# AGENDA

## DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE MEETING

**MAID STONE**
Borough Council

Date:  Wednesday 8 February 2017
Time:  6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors  Boughton (Chairman), Fissenden (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Hinder, Mrs Joy, Lewins, Newton, Revell, Mrs Ring and Vizzard

<u>Page No.</u>

1.    Apologies for Absence

2.    Notification of Substitute Members

3.    Notification of Visiting Members

4.    Disclosures by Members and Officers

5.    Disclosures of Lobbying

**Continued Over/:**

## Issued on Tuesday 31 January 2017

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Poppy Collier on   01622 602242**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent  ME15 6JQ**

6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Democracy Committee**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2016**

**Present:**    Councillor Boughton (Chairman), and Councillors Fissenden, Mrs Hinder, Joy, Lewins, Newton, Revell, Mrs Ring and Vizzard

   **Also Present:**   Councillors Cuming, Prendergast and Willis

31.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

32.   NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

33.   NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that the following Visiting Members were in attendance with regard to the items specified:

- Councillor Cuming reserved his right to speak on items 11 and 12.

- Councillor Prendergast reserved her right to speak on items 11 and 12.

- Councillor Willis reserved his right to speak on item 12.

34.   DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Boughton disclosed an interest with regard to item 8 – Polling Station Review, as he had responded to the consultation and given his firm view. In light of this Councillor Boughton felt he could not consider the issue with an open mind. It was noted that Councillor Boughton would leave the room and the Vice-Chairman would take the chair for item 8.

35.   DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Boughton indicated that he had been lobbied with regard to item 10 – Courier Review.

36.   TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

**RESOLVED**: That all items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

37.   MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2016

It was proposed that item 29, paragraph 3 of the minutes should be amended to state: 'Councillor Vizzard requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Report on the Council changing to four yearly elections dated 2010 be circulated to all Committee Members.'

**RESOLVED**: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the amendment of item 29, para 3 to read: 'Councillor Vizzard requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Report on the Council changing to four yearly elections dated 2010 be circulated to all Committee Members.'

38.   CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

**RESOLVED**: That item 11 – Four Yearly Elections Interim Report be taken before item 8 – Polling Station Review, as a technician was in attendance for item 11.

39.   REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - FOUR YEARLY ELECTIONS INTERIM REPORT

The GIS/LLPG Technician was invited to address the committee regarding the change in electoral boundaries that would be possible following a decision of the Council to change to a four yearly election timetable.

Councillor Prendergast addressed the committee as a Visiting Member.

During discussion the following points were made:

- The issue of four yearly whole council elections was considered as part of a report in 2008-09 under the Cabinet governance system. The matter was not progressed at that time and should be closed.

- A review of four yearly whole council elections was welcomed if this would simplify the system and encourage more people to vote.

It was moved and seconded:

That the progress of the Committee's review of four yearly elections be noted.

For – 4        Against – 5        Abstain – 0

The motion was lost.

**RESOLVED**: That no further action be taken with regard to the review of four yearly elections.

For – 5        Against – 4        Abstain – 0

40. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - POLLING STATION REVIEW

The Chairman Councillor Boughton disclosed an interest in the item and left the room at 7.08 p.m. Vice-Chairman Councillor Fissenden took the chair.

The Head of Policy and Communications presented the report proposing a change of venue of the Fant Ward (East) Polling Station from St Michael's School to the Grange Moor Hotel.

It was explained that the change of venue would be cost neutral. At a Member's request it was confirmed that the costs of using the Grange Moor Hotel would be circulated to committee Members outside of the meeting.

**RESOLVED**: That it be recommended to Council that the polling station in Fant Ward be changed from St Michael's School to the Grange Moor Hotel.

41. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - WEBCASTING SERVICE

Councillor Boughton re-joined the meeting and took the chair at 7.12 p.m.

The Head of Policy and Communications presented the report updating Members on the installation of the new webcasting service provided by Public-i.

The committee was advised that:

- A key feature requiring consideration was the ability to vote electronically at meetings using the conferencing functionality of the new microphone units.

- The Maidstone Borough Council constitution stated that 'Unless a recorded vote is demanded under Rule 21.4, the mayor will take the vote by a show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting' (Part 3.1, 21.4) As such the constitution would need to be amended to include electronic voting. This would require the committee to refer the matter to Council.

Members raised the following points during discussion:

- An all-Member demonstration of how electronic voting would work in practice was required to take place before the issue was considered at Council.

