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Member Development Panel - 28/08/14

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Thursday, 28th August, 2014

Present:- Councillor David Becket – in the Chair

Councillors Bailey, Proctor and Mrs Winfield

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillor(s) Eastwood, Wemyss and White

9. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest stated.

10. **TABLET TRIAL UPDATE**

The tablet trial would be drawing to a close at the end of August and the Members who had been asked to take part had been invited to this Special Meeting to give their views.

The Council's ICT Operations and Development Manager gave a presentation which set out questions for the group to answer:

DEVICE

Were Members satisfied with the size and clarity of the screen?

All of the Members in attendance agreed that they were satisfied.

What was their opinion of the battery life of the device?

Members were happy with the battery life but the charging time of the device raised issues. This could be overcome by charging the device overnight, which Members were doing.

Was the device effective outdoors?

Members agreed that the device worked well outside and was especially useful on site visits.

Did Members knowingly use the 3G connection?

Whilst Members confirmed that they had not knowingly used the 3G connection, it was confirmed that those who were successfully connected online in the actual meeting were using the 3G connection. All Members present believed that the 3G connection on the device was important for its 'use anywhere' ability.

Were Members satisfied with the actual Ipad?

All Members agreed that they were satisfied.

The Members agreed that the keypads were not a good idea and preferred the touchscreen. If the devices were rolled out to Members they would be happy to lose the keypad although the stylus's were essential, making a considerable difference to the usage of the tablet.

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DAY TO DAY WORK

Are e-mails and calendars easy to access?

Members agreed that they were easy to access. A question was raised regarding read/received emails. The device could be set up to show this.

Large attachments would not always open as the Ipad did not yet have the appropriate software to open some of them. This could be easily remedied should the trial go live. Also, when an attachment was written by the sender on a computer, it was easier to send the e mail from the computer than the IPAD.

Members were informed that the trial members had fifty percent less unread emails than those not on the trial.

Did the Ipad make you more accessible as a Councillor?

Members agreed that it did.

Did the Ipad add value to the work that you do as a Councillor? Has it made it easier?

Members felt that it had made the role far more professional. In addition, having instant access to information whilst talking to their constituents reassured the public that something was being done, thus adding value to their work in the community.

What could be altered to make the Ipad more effective?

Build-up, workshop style training would be required for some Members if/when the trial were to go live.

MODERN.GOV

Were the documents on modern.gov easy to work with?

In general, Members found Modern.gov easy to use and having access to multiple sources of integrated information had been good. It was noted however that where agendas ran into hundreds of pages, Chairs found it easier to navigate paper copies. Also, supplementary agendas meant flicking from one agenda to another.

Some Members had experienced confusion with passwords and passcodes which had led to the device locking out. This would be overcome by emphasising the difference between the two during training sessions.

Was the annotation feature of modern.gov useful?

Members agreed that it was.

Restricted documents were a problem as the paper copy was still required. However, should the programme be rolled out, an add-on could be purchased to allow access to restricted documents. It had not been worth purchasing this for the trial.

Access to restricted documents and a better document structure would be a great improvement to modern.gov.

Would an Ipad be an improvement to the ICT solutions currently offered to Members?

This had a mixed reaction and it was agreed that it depended upon each individual Member.

All of the trial members in attendance agreed that they could quite happily leave the meeting, with the Ipad, in the knowledge that they would not receive paper agendas/minutes again and thus, huge volumes of paper.

In all, Members were enthusiastic about using the Ipad for their Council business and stated that they would be sorry to hand them back at the end of the trial as they now had all of their information on one single device.

If the vast majority of Members were willing to use Ipads it would still offer a substantial saving in printing costs. In addition, the Members who still requested paper copies would have to collect them themselves as the courier service would be discontinued.

The Member Development Panel wished to set up a meeting with the Leader of the Council with a view to taking the scheme forward.

A training session on emails should be arranged for all Members with all those Members who do not access their emails being required to attend.

A report on the findings now needed to go to the Executive Management Team

Resolved:- That the information be received and the comments noted.

COUNCILLOR DAVID BECKET
Chair

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