Committee: Member Development & Standards Sub-Committee – For Decision	**Date:** 11 June 2026
Subject: Proposal for a Microsoft Copilot Pilot Scheme for Members	**Public report:** For Decision
This proposal: • **delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes** • **provides business enabling functions**	• Providing Excellent Services • Diverse Engaged Communities
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y (subject to Member decision)
If so, how much?	To be determined subject to the scope and scale of any pilot scheme, if adopted (see financial implications section).
What is the source of Funding?	Member Learning & Development Budget
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y
Report of:	Deputy Town Clerk
Report author:	Isaac Thomas

Summary

This report sets out proposals for exploring the potential introduction of a limited Microsoft Copilot trial scheme for Members.

This has been developed in response to Member feedback concerning the quality and overall digestibility of lengthy committee reports and agenda packs. While work is underway to support the quality of report writing across the organisation, during recent informal discussions with the Chief Commoner, several Members suggested that artificial intelligence ("AI") tools such as Microsoft Copilot might assist Members in the interim in summarising, processing, and understanding committee papers more efficiently. This tool would be particularly valuable for large and complex agenda packs.

It is recognised, however, that providing premium Microsoft Copilot licences to the full Court membership could carry significant financial implications, while the practical value of such tools for Members has not yet been fully established. The Sub-Committee should also note that Members already have access to the free version of Microsoft Copilot (known as "Copilot Chat") and that Digital, Information and Technology Services ("DITS") have recently begun to provide tailored training sessions and guidance to Members on its use.

This report therefore invites Members to consider whether

- the current free Copilot provision (currently available to all Members) alongside further training and guidance, is considered sufficient at this stage; or

- a limited pilot scheme involving a small cohort of volunteer Members trialling the premium version of Microsoft Copilot would be beneficial in assessing its value and practical application for Members (recommended).

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Note the contents of this report, particularly that Members already have access to Microsoft Copilot Chat (the free version of the tool) and that DITS have commenced Member training and guidance sessions relating to its use.

2. Determine whether the current free provision and associated training offer are considered sufficient at this stage, or whether officers should instigate a limited pilot scheme providing a small cohort of volunteer Members with premium Microsoft Copilot licences for a defined trial period.

3. If supportive of a pilot scheme in principle, authorise the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Director of Digital Information & Technology and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this Sub-Committee, to determine arrangements related to the cost, duration and cohort size, with funding for the pilot to be drawn from the Member Learning & Development budget.

Main Report

Background

1. Approximately one year on from the March 2025 Ward Elections, the Chief Commoner convened a follow-up discussion with the cohort of newly elected Members to reflect upon their experiences to date, to gather feedback on the support arrangements currently in place, and to better understand any challenges encountered during their first year in office as elected Members.

2. During these discussions, Members raised concerns regarding the quality, accessibility, and digestibility of some committee reports and agenda packs. Members noted that the volume, complexity, and technical nature of Committee documentation, together with an expectation of historic knowledge relating to the genesis of items, can make it challenging to process information efficiently, particularly where Members serve across multiple Committees and Sub-Committees. Acknowledging these concerns, the Town Clerk is continuing to work towards improving the quality and accessibility of report writing across the organisation.

3. Alongside these broader improvements to report writing, Members also suggested that artificial intelligence ("AI") tools such as Microsoft Copilot could play a role in summarising, information processing and identifying key points, statistics and decisions within committee papers, thereby helping Members engage more effectively with their committee business.

4. The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge conducted in 2025 highlighted the need to revisit and streamline decision-making processes, improve Member and officer working, and enhance organisational understanding of complex issues, including financial matters. In this context, providing Members with Copilot Premium licences could strengthen the Corporation's governance and enable more informed and effective decision-making by Members.

Current Position

5. Members currently have access to Microsoft Copilot Chat (the free version of Copilot), which is included within the Microsoft suite provided to all staff across the City of London Corporation.

6. On Thursday 21 May 2026, DITS officers delivered a demonstration session to Members regarding the use of Copilot Chat, including demonstrations of how committee reports and agenda packs can be uploaded and summarised.

7. At the demonstration session, officers advised that Microsoft Copilot Chat operates within the Corporation's approved Microsoft environment, meaning that appropriate security protections and guardrails are in place, and that Corporation documents (including non-public information) can be handled securely.

8. Members were further advised that external AI tools, including platforms such as ChatGPT, are not approved for Corporation use and may not offer equivalent safeguards or protections. For example, content entered into such platforms may be used to inform and train their own AI language models and should therefore not be used for Corporation business.

9. In summary, CoPilot Chat currently allows users to:
    - upload and summarise documents;
    - ask questions about uploaded papers;
    - generate summaries and key action points; and
    - assist with drafting and information processing tasks.

