Member Support Steering Group 29th January 2015

Report of the Assistant Director Governance and ICT

Membersphere Update

Summary

1. This report provides a contextual update on the proposals for a 'Membersphere' website. Members will also receive a working presentation by ICT officers on the facility as it stands and be consulted on their views.

Background

2. The Steering Group will be aware of proposals to introduce a new 'Membersphere' to provide Members with a single site from which to access and communicate key information quickly. Despite the delays arising in mid 2014 from Cabinet Office requirements relating to the Public Sector Network, it is hoped that Membersphere will still be available as a site for the benefit of all Members, but specifically aiding newly elected Members, as from May 2015.

Features of 'Membersphere'

3. At previous meetings, Steering Group Members have received 'work in progress' demonstrations as the package developed and were invited to comment and suggest ways in which they would like Membersphere to work for them. Membersphere has been developed accordingly and it is intended that Members may use it for the following:

- Allow members to easily create and administer groups
- Enable members to easily upload and share documents, images and links between groups and individuals
- Facilitate external/internal collaboration

- Let users send messages between individuals and groups
- Be compatible on mobile devices
- Provide a central place to access key member information, such as the Constitution, members' guide and training programmes
- Display relevant information from external sources (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, ModGov etc.)

4. The Digital Development Team will be demonstrating the latest version of Membersphere at the meeting. There will be a further opportunity for members to provide feedback and ask questions.

5. It is intended that before the final launch of the site that a group of current Members will be invited to 'test' it ahead of it being launched to all Members in May 2015.

Consultation

6. Steering Group Members have been asked prior to this meeting to provide feedback on Membersphere as it progressed.

Options

7. Members can:

    i. Approve the continuation Membersphere in its current format bearing in mind there is some work still to do.

    ii. Choose to make changes to the current format.

Analysis

8. In recent years due to budget constraints, the resources for Member Development and Support have been reduced. 'Membersphere' is being provided in-house and it is hoped it will provide a single destination for Members to easily access resources and support they may require and help them manage their work as Councillors.

Council Plan 2011-2015

9. Having well informed Members will continue to help the Council deliver its key priorities set out within the Council Plan 2011-15.

    Implications

10. **Financial** – There are no financial implications associated with this report other than the investment of staff resources to build the site. There is a possibility that if successful it may be offered to other authorities and partners where a business need is identified.

11. There are no known Human Resources, Legal, Equalities or other implications associated with delivering this site for Members.

    Risk Management

12. There are clear advantages to Members with this site in terms of enabling them to access the information they require more easily and in terms of enhancing their methods of communicating and sharing information. There is a risk if the Council fails to look to digital solutions to ease the burden of information and information sharing increasingly faced by Members that Members will become less and less equipped to manage their time and resources effectively.

    Recommendations

13. Members are asked to note and comment upon the redevelopment of the 'Membersphere' site.

    Reason:

    To enable arrangements for Membersphere to be introduced in the 2015/16 municipal year.

Contact Details

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Report Approved ✓ **Date** 21.1.2015

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: None   **All** ✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:
None

Annexes

None