

**DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE****8 February 2017**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes****Courier Run Review**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Democracy Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the Committee considers the options and agrees what action should be taken in respect of the Courier Run having regard to Options A-E in this report.

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

This report relates to the decisions made in respect of our priorities as it covers the printing and distribution of Agendas.

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Democracy Committee	16 November 2016
Democracy Committee	8 February 2017

# Courier Run Review

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the start of the municipal year the Committee commissioned an officer review of the courier run. This work has been undertaken by a member of the finance team in consultation with corporate services and the mayoral team.
  - 1.2 The Committee considered the options at its meeting in November and requested that consultation with Councillors be carried out on all the options prior to a decision being made.
  - 1.3 This report outlines the responses to the options for consideration.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Committee commissioned a review to look at the possible savings and future options for the printing and distribution of agendas for Councillors. At present agendas and reports are printed centrally by the council's print room known as corporate support. Agendas are posted or more usually, delivered via the civic officers on a weekly courier run on a Friday. This can take a civic officer the whole day to complete when delivering papers to all members for Full Council.
- 2.2 The review sought to identify both efficiency and cashable savings. Officers examined the processes in the Corporate Support team for printing agendas and preparing for the courier run, to identify the officer time taken. Data was used from 2015-16 to identify the costs of printing agendas and running the van for the courier run. The van is used for an internal post-delivery on a Wednesday taking post to and from the satellite offices and services and the courier which only runs on Fridays. MBS, the team at the depot have also undertaken the courier run on occasions and this data has also been considered as part of the report.

### The Process

- 2.3 Councillors are contacted at the start of the municipal year to find out what agendas they wish to receive. A distribution list is collated for each committee listing which Councillors are to receive the different agendas. All Councillors also receive an email with links to all agenda's on line and via the intranet. Currently the access to the intranet does not include the exempt part 2 pages.

2.4 The Corporate Support team process for a print run for Agendas is as follows:

- Email is received in print room inbox, with some instructions from user i.e. when needed, black & white / colour & stapled etc.
- The operator sets up the job to print, checking that each appendix is set up on a new page.
- Print distribution list for the particular committee to check number of copies required.
- If there are any issues liaise with Democratic services to see if the format can be changed.
- If the agenda refers to minutes of the previous meeting, these are accessed and 1 copy is printed on special minute paper.
- Go through the distribution list and include copies of the agenda papers in the members appropriate pigeon hole.
- In 2015/16 Corporate printing costs was identified as £13,000.

2.5 The Corporate Support team process for a Courier Run is as follows:

- There is a set list of the order to deliver to members in number order.
- Work through the list in numerical order and empty any agenda papers from the members pigeon hole and include in appropriate green bag or address an envelope with Cllr's name and number from the sheet.
- Include in large box in strict numerical order.
- List any names of councillors who will not be receiving a delivery.
- This list will need to be emailed to Julie Webb.
- Count number of deliveries; add to list of members who will not be receiving a delivery and check this comes back to the total number of members.

2.6 Estimated cost of the courier run (not including print or post):-

This is based on the mileage in 2015/16 and time collated by officers during the month of September 2016. The mileage is an annual estimate using a figure of 70 miles per member courier run. The employee efficiency calculation is for one civic officer based on 5 minutes per mile.

Van costs based	£4,667
Fuel costs, 3433 miles	<u>£226</u>
<b>Total estimated cost cashable</b>	<b>£ 4,893</b>

**Other employee efficiencies** – Civic Officers 0.22 FTE (£4,760)  
Corporate Support, minimal time preparing courier run

### 3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 There are a number of options the Committee could consider in relation to the printing and distribution of agendas and other papers to Councillors. Councillors in a survey were asked to consider each option and the impact it would have on improving arrangements for agenda papers and secondly whether they would support the option. There were 23 respondents to the survey.

3.2 The survey results are in favour of option D remain the same with 55% of respondents in support of maintaining the current approach. Option A print only was supported by 31.8%, Option B electronic agendas by 13.6% and Option C posting printed agendas by 13.6%.

