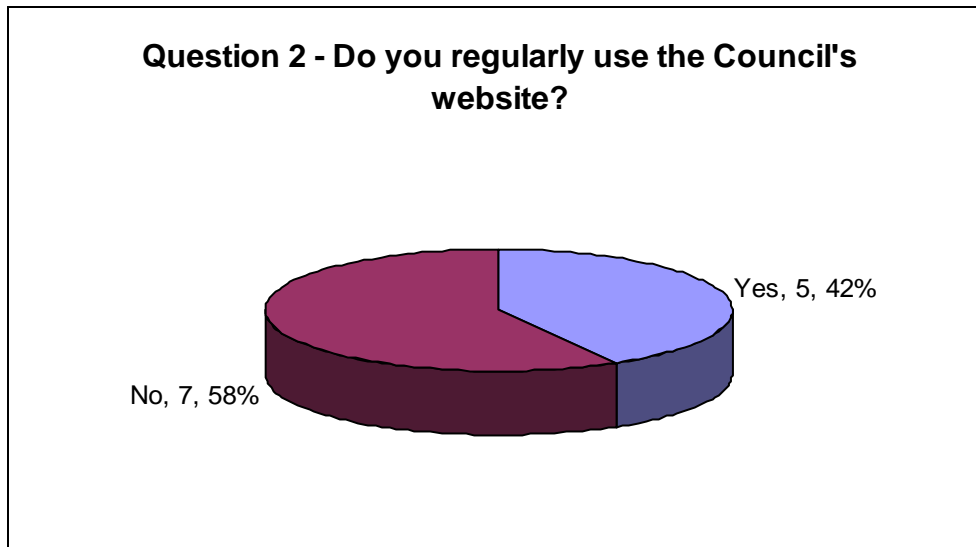
12. The reasons given for not using the services included;

- a. 'A useless system to me'
- b. '...find written communications infinitely more comprehensible.'
- c. '...never had cause to use Grapevine.'
- d. '[I have] alternative access to products home and/or work.'
- e. 'Already have the facility - do not need to use the remote site.'
- f. 'I have tried using the NWLDC kit & the RSA token with varied success. I find it easier to access all I need via my own PCs and have my own MSoft and Internet fast access as indicated.' [PowerPoint and MS Publisher]
- g. 'Use own computer'.
- h. 'I often use a remote access own computer'.