- Social media was currently used as a tool for public engagement. The use of social within the procedures of the Council's committees – such as to allow members of the public to use Twitter as a facility for asking questions of Councillors during a live meeting – would require amendments to be made to the constitution.

**RESOLVED**:

1. That the update on the installation of the webcasting service be noted.

2. That it be recommended to Council that the use of the webcasting voting system to ensure transparency and accuracy at meetings be approved, and that the constitution be amended to reflect this decision.

3. That a demonstration of the webcasting voting system for all Members be held prior to Council's consideration of the voting system recommendation.

   For – 9        Against – 0        Abstain – 0

42. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - COURIER REVIEW

The Head of Policy and Communications presented the findings of a review into the courier run as commissioned by the committee as part of its work programme.

The following issues were raised during discussion:

- The Civic Officers owned a van which was used to deliver the internal courier run on Wednesdays and Councillor courier run on Fridays. MBC debt recovery was in need of a van, and so officers were requested to ascertain whether MBC debt recovery could have use of the van on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

- The courier run utilised .22 FTE (full time equivalent) of officer time, equating to approximately £3000 annually. The exact cost figure would be circulated to Members outside of the meeting. The staffing implication was that an officer role could be reduced by .22 FTE, or the officer assigned to other duties during those hours.

- A Member put forward Thurrock Council as a positive example of an authority at which Councillors collected their papers from a named pigeon hole at the Council offices. It was suggested that this method would only be effective if papers were ready promptly for collection.

- It was felt that Councillors views were missing from the review. It was requested that an all-Member survey on the findings of the courier run review and available options be undertaken with the results to return to the January meeting with a clear officer recommendation. It was requested that the survey also invite Members to put forward their own suggestions.

**RESOLVED**: That an all-Member survey on the findings of the courier run review and available options be undertaken, with the findings to be

presented to the 11 January 2016 meeting of the committee with a clear officer recommendation.

For – 9        Against – 0        Abstain – 0

43.    REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - OUTSIDE BODIES FOLLOW UP REPORT

The Head of Policy and Communications introduced the report explaining that additional omitted information had come to light following the decision made regarding Outside Bodies on 8 September 2016. The committee was therefore asked to review its decision.

Councillor Willis addressed the committee as a Visiting Member.

Members stated the following during discussion:

- Members had previously requested clarification from legal as to which Outside Bodies the Council had a legal obligation towards, but this was not brought out in the reports to Committee.

- It had been put forward that Outside Bodies could be aligned to Service Committees. The allocation of Bodies to specific Committees required further work.

- A working group supported by a legal advisor would allow all issues to be identified and addressed, and would be able to harness Member's knowledge of the historical links between the Council and Outside Bodies.

**RESOLVED**:

1.    That, in light of the information in the report, the decision made with regard to Outside Bodies on 8 September 2016 be revisited.

2.    That a working group be created to review the appointments to Outside Bodies in detail, giving consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny review in 2008-09 as part of that review.

For – 9        Against – 0        Abstain – 0

44.    DURATION OF MEETING

6.33 p.m. to 8.11 p.m.

| DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE | | 8 February 2017 |
|---|---|---|
| Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting? | | **Yes** |

## Courier Run Review

| | |
|---|---|
| **Final Decision-Maker** | Democracy Committee |
| **Lead Head of Service** | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Lead Officer and Report Author** | Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Classification** | Public |
| **Wards affected** | |

| **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:** |
|---|
| 1. That the Committee considers the options and agrees what action should be taken in respect of the Courier Run having regard to Options A-E in this report. |

| **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:** |
|---|
| This report relates to the decisions made in respect of our priorities as it covers the printing and distribution of Agendas. |
| • Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all |
| • Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough |

| Timetable | |
|---|---|
| *Meeting* | *Date* |
| Democracy Committee | 16 November 2016 |
| Democracy Committee | 8 February 2017 |

# Courier Run Review

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 At the start of the municipal year the Committee commissioned an officer review of the courier run. This work has been undertaken by a member of the finance team in consultation with corporate services and the mayoral team.

1.2 The Committee considered the options at its meeting in November and requested that consultation with Councillors be carried out on all the options prior to a decision being made.

1.3 This report outlines the responses to the options for consideration.

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Committee commissioned a review to look at the possible savings and future options for the printing and distribution of agendas for Councillors. At present agendas and reports are printed centrally by the council's print room known as corporate support. Agendas are posted or more usually, delivered via the civic officers on a weekly courier run on a Friday. This can take   a civic officer the whole day to complete when delivering papers to all members for Full Council.