#### 3.3 Option A

Committee agendas continue to be printed but not delivered or posted

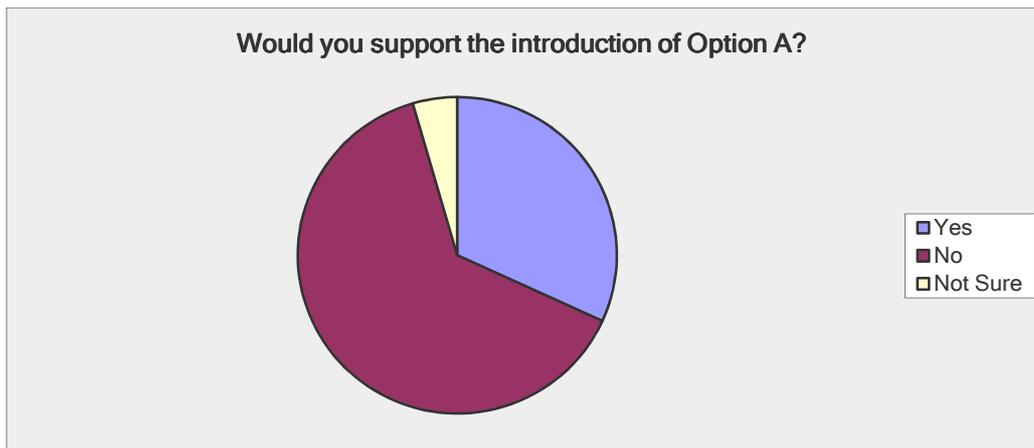
##### Savings

Vehicle costs, excluding fuel	£4,667
Fuel costs	£226
Postage (as per 2015/16 costs)	£1,276

**Total cashable saving** **£6,189**

**Other employee efficiencies** – Civic Officers 0.22 FTE  
Corporate Support, minimal time preparing courier run

What would be the impact of Option A on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A large positive impact	9.1%	2
A small positive impact	18.2%	4
No Difference	9.1%	2
A small negative impact	9.1%	2
A large negative impact	54.5%	12
<i>answered question</i>		<b>22</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>



Yes	31.8%
No	63.6%
Not Sure	4.5%

#### Comments received on option A:

- Although it doesn't challenge the need for corporate printing
- We would need an email to say papers are in pigeon holes.
- Not always in Maidstone this could only work if papers were to be ready long in advance of meetings
- I have a full time job as well as being a councillor, as do some other members. I would find it very difficult to get into town in office hours
- I need papers well before a committee meeting so I can read and research accordingly. To collect before I go in means I would be poorly prepared.
- MBC is proposing minor savings in order to save £4.2.million by tinkering with the real costs of management when what is really needed is an independent review of staffing costs across the Council.
- It will prevent councillor's being able to do their work, they will attend meetings without having papers to read and the quality of decision making will drop
- Democracy is expensive, but, in the overall scheme of things, £19,169 is a relatively small price.
- The cost to the Council of individual Cllrs making trips to Maidstone to collect agendas, would surely cost more than the cost of a single person delivering them.
- Option A is too cumbersome, as it would require extra journeys by members into Maidstone.

Please note that under this option agendas would be available on-line on the Council's website, so they would be available for Councillors to read at publication point at least 5 clear days before the committee meeting.

### 3.3 Option B

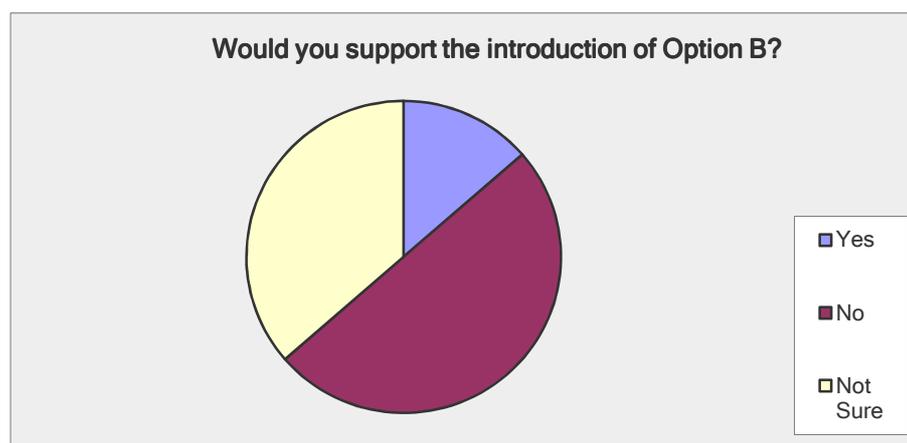
The Modern.gov system is upgraded to allow proper access to papers via ipads. Councillors and officers use ipads to access agenda papers. Since the survey was distributed we now have our agendas available via the modern app so they can be accessed via ipads. Councillors can request printed copies. External organisations are no longer sent copies of the papers.