Question 2

13. Question 2 asked whether members regularly accessed the council's website.

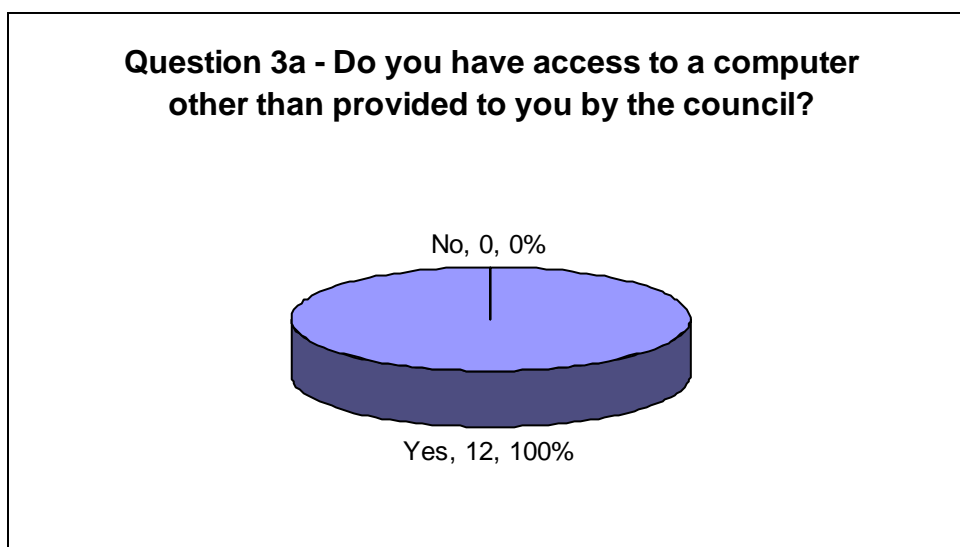


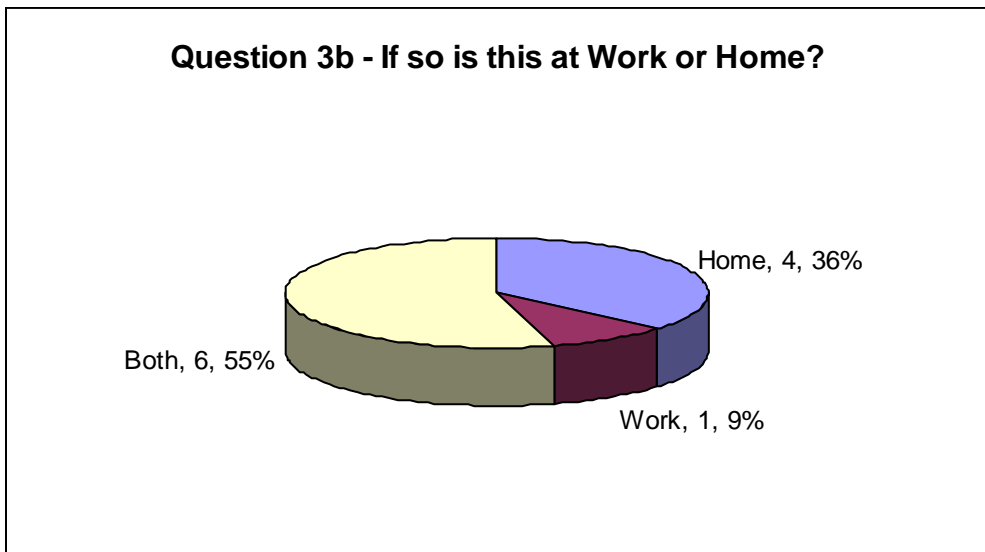
14. 58% (7 respondents) did not use the website regularly. While website page usage data might be able to identify overall usage they are unlikely to be able to identify the most popular pages with members specifically. Respondents, who responded indicating the most useful aspects, identified;

- a. 'Contacts page'
- b. 'Most – general trawl through at leisure'
- c. 'Councillor details – minutes.'
- d. 'email'
- e. 'Not now'
- f. 'Planning, Minutes of meetings'.

Question 3

15. Question 3 asked whether members had access to a computer other than that provided by the council and, if so, whether this was at home or at work.





16. All respondents had access to computers not provided by the council with the majority enjoying access at both work and home. This would suggest that the large majority of members has received some degree of computer training at work and familiarity, at least at home.

