Change Management Committee	Tuesday, 15 January 2019	Matter for Information and Decision

Report Title: Introduction of Paperless Committee Meetings

Report Author(s): Steven Tucker (Democratic & Electoral Services Manager)

Purpose of Report:	To seek approval for Change Management Committee to undertake a pilot of 'paperless' meetings and, subject to the success of the pilot, to extend this approach to all Council and Committee meetings on a phased basis.
Report Summary:	The adoption of a paperless approach to meetings will reduce the Council's carbon footprint, deliver printing, paper and production cost savings, and provide Members with improved access to information, thereby allowing them to more effectively and efficiently undertake their duties.
Recommendation(s):	A. **That the next meeting of Change Management Committee scheduled for Tuesday, 5 March 2019 be designated as a pilot 'paper-light' meeting;** B. **That the first meeting of Change Management Committee in the 2019/20 Municipal Year be designated as a pilot 'paperless' meeting;** C. **That subject to the success of the above pilots, a phased Council-wide transition to paperless meetings be implemented, with the timetable to be agreed in consultation with Committee Chairs; and** D. **That Members note the intention to purchase the Modern.Gov restricted app to facilitate the transition to paperless meetings.**
Responsible Strategic Director, Head of Service and Officer Contact(s):	Stephen Hinds (Director of Finance & Transformation) (0116) 257 2681 stephen.hinds@oadby-wigston.gov.uk David Gill (Head of Law & Governance / Monitoring Officer) (0116) 257 2626 david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Steve Tucker (Democratic & Electoral Services Manager) (0116) 257 2605 steven.tucker@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Samuel Ball (Senior Democratic Services Officer / Legal Officer) (0116) 257 2643 samuel.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Corporate Priorities:	An Inclusive and Engaged Borough (CP1) Effective Service Provision (CP2) Green & Safe Places (CP4)
Vision and Values:	Accountability (V1)

	Innovation (V4) Customer Focus (V5)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	The implications are as set out in the report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out in the report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Effective Utilisation of Assets/Buildings (CR5) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Organisational/Transformational Change (CR8)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising directly from the report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from the report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from the report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 The Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015
Appendices:	**1. Estimated Committee Agenda Printing Costs (2018)**

1. Background

1.1 In light of ongoing financial pressures, the Council continues to look at identifying ways of doing more with less. Part of the Council's strategy to achieve this is through the implementation of smarter ways of working in a digital age through its Business Transformation agenda.

1.2 A number of Councils have completed a transition to paperless meetings over recent years and there is a clear direction of travel in this regard, such that over the course of the next few years it is expected to become standard practice in local government.

1.3 Across a wide number of service areas, the Council is increasingly encouraging its residents to access services electronically. Moving to paperless meetings provides Members with an opportunity to lead by example in this regard and demonstrate that they too are prepared to embrace new forms of technology to deliver savings, embrace more efficient working practices and reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

2.   Advantages of Paperless Working

There are a number of potential benefits associated with a move to paperless meetings, which include:

2.1   Environmental Benefits

The primary benefit of paperless meetings is the reduction of the Council's carbon footprint, highlighting the authority as being environmentally responsible. Paper and stationery usage is reduced, less energy is used to produce printed papers, less printing equipment is required and less transport is involved.

2.2   Reduced Printing & Postage Costs

It is not possible to determine the exact year-on-year spend on printing of meeting papers because departmental recharges for printing do not differentiate between the various types of printing. However, as an indicative guide, the estimated costs for the Council's six principal Committees during 2018 are outlined at **Appendix 1**.

These figures are based on the current cost of paper purchase, colour printing at around 4.5 pence per page and £1.50 for large postage per agenda pack to each Committee Member. The total estimated cost of producing Committee papers during 2018 was just under £3,500 for approximately 52,000 pages.

The frequency of Council and Committee meetings and the size of agendas can vary significantly, and with the addition of ad-hoc Committees, extraordinary meetings, Sub-Committees and Working Groups, it is difficult to project a definitive cost saving that paperless meetings would offer going forward. However, it is considered that even when the annual site-licence fee for the Modern.Gov restricted app (see paragraph 3.2 below) is taken into account, the paperless initiative will still deliver a moderate cost saving.

2.3   Security

The Modern.Gov App will enable Democratic Services to disseminate Private or Restricted (Exempt Information) papers securely to Members. This has the benefit of ensuring that only the people who should see the papers have access to them.

2.4   Officer Time

The removal of the need to print, envelope and process hard-copy agenda papers for postage will result in efficiencies in Committee administrator time which can be reallocated to other areas of Member support.

