



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MARCH 2019**

### **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

#### **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES –SUPPORT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS WORKING GROUP**

#### **REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the report and recommendations of the working group set up to look at Support provision for Members.

##### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee:

- (i) Consider and endorse the recommendations of the Working Group as contained within the report attached as Appendix 1 (and for ease of reference listed below a-f).
  - a) That a flexible training Framework be taken forward by ICT and HR to support Members with their roles and to assist in the paper light approach to Committee meetings.
  - b) Details regarding a dedicated point of contact within ICT (who can assist them with any technical difficulties that they may be experiencing with their devices) are circulated to all Members.
  - c) That the adequacy and access to internet for Members across Council Buildings including Schools is reviewed by the Head of ICT and acted upon where necessary.
  - d) That the Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services takes forward a costing exercise in relation to the upgrading of facilities available to Members in the Chamber, from basic charging points to webcasting facilities.

- e) That the Chairs of Committee meetings become an exemplar of the Paper light approach, utilising the Modern.Gov system and impressing the paper light approach to each of their Committee Members, identifying training where needed.
  - f) That all Members are advised of the importance of attending training sessions when arranged to support Members in their roles and to ensure value for money for the Council.
  - g) That the Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services reviews the Members paper budget provision and to raise awareness to Members on the 'think don't print' approach to reduce printing where available to reduce costings for the Authority and the impact on the environment.
- (ii) Subject to the agreement of 2.1(a) that officers prepare an implementation plan detailing the actions required to take forward the approved recommendations.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the Democratic Services Committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 Members resolved that a Democratic Services Working Group be set up to look at the ICT and training provision provided to Elected Members to assist in the forward approach of the paper light Committee system.
- 3.2 Members also recognised the importance of the review in ensuring that Elected Members were able to perform their roles confidently with the devices that they are provided with.
- 3.3 A meeting of the working group was scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 and the subsequent report of the group is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Members highlighted 7 recommendations for Committees consideration, which they felt would provide additional support for Members in undertaking their roles and contributing to the Councils paper light approach.

### **4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This report supports the need for all Members to have equal access to support regardless of political allegiance. The report encourages the authority to examine the way that business is conducted to ensure the equality of access and involvement of all people as councillors.

### **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Democratic Services Working Group – 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 6.1 If the recommendations are taken forward then details of any financial costs will be presented to Members with the respective implementation plan,

**7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None

**8. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

- 8.1 The work of all Councillors is fundamental to the work of the Council and subsequently the delivery of the Corporate Plan, hence ensuring Members are fully supported in undertaking their roles is important to the work of the Council overall.
- 8.2 Ensuring all Members are supported and have equal access to support and development links to the future generations well being goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

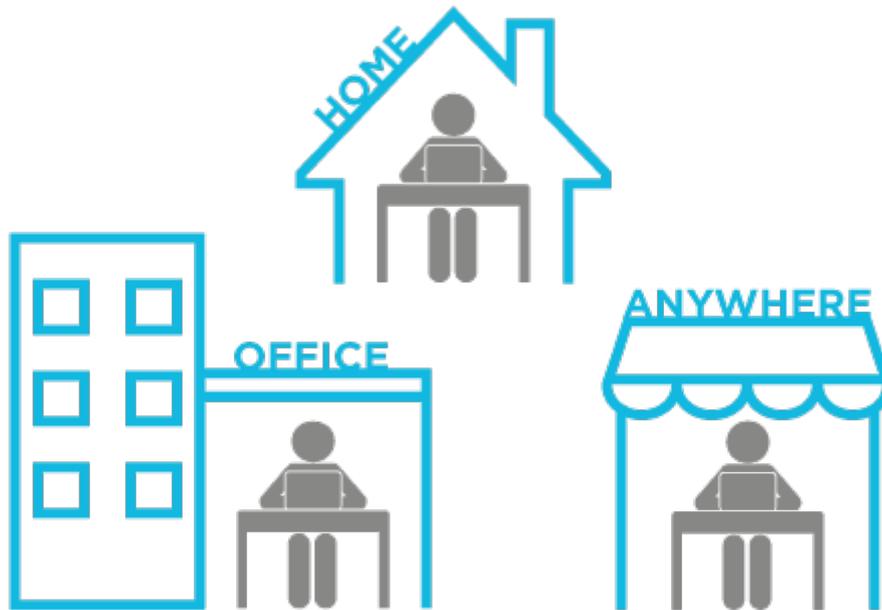
**MARCH 2019**

**REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS - Democratic Services – Support for Members**

Democratic Services – 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018.