17. Two members stated that they did not have a computer provided by NWLDC.

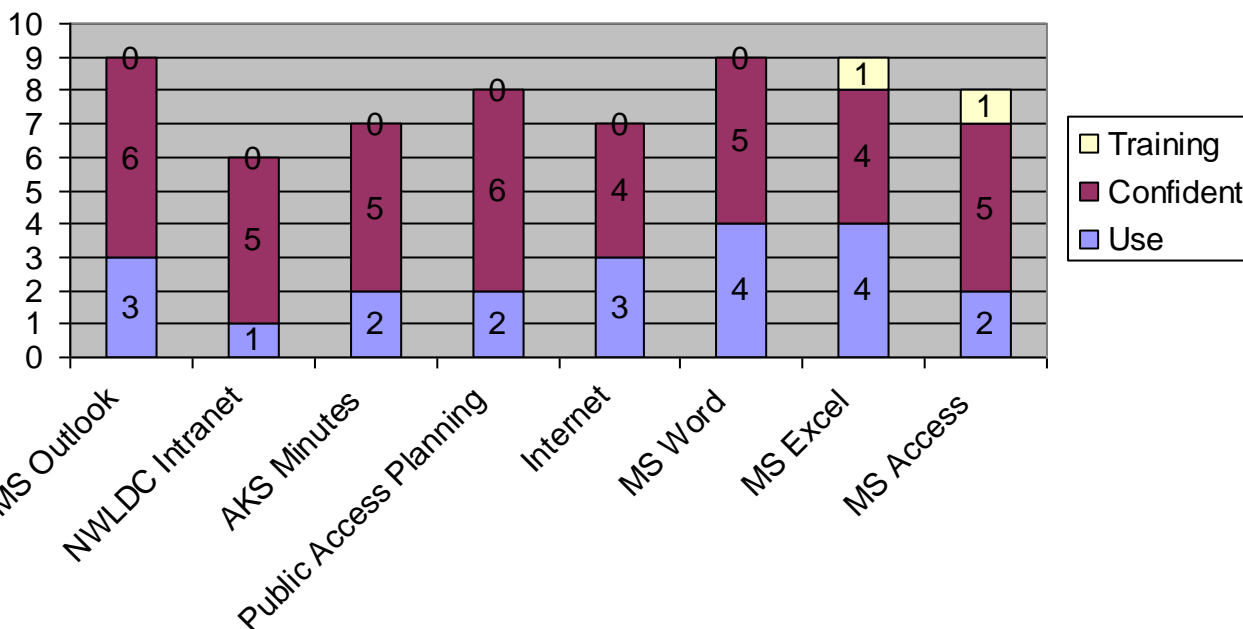
Question 4

18. Question 4 expands slightly upon the data gathered at question 1 grouping the same selection of services as ‘Used’, ‘Confident to use’ or ‘Need further training’.

19. The response appeared possibly confusing with several members indicating that they were confident to use but did not do so. The response also seems not to correlate exactly with the usage indicated in Question 1.

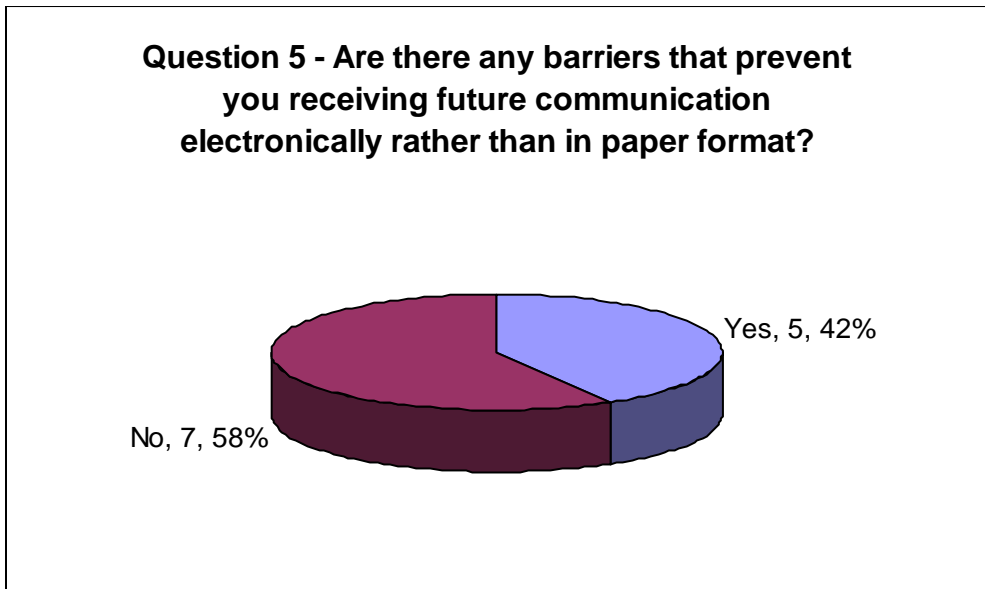
20. The responses did not indicate any great perceived need for training. Only one member indicated any need.

Question 4 - Please indicate your level of usage of IT services and whether you would like to receive further guidance or training.