2.2 The review sought to identify both efficiency and cashable savings.  Officers examined the processes in the Corporate Support team for printing agendas and preparing for the courier run, to identify the officer time taken.  Data was used from 2015-16 to identify the costs of printing agendas  and running the van for the courier run. The van is used for an internal post-delivery on a Wednesday taking post to and from the satellite offices and services and the courier which only runs on Fridays . MBS, the team at the depot have also undertaken the courier run on occasions and this data has also been considered as part of the report.

The Process

2.3 Councillors are contacted at the start of the municipal year to find out what agendas they wish to receive. A distribution list is collated for each committee listing which Councillors are to receive the different agendas. All Councillors also receive an email with links to all agenda's on line and via the intranet. Currently the access to the intranet does not include the exempt part 2 pages.

2.4 The Corporate Support team process for a print run for Agendas is as follows:

- Email is received in print room inbox, with some instructions from user i.e. when needed, black & white / colour & stapled etc.
- The operator sets up the job to print, checking that each appendix is set up on a new page.
- Print distribution list for the particular committee to check number of copies required.
- If there are any issues liaise with Democratic services to see if the format can be changed.
- If the agenda refers to minutes of the previous meeting, these are accessed and 1 copy is printed on special minute paper.
- Go through the distribution list and include copies of the agenda papers in the members appropriate pigeon hole.
- In 2015/16 Corporate printing costs was identified as £13,000.

2.5 The Corporate Support team process for a Courier Run is as follows:

- There is a set list of the order to deliver to members in number order.
- Work through the list in numerical order and empty any agenda papers from the members pigeon hole and include in appropriate green bag or address an envelope with Cllr's name and number from the sheet.
- Include in large box in strict numerical order.
- List any names of councillors who will not be receiving a delivery.
- This list will need to be emailed to Julie Webb.
- Count number of deliveries; add to list of members who will not be receiving a delivery and check this comes back to the total number of members.

2.6 Estimated cost of the courier run (not including print or post):-

This is based on the mileage in 2015/16 and time collated by officers during the month of September 2016. The mileage is an annual estimate using a figure of 70 miles per member courier run. The employee efficiency calculation is for one civic officer based on 5 minutes per mile.

| | |
|---|---|
| Van costs based | £4,667 |
| Fuel costs, 3433 miles | £226 |
| **Total estimated cost cashable** | **£ 4,893** |

**Other employee efficiencies** – Civic Officers    0.22 FTE (£4,760)
                                                                    Corporate Support, minimal time preparing
                                                                    courier run

## 3.   AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1   There are a number of options the Committee could consider in relation to the printing and distribution of agendas and other papers to Councillors. Councillors in a survey were asked to consider each option and the impact it would have on improving arrangements for agenda papers and secondly whether they would support the option. There were 23 respondents to the survey.

3.2   The survey results are in favour of option D remain the same with 55% of respondents in support of maintaining the current approach. Option A print only was supported by 31.8%, Option B electronic agendas by 13.6% and Option C posting printed agendas by 13.6%.

3.3   **Option A**

Committee agendas continue to be printed but not delivered or posted
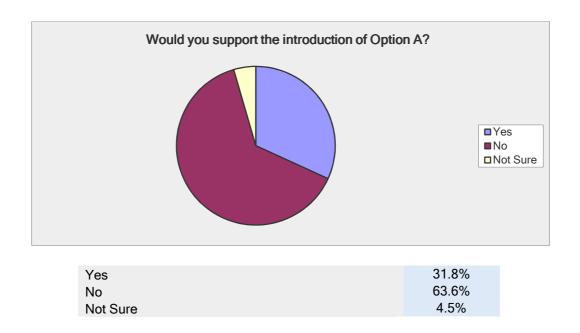
**Savings**
Vehicle costs, excluding fuel          £4,667
Fuel costs                             £226
Postage (as per 2015/16 costs)         £1,276

**Total cashable saving                £6,189**

**Other employee efficiencies** – Civic Officers     0.22 FTE
                                    Corporate Support, minimal time preparing courier run

| What would be the impact of Option A on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| A large positive impact | 9.1% | 2 |
| A small positive impact | 18.2% | 4 |
| No Difference | 9.1% | 2 |
| A small negative impact | 9.1% | 2 |
| A large negative impact | 54.5% | 12 |
| | *answered question* | 22 |
| | *skipped question* | 1 |

**Would you support the introduction of Option A?**



| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 31.8% |
| No | 63.6% |
| Not Sure | 4.5% |

