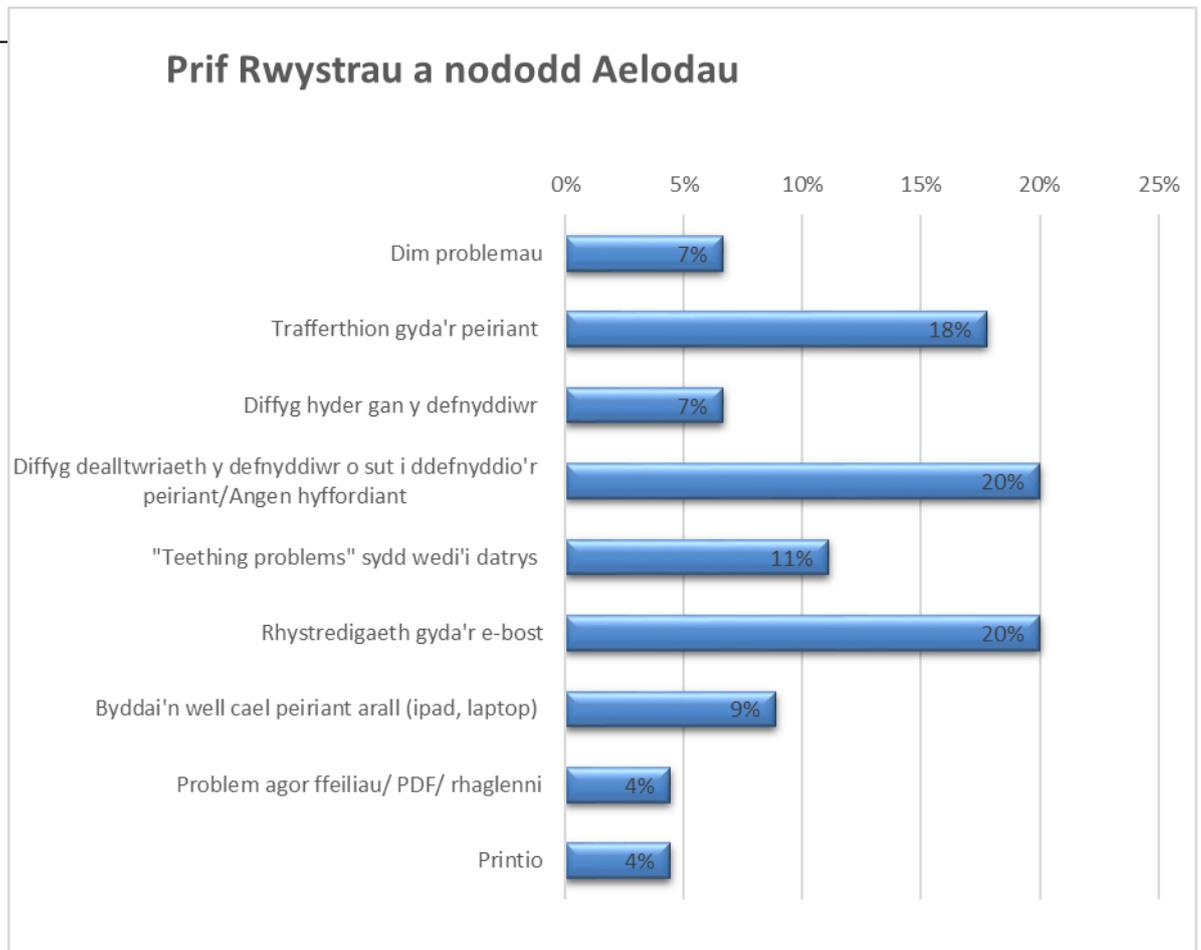

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	12 April 2018
SUBJECT	Technical Provision for Members
PURPOSE	To consider the way forward with regards to technical provision for Members
AUTHOR	Geraint Owen, Head of Democratic Services
RELEVANT OFFICER	Huw Ynyr and Bryn Goodman Jones, IT Department Vera Jones, Democratic Services Manager

1. In my role as the Head of Democratic Services for the Council, I endeavour to ensure that the provision you have in order to fulfil your work is fit for purpose.
2. At the beginning of the year, I contacted all Members to attempt to understand the concerns and obstacles you face (as well as gathering evidence) on two specific areas (technical provision and response from officers)
3. This report examines one of the areas - 'Technical Provision'. Some members had mentioned verbally that they had had technical difficulties with the device and others had noted that they want an opportunity to learn more about the device.
4. A good response has been received, with 27 Councillors responding in general to the enquiry, and 24 offered observations on the technical provision. As already stated, the main points raised with the technical provision referred to
 - difficulties with use of the e-mail element currently on the Surface
 - e-mail messages and files 'disappearing' after a month
 - battery power draining quickly
 - further training.

On the flipside, others noted that they had no problems with the provision and praised assistance from staff.