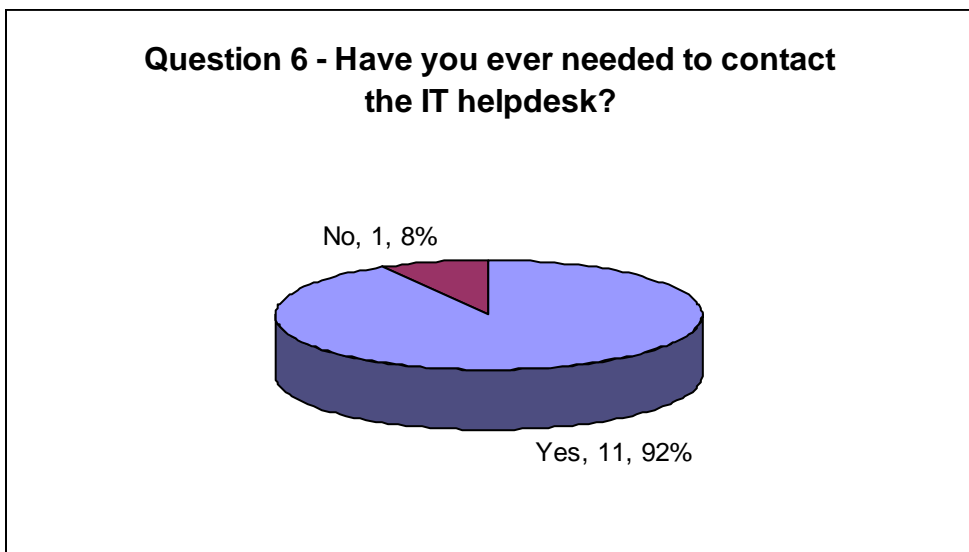
Question 5

21. Question 5 asked whether there were barriers to future communication electronically from council offices.
22. Those respondents identifying barriers related these barriers to issues already identified as preventing use of the system generally; detailed in paragraph 10.
23. A member commented that ‘Its easier for me to carry papers with me to read that carry my laptop. I try to check emails regularly but can only access at home and often struggle with having enough time.’
24. One member suggested that ‘Consideration may be needed to cost of paper - inc cart[ridge]s etc.’ raising issues of speedy electronic circulation reducing environmentally damaging and costly distribution compared with the costs of many members printing the information on relatively high cost (probably inkjet) personal printers.
25. These comments represented considerations for future electronic communication rather than barriers to the use of the system.
26. One respondent did comment on access problems saying, ‘I find accessing committee minutes just too fiddly and the rest that I access (minutes) are all sent to me via MS Outlook so I have no need for the Intranet - Just reams of paper please! ... oh and an occasional laser printer cartridge please.’



Question 6

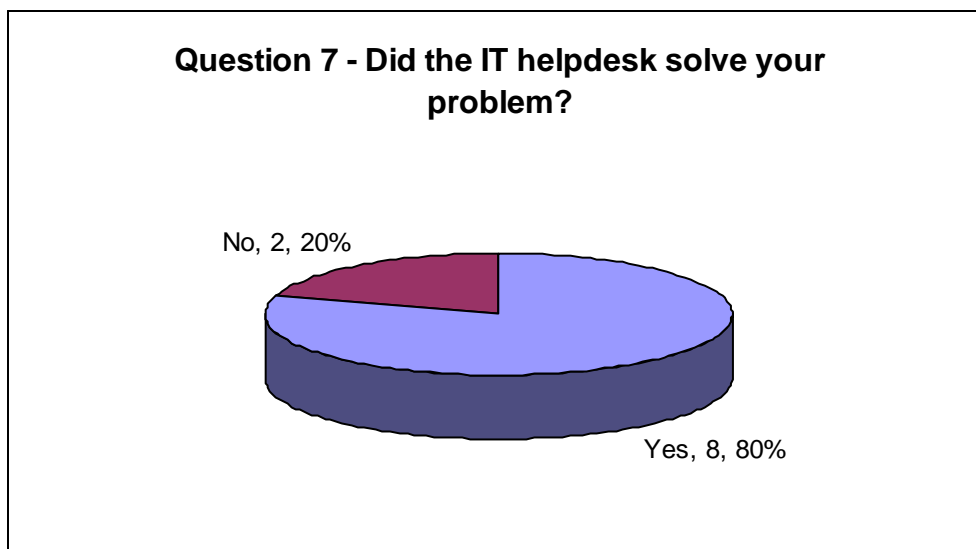
27. Question 6 asked if members had ever had the need to contact the IT Helpdesk. Despite the relatively low figures represented it is clear that the large majority (92%) had used the service.



Question 7

28. Question 7 asked of those who had contacted the IT Helpdesk (Question 6) whether the problem had been solved.

29. The majority 8 (80%) had been successful. Very few details were given relating to those that were unsuccessful although one member described his problem as ‘Partially’ resolved and stated that ‘The problem was internet connections, not the equipment as supplied. This was resolved by third parties though the IT department was very helpful’.



