

By: Alex King, Deputy Leader
Peter Bole, Director of Information & Communication Technology
Geoff Wild, Director of Governance & Law

To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 25 July 2012

Subject: (a) Review of Members' Information and Communications
Technology (ICT)
(b) Members External Websites and Blogs

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This paper responds to the request made by Members for a review of the current ICT provision for County Council Members and how this fits with current requirements, new technology capability and future needs. It also addresses the issue of Members External Websites and Blogs

1. Introduction

The current Information and Communications Technology (ICT) provision for Members was agreed following a review in 2008 prior to the County Council elections in 2009. Following this review, a funding bid was made by Legal & Democratic Services to fund the ICT Provision for Members until the next elections in 2013.

2. Member ICT Requirement as defined in May 2009

(1) In May 2009 it was agreed that ICT provision needed to enable Members':

- Access to information and electronic methods of communication
- Access to the systems required to efficiently fulfil their duties
- Reduced dependency on paper

(2) Members were encouraged to use the KCC website to keep in touch with the public.

(3) In terms of communication all Members needed to have a @kent.gov.uk email address in addition to any personal email or District Council accounts. Access to the KNet 'information' store was considered essential.

(4) Democratic Services were implementing a new Committee Management System (modern.gov) which had the potential to assist Members in their role. This system enabled committee papers to be published on the KCC website and had the potential to assist Members in their role through:

- Members' self-managed personal websites – this gave the potential for all Members to have their own personal website at no extra cost to the County Council. The websites were very simple to create and

update and could greatly improve Members' visibility to the general public.

- Subscription to updates - Members were able to subscribe to a list of issues that they were interested in. Whenever information was published on the website via modern.gov, an email would be automatically generated and sent with a link to the information to subscribers.
- Register of Interests database - the system included a comprehensive database to ease management of this important data. A web-based submission form was made available to enable ease of completion and full histories of submissions were held.
- Outlook calendar integration - meeting dates and links would automatically appear in the attendee's Outlook Calendar.
- Attendance at meetings - the system was able to produce detailed information and statistics of Members' attendance at meetings to assist them in the production of their annual reports.

(5) The modern.gov system is now well established. It was intended that the system would go live initially with the agenda and minute features used by Democratic Services Officers being published to the website. Other features of modern.gov were to be rolled out once the system was established.

3. The Current ICT Provision Entitlement for Members

(1) From May 2009 onwards, Members have been provided with a comprehensive ICT solution encompassing:

- A KCC locked down laptop with A2K (if a Member does not already have access to a suitable laptop)
- Secure Socket Layer (SSL) - so that they can get access from any PC with internet access
- Outlook Web Access (OWA) - so that they can get email and KNet from any PC with internet access
- Internet Access on request through the Guest Wireless Network in KCC buildings to enable connection of privately owned devices
- ICT help desk support 08:00 to 17:30 weekdays for support of KCC hardware - provided by the Information Systems Group (ISG) through the ISG Service Desk and a VIP engineer.

(2) This enables Members to have access to:

- KCC e-mail
- Electronic calendars
- The KCC website (www.kent.gov.uk)
- KCC's Intranet (KNet)
- Committee Management System from wherever there was wired or wireless access to the internet.

(3) Members are expected to provide their own broadband internet within their homes. Wireless access for KCC laptops has been made available within County Hall. Where Members need to use their own devices, access to the Guest Wireless Network has been made available, giving access to the internet

(4) The provision of Blackberry devices was not included in the ICT funding. Blackberry devices are regarded as an additional option rather than an alternative to the use of a PC or laptop away from KCC.

4. Review conducted in January 2012

(1) This Review conducted in January 2012 sought to:

- Summarise Member ICT requirements
- Summarise the current available provision
- Identify the actual Member provision
- Establish (as far as possible) the current use of the ICT provided
- Identify barriers and blockages preventing the full and effective use of the existing ICT provision
- Identify the relevant ICT Service Improvements that are currently being implemented across KCC
- Highlight examples of good practice
- Identify potential opportunities for change in ICT provision for Members post June 2013

(2) What follows are extracts from this member survey.

5. Actual Member ICT Provision & Current Use

A summary of the actual ICT issued to Members and an analysis is set out in the table below. This information does need to be read with certain caveats because although the County Council's different logging systems have been trawled, there can be no overall definitive recording system of device usage. It needs to be noted that even if Members have not logged into the KCC network with a laptop device, they may nevertheless have used it offline for KCC business purposes.