Comments received on option A:
- Although it doesn't challenge the need for corporate printing
- We would need an email to say papers are in pigeon holes.
- Not always in Maidstone this could only work if papers were to be ready long in advance of meetings
- I have a full time job as well as being a councillor, as do some other members. I would find it very difficult to get into town in office hours
- I need papers well before a committee meeting so I can read and research accordingly. To collect before I go in means I would be poorly prepared.
- MBC is proposing minor savings in order to save £4.2.million by tinkering with the real costs of management when what is really needed is an independent review of staffing costs across the Council.
- It will prevent councillor's being able to do their work, they will attend meetings without having papers to read and the quality of decision making will drop
- Democracy is expensive, but, in the overall scheme of things, £19,169 is a relatively small price.
- The cost to the Council of individual Cllrs making trips to Maidstone to collect agendas, would surely cost more than the cost of a single person delivering them.
- Option A is too cumbersome, as it would require extra journeys by members into Maidstone.

Please note that under this option agendas would be available on-line on the Council's website, so they would be available for Councillors to read at publication point at least 5 clear days before the committee meeting.

### 3.3  Option B

The Modern.gov system is upgraded to allow proper access to papers via ipads. Councillors and officers use ipads to access agenda papers. Since the survey was distributed we now have our agendas available via the modern app so they can be accessed via ipads. Councillors can request printed copies. External organisations are no longer sent copies of the papers.
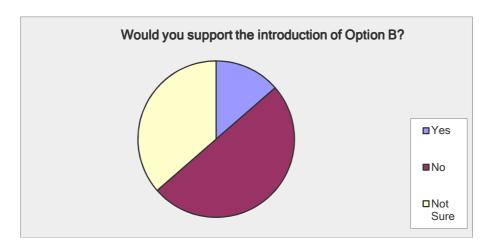
**Savings**

| | |
|---|---|
| Vehicle costs, excluding fuel | £4667 |
| Fuel costs | £ 226 |
| Corporate Printing costs | £13,000 |
| Postage (as per 2015/16 costs ) | £1276 |
| **Total cashable saving** | **£19,169** |

**Other employee efficiencies** – Civic Officers    0.22 FTE
Corporate Support, minimal time preparing courier run

| What would be the impact of Option B on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers? | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| A large positive impact | 9.5% | 2 |
| A small positive impact | 9.5% | 2 |
| No Difference | 4.8% | 1 |
| A small negative impact | 38.1% | 8 |
| A large negative impact | 38.1% | 8 |
| | *answered question* | 21 |
| | *skipped question* | 2 |

**Would you support the introduction of Option B?**



| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 13.6% |
| No | 50.0% |
| Not Sure | 36.4% |

Comments on Option B

- large positive impact on budget savings, but a large negative impact on committee members, especially where there are a lot of reports and tables.  I get sea sick reading too much on screen!  Also I like to make notes on my cttee papers.
- This would have to apply to all to work with no exceptions. I do not think iPads are ideal for large documents and we need this to apply to all as there is a page numbering issue between iPads and paper report numbering.
- will only work if papers are ready long in advance
- Full council agenda this month ran to 403 pages
- Just the Agenda? I need to read all papers and detail fully and move between pages frequently
- See comments made for option A
- The council would have to pay for councillor's to have high quality fibre, plus high quality printers and pay for paper, there would be an increase in cost and again why should councillors have to do this, it is what officers are supposed to do
- There are some areas where agendas do not need to be printed, e.g. Full Council agendas often replicate what Cllrs have seen at service cttee's.  But there is a real issue with proof reading by Officers, and it is often only Cllrs reading printed versions who pick up on a plethora of issues.
- Access to documents should be easier by sending whole agendas via email in a single file rather than links to a webpage with multiple files which is very cumbersome to access and download.

### 3.4 **Option C**

Posting agendas and not using the courier run showed we could make an efficiency saving of 0.22 FTE.  However this option will increase costs rather than decrease as any cashable savings from vehicle costs including fuel will be lost in the cost of postage.
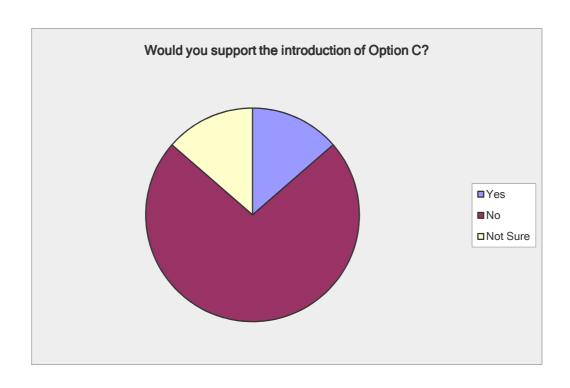
**Savings:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Vehicle costs, excluding fuel | £4667 |
| Fuel costs | £ 226 |
| Non cashable civic officer time | £ 4,760 |