Comments

30. The final section offered members the opportunity to add any other comments regarding the provision of IT equipment and services.
31. As this section was not numbered separately it appears that comments made here have interpreted the section largely as relating to the previous question (Question 7) although reference is also made to the issues referred to previously under paragraph 10.
32. A respondent commented generally, 'I feel it is time that an allowance was given to members for broadband access as 'e-government' is one of our aims @ NWLDC. Otherwise we could be accused of not being serious about converting to a 'paperless' system. We do have an allowance for a telephone line so why not broadband?'
33. Comments made and not referred to elsewhere in this analysis included, "When used they have been speedy and accurate. Also very friendly and patient.' Presumably relating to the IT helpdesk team!

Appendices

MEMBER IT SURVEY

1. You currently have access to a number of IT services via our secure remote access facility

(CITRIX and RSA tokens). Please can you indicate which of the following, if any, you use?

	Regularly	Infrequently	Never
MS Outlook [e-mail system]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NWLDC Intranet [Grapevine]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AKS Committee Minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Access on-line planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MS Word (word processing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MS Excel (spreadsheets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MS Access (databases)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you do not regularly use any of these, can you please give your reasons:-

.....

2. Do you regularly access the Council' website? [e.g at least once a week]

Yes No

If yes, what aspects do you find most useful?

.....

3. Do you have access to a computer other than that provided to you by the Council?

Yes No

If so, is this at Work or Home

4. Please indicate your level of usage of the following software/systems and whether you would like to receive further guidance or training.

	Use	Confident to use	Need further training
MS Outlook [e-mail]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NWLDC Intranet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AKS Committee Minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Access on-line planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MS Word (word processing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MS Excel (spreadsheets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MS Access (databases)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Are there any barriers that prevent you receiving future communication from Council offices electronically rather than in paper format?

Yes No

Please give your reasons

6. Have you ever had the need to contact the IT helpdesk? The telephone number is 01530 454718.

Yes No

7. If so, did this solve your problem?

Yes No

Please add any other comments you wish to raise regarding the provision of IT equipment and services.

If you would like to discuss any issues before completing this form, please contact Keith Gordon on 01530 454538 or e-mail keith.gordon@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO KEITH GORDON, SENIOR SCRUTINY OFFICER AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, COALVILLE BY FRIDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2008

North West Leicestershire District Council

ICT Working Party

Internet use survey

As a supplement to the original survey undertaken in September 2008, the Chairman of the Working Party together with other members instigated a short survey that asked the following questions

- 1) Do you access your email account at NWLDC?
- 2) If Yes, How often?
- 3) Do you find any problems/ issues with the system/gaining access etc.
- 4) If No, why not?

The Senior Scrutiny Officer sent a copy of the survey to each member of the council and has summarised the results.

Eighteen responses have been received (47%).

Nine stated that they do access their email account at NWLDC and nine that they did not (50%-50%).

Of the nine that do not access their email;

- One stated that he/she does not use a computer
- Three referred to 'long-windedness' and complexity of logging on although two expressed in 'starting again' to re-gain access
- Four have emails forwarded to private email addresses. This could lead to difficulties if increased security is introduced to comply with the Government Connect initiative. One felt that, after initially proving satisfactory, forwarding now seemed intermittent. This could be linked to issues of inadequate mail box capacity to which the ICT Manager referred at the last meeting of the working party.

Of the nine that do access their email;

- There is considerable difference in frequency of access ranging from 'rarely', once a week, 1-2 a week, 3-4 a week, 5 days a week to seven days a week, several times a day
- Only one stated they had no problems,
- One stated that forwarding to a private address at home gave a 'continuous' feed

Member IT Survey – Response Report

- Four referred to difficulties gaining access to the system (generally preferring forwarding or use of own equipment). One requested that ‘the caps/numbers/min character thing’ be dropped. One described the system as ‘over securitised for most people’.
- One referred to difficulties of ‘speed’ particularly remotely from home.

Senior Scrutiny Officer
April 2008

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to ICT working party – 18 June 2009

Proposal

- 1 At the last meeting of the working party, members identified areas for further examination.

