

**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Provision of IT Equipment to Members Working Group
<b>Subject:</b>	The provision of IT equipment to Members
<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 8 June, 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6316)
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<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	The Policy and Resources (Members) Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 14 March, 2005, agreed that Members, elected to the new Council in May of that year, be provided with personal computer equipment up to a maximum cost of £2,000 per Member per Council term. This equipment would be provided to each Member on the basis that the Council owns the equipment and it is loaned to those who request it. Members would have the option of borrowing either a desk-top computer or a lap-top, together with appropriate peripheral devices, such as, printers, scanners, cameras and iPACs.
1.2	It was also agreed that Members would have the option to purchase the computer equipment which had been loaned to them. The cost to the Member would be based on the age and quality of the computer equipment.
1.3	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 15 April, agreed, after considering a recommendation which promoted the standardisation of the IT equipment provided to Members, to defer the matter until after the election when a Working Group would be set up to consider the relevant issues.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Since the commencement of the last Council term in 2005, technology has advanced immensely resulting in high quality IT equipment available at a significantly less cost than what would have previously been the case. This has had a direct impact on the amount and type of equipment which can be provided to the Member for the Council term. It is clear that an opportunity now exists for the Committee to consider the IT provision to Members and any associated savings which may be realised whilst ensuring that Members are provided with an enhanced IT package which allows them to harness the many new technologies in order to further assist them in undertaking their roles and responsibilities effectively.
2.2	Another important development which has had an impact on the provision of IT equipment is the very high turnover of Councillors with 21 Members co-opted during the last Council Term. Although it is unlikely that the Council would see such a high turnover in the foreseeable future, it is arguable that any decision in relation to the IT provision to Members should take into account that future Council terms will most likely see a higher intake than that which would have been experienced pre May 2005. With this in mind, Members are asked to

	<p>consider the implications of how the current policy permits all 51 re-elected or newly elected Members to avail of the £2,000 IT provision at the start of a new Council term. This will mean that it is possible for a Member who has been co-opted 2 months before the end of a Council term and provided with the relevant IT Equipment to be given the option of receiving new equipment should they be re-elected to the new Council.</p> <p>2.3 To ensure that the best use is being made of the IT provision, Members are asked to consider that the equipment be provided on a four year rolling programme with all devices being supported by a suitable warranty for this period. This would mean, for example, that those Members who received their equipment in January 2010 would be offered the option to receive new equipment, from a standard package (outlined below), in January 2014 at the earliest. This would ensure that Members would be able to make use of the equipment for its whole useful life and would provide value for money in respect of the equipment purchased.</p> <p>2.4 Following a recent information, communication and technology benchmark exercise it was identified that the Council's IT estate is too diverse with its range of personal computers, laptops, operating systems and other peripherals. The diversity of the estate contributes directly to the amount of resources required to support it and therefore to the cost effectiveness of the Council's IT provision. As part of ISB's improvement plan, the estate will be standardised with a limited range of high quality and functionally capable IT equipment and associated software. This will increase user productivity, reduce user downtime and reduce the cost of ICT support.</p> <p>2.5 It is accepted that, although standardising the estate will result in efficiencies, this must not have a detrimental effect on how Members can utilise their equipment in undertaking their roles and responsibilities effectively. The estate must also ensure that further technological advancements can be harnesses and utilised by Members and Council staff. Therefore, ISB have proposed the following package, at an approximate cost of £1,000 per Member on a four year rolling programme, which will be offered to all Councillors who are returned to the Council following the Local Government Elections in May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desktop PC</li> <li>• Monitor</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;"><i>or</i></li> <li>• Laptop</li> <li>• Laptop docking station</li> <li>• Laptop case</li> <li>• Laptop lock</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;"><i>and</i></li> <li>• All-in-one printer, scanner and fax machine</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500GB External hard drive</li> <li>• Blackberry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (as per the decision of the Policy and Resources (Members) Sub-Committee, on 19th September, 2005 this does not include line rental or cost of calls)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Members will also be provided with print cartridges and memory sticks when</p>

