

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of the Director of Corporate Resources to the Joint Audit and Scrutiny Panel – 24th November 2010

ICT Equipment for Members

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To appraise the Audit and Scrutiny Panel (JA&SP) of the approach to be adopted regarding the review of ICT Equipment and Services for Members.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Panel acknowledge and accept the proposed workshop structure for JA&SP Members

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 In order to maximise its investments in ICT, Breckland Council have opted to 'sweat' its ICT assets to ensure full value is received from each item of hardware.
- 3.1.2 This has meant that hardware has been in use (at officer and Member level) an extended period of time, and repaired rather than replaced where possible.
- 3.1.3 The advantages to this approach are 3 fold; it minimises disruption due to unnecessary planned change of hardware (and associated costs of re-imaging kit, travel, installation etc); it allows ICT to review other technologies to deliver the same service, based on technological change; and it reduces costs to the Authority at a time when there is significant focus on effective management of public expenditure, as well as a number of 'green agenda' benefits to extending use of hardware.
- 3.1.4 It should also be noted that the current client devices/'end user' hardware platforms are becoming increasingly commoditised and therefore much cheaper – but with greater investments being made at the back (server) end (e.g. 'cloud' computing) seeking to deliver greater services, with increased capabilities but without loss of security – to a wide range of user platforms (handheld through to fixed desktop) – thereby opening up more opportunities for Breckland and its Members and officers..
- 3.1.5 It is also recognised that from a timing perspective, reviewing service provision now, and agreeing a model to be adopted following the Local Elections in 2011 provides a good opportunity to revisit Member expectations, to review current market trends and services and to seek to provide a new common platform to ensure that Breckland Members post May 2011 are best placed to fulfil their roles within the Council/their respective communities.

3.1.6 The approach to achieve this will be to initiate discussions with a group of Members to ascertain the following:

3.1.6.1 Identification of any current issues with existing technology/systems/services/support - including mod.gov / Breckland Intranet – connectivity, hardware, printers etc.

3.1.6.2 Potential opportunities/requirements from new technologies, services

3.1.6.3 Identification of any educational, and/or technological, and/or training and/or security, and/or financial/other barriers to achieving the above.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 There are no issues identified at this stage.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 Options available are:

3.3.2 A) Do nothing. Breckland have managed to extract significant value out of its ICT hardware for Members – however there is wide recognition that the current hardware is now uneconomic to continue to repair, therefore costs of service would increase as a result of a ‘do nothing’ option.

3.3.3 B) Review the service, and agree a way forward post elections 2011 that ensures Members receive an affordable, supportable value for money service that meets with their current and coming requirements where possible.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.4.1 The Council needs to keep on top of both technological advances, and also be cognisant of changing Member requirements as technology becomes more pervasive. The aim of the panel therefore is to clarify where possible future needs of Members, to appraise Members of technology that may assist with their council business, and to recommend an approach to be adopted post elections in May 2011.

4. **Risk, Impact and Financial Implications**

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 No risks identified at this stage.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 There are no financial implications at this stage

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 None at this stage

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: None
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: none
- f) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004]: None

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

7.1 Your Council – Your Services

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 None.

Lead Contact Officer:

Name/Post: Kevin Taylor

Telephone: 01362 656841

Email: Kevin.taylor2@breckland.gov.uk

Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):