**Costs**

| | |
|---|---|
| Posting Agendas | £19,245 |
| Corporate Printing costs | £13,000 |

| What would be the impact of Option C on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| A large positive impact | 9.1% | 2 |
| A small positive impact | 4.5% | 1 |
| No Difference | 31.8% | 7 |
| A small negative impact | 13.6% | 3 |
| A large negative impact | 40.9% | 9 |

**Would you support the introduction of Option C?**



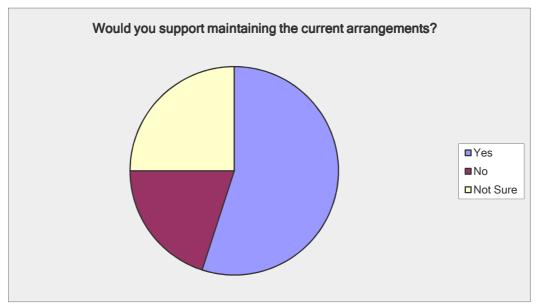| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 13.6% | 3 |
| No | 72.7% | 16 |
| Not Sure | 13.6% | 3 |

Comments on option C

- A large positive impact on vehicle cost savings and savings on civic staff time (which I note are not stated in the cost of current arrangements). But horrendous extra cost and therefore out of the question!!!
- A very expensive option that we should not be considering in the current financial climate.
- Mainly on the additional costs that would be incurred
- This hugely increases the cost
- See comments made for option A
- It makes no sense to spend more to post out papers than have a courier service
- Why would we consider an option that incurs an additional cost than the current solution?
- the extra cost is a no-brainer

## 3.5  **Option D**

Maintain the current approach, Councillors may still want to individually consider whether or not to use ipads or other electronic devices instead of printed papers to reduce the costs of printing and distributing papers.

| What would be the impact of Option D on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| A large positive impact | 20.0% | 4 |
| A small positive impact | 5.0% | 1 |
| No Difference | 65.0% | 13 |
| A small negative impact | 10.0% | 2 |
| A large negative impact | 0.0% | 0 |
| | answered question | 20 |
| | skipped question | 3 |



Would you support maintaining the current arrangements?

Legend: Yes, No, Not Sure

| Answer Options | Response Percent |
|---|---|
| Yes | 55.0% |
| No | 20.0% |
| Not Sure | 25.0% |

Comments on Option D:

- Stricter printing discipline of only printing papers for Cttee Members only.  Either members should hand their papers to subs if they are not attending OR a couple of extra copies are printed 'just in case'
- This system works, some postage could be saved by not posting decision sheets for instance
- Rural members in particular shouldn't have to come all the way into Maidstone to pick up their papers.
- see my comments re option B
- the current arrangements have minor advantages as it can be utilised to mail bits from member to member and I get the Downs Mail which is no longer delivered in my rural area

3.6 **Option E**

Identify other alternatives and solutions which may mix and match some of the ideas in the options above.

The issues with modern on the ipads has now been resolved so access to agendas online has improved. We are also working to resolve the issue with the screens and have two solutions which will mean larger documents can be displayed for everyone to see in the meeting as they are being presented.

The committee as an alternative could consider restricting the printing of agendas to be only for those who are committee members or have been asked to substitute. They could also consider if those agendas need to be distributed or could be picked up from a designated place. Papers could be distributed at other meetings councillors are attending.

Comments from the survey:
- ipads MUST be upgraded and access MUST be made available to mod.gov so that members can save documents and annotate notes; members must be trained accordingly. This will help reduce printing costs significantly although admittedly not totally.
- Have an amnesty for disposing of committee papers for squirrels among us. It'll make us realise that we don't need to keep them and maybe we didn't need them in the first place, because we can see them on google/intranet.
- Highlight important agenda items on the front page for ease of reference
- We should be increasing the use of digital facilities but feel that the IT is not up to scratch to support ceasing paper reports.
- I think perhaps a mixture of the options, a 400 page document is not practical to print and a decision sheet can easily be printed instead of posted, I don't think we need to be distributing the Down's Mail, even though I enjoy reading it, these could be picked up from the offices or Town Hall. Opting in to which agendas you wanted was a good idea a couple of years ago, can a similar thing be tried to further reduce the time use of civic officers, after all some councillors are in the offices almost every day and can easily collect theirs.
- See comments made in respect of option A
- summary:
  - o Access to electronic documents should be easier by sending whole agendas via email in a single file rather

than links to a webpage with multiple files which is very cumbersome to access and download

- o Most of all, it is very time consuming.
- o If this would be implemented and printed copies be available at the meeting, then there would be no need to send out hard-copies by mail nor courier and option B would be acceptable.
- o Option A is too cumbersome, as it would require extra journeys by members into Maidstone.