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES WORKING GROUP**



## **SUPPORT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS**



## FOREWORD



As part of its Terms of Reference the Democratic Services Committee has overall responsibility for deciding what should be regarded as reasonable training and development opportunities available to Members to support them in carrying out their roles and functions that they were democratically elected to undertake.

Due to this responsibility it was incumbent upon us as a Committee to ensure that Members were fully supported across all aspects of training, recognising that with the use of modern technology Members could work smarter and slicker. However it was recognised that Members needed to be equipped with the right training and devices to maximise upon this new way of working.

As a Committee we have fully supported the Council in its advances to achieving a 'paper light' Committee approach through the utilisation of the Modern.gov system. Such an approach allows Members and the Council as a whole to become more resilient, globally responsible and sustainable going forward, reducing the carbon footprint of the Council and maximising opportunities to make efficiency savings in days of austerity. It was with this approach in mind that we created our working group, to ensure that Members were in a confident position to take forward the paper light approach.

The recommendations listed within the report look at practical solutions to a developing modern age and digital environment, ensuring that the Council and those elected to represent can communicate and stay in touch using the modern practices. There should be no barrier to the technological advances that are taking place and as a Committee, Democratic Services recognise that to embrace these advances, Members should be given the right provisions and training to allow them to carry out their role through all the different avenues that are available to them. The recommendations look at a long term approach and sustainable outcomes.

I would like to thank all Members and Officers who took the time to sit on this working group, for their valuable contributions which I believe are both practical and necessary to further equip all Elected Members to embrace the digital age that we embark upon, whilst always being mindful of the future possibilities, advancements and changes, in the ever constant changing world that we live in.

**Cllr G Davies  
Chairman**

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## **INTRODUCTION.**

The Democratic Services Committee have fully supported the Council in its advance to achieving a 'paper light' Committee approach through the utilisation of the Modern.gov system. Such an approach allows Members and the Council as a whole to become more resilient, globally responsible and sustainable going forward, reducing the carbon footprint of the Council and maximising opportunities to make efficiency savings in days of austerity. Adoption of the paper light approach also illustrates a modern approach to conducting and contributing to Committee meetings, boosting productivity, saving space, and making documentation and information-sharing easier. The Democratic Services Committee decision, as endorsed by Council, are keen for the continued roll out of the approach to be taken forward, although the Committee appreciate that not all Members will wish to utilise this method. In addition it has always been stressed that the phased roll out approach would be run to suit Committee Member needs.

## **THE MODERN.GOV SYSTEM.**

Modern.Gov software allows Committee agendas and reports to be collated and "pushed out" via an app which can be accessed through tablets and laptops set up and available to those on the prescribed distribution list. An English and Welsh app is available for Members to access.

As listed in the [report](#) that was presented to the Democratic Services Committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, there are many advances for utilising the Modern.Gov approach with this system being used by 19 of the 22 Local Authorities. The system is continually being updated to take on board new ways of working to ensure maximum benefits for its users.

The system allows Members to receive agenda's, annotate documents and save or email reports out (if not a restricted document) and allows Members to view all public meetings of the Council through their devices, all through one app.

Members can also access other Council's Modern.Gov systems, again when the Committee is publically available, allowing a practical approach to shared resources.

## **MEMBER DEVICES**

All Members have been provided with a device that can be used remotely, with secure access to Council systems and services. Through own Members choice a mix of Ipads or windows devices have been provided with one to one handover and technical support via the ICT Service Desk. ICT will try to ensure that the device provided is fit for business use in that it will allow Members to undertake their roles sufficiently.

