

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance & Resources
DATE	02 December 2010
DIRECTOR	Stewart Carruth
TITLE OF REPORT	Accord Update Report
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/10/182

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Committee on the progress being made regarding all aspects of the scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that elected members:

- i) Note and approve the progress and developments being made in the advancement of the Accord Scheme;
- ii) *Approve the change of one site for sQuid payment, from a Sport Aberdeen site to the Town House restaurant;
- iii) *Approve the trial of an on-line pre-ordering facility for the Town House restaurant utilising a sQuid purse on the Accord card and/ or smart staff ID badge.

*subject to the option included in the 5 Year Business Plan regarding the Town House restaurant.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To introduce the trial of an on-line pre-ordering facility for the Town House restaurant;

- i. £2833.13 to purchase the required hardware and customize the software for Aberdeen City Councils requirements;
- ii. £75.00 per month to host; initial trial period of 12 months, therefore, total cost of £900.00

- iii. These costs will be met from the Modernising Government Funds already allocated to the Accord card scheme. Therefore, there is no impact on the Accord Operational budget.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of a trial of an on-line pre-ordering facility for the Town House restaurant is subject to a due diligence review by the Policy & Advice Team of the office of the City Solicitor.

5. MAIN UPDATE

The following provides an update on items arising in the last reporting period.

5.1 Smartcard Migration

- 5.1.1 As stated in previous reports, the current type of smartcards used in Scotland is to be replaced due to security and transaction time concerns. The initial decision from *ITSO was that the MiFare smartcard (the card used by all other Scottish Local Authorities) should no longer be used from 31st December 2011 and JCOP card (the card used by Aberdeen City Council) could no longer be used from 31st December 2010.

** ITSO are the organisation that provide the secure electronic smartcard environment within which the Scotland-wide free bus scheme operates.*

- 5.1.2 An application was made to the ITSO board to have the deadline moved for JCOP cards to 31/12/2011 in line with all other local authorities. This application was approved and discussions are ongoing with the Improvement Service regarding card migration plans to ensure that the new card type is compatible with existing applications.

5.2 sQuid E-purse

5.2.1 sQuid Launch

The aim of the Accord Scheme is to offer access to a wide variety of local and national services to the citizens of Aberdeen via the Accord / National Entitlement Card (hereafter referred to as the Accord card). Providing an electronic purse has been recognised as a key step in this process offering citizens a convenient way to pay for low value goods, Council services and opening up opportunities for further development.

- 5.2.2 The electronic purse (e-purse), sQuid, meets the criteria for an e-purse on the Accord card in terms of social inclusion, independency from banks and being free to get and free to use. The integration of the sQuid purse to the Accord card is now complete and was officially launched on 1st September 2010.

- 5.2.3 From this date onwards all Accord cards have had a sQuid purse encoded to card for cardholder to use. The launch took place at the Central Library under the auspices of Councilor John Stewart and Councilor Neil Cooney. This was backed by representatives from sQuid and underpinned by 'sQuid on your Accord Card' campaign designed by the Accord team in conjunction with the Corporate Communications team.

- 5.2.4 The initial rollout of sQuid is at seven Sport Aberdeen facilities, Provost Skene's House Cellar Café, the Art Gallery Café, Central Library, with all of these sites now accepting sQuid as a method of payment.
- 5.2.5 The National Customer Service Week, 4th – 8th October 2010, was also seen as a good opportunity to raise awareness of sQuid by means of an exhibition at 'The Point' which was staffed jointly by sQuidcard and the Accord team and has attracted a good outcome.
- 5.2.6 To date, there have been just under 100 sQuid transactions in Aberdeen City which represents a card holder either using sQuid for payment or have the sQuid purse loaded to their card (which can be done at any Customer Access Point to any Accord card issued prior to 1st September 2010). The next stage of having retailers accepting sQuid for payments will commence early 2011 and will be led by sQuidcard's field team.
- 5.2.7 Following the introduction of sQuid to the Accord card further roll-out opportunities have arisen and these are covered in the development section of the report.

