



## Transformation Committee 16 January 2019

### Committee Management System – Establishment of Member Working Group

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#### Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the establishment of a member working group to support councillors' utilisation of the committee management system.

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#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report seek approval for the establishment of a member working group to consider how best to utilise the committee management system in assisting councillors in their duties and to prepare them for new ways of working.

#### 2.0 Committee Management System

- 2.1 The administration of the democratic framework and decision making process at the council is currently largely reliant on a manual system which, following review, needs to be replaced to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes. It is considered important that officers and councillors become familiar with such a system as it is anticipated that the proposed new Unitary Council will use one. It will also enable the Democratic Services Team to support the additional work required for the preparation for the new Unitary Council.
- 2.2 On 29 October 2018 the Finance and Performance Sub-Committee approved the transfer of £18,000 from the development pool into the 2018/19 capital programme for the purchase of a Committee Management System and following a procurement process, a contract was entered into with Astech Consultants Limited in December 2018.
- 2.3 In light of the uncertainty of local government reform in Northamptonshire, the contract was awarded for a period of two years plus the possibility of extension for two periods of one year (potential total contract length and lifecycle cost of £37,000 over four years) to allow for any necessary closedown and transfer of information if the new Unitary Council proceeds.
- 2.4 There will be an initial period of implementation, configuration and training for core Democratic Services Staff in January 2019, to be followed by wider officer and member engagement later in February and onwards, with a view to the system being live in readiness for the new municipal year commencing in May 2019.

#### 3.0 Member Working Group

- 3.1 It is proposed that a group of five members be established to consider the following areas of engagement with officers, in delivering the system and maximising its benefits:-

- Councillor Information to be placed on the CMS website;
- Councillors' personal webpages;
- System efficiencies in the support of governance activities;
- ICT equipment required to deliver 'paperless' meetings;
- Training requirements
- Public involvement and engagement.

3.2 Proposed terms of reference for the Working Group are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

#### **4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

4.1 There are no known equalities issues arising from this report. Provision of electronic based committee papers for use in meetings will not preclude from paper copies of reports being provided to those members or officers with disability requirements under the Equality Act 2010. For some visual impairments customisation of on-screen viewing may provide benefits.

#### **5.0 Privacy Impact Implications**

5.1 There are no new privacy impact implications arising from this report. A full Privacy Impact Assessment will be completed following into introduction of the new system and prior to it going live, but the type of information collected and processed by this council using the new system is not anticipated to change as it is covered by statutory requirements.

#### **6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 The purchase of the Committee Management System will enable the more efficient discharge of the council's legal obligations in relation to the publication of agendas, reports and minutes and councillor's Registers of Interests.

#### **7.0 Risk Management**

7.1 The proposed system will be 'cloud' based and therefore it will help mitigate the risk of loss of availability of information about the council's democratic processes. The system complies with the council's IT requirements for effective security, including multi-layered authentication and authorisation controls, in order to prevent unauthorised use.

#### **8.0 Resource and Financial Implications**

8.1 As reported to the Finance and Performance Subcommittee on 29 October 2018, the cost for the committee management system in 2018/19 will be borne from the capital programme. The licensing and maintenance costs for future years will be incorporated into the normal revenue budget setting process, along with any potential savings.

#### **9.0 Constitutional Implications**

9.1 There are no known constitutional implications arising from this report.

## 10.0 Implications for our Customers

10.1 The committee management system will improve access for the public to the council's decisions. The current publication of agenda, reports and minutes on the council's website requires residents to have an in-depth knowledge of the council's decision making system in order to find items of interest. There are also options to enable residents and councillors to subscribe to updates to specific committees or for specific topics, such as anything happening in their ward.

## 11.0 Corporate Outcomes


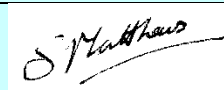
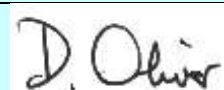
11.1 This report links to the corporate outcome of *Good Value for Money* – Purchase of the system will simplify the current complex manual processes to support governance activities. It may also be possible to reduce some printing, paper and postage costs in due course.

## 12.0 Recommendation

12.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees:

- a) a working group of five members from this committee be established to support the use of the committee management system, from a councillor perspective;
- b) That delegated approval is given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve the membership of the working group.
- c) Considers and approves the proposed terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 to the report
- d) That the working group reports on its activity to the Transformation Committee at regular intervals.

*[Reason: To enable improvements to governance activities and to prepare councillors for new ways of working]*

<b>Legal</b>	Power:					
<b>Background Papers:</b> Report to Finance and Performance Sub-committee, 29 October 2018						
<b>Person Originating Report:</b> Ben Smith, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager ☎ 01832 74(2113) ✉ bsmith@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk						
<b>Date:</b> 04/01/19						
<b>CFO</b> 07/01/18			<b>MO</b> 07/01/18		<b>CX</b> 07/01/18	

**Committee Management System Working Group – Draft Terms of Reference**

**Purpose**

1. To consider how best to utilise the committee management system in assisting councillors in their duties and to prepare them for new ways of working;

**Membership**

2. The Working Group is appointed by the Transformation Committee and will comprise of:  
  
[Five Councillors of the Transformation Committee]
3. A chair and vice-chair will be appointed at the first meeting.
4. The Working Group will be supported by the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager, with other officers being involved where relevant and as required.

**Role**

5. The Working Group will meet as and when necessary to assist and work with officers:
  - in the review of councillor information to be placed on the Committee Management section of the ENC website;
  - to develop councillors' personal webpages;
  - in assessing system efficiencies that may benefit councillors in the support of their governance activities;
  - in assessing utilisation of ICT equipment required to deliver 'paperless' meetings;
  - in developing further member training and guidance on the system
  - in considering public involvement and engagement in respect of the public facing sections of the committee pages of the ENC website.
6. The Working Group is not a decision making body with any matters requiring a decision being dealt with by the Transformation Committee as part of the reporting back process.

**Meetings**

7. The business of the meeting shall be set out in an agenda and notified to members of the Working Group five working days in advance of the date of the meeting.

8. The minutes of the previous meeting shall be submitted for agreement at the start of every meeting.
9. Frequency of the meetings will be agreed at the first meeting of the group and reviewed on a meeting by meeting basis thereafter.
10. The minutes of the meetings, and any associated matters requiring decision, will be reported back to the Transformation Committee

### **Members' Responsibilities**

11. Councillors and officers must declare at the start of any meeting an interest in any matter for discussion at which they have a personal interest or involvement.

### **Voting**

12. The Working Group will work towards securing mutual agreement on all aspects of member involvement in the Committee Management System, but should a vote be necessary on the recommendation on any decisions to be made by the Transformation Committee each councillor will have a single vote and decisions will be made by show of hands. In the event of a tie in the number of votes, the Chairman will have a second, or casting, vote.

### **Terms of Reference approval and variation**

13. These terms of reference will be approved by the Transformation Committee and reviewed thereafter as required by the Transformation Committee, for further approval and report to Council for noting..