<b>Device</b>	<b><i>No. of Members Provided</i></b>
iPad Pro (Apple ios). This device is a touch screen tablet with detachable keyboard	<i>67 Members have been allocated this device</i>
Lenovo Ultrabook (Windows 10). This device is a laptop with fixed keyboard	<i>2 Members have been allocated this device</i>
Lenovo Miix (Windows 10). This device is a touch screen tablet with detachable keyboard	<i>4 Members have been allocated this device</i>
Lenovo Thinkpad (Windows 10). This device is a laptop	<i>2 Members have been allocated this device</i>

Through their chosen device, Members are able to access

- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint)
- One Note
- One Drive for saving and accessing your documents
- Council provided email
- INFORM – the Council’s Intranet
- Modern Gov App - online access to Committee papers (agenda, reports and minutes)
- Council App – access to Council Information

**ICT TRAINING & MEMBER SUPPORT.**

Ensuring Members receive adequate training and support when receiving their device is essential to ensure that the Member feels confident with their chosen device and to allow them to undertake the roles and duties required of them. All Members will receive an initial ‘handover appointment’ of any new device with ICT at a time and place to suit Members. (The user guide provided to Members during initial device handover is attached as Appendix 1 to this report). This provides Members with details of how to access the apps and packages on the device and to produce and save documents as required, with ICT Officers assisting by demonstrating usage of the device and essential log on information to Members.

Other general support to Members via the ICT service desk is undertaken through phone calls, through remote access or face to face engagement either with Members visiting the ICT Hub in Bronwydd or home visits to Members being arranged.

The Council Business Unit provide one to one training on the Modern.Gov system. This entails training on the English & / Or Welsh version of the App on the Members chosen device. An additional Training Manual is provided to Members to compliment the training with step by step instructions and also a helpful 'Hints & Tips' section. Further support and training is provided if and when necessary. (This training Manual is attached as Appendix 2). To date 46 Members have been trained on the Modern.Gov system with the Senior Leadership Team and other Senior Offices also able to access the App for Committee papers. During the Modern.Gov training session, officers from the Council Business Unit stress to Members that the Committee agenda and reports will continue to be distributed to them via post, until they advise otherwise. Feedback from those Members who have begun to utilise the paperless approach has been positive with many Members choosing to use Modern.Gov to access reports in its entirety.

The current percentage of Members utilising the Modern.Gov application at the Council's Committees is outlined below:

<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Scrutiny Chairs &amp; Vice Chairs</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Planning &amp; Development Committee</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Licensing Committee</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Council</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Democratic Services Committee</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Public Service Delivery, Communities &amp; Prosperity Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Finance &amp; Performance Committee</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Standards Committee</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>VER</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Appeals</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>LEA</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Appointments</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Audit Committee</b>	<b>53%</b>

Any further training provided to Members following the device handover and Modern.Gov training is identified by HR following completion of Members PDRs. Alternatively, Members

can also contact the Council Business Unit to discuss any further training needs with the Interim Head of Democratic Services. It has been identified that there is a training gap with the training support provision provided to Members following the initial device hand over and a more cohesive approach to such training is needed. Currently the Council are currently unable to provide in-house training in respect of ICT with external providers being utilised.

## **MEETING ROOM FACILITIES.**

The Majority of Committee meetings are undertaken in the Council Chamber, Clydach Vale. Here Members are able to access secure and open wifi access, Sound system (Microphone and loop hearing style system), Powerpoint presentations (if and when required) and in addition the Council's translation equipment. The Chamber promotes a public gallery facility for Members of the public to utilise.

Over the last Municipal year and with efforts to encourage and promote public engagement, Scrutiny Committees haven been taking their meetings 'out into the Community' when appropriate. Scrutiny Committees have held meetings at agenda related venues i.e. Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee conducting meetings at the Lido Pontypridd and Bryn Pica site. Although this has not attracted members of the public to the meetings it has provided opportunities for Members of the Committee to witness and observe services which can further assist Members in future scrutiny discussions. The resulting community involvement and contribution will be reviewed when there is more firm evidence available to establish the effect of this change. When looking at Community venues for Committee meetings Officers try to ensure whenever possible that wifi access is available at the chosen location. The Councils Translation team will also use their portable equipment to attend meetings.

## **SUPPORT PROVISION REVIEW**

Progression of the phased roll out of the Modern.Gov system was considered at the Democratic Services Committee meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018. Members considered the report 'Document Management Proposals – Progress Update and commented upon the ICT provisions made available to them, highlighting the need to strengthen the training opportunities made available to Members in respect of such ICT provisions.

Members resolved that a Democratic Services Working Group be set up to look at the ICT and training provision provided to Elected Members to assist in the forward approach of the paper light Committee system. Whilst also being mindful of the paperless approach Members recognised the importance of the review in ensuring that Elected Members are able to perform their roles confidently with the devices that they are provided with.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

The Draft Terms of Reference of the Democratic Services Working Group set up to look at the ICT and training provision provided to Elected Members to assist in the moving forward of the paperless Committee approach are outlined below:

“To review the ICT devices and subsequent ICT training provision provided to Elected Members to ensure that Members are able to perform their roles confidently and to support in the Councils approach to becoming a ‘paper light’ Authority.”