---

## 4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Committee is asked to consider all the options and identify what would be appropriate.

4.2 Points for consideration:

- Councillor feedback on the options

- The pool car can be booked for the internal mail delivery or staff travelling from satellite services could take and deliver internal post

- The efficiency in staff time from civic officers is minimal so would not result in a direct saving, however it may make it easier to organise supporting meetings and the mayors events plus assisting the Mayor's PA with other duties

- Exempt reports cannot be accessed electronically on modern as access is via the public facing site. Exempt papers could be emailed or printed and sent to Councillors separately.

- Councillors have printing equipment via the council. Based on the list of different types of print cartridges for 2015/16 there were 39 members, or 71% who had access to their own printer. In financial year 2015/16 members incurred costs of £3,513 and purchased 138 print cartridges based on 28 different types.

- Committee meetings could be used to distribute agendas to save postal costs if appropriate and/or Councillors attending the offices could collect papers from the officers.

- Councillors are required under legislation to give consent to receiving summons for meetings electronically and not in paper from for the

Committee meetings they are members of. There are no rules governing how we deliver agendas to those who are not on the Committee.  The summons constitutes the front page of the agenda not the whole agenda.

- 32 iPads have been issued however they currently only provide restricted access as they are locked down for security reasons. Discussions have taken place with IT to see whether this can be amended. Based on a report as of the 5 September 2016 ipads or other devices were last logged into:

  - Within the last week                    17
  - Within the last month                  5
  - Within the last 2 months              1
  - Within the last 3 months              1
  - Between 3- 6 months                    1
  - More than 12 months                    11

  Total Number of devices              36
  (Includes 4 devices not issued by MBC)

## 5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 The Committee is asked to consider the feedback from the survey as part of its review.

## 6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The Committee will need to communicate its decision to all councillors in relation to the courier run. The next steps will depend on which options the Committee wishes officers to pursue.

## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---|---|---|
| **Impact on Corporate Priorities** | This report relates to the decisions made in respect of our priorities as it covers the printing and distribution of | Head of Policy and Communications |

| | Agendas. | |
|---|---|---|
| **Risk Management** | All the options carry risk and Councillors will need to consider this as part of the decision making process | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Financial** | The report offers options for savings and efficiencies | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| **Staffing** | Some of the options will have staffing implications in terms of changing staff activity. | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Legal** | There is a legal requirement that a summons to attend the meeting is sent to every member on the committee by either leaving it at, or posting it to, their place of residence or other address if specified by the member. Where consent has been given the summons can be transmitted electronically. | Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership |
| **Equality Impact Needs Assessment** | Individual needs will have to be assessed and met when considering the distribution of agendas and papers to ensure there is not disadvantage and everyone has access to reports and papers for meetings | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Environmental/Sustainable Development** | Some of the options have positive environmental impacts such as reducing the number of agendas printed and reducing distribution by van | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Community Safety** | N/A | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Human Rights Act** | Access to information procedure rules need to be abided by. | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Procurement** | Not all councillors have ipads and a change to the courier run may incur cost and procurement of extra IT equipment. | Head of Policy and Communications |

| Asset Management | IT equipment. | Head of Policy and Communications |

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix A – Copy of the survey

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

The Democracy Committee are reviewing the efficiency of the current courier and printing arrangements for agenda distribution. They would like your views on the options being considered.

| Costs of current arrangements | |
| --- | --- |
| Vehicle costs | £4,667 |
| Fuel cost | £226 |
| Postage (based on 2015/16) | £1,276 |
| Corporate printing costs | £13,000 |
| Total costs | £19,169 |

Option A

**Option A**

**Committee agendas are printed but not delivered or posted – so can be collected from pigeon holes at the Town Hall or Council Offices.**

Non-Cashable Employee Efficiencies – 0.22 Civic Officers (estimated £4760)

| Expected Cashable Savings | |
| --- | --- |
| Vehicle costs | £4,667 |
| Fuel costs | £226 |
| Postage (based on 2015/16) | £1,276 |
| Total cashable savings | £6,189 |

1. What would be the impact of Option A on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers?

◯ A large positive impact

◯ A small positive impact

◯ No Difference

◯ A small negative impact

◯ A large negative impact

2. Would you support the introduction of Option A?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Not Sure

3. Do you have any other comments about option A?

---

**MAIDSTONE** Borough Council | **Member Papers Distribution**

## Option B

**Option B**

Stop printing agendas, Councillors and officers and external agencies can access papers online those who are unable to can get printed copies.