County Council Security

- 2 It has not been possible for a representative of the County Council to attend the Working Party. The County Council is engaged in a review of its IT systems and feels that it would not be able to contribute at this time.

Comparative data

- 3 The Senior Scrutiny Officer has consulted other authorities on their provision of ICT to Members.
- 4 The authorities consulted were;
 - 4.1 South Derbyshire District Council
 - 4.2 Tamworth Borough Council
 - 4.3 Blaby Borough Council
 - 4.4 Charnwood Borough Council
 - 4.5 Harborough Council
- 5 The questions asked were;
 - 5.1 Do you provide PC/Laptops to your members?
 - 5.2 Do you enable members to access your council system remotely from home;
 - a. using council computer?
 - b. Using member's own computer?
 - 5.3 What is the nature of the security system used by members accessing the council system?
 - 5.4 What training do you provide on the use of computers e.g. email;
 - a. Use of template emails?
 - b. Emailing multi-addresses?
 - c. Common informal email protocols?
 - 5.5 Do you circulate agenda and reports electronically?
 - 5.6 If so do you still provide hard copies?

Member IT Survey – Response Report

- 5.7 Do you provide members with;
 - a. email addresses?
 - b. Websites?
- 5.8 Do you use;
 - a. Webcasting?
 - b. Social network sites such as Twitter, Facebook?
- 5.9 How do you deal with members who are reluctant to communicate electronically, the public expectation and impact on council work?
- 6 A summary of responses received is attached to this report.

Expert witness

- 7 The Senior Scrutiny Officer contacted the IDeA Regional Associate (East Midlands). He drew attention to good work undertaken by several authorities but they were all larger and not directly comparable with NWLDC.
- 8 The regional Associate also referred to a Socitm (Society of Information Technology Management) publication entitled 'ICT for Members - Not for Kissing Babies'¹⁰ (copy attached for members).

Keith Gordon, Senior Scrutiny Officer
June 2009

¹⁰ Available to download

<http://www.socitm.gov.uk/socitm/Library/ICT+for+elected+members++Not+for+kissing+babies.htm>

ICT Working Party

		Sth. Derbyshire DC	Tamworth BC	Blaby DC	Charnwood BC	Harborough DC
1.	Do you provide PC/Laptops to your members?	Yes	Yes, all elected members have access to a council provided laptop	Individual laptops/PCs are not provided to members; however they have access to PC terminals in the members' room	Yes	Yes, laptops and broadband services are supplied for those that need/request them
2.	Do you enable members to access your council system remotely from home; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. using council computer? b. Using member's own computer? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. Yes, with appropriate safeguards for security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. We allow webmail access from their own computers but not access to any other systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No, access only via members' room b. No, access only via members' room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes, access is possible to the member's mailbox and our intranet site b. Yes, access is possible to the member's mailbox and our intranet site

Member IT Survey – Response Report

		Sth. Derbyshire DC	Tamworth BC	Blaby DC	Charnwood BC	Harborough DC
3.	What is the nature of the security system used by my members accessing the council system?	Being reviewed currently, will comply with Government 'Connect' initiative	Councillors access through VPN controlled accounts and we are in the process of rolling out corporate dual factor authentication	Each member is allocated a unique username and password (password can be changed following first log-on)	Firepass	We currently implementing a new SSLVPN, this checks the security measures in place on the connecting PC and denies access if specific requirements are not met. A username and password is also required to gain access
4.	What training do you provide on the use of computers e.g. email; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use of template emails? b. Emailing multi-addresses? c. Common informal email protocols? 	We try to offer a tailored approach to each member. This usually takes the form of 1-1 assistance	All members have been invited to attend training on ECDL although not all took up the offer	No formal training is provided at present, however members can be individually trained if they so request it	Wide ranging and extensive IT training to suit a member's needs which includes Outlook, Word, Excel, Internet/Intranet and other uses as required e.g. Powerpoint	Have provided e-mail training in the past and the ICT Helpdesk can assist with specific issues

