



## Information Systems Sub (Finance) Committee

**Date:** TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2012  
**Time:** 11.30 am  
**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOMS - WEST WING, GUILDHALL

### 7. COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE REPORT

Report of the Town Clerk.

**For Information**  
(Pages 1 – 6)

Item received too late for circulation in conjunction with the Agenda.

**John Barradell**  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

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# Agenda Item 7

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Information Systems Sub Committee	2 October 2012
<b>Subject:</b> Modern.gov - Post-Implementation Update	Public
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	For Information
<b><u>Summary</u></b>	
<p>Following the update report to the Sub Committee in May 2012, this report is intended to provide a further overview of the work that is on-going by the Town Clerk's Department and the IS Division in respect of implementation and use of the new committee management system (Modern.gov). This includes the implementation phase and on-going implementation issues. It also looks at future activities for enhanced use of the software and refers to wider corporate activities, specifically the IS Division's roll-out of iPads to elected Members.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation:-</b> That the report be received and its contents noted.</p>	

## **Main Report**

### **BACKGROUND**

1. The main objectives of acquiring a new committee management system were to establish more efficient ways of working; maximise quality and accuracy in terms of data management; reduce printing and circulation costs where possible; and use new technologies to support governance activities and deliver wider benefits.
2. Between January and June 2012, the Committee and Member Services Team, in close collaboration with the IS Division, the Web Development Team and Modern Mindset Ltd, focussed on implementing Modern.gov ahead of the corporate web refresh. During this period, additional resources were introduced (two days per week) to ensure that sufficient technical support was available during the implementation phase and key project milestones were achieved.
3. A range of activities were undertaken during the implementation phase including comprehensive data cleansing, checking and inputting activities to ensure accuracy of wide-ranging data within the new system; administrator training sessions, historic data conversion and migration, template design, default agenda creation and application to all committees; and a review of Members' Registers of Interest documentation.
4. Members were kept informed of the project at various stages during the implementation phase through a variety of mechanisms including the Members' Briefing updates, reports to the Finance Committee, the Information Systems

Sub Committee, the Web Decision Board and the IS Strategy Board; and direct correspondence specifically in respect of reviewing Member data.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

5. On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012, Modern.gov was implemented, at which point all Member, committee and decision-making related information was published via the new system. With immediate effect, the Committee and Member Services Team began utilising a comprehensive range of back-office functionality. This has included the streamlining of administrative functions and the use of newly automated processes to support a wide range of committee administration activities (agenda preparation, publishing papers on the web).
6. Since June 2012, the system has been used continuously and effectively to support the Corporation's committee administration processes. The software is enabling the Committee and Member Services Team to maintain high standards of governance and committee and Member services provision to all elected Members, officers and the public as a result of wide ranging software features.
7. However, a number of facilities available through Modern.gov were not implemented straight away, including:-
  - Calendar (Outlook) synchronisation
  - Publication of Members' Interests via Modern.gov
  - Corporate search user access (to view archived non-public documentation)
  - Publication of all migrated archived data on the corporate webpages (pre-May 2012).
8. It was agreed at that time that these remaining activities would be reassessed and a post implementation plan developed to include any outstanding activities.

## **CURRENT POSITION – POST IMPLEMENTATION & PRIORITY ISSUES**

9. As the system is still relatively new and revised working practices are bedding-in, we regularly review our working practices and user problems. A nationwide Modern.gov Forum is in existence and via this, and Modern Mindset's formal Support Helpline, we are able to quickly draw on other people's experience and best practice to resolve practical user issues. As we continue to address the outstanding issues, defined ways of working are being set down in the Team Handbook to ensure that consistent ways of working are bedded-in across the team, both in the short and the longer term.

### **Calendar synchronisation**

10. We are continuing to work closely with Modern Mindset Ltd to address the integration between Outlook and Modern.gov as we know that Members favour the automatic placing of meeting commitments in their Outlook calendars. Work on this aspect was halted ahead of implementation as it was felt that a technical update to the system was required ahead of comprehensive testing. The

update has now taken place and testing within the Town Clerk's Department is underway. It is hoped that Members of the IS Sub Committee will assist with a wider test in the coming weeks with a view to launching the full calendar sync function in a phased approach throughout November.

