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| <p>1. Executive summary</p> <p>1.1 The Overview Scrutiny Committee agreed to appoint a task group to undertake a review of Members Information and Communication Technology.</p> <p>1.2 The task group was chaired by Councillor Mike Snelling, the other four members being Councillors Jones, Rosemary Leadley, Newell and Singh. Councillor Turner who has extensive knowledge of IT systems advised the task group on technical issues and sat in on some of the evidence gathering sessions.</p> <p>1.3 The terms of reference for the review were:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">To recommend a way forward for members' information services for the future, including provision of computer equipment, or allowance to purchase such, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consulting with all members as to their needs, expectations and experiences of information technology; • considering the impact the new committee management system will have on how members receive and access information; • investigating the implementation of the council's e-government strategy in respect of members services including how value for money can be achieved; • considering best practice in other local authorities; • using the evidence gathered from the review to make recommendations to the Cabinet. | <p>1.4 Recommendations to cabinet are</p> <p>1.4.1 IT equipment for members to be leased rather than purchased. Members to be offered a choice of a PC with 19ins flat panel monitor or a laptop. Both choices to include a basic black and white laser printer. The lease to be for 4 years to coincide with the electoral cycle.</p> <p>1.4.2 Every member to have a broadband connection paid for by the council but with a nominal contribution of £5 per month by each member for personal use. Existing connections, that members have already installed on their own behalf, could be utilised provided that they can be made secure to protect the authorities IT system.</p> <p>1.4.3 Provide a support service to members during office hours. The preferred option would be for this service to be provided in house. However constraints on the IT department may make it necessary to out source provision of this support service.</p> <p>1.4.4 A notional allowance, suggested level to be £200p.a., to be made available to each member. This money will be held by the council and requests for consumables (paper, printer cartridges etc) will be offset against an individual member's allowance.</p> <p>1.4.5 Members use of the council supplied computer equipment and network should be covered by a protocol agreed with the standards committee</p> <p>1.4.6 Members to be provided with training on the use of Word, Excel, search engines, the internet, e-mail and Modern.gov.</p> |
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1.4.7 Members to be offered the opportunity to develop their own personal websites as part of the Modern.gov committee management system.

1.5 The context in which this review was undertaken was the impending introduction of Modern.gov which is a document and committee meeting management system and the needs and expectations of both members and the council in respect of the e-government agenda.

1.6 Evidence gathering

Evidence gathering sessions were held with the Head of Democratic Services, the Head of IT Services, the leader of the council, two non executive members and representatives of Newham Council.

A questionnaire was sent to all members seeking their views on IT equipment and services.

A survey of other local authorities in the south east was also carried out to determine what level of IT services they supplied to their members.