	required.
2.6	The proposed package not only acknowledges the benefits of the equipment which is currently provided to Members but also considers best practice research, as outlined in appendix 1. As a result of this research and when considering how the Council's methods of communication have evolved and improved, it is recommended that the package includes a Blackberry communications device.
2.7	The Blackberry will not only permit Members to communicate verbally, by text and by email but it will also provide access to the internet as well as prove to be an effective tool in harnessing social media, a communication technique which is changing the way messages are relayed to many of the city's key stakeholders through interactive dialogue.
2.8	Blackberry is currently the device of choice for the Council to deliver secure email and voice services due to the comprehensive security safeguards and policies that are delivered through the Blackberry enterprise server. Apple iPhones and other smart phones are not approved for Government use by the Communications-Electronics Security Group (CESG). CESG is the Information Assurance arm of government providing advice and assistance on the security of communications and electronic data.
2.9	Another important issue to be considered is the security of the Council's electronic information. The organisation faces several ways in which sensitive data may be at risk of leaking out of the organisation. One of the most common and easiest ways to remove sensitive data is via removable media, such as, memory sticks, CD ROMS, Digital Cameras, smartphones, etc. Other mobile devices such as laptops and tablet PC's often experience loss of data, regularly receiving media attention. This protection of this information is vital and can be directly enhanced by standardising the IT equipment.
2.10	Furthermore, in April 2010 the Information Commissioner received new powers to order organisations to pay up to £500,000 as a penalty for serious breaches of the Data Protection Act. The information Commissioners office has already used these powers to issue fines to Ealing Council (£80,000) and Hounslow Council (£70,000). In the case of both councils, laptops were lost or stolen containing details of around 1,700 individuals. While both laptops were password protected they were unencrypted. There was no evidence to suggest that the data held on the computers was accessed.
2.11	As a result and in order to ensure that the Council's obligations are being met in this regard ISB are currently rolling out encryption software on all laptops and will be bringing forward additional policies to enhance the protection of removable media.
2.12	Should all Members continue to be provided with the non-standardised IT
	equipment, in accordance with the current policy, the total cost would equate to approximately £25,000 per year. However, the total cost of the above package would equate to approximately £13,000 per year, resulting in a saving of approximately £48,000 over the Council term.
2.13	As per the decision of the Policy and Resources (Members) Sub-Committee, on 14 March, 2005, Members are recommended to continue with the policy whereby

	they are given the option to purchase the IT equipment which had been loaned to them and that the cost would be based on the age and quality of the computer equipment. If IT equipment is purchased, all Council supplied licenses must be removed, for example Microsoft Office.
2.14	It must be made clear that although significant savings can be made through the standardisation of the package being offered these savings will not result in a reduced IT support for Members. Members are assured that the proposed package will not only allow for their roles and responsibilities as a locally elected representative to be carried out effectively but that it will also permit Members to harness new, evolving and increasingly important methods of communication.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	The total cost to the Council to provide the above IT package would be approximately £13,000 per year which would result in an annual saving of £12,000 per year.
3.2	As a result of the standardisation of the IT estate further efficiencies would be realised as a result of a decrease in the amount of resources required to support the diverse estate which exists presently.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
4.1	N/A

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	The Working Group is asked to consider the information supplied and recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agree to the standardisation of the IT equipment provided to Members which would result in the provision of the above package from the start of the new Council term on a rolling four year programme
5.2	The Working Group is also requested to recommend that the decision of the Policy and Resources (Members) Sub-Committee of 14 March, 2005 whereby Members are given the option to purchase the loaned equipment at a cost which would be based on its age and quality be reaffirmed.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Officers responsible: Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer June 2011	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
ISB - Information Services Belfast CESG - Communications-Electronics Security Group	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
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Appendix 1: Best practice research on IT provision to other high performing Councils  
Appendix 2: Further Information on smartphones and media tablets

Appendix 1

**Best practice research on IT provision to other high performing Councils**

**Edinburgh City Council**

Desktop or laptop  
Mobile or Blackberry - **only** to those Members who have a special responsibility  
Printers in party rooms