- To review the device options provided to Members
- To review the ICT Training options available to Members
- To consider the introduction and implementation of a Training and Support Framework to help direct the support provided to Members.
- To provide one to one contact support provision to Elected Members
- To review the take up of Modern.Gov

## **WORKING GROUP**

The Working Group met on the 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 and membership included Councillor G Davies (Chair), Councillor M Webber, Councillor M Adams, Councillor J Bonetto, Councillor G Thomas and Councillor L Walker. An apology for attendance was received from County Borough Councillor H Fychan.

Officers supporting Members during the review included the Head of ICT, the Head of Organisational Development, Director of Communications & interim Head of Democratic Services and the ICT service Manager, Infrastructure.

At the first meeting members considered the following aspects of the review and further detailed information in to the findings are outlined further within the report:

- Agreed the Terms of Reference
- Received a Joint PowerPoint presentation from the Head of ICT and Head of Organisational Support advising of the device options available to Members and the initial training provided.
- Discussed the creation and benefits of a Training and support Framework
- Considered the roll out of the Paperless Committee approach.

**Documentation** – in addition to the PowerPoint presentation received Members received information in relation to the

- Modern.Gov Report – 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018.
- Initial Device - Hand over Guidance Notes (Appendix 1 to the report)
- Modern Gov. – Manuals (Appendix 2 to the report)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group agreed seven recommendations to put forward to the Committee for their consideration. To assist in the Committees deliberations the recommendations also seek to illustrate the potential outcome such a recommendation would have so that its impact could be easily demonstrated and measured if successful

### Recommendation 1.

- That a flexible training Framework be taken forward by ICT and HR to support Members with their roles and to assist in the paper light approach to Committee meetings.

#### Member's comments:

Members discussed the need for a flexible training framework to be taken forward to cater for all Member's needs, recognising that a 'one size fits all' approach would not be suitable. Members also commented on the flexibility of devices, commenting that some Members may need to change devices if a different device better suits their needs

**Council Position:** Ensuring such flexibility allows a greater equality of provision to Members and the introduction of a framework provides a continuous level of support and training going forward. Such a framework links with the wellbeing goal of 'A prosperous Wales' as we develop and support Members with their skill setting for undertaking their roles and supporting their residents within their communities. The framework would also link with the Councils Digital strategy and the focus on 'digital skills' programme. The flexibility of devices would also ensure equality of provision.

**Outcome:** Members are provided with sufficient training to undertake their duties and to take forward the paper-light approach to Committee meetings.

**Outcome Measure:** Member training feedback / Further take up of Modern.gov and diminishing of paper agenda production

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### Recommendation 2

- Details regarding a dedicated point of contact within ICT (who can assist them with any technical difficulties that they may be experiencing with their devices) are circulated to all Members.

#### Members Comments:

Members spoke of the need and ease of having a dedicated point of contact within ICT for Members to assist them with any technical difficulties that they may be experiencing with their devices and to provide any step by step guidance in the first instance.

#### Council Position:

ICT staff are able to support all Elected Members. All calls or emails from Members to the ICT Servicedesk are prioritised and responded to accordingly. It is important that Members feel comfortable and confident with their devices and feel that they have sufficient support to be able to utilise their devices to their maximum potential. Details of the ICT Support will be circulated electronically to Members and consideration will be given to other useful forums where such contact details can be displayed.

**Outcome:** Members are able to contact ICT directly for support as and when necessary allowing them to become more confident in the workings of their device leading to greater productivity for their constituents.

**Outcome Measure:** Increased contact with the ICT Members Support Team with faster resolutions of Members problems / enquiries.

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### RECOMMENDATION 3

- That the adequacy and access to internet for Members across Council Buildings including Schools is reviewed by the Head of ICT and acted upon where necessary.

#### Members Comments

The internet provision across Council offices was referenced by Members with the Head of ICT confirming that upgrades to the wifi access had been undertaken at Clydach Vale and other venues across the County Borough. Members also referenced problems with accessing the internet at School buildings due to wifi security.

