

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE, INNOVATION and PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

20 July 2016

Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 IT SERVICES UPDATE

Update for Members on the implementation of a new email platform and amendments to the password policy to assist the reliability of Members tablets.

1.1 Email platform

- 1.1.1 The Council has used Novell GroupWise as its email platform for many years, but in recent months has been migrating over to Outlook. Migration has to be done account by account, and therefore it is a lengthy process.
- 1.1.2 At the time of writing, officers' email accounts have been migrated to Outlook and IT staff are in the process of migrating Members' accounts.
- 1.1.3 The migration brings with it some benefits. Outlook integrates with the telephony system (Skype) and enables all functionality to be employed, including calendar functions, voice mail, etc. This was not possible with GroupWise.
- 1.1.4 In addition, the set-up of the mobile email 'push' technology associated with GroupWise restricted the opening of larger attachments on tablets and other mobile devices. This problem is overcome with the rollout of Outlook.
- 1.1.5 I wrote to all Members at the end of June asking them to make an appointment with IT Services in order to arrange the migration of individual email accounts. At the time of writing, we have just commenced the programme.

1.2 Network Password Policy

- 1.2.1 The government published new password guidance in September 2015 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/password-policy-simplifying-your-approach>) drawn up by the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) and CESG (the information security arm of GCHQ).
- 1.2.2 This recognised the need to balance user convenience alongside the overall strength of passwords and suggested several methods of achieving this.

1.2.3 Taking into consideration this guidance the password policy of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has been amended.

1.2.4 The amended policy aims to achieve the following goals:

- Improve the strength of passwords being used.
- Making the passwords easier for staff to remember.
- Improving the reliability of Members tablets with regard to password changes.

1.2.5 The new password policy covers the protection of back office network resources (such as email). The current policy for the “lock screen” of Members tablets is not changing and will remain the same.

1.2.6 The new policy is being implemented immediately for Members when tablets are being reconfigured for Outlook email so they may benefit straightaway.

1.2.7 The new policy will be rolled out to staff in the coming months.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 None.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 Costs incurred on the above projects have been met from existing budgets.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 Security vulnerabilities in out of date software can be exploited putting data and service availability at risk. By changing email platform to a product with available security support until 2023 we are ensuring the email system can be updated as and when patches are made available by Microsoft.

1.5.2 Weak and insecure passwords pose a risk to data and provide an opportunity for computer misuse. By amending our policy and taking a pragmatic approach as suggested by government guidance we will improve the quality and strength of passwords in use.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Communications; Customer Contact; Business Continuity/Resilience

Background papers:

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Nil

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