### **Glasgow City Council**

Desk top or laptop  
Blackberry for all Members  
Printer

### **Manchester City Council**

Desk top or laptop  
Printer  
Blackberry for all Members

### **Liverpool City Council**

Laptop only  
3G Network Card  
Printer  
Blackberry - **only** for Members who have a special responsibility

### **Dublin City Council**

Laptop  
Docking Station  
Printer  
Blackberry

Appendix 2

### **Further Information on Smartphones and Media tablets**

Blackberry is currently the device of choice for BCC to deliver secure email and voice services due to the comprehensive security safeguards and policies that are delivered

through the Blackberry enterprise server. Apple iPhones and other smart phones are not approved for Government use by the CESG. CESG is the Information Assurance arm of government providing advice and assistance on the security of communications and electronic data.

- Data remains encrypted at all points between the Blackberry Enterprise Server and the device.
- Devices which are lost or stolen can be deactivated quickly and all information wiped.
- Blackberries are defended by a "root of trust" certificate architecture that prevents low-level hacking and deters malicious applications. Application programming interfaces (APIs) to sensitive system services require permissions to use that are tied to the original root certificate.
- All Blackberry models have a common security architecture.
- Blackberry security policies are larger in number and range of controls than those for any other Smartphone platform.
- Blackberries managed via the Blackberry enterprise server can be guaranteed to comply with strict policies.

Other Smartphones (including Android and iPhone) do not offer the same level of enterprise protection as Blackberry. For example:

- Android OS security controls are incomplete and geared toward consumers.
- Native data encryption and strong authentication are not included.
- Android OS does not proactively screen or provide embedded control for distribution or execution of third-party applications.
- Users, developers and hackers can take root control over their phones, allowing nearly any component at all levels of the OS to be altered and/or replaced.

To use email on iPhone there are 2 options Outlook Web Access or Active synch through iTunes.

iTunes will synchronise any music, video etc to the PC it is installed on potentially breaching copyright laws and breaching the terms of the Council's computer use policy, if it is installed on a work PC.

- If iTunes was installed on a personal PC that does not connect to our network Outlook web access could be used to access work email without breaching our computer use policy.
- When/if we connect to Network NI to access transferring functions central government have a directive in place stating that iPhones, Android, Windows Smart phones or Nokia email devices are not allowed to connect.
- With Blackberry there is a remote wipe and lock feature if the device is lost or stolen.
- Not available with iPhone OWA.

### **iPad Media Tablets**

Under instruction ISB have previously purchased a limited number of iPads for use by Councillors, however, conclusions and recommendations from our recent ICT benchmark include:

- The number of operating system and versions of Microsoft Office is noticeably higher than benchmark, which compounds the support challenges
- Users have a higher call rate to the Service Desk than the benchmark
- The BCC ICT infrastructure is older and more complex to support than the benchmark organisations, on average
- In order to get the best out of the Windows 7 and Office 2007 environment up-to-date **standardised** PCs, laptops and printers would be required
- A multi-year technology refresh programme should be included in the Windows 7 project considerations
- This would increase user productivity, reduce user downtime and reduce the cost of ICT support.

These form part of the basis for the current ISB improvement programme.

There are other practical reasons which currently rule out iPads as business devices.

- Connectivity to our network (including shares and Interlink) are not accessible on the iPad
- The iPad does not provide any way for users to access files on the device other than through the application they are associated with
- VPN connectivity is not supported for remote connectivity
- There may be apps for the iPad to deliver Word functionality, but it seems that there are issues with compatibility when circulating documents
- Excel and Powerpoint aren't currently available in compatible form
- It is not designed for intensive productivity work
- The safari browser is not compatible with certain web-based applications
- It is difficult to type at speed
- Another major factor that counts against adoption of the iPad is that it is not capable of serving as the sole business client, and the price tag (starting at £429, or £529 for both 3G and Wi-Fi) makes it a very expensive companion device to a PC laptop, especially in the current economic climate.