#### Current Position

Upgrades to the Councils digital infrastructure had been identified through the Councils Digital Strategy to allow for the continued support of agile working and a digital work place ethos. Investment in the Council's digital infrastructure has included improved capacity; modernised systems and created a more sustainable platform that enables wider improvement. Enabling Members, Staff, residents and businesses to be digitally connected through such improvements enables a County Borough made up of cohesive communities and a prosperous Wales through the efficient use of resources.

In order to drive the Councils digital improvements and to ensure Members are equipped with sufficient resources it is critical that the Councils underlying infrastructure is robust, refreshed and improved, as when necessary.

**Outcome:** That Members are able to access the resources needed for them to undertake their roles and duties across the County Borough.

**Outcome Measure:** Measuring of internet accessibility at meeting venues / Members able to utilise their devices and access the internet / agendas.

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## **Recommendation 4**

- That the Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services takes forward a costing exercise in relation to the upgrading of facilities available to Members in the Chamber, from basic charging points to webcasting facilities.

### **Members Comments**

Members commented upon the potential barriers facing Members and Officers with the paper light approach due to the lack of charging facilities within the Council Chamber and the Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services advised that 15 portable battery packs were available to Members during meetings as a short term fix to any battery problems, although acknowledged that this would not be sufficient to cover all 75 Members during a Council meeting. Members requested costings into the options available for upgrading the facilities within the Chamber. Members also commented on the need for each Member to take accountability for ensuring that devices were fully charged before attending meetings, when possible. The Director commented further on the need for future investment within the Chamber referencing webcasting provision and the opportunity to update all systems within the Chamber to support Members with webcasting and the paper light approach simultaneously.

### **Council position:**

Clearly aligned to the Council's digital strategy the focus for 'digital workplace' has centred on the delivery of Agile Working, which should support both Members and Officers in undertaking their roles. This focus should ensure that adequate facilities are provided to allow Members and Officers the tools to take forward the paper light approach. With the increased use of devices in varying different forms and meetings on a daily basis, it is appropriate that basic facilities such as accessible charging points are made available to Members and officers at meeting venues. Such provision would strengthen the Council's paper light approach and assist in Members becoming more resilient, globally responsible and would reduce the Council's carbon footprint with the reduction in paper agenda copies.

During 2014, following Welsh Government funding a pilot of webcasting was undertaken by the Authority in respect of its then called 'Development Control Committee', where by a number of its meetings were live streamed. This pilot ceased following the cessation of the funding available and due to the costs associated with Webcasting this provision was not taken forward by the Council.

Since that time and with the changes in technological advancements and the potential Welsh Government proposals surrounding a mandatory requirement for Webcasting this provision will need to be re-considered. Adequate facilities will need to be provided within the Council Chamber to allow for the provision of broadcasting and the costing of such a service will need to be factored into Council budgets, unless funding is made available by the Welsh Government. Webcasting will allow the Council to further improve its public engagement and to further strengthen democracy within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Webcasting will allow equality of provision, allowing the public to engage in Council business, from the

'comfort of their own home' without them needing to attend a Council venue. Currently 18 out of 22 Local Authorities in Wales currently webcast.

**Outcome:** (Dependent on costings) adequate provision of facilities to undertake a paper light approach and the future provision of webcasting.

**Measured outcome:** Increased take up of Modern.Gov and increased public engagement and strengthening of democracy through webcasting.

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## Recommendation 5

- That the Chairs of Committee meetings become an exemplar of the Paper light approach, utilising the Modern.Gov system and impressing the paper light approach to each of their Committee Members, identifying training where needed.

### Member's comments:

Members discussed the role of Committee Chairs in taking forward the paper light approach adding that Chairs should be ambassadors for the Modern.Gov approach, impressing on the importance of the approach to their Committee members. Members discussed the need for all Chairs to be offered further training on their devices if appropriate.

### Council Position:

Committee chairs have an important role within the democratic process as they provide confident and effective management of meetings to facilitate inclusivity, participation and clear decision making. Committee Chairs require a good understanding of the committee's role and responsibilities and should encourage members to participate fully in its work. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council have invested in its Chairs through mentoring and training and are fortunate to have confident and experienced chairs in post across all of its Committees, who have a good knowledge of their Committee and Members and are highly regarded by all. Utilising the Chair as an ambassador and role model setting a form of good practice in respect of Modern.gov will hopefully further encourage Members to partake in the paper light approach.

All of the Committee Chairs have been offered training on the Modern.Gov system and further training can be offered where and when necessary to ensure that they are comfortable with the paper light approach.