11. When the sync is triggered, meeting dates for all specific committee responsibilities will automatically be migrated into individual Members' Outlook calendars (City Corporation accounts only). This will include all scheduled meeting dates throughout 2012 and 2013, where confirmed. Due to the volume of dates that will have to be migrated it is proposed that this will be undertaken in a phased approach.

#### **Modern.gov iPad app – public committee information**

12. Modern Mindset Ltd's iPad application (app) is now available, providing access to all public committee documentation via mobile device such as the iPad. The app is available to all Members that have access to an iPad (Corporation issue or personal devices) and is now being regularly used to access; review and annotate chosen committee documentation, as and when papers are published.
13. The availability of committee documentation via PDF packs created in Modern.gov (but not sent via the automated email alerts at this stage) has, and continues to complement the iPad trial which commenced earlier in the year. This project is now being expanded, as per another report on today's agenda, with iPads being rolled out to all Members and Chief Officers. 42 Members now routinely use iPads to manage and review committee documentation. The initial trial was limited to the circulation of papers for a small number of committees but, as the iPad roll-out has been extended, this now covers all committees, sub-committees and working parties. Consequently, the iPad app, with the Committee Team's support and revised processes for circulating committee documentation electronically, is enhancing Members' access to information overall and encouraging wider use of new technologies.

#### **Non-public iPad app – restricted committee documentation**

14. The iPad app currently provides access to public reports only, hence the existing arrangement to circulate full PDF agenda packs (including public and non-public information) via emails generated by the team. However, the non-public app is currently being developed by Modern Mindset Ltd as a developmental priority. At this stage it is anticipated that the non-public iPad app will be rolled out to Members in January 2013. Guidance about the new app will be circulated to Members in due course. Wider and enhanced use of iPads by Members will certainly provide further opportunities to reduce the circulation of hard-copy documentation.

#### **Converted data – pre and post-May 2012**

15. The Modern.gov search mechanism on the internet and intranet displayed a number of erratic results for the period after launch (post May 2012). This was thought to be as a result of phantom committee dates being listed in the database, papers not being loaded correctly and some degree of duplication in publishing. The records have now been reviewed comprehensively and work has been undertaken to systematically identify and correct errors.

16. In respect of converted data pre-May 2012, comprehensive work has been undertaken to review the status of the converted data (over 130,000 records, some dating back to the mid-1980s). The Project Team was initially concerned about the consistency and formatting of the archived data and it was agreed that until the records could be considered fit for purpose, the archived data should continue to be accessible via the old database (EscoNet). The contract with EscoNet was therefore extended for a further six months to enable all internal users to be able to access the pre-May 2012 data. Since this time, the conversion work undertaken by EscoNet and the migration into Modern.gov have been reviewed in collaboration with Modern Mindset Ltd and EscoNet.
17. Having established the cause and extent of the data conversion issues, data cleansing re-saving work is now underway. Once this work has concluded, we will terminate our contract with EscoNet. Thereafter, all data pre-January 2010 will be accessible via Modern.gov and published via the system.

#### **Members' Registers of Interest**

18. Data from the Members' Manager database is now in Modern.gov. However, for the time being the Members' Register of Interest data continues to be published via the old database and it is proposed that the publication of Members' Register of Interest data does not change until such time that the new Standards requirements are agreed. A new form will be circulated for completion amongst Members and an up to date Register will be created within Modern.gov. This work has commenced and a new form will be ready for circulation amongst the Court once the new Code of Conduct and requirements in respect of declaring interests are agreed by the Court of Common Council on 25th October 2012. Once Members' forms are received, this data will be input into Modern.gov and thereafter published via the system.

#### **Extranet - access by Non-City of London Departments**

19. Officers within external departments such as the Barbican and the City of London Police have not been able to access non-public committee documentation via the intranet due to the system's reliance on users having an active directory account. To enhance access, an extranet site is being created by Modern.gov which will enable direct access by external representatives to non-public committee documentation. An update from Modern.gov in respect of this matter is anticipated and the timescales will, if possible, be reported verbally at the meeting.