ICT Working Party

		Sth. Derbyshire DC	Tamworth BC	Blaby DC	Charnwood BC	Harborough DC
5.	Do you circulate agenda and reports electronically?	Yes – we have an electronic committee management system	Yes, and confidential reports are encrypted	Agendas and reports are published electronically via Modern.Gov, however they are circulated in paper format for those members who are on the relevant committee(s)	No – we load to our Intranet and e-mail to councillors a link to the agenda, reports etc	No, in hard copy and they can be accessed via our cmis system electronically
6.	If so do you still provide hard copies?	We are also making paper copies available presently to some members (for their committees, to avoid them printing whole agendas from their laptop pc)	No	See Q.5 (above)	Only to those that are on the committee in question	See above

Member IT Survey – Response Report

		Sth. Derbyshire DC	Tamworth BC	Blaby DC	Charnwood BC	Harborough DC
7.	<p>Do you provide members with;</p> <p>a. email addresses?</p> <p>b. Websites?</p>	<p>a. Yes</p> <p>b. They each have a profile page on the council's systems. Some have private web pages as well</p>	<p>a. Yes</p> <p>b. We have recently replaced our CMS which we have included a requirement for councillor pages</p>	<p>a. yes (although not all members receive their emails automatically)</p> <p>b. yes (not all members have chosen to make use of this facility at present)</p>	<p>a. Yes</p> <p>b. No – but they can create their own</p>	<p>a. Yes</p> <p>b. No</p>

ICT Working Party

		Sth. Derbyshire DC	Tamworth BC	Blaby DC	Charnwood BC	Harborough DC
8.	<p>Do you use;</p> <p>a. Webcasting?</p> <p>b. Social network sites such as Twitter, Facebook?</p>	<p>a. No</p> <p>b. No</p>	<p>a. No</p> <p>b. Currently in 30 day pilot with a view to roll-out access corporately</p>	<p>a. No</p> <p>b. No</p>	<p>no but we sound record Council meetings and put them on the Intranet (and are looking to put them on the website)</p>	<p>a. No. Webcasting of council meetings is to be investigated with the help of JADU (who are producing our revamped website)</p> <p>b. No. I believe that the re-designed website will integrate Web 2.0 functionality</p>

Member IT Survey – Response Report

		Sth. Derbyshire DC	Tamworth BC	Blaby DC	Charnwood BC	Harborough DC
9.	How do you deal with members who are reluctant to communicate electronically, the public expectation and impact on council work?	Encourage as best we can. Periodic seminars and explanation of the benefits of the new systems. Being realistic, some members struggle with the technology	Generally handled within party group	We have struggled to engage those members who are reluctant to communicate electronically, however later on in the year we shall be producing a Member ICT Strategy which may include proposals to try and tackle this issue	By providing them with one-to-one training and support so that they are able to overcome their reluctance	<p>We have to send hard copies of everything to them. Also, member inboxes often get full which means emails aren't received.</p> <p>As part of the increased security measures detailed in the latest version of the ICT Security Policy ICT will no longer permit e-mail forwarding. This lack of direct connection to HDC mailboxes has often been the cause of mailboxes becoming full and, therefore, with no e-mail forwarding in place shouldn't occur as much</p>

Minutes of meeting 25 March 2009

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ICT WORKING PARTY held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2009

Present: Councillors G Jones and D Stevenson

Officers: P Clark, A Davies and K Gordon

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved: that Councillor Jones be elected Chairman for the duration of the Working Party.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Smith

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Declarations of Interest were declared.

In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that co-opted Members were subject to the Council's Code of Conduct.

Keith Gordon reported that Cllr Bowley, although not a member of the working party had expressed an interest in the subject. It was agreed that copies of papers be provided and Cllr Bowley be informed that he would be welcome to attend any meeting of the working party.

4. PROVISION OF ICT FOR MEMBERS

The Working Party considered the evidence provided in the documents accompanying the agenda.

During general discussion the following points were raised;

- The County Council had a very similar security system for Members connection to the council computer system. Members who were Members of both the county and district councils found confusion and duplication in this. To explore this aspect a county/district councillor and a county council officer be invited to a future meeting, respecting the county council's protocol.
- When changes and updates were made to software, members required training on the update. It was also recognised that beyond basic use of software, some members would benefit from, for example, use of email and email conventions as well as features such as use of standard emails and multiple addressees.
- The survey evidence showed that some members were reluctant to use ICT and this presented an obstacle to future extension of electronic communication including possible circulation of agenda and papers by electronic means to members.
- While some members accessed the council system direct (using the Citrix security system) others had emails redirected to private email addresses.