Non-Cashable Employee Efficiencies – 0.22 Civic Officers (estimated £4,760).

| Expected Cashable Savings | |
|---|---|
| Vehicle costs | £4,667 |
| Fuel costs | £226 |
| Postage (based on 2015/16) | £1,276 |
| Corporate printing costs | £13,000 |
| **Total Cashable Saving** | £19,169 |

21

4. What would be the impact of Option B on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers?

○ A large positive impact

○ A small positive impact

○ No Difference

○ A small negative impact

○ A large negative impact

5. Would you support the introduction of Option B?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Not Sure

6. Do you have any other comments about option B?

---

**Member Papers Distribution**

Option C

**Option C**

Printing and posting agendas not using the courier run, this would save staff time and the cost of the vehicle but would increase the cost of postage significantly.

| Expected Cashable Savings | |
|---|---|
| Vehicle costs | £4,667 |
| Fuel costs | £226 |
| **Total Cashable Saving** | **£4,893** |

| Additional Costs | |
|---|---|
| Posting agendas | £19,245 |
| Corporate printing costs | £13,000 |
| **Total Additional Costs** | **£32,245** |

7. What would be the impact of Option C on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers?

○ A large positive impact

○ A small positive impact

○ No Difference

○ A small negative impact

○ A large negative impact

8. Would you support the introduction of Option C?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Not Sure

9. Do you have any other comments about option C?

23

## Option D

**Option D**

**Maintain current courier run and agenda printing processes.**

10. What would be the impact of Option D on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers?

○ A large positive impact

○ A small positive impact

○ No Difference

○ A small negative impact

○ A large negative impact

11. Would you support maintaining the current arrangements?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Not Sure

12. Do you have any other comments about option D?

```
```

## Other Suggestions

13. Do you have any other suggestions or options you would like to be considered in relation to the printing and distribution of committee and meeting agendas

```

```

**Member Papers Distribution**

14. Please place the following options in your order of preference.
Where 1 is your first choice and 4 is your last choice.

| | | Option A - agendas and papers to be collected |
|---|---|---|
| | | Option B - agendas and papers are not printed but accessed online |
| | | Option C - agendas are posted |
| | | Option D - maintain current arrangements |

15. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the printing and distribution of agendas and meeting papers?

```

```

**Member Papers Distribution**

Demographics

**Maidstone Borough Council is committed to Equal Opportunities. The information you provide in this section will not be linked to any comments you make on consultations, and will not be linked to your name, address or other personal identifier. The information will be used for monitoring purposes only and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.**

**Details of our privacy policy and how we handle personnal information can be viewed here**

25

16. Are you…

( ) Male

( ) Female

( ) Prefer not to say

17. Which of the following age groups do you fall into?

( ) 18-24 years

( ) 25-34 years

( ) 35-44 years

( ) 45-54 years

( ) 55-64 years

( ) 65-74 years

( ) 75+ years

18. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

( ) Yes

( ) No

19. Which of these ethnic groups do you belong to?

- ( ) White; English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- ( ) White; Irish
- ( ) White; Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ( ) White; Other White - please specify
- ( ) Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black Caribbean
- ( ) Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black African
- ( ) Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Asian
- ( ) Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; Other Mixed - please specify
- ( ) Asian/Asian British; Indian
- ( ) Asian/Asian British; Pakistani
- ( ) Asian/Asian British; Bangladeshi
- ( ) Asian/Asian British; Chinese
- ( ) Asian/Asian British; Other Asian - please specify
- ( ) Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; African
- ( ) Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Caribbean
- ( ) Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Other Black - please specify
- ( ) Other Ethnic Group; Arab
- ( ) Other Ethnic Group; Any Other Ethnic Group - please specify

Other (please specify)

[                                    ]

27

| **Democracy Committee** | **8 February 2017** |
|---|---|
| Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting? | **No** |

## Webcasting Service Update

| **Final Decision-Maker** | Democracy Committee |
|---|---|
| **Lead Head of Service** | Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Lead Officer and Report Author** | Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications and Sam Bailey, Interim Democratic Services Manager |
| **Classification** | Public |
| **Wards affected** | |

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. To note the update on resolving problems with the webcasting service; and
2. Identify any further action that should be taken in relation to issues with the webcasting

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:** Our Corporate Priorities outline the Council's ongoing commitment to the residents of Maidstone. Ensuring that the Council is accountability, transparent and above all involving residents in its decision making. Providing a webcasting service that has the ability to engage with residents is key to this.