#### **Document sizing**

20. One area that has arisen since go-live is the creation of PDF agenda packs that are too large to send via email. Once the non-public iPad app is available, the Committee and Member Services Team will cease sending committee agenda PDFs via email and so the problems associated with sending substantial documents via email should no longer be an issue. In the interim, whilst we are exploring all options to remedy sizing issues, there are occasions where only hard copy papers can be provided (Planning and Transportation Committee).

## **FUTURE STEPS – LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS AND WIDER CITY CORPORATION BENEFITS**

21. Phase 2 of implementation is firmly on the Project Team's agenda. This is focussing on access to non-public documentation, specifically via the non-public iPad app.
22. The process by which committee papers are produced and published is now very different and Members will have noticed some changes in formatting and publication styles. These changes will enable the organisation to achieve greater consistency and accuracy in written and retained data, as well as improved electronic access to committee and Member related information. Work is underway in respect of updating the report writing template and guidance for officers to ensure consistency, compatibility with the software and greater efficiency when preparing agendas.
23. The wider roll-out of the report writing and meeting management functionality is a longer term consideration and one that the Committee and Member Services Team will look to progress, once the above priority issues are resolved. As previously suggested, a number of Chief Officers will be approached in early 2013 in order to discuss wider use and development of the software to support the Corporation's governance activities. Members will continue to be kept informed and engaged throughout further phases of the project.

## **CORPORATE AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS AND ISSUES**

24. The use of new technologies is seen as an enabler to reduce the amount of printed and circulated committee documentation and increase access to information electronically. As a result of the iPad project and the increasing focus on the use of new technologies by Members, two Members have now indicated that they no longer wish to receive committee papers in hard copy. Consequently, all committee documentation is received via their iPads.
25. Many local authorities have implemented committee management solutions of this kind in an effort to streamline ways of working, enhance accuracy of data and maximise the use of new technologies to support more efficient and effective back-office processes. The software has also enhanced the provision of support to elected Members, maximising access to accurate data via electronic solutions such as the Modern.gov iPad app.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

26. A budget provision of up to £50,000 was made to cover the costs associated with implementation of the new software as well as the temporary additional staff resource costs, data migration and server costs and any costs associated with support from the Corporate IS Division. No additional on-going costs were anticipated at the start of the project, other than future annual charges for maintenance and support which have been taken into account as of January 2013 and will be contained within the Town Clerk's local risk budget.

27. Modern Mindset Ltd was acquired by Xpress Software Solutions Ltd (part of Electoral Reform Services Group) in June 2012. Having spoken with Modern Mindset and the Director of Xpress Software Solutions Ltd, the acquisition was driven by a desire to complement the Electoral Reform Services Group's portfolio of public sector solutions by bringing together electoral and democratic products and services. The current business operation and development priorities are unchanged and consequently, Modern Mindset will continue its development work in respect of the non-public app and there are not thought to be any financial/business concerns.

## **CONCLUSION**

28. Since going live with Modern.Gov on 1st June 2012, all Committee and Member related documentation has been prepared and published (to the intranet and internet) via the new software.
29. The team is benefiting from more efficient agenda publication processes, hands-on management of meeting and Member data, and consistency in report/agenda documentation.
30. Longer term, there are obvious benefits to the wider Corporation and Members, including report writing workflow functionality, access to public and non-public documents via the iPad app; and a potential reduction in hard-copy documentation.
31. Modern.gov is already providing both short and long term benefits not only for the Committee and Member Services Team but more widely across the organisation and for elected Members. In the longer term, aside from simplifying complex manual processes to support governance activities, there is scope to reduce printing and circulation costs, although the costs cannot at this stage be estimated.
32. Following implementation, a host of mandatory business requirements are now being satisfied. Familiarity with and use of the system's wider functionality is on-going, as is resolution of the outstanding issues as set out above. Wider work flow implementation and use of the software in other departments across the organisation will, once the priority issues are resolved, be explored as part of longer term activities.

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