Summary		
Laptops	Laptops Issued	55
	Laptops with no record of accessing KCC	21
SSL	SSL Fobs Issued	35
	SSL no record of last use	6
	SSL last used pre-2008	7
	SSL last used 2008	5
	SSL last used 2009	10
	SSL last used 2010	2
	SSL last used 2011	5
A2K	A2K Installed	55
	A2K unused (1/11/11 - 4/1/12)	51

Outlook Web Access	OWA used (31/11/11 - 8/12/11)	21
Guest Wireless Internet Access Accounts	Accounts Set Up	10
Blackberry	Blackberries Issued	67
	Phone Enabled	3
Support Calls	Number of Members who have called the ICT Service Desk since Jan 2011	73
	Number of Calls Logged	326

6. Barriers to Effective Use of ICT by Members

(1) One of the questions in the survey asked Members to say which statement most accurately reflects the way in which they currently use ICT.

Happy with current use	Would like some assistance with ICT provided by KCC	Would like some assistance to set up personal device
38	18	11

(2) It was clear from the survey results that many Members identified training ranging from basic to quite complex as an important need. This has also been reflected in the Personal Development Plan discussions that have been conducted with Members. Discussions have taken place with colleagues in Learning and Development to work with Members to provide bespoke one to one “power hour sessions”. Members often only need a refresh to provide the confidence to move forward with the technology. The majority of Members recognise that with the appropriate equipment they can build capacity to improve their effectiveness and save time.

(3) Several Members also expressed concerns around accessibility and security issues, which are being kept under review. The majority of issues have already been addressed. For example:

Member-Net

(4) Access to the internet for Members’ personally owned devices is currently provided through an individual and repeated login to the ‘Guest’ wireless network. ICT have now established a new wireless network, Member-Net, which will only require the one-time entry of an access key. This will enable the device, laptop, tablet or smart phone, to access the internet whenever it is in range of the network without any user action.

Timeouts

(5) Timeouts for personally owned devices were previously set to 2 minutes. This policy and the risks have now been reviewed by The Director of Governance and Law and it has been agreed that the timeout can be extended to 5 minutes in line with that of KCC-issued Blackberry devices.

SSL – RDA

(6) The SSL remote access solution, which used the black fobs and any internet accessible personal computer to gain access to KCC systems, has had to be retired as it was no longer supportable. ICT have introduced a new system which uses a more secure method (RDA) of access which uses a new white fob. This system has the capability to adequately comply with the Government's security requirements. Initially, there might be some individual user issues with this implementation and ICT are working with Members to resolve any issues if they arise.

7. ICT Service Improvements

(1) The following service improvements are already being actioned:

i. Unified Communications:

- Desktop Web Conferencing
- Chat
- Presence
- Follow Me 0300 Numbers
- Control panel access via non KCC internet access

ii. Knet – Sharepoint – Team Sites – Partner Access - Outlook 2010

Outlook Web Access 2010 – From late 2012 OWA will deliver:

- Facility to view other people's calendars
- OWA to work with all web browsers
- Room booking functionality
- Single page of emails
- Change of function in the way flags work to give categories
- Outlook 2010 and OWA 2010 will have same look and feel

iii. SSL – 2 Factor Authentication – Replacement Remote Data Access (RDA Service) has been launched but this will limit access to just MS Operating system devices if the full security facilities are enabled. Initially implementing these added security benefits is being postponed to enable continued use of multiple operating systems and web browsers. The use of RDA for employee self-service which includes Member Online Expenses has been tested and no issues have been reported.

- A2K – Replacement
- TRP – HP Laptops

(2) Modern.Gov have developed an iPad application and are developing a similar Android smart phone application which allows users to specify committees of interest enabling automatic updates with all the latest meeting papers, including the full agenda pack instantly available. The application also allows users to highlight sections of the pack and make annotations just as they would if it were a paper copy. This is now being tested and would appear to be very cost effective as it would more than pay for itself in paper savings in a

reasonable amount of time depending on the number of Members using the facility..

(3) A range of handheld devices are being researched to enable non-KCC devices to better access to KCC services. For example the Staff Officer to the Leader has been provided with an iPad 3G device for evaluation as well as one for the Leader. This is to trial how such a device can be used as a non-KCC supplied, supported and non-KCC network connected device to meet the needs of Members and what KCC ICT needs to do to support such use.

(4) These devices have been configured in the same way as an iPhone, with the same controls to synchronise KCC emails, use OWA, access KNet and the Committee Management System (modern.gov - using kent.gov.uk). It is believed that this is all that KCC ICT would need to do to enable such a device to meet the needs of Members.

