



Public Document Pack

Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

SUPPLEMENTARY PACK

Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 10th March, 2020
Time: 7.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Chairman: Councillor N Gregory
Members: Councillors M Caton, A Coote, C Criscione, G Driscoll, R Jones, P Lavelle, G LeCount (Vice-Chair), N Reeve and G Sell

ITEMS WITH SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION PART 1

Open to Public and Press

10 Recording and Broadcasting of Meetings 3 - 4

To receive a report on the recording and broadcasting of meetings from Councillor LeCount.

For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services

Telephone: 01799 510369 or 510548

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General Enquiries

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Agenda Item 10

AudioMinutes

1. Following the non-broadcast and non-recording of the Planning Committee meeting on 24 January 2020 the system supplier undertook an investigation and set out the following

‘What went wrong and how do we stop this happening again?’

The issue was local to the set-up at UDC, and given the highly unusual failure to record, the focus has to be on the Lenovo tablet. This device has worked well for years but the operating system (Android 19) was deprecated in 2014 - on reflection, we should have withdrawn support for such an outdated device long ago.

One theory that we are investigating is that a large amount of data needed to be deleted from the tablet (as a result of the long meeting on 17th) and that this could have caused an issue with the opening of the new recording file on the tablet. We were informed by Democratic Services that the app was reporting that old files were being deleted. This wasn't regarded as unusual as it happens each time the app runs.

This part of our code had to be substantially rewritten to maintain support for Android 19. It is possible that a bug relating to this change exists and only affects the specific Lenovo device as used by UDC. At present there is no indication to the operator that the local file has not been created – this we will address in later versions.

Our response to poor WiFi connectivity - which we never see at many locations but routinely see at others, is to work around this by making it easy to synchronize the local file, but if we notified the operator more prominently each time it happened, then this would increase the likelihood that something would be done permanently to fix the issue. In addition, we could log these failures and send an automated report to our contacts at the council concerned, again keeping the issue in front of mind.

As it turns out the failure on 24th was likely not related to UDC WiFi, however had we not previously had issues with the WiFi at UDC that appeared similar from our side, then we would not have automatically assumed that the issues were down to that. ‘

2. Following this review and report, a meeting was held with the supplier of the system and a number of changes made
 - a. The company has provided a new tablet with an up to date operating system and more hard disk space
 - b. The council has added a sim card to enable any WiFi dropouts to be avoided. This will be tested for the first time at Scrutiny on 10 March 2020.
 - c. The old tablet will be used as an offline recorder as a backup should the main device fail.
 - d. In addition, one of the broadband lines in the chamber has been removed from public use and will be dedicated to the audio system.

3. The system has to integrate with our democratic system ModGov. There are only two providers, one of which is Audiominutes and the other Public-i who we have met with previously and they promote a video based solution.
4. We have agreed a review meeting in May to see whether the changes have improved the system performance.

Microphones

5. The microphones are serviced once a year by the successor company to that which originally installed the system. That company have been to site and we have identified a programme of changes.
 - a. A number of the microphones have been re-programmed to work in both the chamber and committee room. This was because we were short of committee room microphones, given the size of the new committees, and moving them between users by picking them up by the swan neck was causing damage.
 - b. The dual room microphones have also had their bandwidth changed to a lower use frequency. If this works the remaining microphones will also be switched.
 - c. Software updates are scheduled.
6. The company have confirmed that dropouts during speaking are almost always caused by the speaker being too close to the microphone. Signs have been made for public speakers advising them of the need to sit back from the microphones.
7. It is important to make changes in stages, so as to be able to assess what works and what doesn't, and be able to easily roll back to a stable position if need be.
8. The committee room microphones were used for the first time for Cabinet on 4 March and they ran without an issue.
9. Whilst the above is all positive, the results are based on only single meetings and time will need to be given to be certain that the issues have been resolved.