This recommendation proposal further supports the take up of the Modern.Gov approach, providing a more prosperous and resilient way forward. It also displays the Members high regards to the Committee Chairs and the role that they play during meetings.

**Outcome:** To encourage more Members to utilise the Modern.Gov approach

**Outcome Measure:** Increase usage of Modern.Gov and decrease in paper copies of agendas

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## RECOMMENDATION 6

- That all Members are advised of the importance of attending training sessions when arranged to support Members in their roles and to ensure value for money for the Council.

### **Members Comments:**

Members queried the ICT training provided to Members and the subsequent non-attendance and following a query the Head of Organisational Development confirmed that as the training was provided by an external provider there was a cost to the Council for all sessions. Members expressed the need for all Members to be aware of the cost of training provided and to stress the importance of attendance at such training to all Members.

### **Council Position:**

Providing Members with the training required of them has always been seen as a priority by the Council as the Council recognises that Members needed to be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to undertake the roles and duties required of them. A comprehensive induction and training programme for elected Members is in place which has been built upon through the use of Member Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) which identify individual training needs. The Head of Organisational Development undertakes Members Personal Developments Review twice a year. Training to meet these needs has been put in place through different formats and has been provided both internally and externally, depending on the subject matter. This training has been further complemented through the use of training sessions arranged in advance of meetings of full Council and other Committee meetings. The intention of this training is to assist Members to develop skills and confidence within their roles.

Due to the nature of some of the training requirements, not all have been accommodated in house. The Council have to look at all factors when providing training looking to ensure that the training is accurate, helpful and meets the needs of Members but also that when provided externally, value for money is obtained. Officers will always try to endeavour that any training provided is done so at a time and location that best suits its Members. Where possible, training at a Members home address has been accommodated to ensure maximum attendance and maximum buy in from Members. Ensuring Members feel comfortable in the training environment is also important to ensure its success. Bespoke packages of training are also offered when necessary as the Council recognise that a one size fits all doesn't necessarily provide the maximum results.

There have been occasions where Members have needed to cancel training sessions that have been booked, due to unavoidable circumstances. Unfortunately as some training is provided externally, when such cancellations occur these sessions are still costed to the Authority.

**Outcome:** Members receive high quality training to meet their required needs, while also ensuring that the Council receive value for money for the training provided.

**Outcome Measure:** Improved attendance at scheduled training

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## **RECOMMENDATION 7**

- That the Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services reviews the Members paper budget provision and to raise awareness to Members on the 'think don't print' approach to reduce printing where available to reduce costings for the Authority and the impact on the environment.

### **Members Comments:**

Printing was also discussed by Members, with the Head of ICT advising that Members were able to print from their Ipads if the printer was compatible. Members discussed printing needs and the practice of emailing constituents when possible rather than printing documents / emails in the first instance. Members commented on the reduction of paper budgets to allow only printing in essential circumstances.

### **Council Position:**

Members are able to make requests for ink cartridges, papers and other stationery to assist them in their duties from the Council Business Unit. The provision of printers to Members is on a request bases only approved by the Interim Head of Democratic Services when an appropriate business needs case is justified, as the Council try to take forward the paper light approach. With efficiency savings being demonstrated across the County Borough it would seem appropriate that the printing and paper budget for Members is reviewed.

**Outcome:** To reduce printing where available and to reduce costings for the Authority and the impact on the environment.

**Outcome Measure:** Reduction in printing paper requests

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## **CONCLUSION.**

The Democratic Services Committee aim is to ensure that all Elected Members receive the correct support, whether this relates to training, equipment or officer support to assist them in undertaking the roles that they were democratically elected to undertake.

Like many people in today's society, many of the Councils Elected Members undertake dual roles on a day to day basis, balancing busy lives, so ensuring that the Council provides the required support and provisions to Members is essential.

The Democratic Services Working Group recognise that with the use of modern technology Members can work smarter and slicker, however it is recognised that Members need to be equipped with the right training and devices to maximise upon this new way of working.

The recommendations listed within the report look at practical solutions to a developing modern age and digital environment, ensuring that the Council and those elected to represent can communicate and stay in touch with the modern practices. This work has a long term vision and sustainable outcomes for the future. There should be no barrier to the technological advances that are taking place and as a Committee the Democratic Services Group recognise that to embrace these advances, Members should be given the right provisions and training to allow them to carry out their role through all the different avenues that are available to them.

**\*\*\***