(5) Feedback from those Members who have been trialling other equipment will be presented orally to the Committee.

Use of Personally owned devices

(6) A number of Members have purchased their own tablets which meet the majority of their IT needs. OWA together with RDA (SSL replacement) should meet any remaining needs.

(7) However, Members' online expenses (employee self-service) can only be accessed through KCC issued devices or the use of RDA on non KCC devices., To take advantage of the full security capabilities of RDA, the users' PCs need to be on Microsoft operating systems and use MS Internet Explorer (v.7 or above). Furthermore, the users' PCs need to have all Microsoft update patches installed together with up-to-date anti-virus and software firewalls. Initially, the full security facilities are not being implemented to reduce these restrictions.

Potential Opportunities and Need for Change in ICT Provision

(8) Members need to have adequate access to KCC desktop machines within County Hall to enable them to access the full range of services set out below.

(9) For the purposes of claiming online expenses Members need to use KCC devices to enter their expenses or use use RDA (SSL).

(10) Consideration should be given to enabling Member-funded provision of their own (but ICT recommended) handheld devices such as iPads. As well as providing access to KCC Email and KNet this would provide paperless access to committee papers downloaded by the Member from the kent.gov.uk website or more simply by using the modern.gov application. These devices could replace the need for KCC ICT to provide Blackberry devices for email and other equipment.

8. Options for Future ICT Provision

(1) The options for the future ICT provision for elected Members beyond the next election in May 2013 are many and varied and each Member's individual ICT needs will be slightly different. It is proposed that all selected candidates will receive a questionnaire from ICT outlining what will be available to Members following the election. This will be on the basis that the County Council will only provide one piece of equipment to enable a Member to perform their duties, although it is accepted that a small number of Members have a dedicated office at County Hall where the provision of a desktop computer will continue. The choice of mobile devices will include:

- (a) A mobile computer with A2K or
- (b) RDA with a Blackberry device

(2) The Committee is recommended to agree that any additional mobile equipment such as a laptop, tablet or Blackberry requested by Members will be at their own expense and will need to accord to a standard KCC specification and configuration (if being used for County Council business) to comply with the County Council's security policy.

9. Conclusion

The Director of Information and Communication Technology will continue to review new and emerging technologies to ensure that the County Council takes advantage of opportunities to better support the needs of KCC, its Members, staff and its partners.

10. Members external Websites and Blogs

(1) A number of Members have personal websites and blogs which they use to inform their constituents of local events and issues and to give their own personal views on matters of local, national and global interest. The question has recently arisen as to whether these sites should be linked to their personal profile page on KCC's website.

The issues

(2) The Government has called for greater openness in local government and has recently given its support to the principle of permitting members of the public to make their own personal recordings of meetings for use in whichever way they see fit. The Secretary for Communities and Local Government summed up this approach in Parliament with the phrase "you tube if you want to."

(3) At the same time, the personal profile page is published by Kent County Council, which therefore has the responsibility for its content. This therefore would suggest that before a Member could place any material on the site, it would have to be submitted to the County Council for approval. Potentially, this could result in officers censoring the content of a Member's personal views.

(4) It is therefore considered that, in the interests of both good governance and free speech, Members personal views should be expressed through a private medium.

(5) There is no incongruity between the County Council adopting this stance and offering to signpost interested parties to Members' private sites – albeit that there would need to be a disclaimer from the County Council to the effect that the views of that site are the Members' own and do not necessarily represent those of the County Council.

10. Recommendations

ICT

- (a) The Committee is asked to note the report and comment on the proposed ICT support for elected Members following the County Council elections in May 2013; and
- (b) The Committee is invited to delegate authority to the Head of Democratic Services and the Director of Information and Communication Technology to develop a draft budget for Members' ICT costs in 2013/14, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement for inclusion in the budget process;

Members Websites and Blogs

- (c) Members' personal views will continue to be expressed purely through a private medium rather than through a page linked to the relevant Member's profile on KCC's website; and
- (d) All Members will be offered the facility for their personal profile pages to notify the public of their private sites and that this notification be accompanied by a disclaimer from the County Council to the effect that the views expressed on that site are the Member's own and do not necessarily represent those of the County Council.

Peter Bole
Director of ICT
(01622 696174)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(01622 694002)
peter.sass@kent.gov.uk

Background Papers: Member Survey of ICT requirements 2012