2.5   Improved Access to Information

Through the Modern.Gov app, Members are able to access meeting papers from any place, at any time to suit their personal commitments. Most tablet devices are small, portable, convenient and easy to use once Members become familiar with them; by contrast some agenda packs can be several hundred pages long and particularly cumbersome. The Modern.Gov app can be set to retain six months' worth of Committee papers which can be accessed and referred to at any time (including during meetings), improving access to information. At the current time Members only receive a hard copy agenda for the Committees on which they sit; however the app can be configured to provide Members with access to any Council meeting papers they wish to receive. Dual-hatted members are also able to access Leicestershire County Council meeting information through the application.

2.6 **Improved Member Skills**

An additional by-product of a move to paperless meetings is likely to be the upskilling of some Members' IT skills. Going paperless provides an incentive to embrace new technologies, and at a time when most Councils are adopting a "Digital First" approach for their communities, it can only help having Members who are more skilled and have an understanding of technology and how it can transform service delivery.

3. Modern.Gov App

3.1 The standard Modern.Gov app is available for any member of the public to download, therefore any exempt/confidential meeting papers cannot be accessed through it. However, for an additional annual site-licence fee, there is a restricted version of the app which will allow Members (via a straightforward login process) to access exempt or non-public Committee papers on their device through the Council's internal network. The cost of the site-licence for the restricted app is ordinarily £3,000 per year, however the Council has been offered an introductory price of £2,000 per year for the first three years. Members are asked to note the Council's intention to take advantage of this time-limited offer to facilitate the move to paperless meetings.

4. Options for Implementation

4.1 Some local authorities are known to have used a 'guillotine' approach to introducing paperless meetings, whereby all meetings from an agreed cut-off date are to become strictly paperless. Modern.Gov report that this approach has had mixed results, with some Council's finding that this allows little time for Members to build confidence.

4.2 Other local authorities have opted initially for a pilot, followed by a gradual meeting-by-meeting approach.

4.3 It is considered that Change Management Committee, given its remit to "provide oversight and scrutiny of any major change management projects being carried out within the organisation", is the most appropriate Committee to undertake a pilot of this nature.

4.4 It is recommended that the pilot should begin with a 'paper-light' approach, whereby Members can request a paper copy of the agenda pack alongside their electronic copy to build confidence, eventually leading to a paperless outcome. The next meeting of Change Management Committee scheduled for Tuesday 5 March 2019 represents a suitable opportunity to commence the pilot.

4.5 It is also recommended that subject to successfully addressing any feedback/concerns arising from the 'paper-light' meeting in March 2019, the first Change Management Committee meeting of the 2019/20 Municipal Year (date to be confirmed) should be designated as a pilot 'paperless' meeting.

4.6 Subject to any further feedback/concerns arising from the pilot paperless meeting, it is then recommended that a phased Council-wide transition to paperless meetings be implemented, with the timetable to be agreed in consultation with each relevant Committee Chair.

5. Support for Members

5.1 It is recognised that some Members will adapt quicker than others to a transition to paperless meetings, therefore the level of support provided to them will be crucial.

5.2 Early consideration will be given to ensuring that all Members have a tablet device (either personal or Council supplied) which is compatible with the Modern.Gov restricted app.

Under the current Member IT scheme, Members can request either a laptop or iPad to assist them in their duties. Provision for new equipment will be included in the 2019/20 budget to provide members with the required equipment.

5.3   It is proposed that in order to put Members at ease with using the Modern.Gov app, ongoing drop-in sessions will be held prior to Committee meetings to deliver high quality one-to-one support and advice. Support will also be requested from IT to ensure that the Member Wi-Fi facility is regularly tested for reliability (although as long as the agenda pack is downloaded before the meeting, a weak or intermittent Wi-Fi signal should not affect Member participation at meetings).

5.4   It is intended that during paperless meetings the agenda will be projected from the Modern.Gov app onto the meeting room screen, to provide a useful a training aide and reference point. This will also be particularly helpful for enhancing the transparency of Committee meetings to any members of the public in attendance.

5.5   To ensure that no Member experiences battery cut-off during meetings, arrangements will be made for spare charging facilities to be available. Spare hard copies of the agenda can also be made available in the event that any Member forgets to bring their device to a meeting.

6.   Legal Implications

6.1   The Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015 permits delivery of an electronic summons to Members for a Committee meeting subject to the consent of the Member.

6.2   The security settings within the Modern.Gov App allow for all common types of information to be published securely, safeguarding sensitive documents and applying where necessary the exemption criteria relevant to Access to Information legislation.