10. By contrast, the premium version of Microsoft Copilot may offer additional functionality, including:
    - integration with Outlook, Teams, OneDrive, and other Microsoft 365 applications;
    - access to broader organisational context through Microsoft Graph integration;
    - enhanced workflow and productivity functionality; and
    - more advanced AI agents and automation features.

Options

11. The following options have been identified for Members' consideration:

Option 1 – Continue with existing free Copilot provision and training only

Members could continue their existing access to CoPilot Chat, supported by further training and guidance from DITS.

This option would avoid additional licensing costs whilst allowing Members to develop familiarity with some existing, free AI functionality.

Option 2 – Introduce a limited premium Copilot pilot scheme (recommended for further exploration):

Subject to this Sub-Committee's endorsement, a small cohort of volunteer Members could be provided with premium Microsoft Copilot licences for a defined trial period.

The purpose of the pilot would be to:

- assess whether premium functionality provides meaningful additional benefit to Members;
- identify practical use cases and limitations;
- develop guidance and training materials for wider Membership if appropriate; and
- establish a cohort of informed "super users" able to support future adoption and understanding.

Option 3 – Full rollout of premium Copilot licences to all Members

Premium licences would be provided to all Members. At this stage, this option is not recommended due to cost implications and the absence of evidence regarding its likely uptake, effectiveness, or value for money; however, depending on the efficacy of the trial at Option 2 (if chosen), this could be explored at a later date.

In doing so, it should be noted that the City Corporation is exploring with Microsoft the potential for a more cost-effective, bulk licensing arrangement. This could significantly reduce per-licence costs for any wider rollout. Microsoft has also proposed a time-limited, scaled offer, with reduced costs over a three-year period, as well as training and adoption support. Should the pilot demonstrate clear benefits for Members, this could provide a more viable financial model for broader deployment.

Proposals

12. It is proposed that Members first consider whether the existing free Copilot provision, combined with additional training and guidance, may sufficiently meet Members' needs.

13. Subject to Member views, officers could then further explore the feasibility of a limited premium Copilot pilot scheme involving a small cohort of volunteer Members.

14. The purpose of any pilot scheme would be to:
    - evaluate the practical value of premium Copilot functionality for Members;
    - assess training and support requirements;
    - understand limitations and risks; and
    - support the development of practical guidance for the wider Court membership.

15. Any pilot would need to be accompanied by:
    - appropriate training;
    - clear guidance on information governance and acceptable use;
    - evaluation criteria and feedback mechanisms; and
    - oversight from relevant Digital Services officers.

16. It is proposed that officers continue to work closely with DITS colleagues to ensure alignment with the Corporation's wider digital and AI workstreams.

Key Data

17. Members currently have access to Microsoft Copilot Chat through the Corporation's Microsoft environment at no additional licensing cost.

18. Preliminary discussions with DITS indicate that the free version may already provide sufficient functionality for summarisation and document-processing tasks.

19. Premium Microsoft Copilot licences would carry additional licensing costs which would require further consideration before any wider rollout.

20. Recent Member training sessions on Copilot and AI tools have demonstrated active Member interest in AI-enabled productivity support.

Corporate & Strategic Implications –

- **Strategic implications –** The proposal supports the Corporate Plan 2024–2029 objective of Providing Excellent Services through exploring opportunities to improve Members' access to information and support effective decision-making. The proposal also supports Diverse Engaged Communities by promoting accessibility and confidence in engaging with committee business.

- **Financial implications -** Any future pilot scheme involving premium licences would carry financial implications relating to the licence purchase(s). The cost

of a licence is £25.50 per user per month, for a 12-month period: the overall cost of a pilot for, say, 5 Members for the period would be £1530.

- **Resource implications -** Officer resource would be required in relation to training, administration, technical support, and evaluation of any pilot scheme that is adopted. It is anticipated that this can be absorbed by the Member Services and DITS teams, on the basis of a small and contained trial.

- **Legal implications -** Appropriate consideration would need to be given to information governance, confidentiality, data protection, and acceptable use requirements.

- **Risk implications -** Risks include concerns around data protection and financial cost, which are indicated elsewhere ein this report.

- **Equalities implications –** The proposal would positively support accessibility and understanding for Members engaging with large volumes of committee information.

- **Climate implications –** None specific to this limited use.

- **Security implications –** None, given that corporate systems (i.e. CoPilot) are proposed for use, which provide sufficient guiderails to manage any data security concerns.

Conclusion

21. This report sets out proposals relating to the potential introduction of a limited Microsoft Copilot pilot scheme for Members.

22. The proposal arises from Member feedback regarding the digestibility and quality of committee papers and seeks to explore whether AI-enabled tools may assist Members in processing information more effectively.

23. The report also recognises that Members already have access to Microsoft Copilot Chat and that training and guidance activity is already underway.

24. Members are therefore invited to consider whether existing arrangements are sufficient at this stage or whether a limited premium pilot scheme should be explored further, in addition to this.

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