#### Savings

Vehicle costs, excluding fuel	£4667
Fuel costs	£ 226
Corporate Printing costs	£13,000
Postage (as per 2015/16 costs )	<u>£1276</u>
<b>Total cashable saving</b>	<b>£19,169</b>

**Other employee efficiencies** – Civic Officers 0.22 FTE  
 Corporate Support, minimal time preparing courier run

What would be the impact of Option B on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A large positive impact	9.5%	2
A small positive impact	9.5%	2
No Difference	4.8%	1
A small negative impact	38.1%	8
A large negative impact	38.1%	8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>21</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>2</b>



Yes	13.6%
No	50.0%
Not Sure	36.4%

## Comments on Option B

- large positive impact on budget savings, but a large negative impact on committee members, especially where there are a lot of reports and tables. I get sea sick reading too much on screen! Also I like to make notes on my cttee papers.
- This would have to apply to all to work with no exceptions. I do not think iPads are ideal for large documents and we need this to apply to all as there is a page numbering issue between iPads and paper report numbering.
- will only work if papers are ready long in advance
- Full council agenda this month ran to 403 pages
- Just the Agenda? I need to read all papers and detail fully and move between pages frequently
- See comments made for option A
- The council would have to pay for councillor's to have high quality fibre, plus high quality printers and pay for paper, there would be an increase in cost and again why should councillors have to do this, it is what officers are supposed to do
- There are some areas where agendas do not need to be printed, e.g. Full Council agendas often replicate what Cllrs have seen at service cttee's. But there is a real issue with proof reading by Officers, and it is often only Cllrs reading printed versions who pick up on a plethora of issues.
- Access to documents should be easier by sending whole agendas via email in a single file rather than links to a webpage with multiple files which is very cumbersome to access and download.

## 3.4 Option C

Posting agendas and not using the courier run showed we could make an efficiency saving of 0.22 FTE. However this option will increase costs rather than decrease as any cashable savings from vehicle costs including fuel will be lost in the cost of postage.

### Savings:

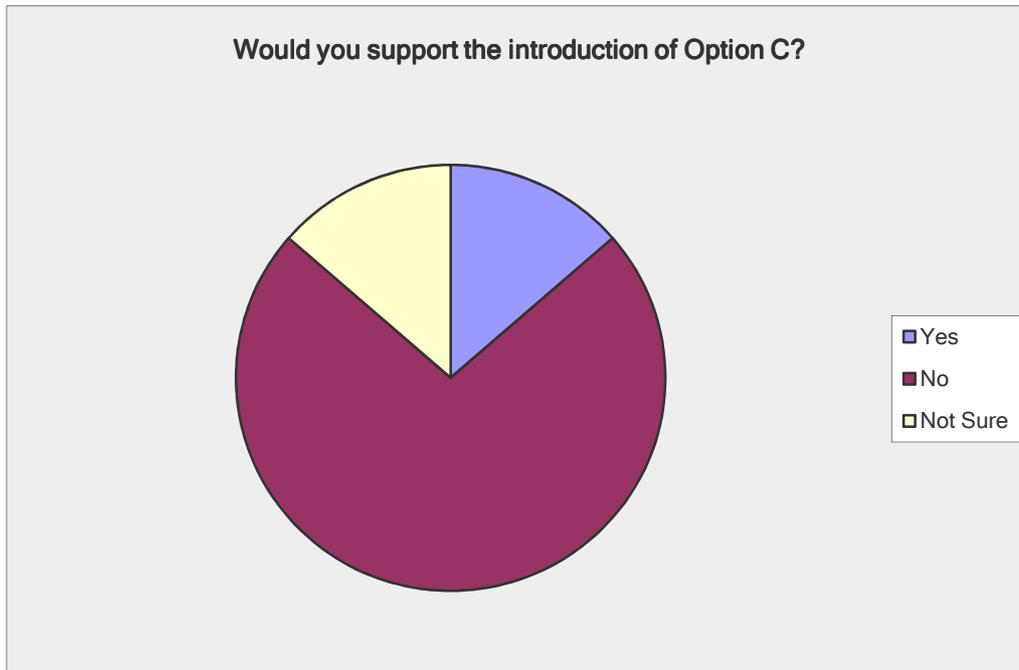
Vehicle costs, excluding fuel	£4667
Fuel costs	£ 226
Non cashable civic officer time	£ 4,760

