



<b>Subject:</b>	Members' Portal Update
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, Town Solicitor
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Elizabeth Watts, Programme Support Officer

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update and seek the initial views of Members on the development and roll-out of a Members' Portal; an online information and knowledge tool. An update is also provided on the work underway to develop and launch a new version of the 'My Belfast' App.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) note progress to date on the development of the Members' Portal, including the suggested process and timeline for future roll-out;</li><li>(ii) agree that the Members' Development Working Group, or their nominees, act as the forum for initial testing/ piloting and feedback on the Members' Portal, albeit any other Member who may wish to participate in the pilot can put themselves forward;</li><li>(iii) highlight any initial views on the potential content and focus of the Portal;</li><li>(iv) note the intention to launch a new version of the 'My Belfast' App which is a mobile application for accessing Council services and information about the City.</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> <p>The Council was awarded the Charter for Elected Member Development in 2011 and was successfully re-accredited in 2015. One of their recommendations based on best practice was the provision of an <b>information link for Members to support their capacity building</b>.</p>

3.2	<p>As part of Members' induction to the Shadow Council in 2014, a Handbook was developed and uploaded to a Members' document library on the council website, using the Modern.gov platform. Other supporting information was added to the document library at the time, such as guidance documents, officer contact details and an outline of capacity building activities.</p>
3.3	<p>Following the launch of the new council in 2015, officers from Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR&amp;OD) and Digital Services began the development of a dedicated Member's Portal using the document management tool, SharePoint. The aim of the Portal is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) To provide easy, on-the-move access to current information and data relevant to Members</li> <li>(ii) To sign-post Members to information held elsewhere on the BCC website, Interlink, or on external websites.</li> </ul>
3.4	<p>At the People and Communities Committee work planning session in June 2015, Members suggested that a Members' Portal could support committee working by providing status updates on local projects and events for example.</p>
3.5	<p>The Portal site has now been developed in prototype format and includes the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A homepage with quick links, news and announcements</li> <li>- Read-only access to information on Council Committees using Modern.gov</li> <li>- Space to upload capacity building and Member development materials (e.g. training module information, videos and training news)</li> <li>- Space for local information such as e.g. area working data, local statistics and physical project news</li> <li>- Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.s)</li> <li>- Link to key forms and processes (e.g. mileage)</li> <li>- Links to relevant external websites</li> <li>- Links to strategic documents (e.g. Belfast Agenda, City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, Corporate Plan)</li> <li>- Links to 'find a person/ find a location'</li> <li>- Links to City Hall events information</li> <li>- Link to 'My Belfast' App (the BCC GPS-enabled information App)</li> </ul>

3.6	<p><b>TIMELINE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>January:</u></b> The Portal should not duplicate existing information, and therefore a short period of content and layout refinement is now required in consultation with HR&amp;OD, Digital Services, Democratic Services, Corporate Communications and other applicable officers. Any initial views on the content and focus of the Portal are welcomed from Members at this time also.</li> <li>• <b><u>February/ March:</u></b> Once refined, it is proposed that a demonstration is provided to the <b>Members Development Working Group</b> in the first instance. It is anticipated that the Portal pilot will form part of wider capacity building task and finish action plan, and that the Working Group will nominate Members to participate in the pilot. The involvement of other interested Members during testing is welcomed. Nominated Members will have access (on PCs, iPads and Smartphones) to the emerging Members' Portal for an initial test period of 4 weeks</li> </ul> <p>Members should also note that a new version of the <b>'My Belfast' App</b> is currently being prepared with a more graphic interface and provide greater ease of navigation for Members and other users. It would be the intention that the new version of the 'My Belfast' App will be launched in the coming weeks and all Members will be briefed on the functionality and benefits of the new version.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>March/ April:</u></b> Following the pilot phase, Members will be asked for feedback on the content, benefits, ease of use, and layout, and further changes will be made.</li> <li>• <b><u>April/ May:</u></b> Wider roll-out, including demonstrations to all Members.</li> </ul>
3.7	<p>The timeline is subject to the establishment of the Members Development Working Group, the smooth roll-out of Office 365, and lead time to upgrade and launch the new version of the 'My Belfast' App.</p>
3.8	<p><b>ONGOING FEEDBACK &amp; SYSTEM MAINTENANCE</b></p> <p>The Portal will only be effective if the content remains relevant and current to Members. It will therefore require ongoing feedback from Members, and continual upkeep and maintenance from officers to ensure maximum benefit.</p>

3.9	<u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u> None
3.10	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
4.1	Appendix One: Members' Portal Screen Example