

Meeting of:	Democratic Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 25 July 2022
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	ICT Update for Members
Purpose of Report:	To inform Members of any new developments or issues within the ICT service and how they relate to the services provided to them.
Report Owner:	Rob Thomas, Chief Executive
Responsible Officer:	Nick Wheeler, Operational Manager (ICT)
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	None
Policy Framework:	The terms of reference of the Committee include responsibility for overseeing the Council's approach to Member Development, including Member ICT.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report provides a general update in relation to ICT provision to Members

Recommendations

1. That Members note the content of the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure Members are made aware of any developments to their ICT Service to the wider Council.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Committee's terms of reference include responsibility for overseeing the Council's approach to Member Development. As part of its role, the Committee has agreed that a Members' ICT update be a standing item on the agenda for each meeting.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 A project team resourced by ICT, Democratic Services and Organisational Development was assembled to plan and deliver all of the required themes with the Member' hardware refresh programme. These themes were:
 - ICT Hardware and Software (specification and procurement)
 - Training (content, materials and delivery)
 - Terms of Use (ICT Computer Code of Conduct and Data Protection)
 - Future Support (ongoing bespoke training and business as usual)
- 2.2 The hardware and software was specified based on requirements gathered by the project team and procured by the council's ICT Procurement Team.
- 2.3 The following equipment that all new and returning Elected and co-opted Members have been provisioned with (laptop, carry case, headsets and spare chargers) were purchased via the NPS procurement framework.
- 2.4 Mobile phones and voice / data SIM cards were purchased through the council's corporate mobile phone contract with Telefonica (O2), with the mobile phone hard cases being purchased from Amazon, following a cost options appraisal.
- 2.5 The equipment was delivered, and training was provided to Members during the 'Market Stall' sessions held in the Civic Offices in May 2022. This training covered the operation of the equipment and also the terms of its use in the context of Information Security, Data Protection and usage, i.e., to only be used for activities relating to Member's functions.

- 2.6** All ICT equipment that had been used by Members before the elections in May 2022 has been collected. Any out-dated / redundant equipment has been securely wiped to ensure that no data remained and then scrapped as part of ICT's scrapping / recycling procedure. Any serviceable kit has been recycled for re-use within the organisation. The ICT inventory database was updated to reflect the above.
- 2.7** To facilitate and maintain a reduction in the volume and cost of printing hard copy Committee agendas, minutes, reports, etc., going forward, the previously developed 'Committee Hub' will continue to be used. This is essentially a secure electronic repository where Members can find agendas, minutes, reports, etc., specifically related to the Committees within their respective portfolios.
- 2.8** Further support and training has been provided to Members since the original 'Market Stall' sessions and ICT support is available via the council's ICT Service Desk.
- 2.9** Following the recent appointment of the new Director of Resources, discussions have begun on how to improve the support that is provided to Members. The scope of the discussions has been around training and development, ICT support and support for remote and hybrid meetings.
- 2.10** To further inform this work, it is intended to carry out a Members' ICT survey to establish feedback on the ICT equipment provided to Members post elections, and to gather any further training and support requirements Members may have.
- 2.11** Office 365, particularly Teams has proved to be invaluable through the pandemic when staff and Members had to work remotely to ensure that council services could be maintained, and to ensure that the democratic process could continue and remain transparent.
- 2.12** Now that Covid-19 regulations have been ostensibly lifted, there is a requirement to facilitate 'hybrid meetings'. This is where some meeting delegates physically sit together in a meeting room setting, in the Vale's case this will be the Council Chamber, while other delegates can attend the meeting remotely.
- 2.13** A team comprised of Democratic Services and ICT colleagues have been testing a hybrid meeting solution, which will be available to facilitate hybrid meetings going forward. The functionality to provide live Welsh / English subtitles and live bilingual translations for meetings that are to be live-streamed are currently being reviewed.
- 2.14** The ICT Service continues to provide work experience and training for young workers. There is currently one trainee post on the ICT establishment and three apprentices have recently joined the team.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** This will allow the Council to communicate and collaborate efficiently into the future and facilitate transparency for the democratic process.
- 3.2** This will prevent the likelihood of cyber-attack(s) and safeguard the council's data and computer infrastructure.
- 3.3** To help integrate processes, both internally and externally with partners and other organisations.
- 3.4** This will allow internal departments and external partners and organisations to collaborate efficiently and securely into the future.
- 3.5** To ensure that all stakeholders, internally and externally will remain involved and able to deliver their outcomes and goals.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** There are no such implications that arise as a result of this report.

Employment

- 4.2** There are no such implications that arise as a result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** There are no such implications that arise as a result of this report.

5. Background Papers

None