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

| **Timetable** | |
|---|---|
| *Meeting* | *Date* |
| Democracy Committee | 8 February 2017 |

# Webcasting Service Update

## 1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   The Council has webcast its Committee meetings since July 2007 as a means of ensuring accountability, transparency and increasing understanding of local decision making.

1.2   In June 2016, following a successful procurement and tendering process the Council changed webcasting providers.  The contract was awarded to Public-i. As part of the new contract the microphones were renewed as the previous units were no longer serviceable. The installation of the new system took place in September 2016.

1.3   Since the installation of the system, after a period of the system working properly a number of problems occurred. Since the Interim Democratic Services Manager was appointed he has been working with Public-I to find solutions to, and resolve, the problems identified.

1.4   Due to the ongoing problems, members requested an update on the progress made on resolving them.

## 2.   ISSUES

2.1   Following installation there have been some technical issues, some of which have been resolved and others that are in the process of being resolved.

2.2   The issues that have been resolved include:

- Failure to broadcast the Policy and Resources meeting of 3 January 2017. This was rectified in time for the next meeting (Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee on 10 January 2017).
- Poor quality, jerky video, with a bad frame rate. This was solved by Public-i turning down the resolution.
- The Democratic Services iPad, which is used to control the system during meetings, would not connect to the webcasting system. This was resolved when Public-i conducted a site visit.

2.3   There are a number of issues that are still outstanding and solutions have been identified for. They include:

- The presentation screens do not work or flicker when a signal is sent to them. We have identified that the converters, which convert the VGA (analogue) signal in the cabling to the HDMI (digital) input for the screens, are scrambling the signal. An improved converter will be ordered that we can control manually, which should resolve the problem.

- There is interference from lighting in the town hall, which causes moving horizontal lines to appear through the picture. We are awaiting a quote from an electrician to change the lighting at the Town Hall to LED lighting, which should resolve this problem.
- Microphones cut out, or don't turn on, occasionally. Democratic Services will monitor which microphones this is happening to and make a note of their serial numbers. Public-I will then test these microphones to see whether it is an issue with individual microphones. They will also send an engineer to test the wifi reception in the town hall to check whether there is any interference affecting the signal.
- Members recently raised an issue with the volume of the webcast. Although this was raised before, the team thought it had been fixed. We will work with Public-I to find the source of the problem and resolve it.

2.4 The Interim Democratic Services Manager has been in regular contact with the account manager and technical support team at Public-i. This has ensured that solutions have been found for the problems that have been identified.

## 3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Members can choose to receive this update on webcasting problems.

3.2 Members can choose not to receive an update on webcasting problems.

3.3 Members can identify any appropriate action that needs to be taken on webcasting.

## 4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The preferred options are 3.1 and 3.3 – if members receive the update they will be able to identify what, if any, appropriate action is required to improve the service.

4.2 If members choose option 3.2, they will not be aware of the progress that has been made to resolve the current issues with the webcasting service.

## 5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

5.1 No next steps are required – this report is for information for members only.

## 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---|---|---|
| **Impact on Corporate Priorities** | Our Corporate Priorities outline the Council's ongoing commitment to the residents of Maidstone. Ensuring that the Council is accountability, transparent and above all involving residents in its decision making. Providing a webcasting service that has the ability to engage with residents is key to this. | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Risk Management** | | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Financial** | No financial implications identified. | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Staffing** | N/A | Head of Policy and Communications |
| **Legal** | The new webcasting microsite and use of voting system will aid the Council in meeting the transparency requirements. The Constitution will need to be amended to reflect any change to voting. | Interim Deputy Head of Legal |
| **Equality Impact Needs Assessment** | No detrimental impact on the needs of those with protected characteristics identified. | Policy & Information Manager |
| **Environmental/Sustainable Development** | | [Head of Service or Manager] |
| **Community Safety** | | [Head of Service or Manager] |
| **Human Rights Act** | | [Head of Service or Manager] |
| **Procurement** | | [Head of Service & Section 151 Officer] |
| **Asset Management** | | [Head of Service & |

| | | Manager] |
|---|---|---|

## 7.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

*None*