There were no security issues if the system was accessed direct but some issues relating to confidentiality arose when members used their own systems and email addresses. In addition, there were frequently capacity issues related to private email when providers limited server capacity that restricted the space for forwarded emails. The emails would be retained on the council system but rejected by the provider's system, the member who did not check the computer system direct would not be aware of missing emails.

- In response to a member's question, Phil Clark stated that the Citrix security system did not notify the area in which login errors had been made to avoid giving those attempting unauthorised access clues regarding login data.
- As part of the Government's Connect programme the council was obliged to comply with the security standards, this had involved adjustments to security levels in certain areas to allow the secure transmission of classified information. The council's involvement did not involve the higher categories of secure information but was restricted largely to personal information relating to members of the public. This would mean, for example, that all council laptops would be encrypted in future.
- It was stressed that when forwarding emails users should be aware of the information contained in the email correspondence to ensure that personal information was not forwarded inappropriately. This could constitute a criminal offence.

5. FUTURE MEETINGS

Arising from the above, the working party agreed that the following evidence be provided to a future meeting of the working party;

- A county/district councillor and an appropriate county council officer be invited to a future meeting of the working party to give evidence on the use of similar security systems by the councils in relation to members of both councils.
- Comparative data of members ICT provision from neighbouring councils
- Investigate possibility of external expert witness addressing the working party (e.g. IDeA)

The meeting closed at 3.25 p.m.

Minutes of meeting 18 June 2009

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ICT WORKING PARTY held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on THURSDAY, 18 JUNE 2009

Present: Councillors C Andrews, N Smith and D Stevenson

In Attendance: Councillors G Allman, C Bowley and A Saffell

Officers: P Clark, A Davies and K Gordon

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved: In the absence of the Chairman, that Councillor Allman (Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee) take the Chair for this Meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Jones

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Declarations of Interest were declared.

In response to a Member's offer, it was;

Resolved that Councillor A Saffell be co-opted as a Member of the Working Party.

4. PROVISION OF ICT FOR MEMBERS

The Senior Scrutiny Officer introduced his report and highlighted aspects for Members' attention. The Working Party considered the evidence provided in the documents accompanying the agenda.

During general discussion the following points were raised;

- Although it was reported, in response to a Member's question, that approximately 50% of Members accessed emails via the council system (either by logging-in or by automatic forwarding) this was felt anecdotally to be optimistic.
- It was felt that it was important to encourage Members to communicate through electronic means. It was stressed that this not only enabled the council to remain in contact effectively and efficiently but also met an increasing electorate expectation. It was felt that failure to respond to electronic communication would reflect poorly on the council.
- The document 'Not for kissing Babies' emphasised in particular the need for security but also highlighted the pressure from constituents for email and the opportunity offered to raise members' profile locally.
- A Member stressed the additional cost incurred in sending paper copies of documents in the post when email was available.
- It was felt that the issues should be addressed through the political groups as a short-term and longer-term issue.

- A Member felt that he wished to use a private email address rather than the council computer system that was too restrictive. Other Members felt that it was more appropriate to use the council email system, which gave assurances of security and data protection.
- It was felt that restrictions on council equipment were important to safeguard the council systems. If Members wished to use their own equipment to access the council's systems they could do so but the access would be restricted to provide the same safeguards.
- The ICT Manager informed the meeting that different levels of access were possible if Members only required access to the email system then a web front could be provided. This would be more convenient to access.

Councillor Stevenson (Chairman of the Planning Committee) highlighted difficulties encountered at recent meetings of the Planning Committee with presentation display equipment. The ICT Manager informed the meeting that a new presentation display system had been included in the budget but the Council Chamber presented technical difficulties in installation. The issues were being explored and progress was anticipated.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is RECOMMENDED that;

1. the political groups ensure that all members use the council computer system for email and access to minutes, exceptions only being made when this is not technically possible.
2. the political groups ensure that by the elections in 2011 all councillors and candidates agree to make full use of the council computer system.
3. the Member Development Working Party be asked to ensure that suitable training is available for all Councillors that need it.
4. that steps are taken to ensure that a reliable and suitable projection system is installed in the Council Chamber.

The meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.