### Costs

Posting Agendas	£19,245
Corporate Printing costs	£13,000

What would be the impact of Option C on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A large positive impact	9.1%	2
A small positive impact	4.5%	1
No Difference	31.8%	7
A small negative impact	13.6%	3
A large negative impact	40.9%	9

<i>answered question</i>	22
<i>skipped question</i>	1



Yes	13.6%	3
No	72.7%	16
Not Sure	13.6%	3

#### Comments on option C

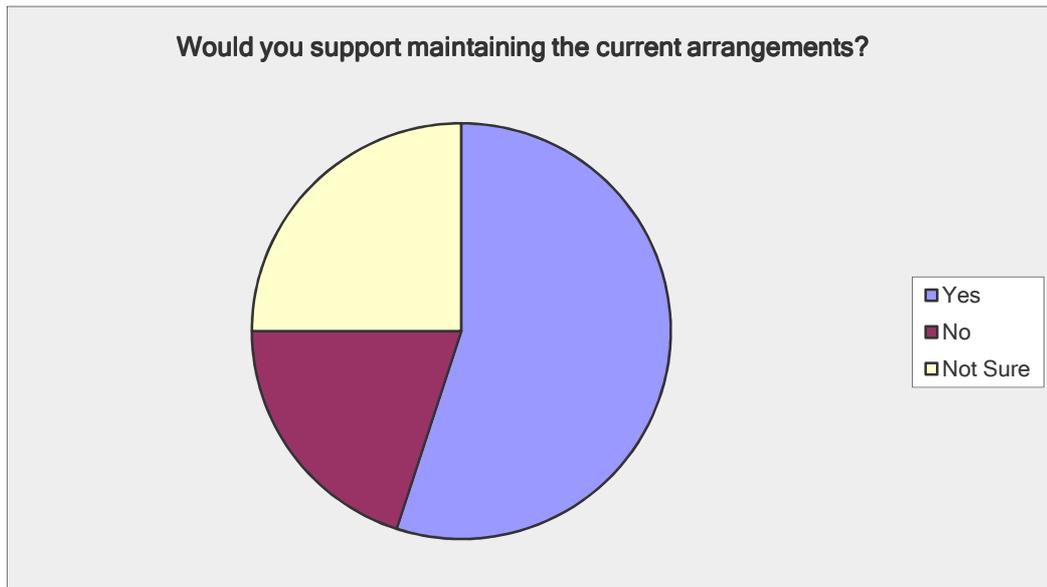
- A large positive impact on vehicle cost savings and savings on civic staff time (which I note are not stated in the cost of current arrangements). But horrendous extra cost and therefore out of the question!!!
- A very expensive option that we should not be considering in the current financial climate.
- Mainly on the additional costs that would be incurred
- This hugely increases the cost
- See comments made for option A
- It makes no sense to spend more to post out papers than have a courier service
- Why would we consider an option that incurs an additional cost than the current solution?
- the extra cost is a no-brainer

### 3.5 Option D

Maintain the current approach, Councillors may still want to individually consider whether or not to use ipads or other electronic devices instead of printed papers to reduce the costs of printing and distributing papers.

**What would be the impact of Option D on improving the arrangements for printing and distribution of agenda and papers?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A large positive impact	20.0%	4
A small positive impact	5.0%	1
No Difference	65.0%	13
A small negative impact	10.0%	2
A large negative impact	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		<b>20</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>3</b>



Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	55.0%
No	20.0%
Not Sure	25.0%

**Comments on Option D:**

- Stricter printing discipline of only printing papers for Cttee Members only. Either members should hand their papers to subs if they are not attending OR a couple of extra copies are printed 'just in case'
- This system works, some postage could be saved by not posting decision sheets for instance
- Rural members in particular shouldn't have to come all the way into Maidstone to pick up their papers.
- see my comments re option B
- the current arrangements have minor advantages as it can be utilised to mail bits from member to member and I get the Downs Mail which is no longer delivered in my rural area

### 3.6 Option E

Identify other alternatives and solutions which may mix and match some of the ideas in the options above.

The issues with modern on the ipads has now been resolved so access to agendas online has improved. We are also working to resolve the issue with the screens and have two solutions which will mean larger documents can be displayed for everyone to see in the meeting as they are being presented.

The committee as an alternative could consider restricting the printing of agendas to be only for those who are committee members or have been asked to substitute. They could also consider if those agendas need to be distributed or could be picked up from a designated place. Papers could be distributed at other meetings councillors are attending.