5. The graph on the page below elaborates somewhat on the responses that were received:



6. The graph above shows that the main concerns were "e-mails", "training to use the device" and "Problem with the Device".
- a) "E-mails". Among the difficulties noted with this element:
 - a. E-mails disappeared after 30 days
 - b. Difficulty finding old e-mails
 - c. Deficiencies with the app, it would be better to use "Outlook" instead of "mail"
 - b) "User's lack of understanding on how to use the device/training required". These were among the problems regarding this element
 - a. I would like further practice session/training
 - b. Device is too complicated
 - c. Not easy to use
 - d. I need assistance over the weekend sometimes
 - c) The third element was "Difficulties with the Device", which included the following elements:
 - a. Short battery life
 - b. Stops typing mid-sentence
 - c. "on/off" problems and face recognition
 - d. Screen is too small

7. A way forward has been identified and a response to a number of the elements above.

8. E-mails. The Members' Portal sub-group has extended its brief slightly in order to examine some of the issues identified above. The Group had an opportunity to view potential solutions for the e-mail element. There are two options that can be considered as follows:

Option 1 – Outlook/0365

- Pros
 - A cloud service that is very similar to Google (including Google Docs) and Outlook.com (including a personal O365 element)
 - The ability to use the full Outlook (2016) tools package under the management of Gwynedd IT, e.g. your Surface. The whole experience of the Outlook package as Council officers, not only the Mail APP
 - All documents saved locally on the Surface are stored in the cloud and are therefore available even if the Surface is broken/lost
 - If changing devices, everything will automatically reappear.
 - Share documents with people outside Council staff and choose the type of access, e.g. Read-only or full right to edit
 - Share the calendar with external people
 - The ability to log-in via an internet browser on any device to read your e-mails, calendar, documents created on the Surface, etc. (if creating new ones using this arrangement, these will be available on the Surface once internet connection is available - auto sync) ***An additional code will need to be created if not using a Council device, very similar to on-line banking systems.
 - The right to install an APP on your mobile device (phone/tablet) to read e-mails, calendar and if desired, documents and Excel spreadsheets - more than one is completely fine.
 - No reliance on one specific system (device agnostic). The system should function easily from any device
 - The ability to make much broader use of IT systems beyond the basic elements such as e-mails and calendar, if desired
- Cons
 - Additional licensing costs
 - Need to re-configure the device once, and it could take up to 24 hours to complete the changes

Option 2 - Add to the Domain and offer a VPN connection from it when out of office. Small annual cost to pay for a VPN licence.

- Pros
 - Less costly if only using the Surface to read e-mails, calendar, MOD.GOV and internet use
- Cons
 - Does not add to the provision

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- There would be additional costs to adding e-mails to mobile devices or via the web
 - Less flexible

9. Group members also invited Councillor Huw Wyn Jones to join the work as he had shown considerable interest in ensuring a potential solution, and because he has a background in the field. By examining potential solutions, it was decided that it would be sensible to trial the solution to see whether using 'outlook' would address the problems. Members also considered how easy the new arrangement was to use, and noted any problems that arose during the period between March and now, in order to report back on this to the Committee.

10. Although there has only been a short period since members started to pilot the new arrangement, the initial response seems to be very positive.

11. If the technical provision is changed to one of the above options, it would result in the action steps below for the members and the IT service:

- Councillor noting a specific time to bring in the device to an IT technician (this might be in Caernarfon only). A timetable will need to be created where Councillors could book a time/day
- IT to create a back-up of any documents that are on the device
- Migrate their e-mail inbox to the new system (365 Gwynedd tenant)
- Reinstall Windows software on the device
- Restore the copied data
- Councillor logs in
- A small demo
 - Guidelines to follow if adding to a mobile device - TG can provide assistance with this
 - Guidelines on how to log-in from any other device via a browser

To ensure sufficient time to complete the work, the IT service would need the device for 24 hours.

The Committee is asked to consider the above observations and the observations of the Members who have piloted the 365 for a short period before deciding on the way forward by either continuing with the pilot for a while longer or by going ahead with the work.

12. Training. Several steps have been offered to assist members with training to use the new devices.

- Council IT officers were available before Council meetings commenced in May and June to answer members' questions as they arose (trouble-shooting)
- Two training sessions were held for members on how to use the devices following requests from a number of members. A session was held in June in Caernarfon and in July in Penrhyndeudraeth, with 18 members choosing to benefit from those sessions. Good feedback was received from them.

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- A large number of elected members also benefited from 1-1 sessions with Council officers. It was the members themselves who contacted officers in order to arrange those sessions.
 - IT "surgeries" were held prior to Area Forum meetings before Christmas, which was an opportunity for any member to receive support with the Surface and/or Members' Portal.
 - Many Members have also received assistance on technical matters from the IT help desk, noting that they had received valuable support when problems arose.

13. However, it seems that some Members still want further training. It is therefore recommended that another session, similar to the sessions held in June/July 2017 are arranged. In order to make the best use of Councillors' time and Council resources, it is recommended that the additional session is arranged following a decision on adapting the provision to one of the two above options with the e-mail. If the e-mail element is to be adapted, then it is believed that arranging a session after changing the provision is more sensible, and to encourage members to attend if they wish.

14. Problems with the Device. I would like to remind members that provision selection has been undertaken based on the work of the sub-group of members who trialled different devices before the May 2017 election. A number of different factors were considered before reaching a conclusion, and amongst them was screen size (current screen is larger than the old iPads' screens), the need to be able to do more than reading documents only, i.e. to be able to create documents easier than on the iPad. Therefore, the new provision is more complex than the old iPads, but it enables members to make much more use of them.

15. The new provision enables members to undertake the basic work that they require, e.g. to receive and reply to e-mails, calendar, Modern.gov and access to the Portal. It also enables those Members who want the provision to create their own documents, to file their work as a councillor and many other things.

16. As a result of observations received from members, it should be noted that a brief sheet has been created on the members' portal noting simple steps on how to save the Surface's battery life.

<https://dgit.com/surface-pro-4-battery-life-improve-51190/>