Comments from the survey:

- ipads MUST be upgraded and access MUST be made available to mod.gov so that members can save documents and annotate notes; members must be trained accordingly. This will help reduce printing costs significantly although admittedly not totally.
- Have an amnesty for disposing of committee papers for squirrels among us. It'll make us realise that we don't need to keep them and maybe we didn't need them in the first place, because we can see them on google/intranet.
- Highlight important agenda items on the front page for ease of reference
- We should be increasing the use of digital facilities but feel that the IT is not up to scratch to support ceasing paper reports.
- I think perhaps a mixture of the options, a 400 page document is not practical to print and a decision sheet can easily be printed instead of posted, I don't think we need to be distributing the Down's Mail, even though I enjoy reading it, these could be picked up from the offices or Town Hall. Opting in to which agendas you wanted was a good idea a couple of years ago, can a similar thing be tried to further reduce the time use of civic officers, after all some councillors are in the offices almost every day and can easily collect theirs.
- See comments made in respect of option A
- summary:
  - Access to electronic documents should be easier by sending whole agendas via email in a single file rather

than links to a webpage with multiple files which is very cumbersome to access and download

- Most of all, it is very time consuming.
- If this would be implemented and printed copies be available at the meeting, then there would be no need to send out hard-copies by mail nor courier and option B would be acceptable.
- Option A is too cumbersome, as it would require extra journeys by members into Maidstone.

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#### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Committee is asked to consider all the options and identify what would be appropriate.

4.2 Points for consideration:

- Councillor feedback on the options
- The pool car can be booked for the internal mail delivery or staff travelling from satellite services could take and deliver internal post
- The efficiency in staff time from civic officers is minimal so would not result in a direct saving, however it may make it easier to organise supporting meetings and the mayors events plus assisting the Mayor's PA with other duties
- Exempt reports cannot be accessed electronically on modern as access is via the public facing site. Exempt papers could be emailed or printed and sent to Councillors separately.
- Councillors have printing equipment via the council. Based on the list of different types of print cartridges for 2015/16 there were 39 members, or 71% who had access to their own printer. In financial year 2015/16 members incurred costs of £3,513 and purchased 138 print cartridges based on 28 different types.
- Committee meetings could be used to distribute agendas to save postal costs if appropriate and/or Councillors attending the offices could collect papers from the officers.
- Councillors are required under legislation to give consent to receiving summons for meetings electronically and not in paper from for the

Committee meetings they are members of. There are no rules governing how we deliver agendas to those who are not on the Committee. The summons constitutes the front page of the agenda not the whole agenda.

- 32 iPads have been issued however they currently only provide restricted access as they are locked down for security reasons. Discussions have taken place with IT to see whether this can be amended. Based on a report as of the 5 September 2016 ipads or other devices were last logged into:

- Within the last week 17
- Within the last month 5
- Within the last 2 months 1
- Within the last 3 months 1
- Between 3- 6 months 1
- More than 12 months 11

Total Number of devices 36  
(Includes 4 devices not issued by MBC)

## 5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider the feedback from the survey as part of its review.

## 6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Committee will need to communicate its decision to all councillors in relation to the courier run. The next steps will depend on which options the Committee wishes officers to pursue.

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## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	This report relates to the decisions made in respect of our priorities as it covers the printing and distribution of	Head of Policy and Communications

	Agendas.	
<b>Risk Management</b>	All the options carry risk and Councillors will need to consider this as part of the decision making process	Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Financial</b>	The report offers options for savings and efficiencies	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	Some of the options will have staffing implications in terms of changing staff activity.	Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Legal</b>	There is a legal requirement that a summons to attend the meeting is sent to every member on the committee by either leaving it at, or posting it to, their place of residence or other address if specified by the member. Where consent has been given the summons can be transmitted electronically.	Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	Individual needs will have to be assessed and met when considering the distribution of agendas and papers to ensure there is not disadvantage and everyone has access to reports and papers for meetings	Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	Some of the options have positive environmental impacts such as reducing the number of agendas printed and reducing distribution by van	Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	Access to information procedure rules need to be abided by.	Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Procurement</b>	Not all councillors have ipads and a change to the courier run may incur cost and procurement of extra IT equipment.	Head of Policy and Communications

<b>Asset Management</b>	IT equipment.	Head of Policy and Communications
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**8. REPORT APPENDICES**

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix A – Copy of the survey

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.