5.3 Payment via the Internet

- 5.3.1 The Accord team are working with the Icon System Administrator and his team to introduce the function of loading via the internet the cashless catering e-purse used at all secondary schools.
- 5.3.2 The development of both the Icon payments system and the cashless catering system is nearing completion. This is on schedule to be live in December 2010. Upon completion, promotion and awareness will commence and be launched at all schools in January 2011.

5.4 Free school meal revalidation

- 5.4.1 Social inclusion such as removing the stigma associated with Free School Meals is at the core of the Accord Scheme and since 2004 the Accord Card is used in all 12 secondary schools to pay for school meals. If a pupil is eligible for Free School Meals this information is stored on the Accord Card and the cashless catering system automatically credits the pupil with their daily allowance. As no cash/ tickets/ tokens are exchanged in the process, the receipt of Free School Meals is completely anonymous.
- 5.4.2 Parents or guardians can claim Free School Meals for their child if they are in receipt of either Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Child Tax Credit/Working Tax Credit.

- 5.4.3 Until recently, Free School Meal revalidation was undertaken twice a year and parents or guardians were asked to provide evidence of their receipt of one of the qualifying benefits in February and September of each year. The revalidation process was entirely manual with letters, reminders, possibly invoices being sent to parents asking for documentary evidence that their child was still entitled. This process was time consuming and administratively burdensome.
- 5.4.4 The Accord team developed a proposal for streamlining the revalidation process to the benefit of the school, parents and pupils which was approved by Education, Culture and Sport in June 2010.
- 5.4.5 Following this, the Accord team in cooperation with the CRM development team has specified and developed an automated solution that validates Free School Meal entitlements against Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit records for those parents/ guardians in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker Allowance and Employment Support Allowance (this process can not be applied to those receiving Child Tax Credit/ Working Tax Credit). This process will be undertaken twice a year and provides all 12 secondary schools with information on whether a pupil still qualifies for Free School Meals.
- 5.4.6 The benefits of the automated solution is that parents/ guardians in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker Allowance, Employment Support Allowance no longer have to provide evidence twice a year, pupils no longer require to have their Free School Meal entitlement updated on their Accord Card, recovery procedures are reduced leading to time and efficiency savings. The first matching exercise carried out in August 2010 resulted in 457 pupils free school meal entitlements being revalidated via the new process. This represents 52% of all pupils currently in receipt of a Free School Meal.
- 5.4.7 This development helps support the aim of more effectively managing information within the Council on the basis of *“collect it once, use it many times”*.

5.5 Operational Performance Update

- 5.5.1 Reviewing performance for the year 2010/ 2011 we note the following:

Table 1 below shows the number of new Accord cards produced during the period 1st May 2010 to 31st October 2010.

New Applications					
Performance (PI)	Indicator	Number Received	Within PI	Outwith PI	Overall
	90% of cards to be dispatched within 10 days	2255	2234	21	99%

of receipt in the Accord office				

Table 1

5.5.2 Table 2 below shows the number of replacement Accord cards produced during the period 1st May 2010 to 31st October 2010.

Replacement Applications					
Performance Indicator (PI)	Number Received	Within PI	Outwith PI	Overall	
90% of cards to be dispatched within 5 days of receipt in the Accord office	7888	7688	200	97%	

Table 2

5.5.3 Table 3 below shows the number of phone calls and emails dealt with by the Accord office during the period 1st May 2010 to 31st October 2010.

CUSTOMER QUERIES	
Category of query	
Travel & A2L	2498
School	659
General / Other	108
Email enquiries	104
Totals	3369

Table 3

All correspondence to the Accord office is dealt with in accordance with our service standard of responding within 10 working days.

5.5.4 Table 4 below shows the number of technical support and maintenance calls dealt with during the period 1st May 2010 to 31st October 2010. This covers all council sites utilising Accord equipment, i.e. schools, leisure sites, registrars, libraries, and Customer Access Points.

Technical Maintenance & Support					
Performance (PI)	Indicator	Number Received	Within PI	Outwith PI	Overall
	100% of urgent calls to be dealt with within 1 hour	9	9	0	100%
	100% of non-urgent calls to be dealt with within 24 hours	119	107	2	98%
	100% of standard maintenance calls to be dealt with within 5 working days	4	4	0	100%

Table 4

5.6 Accord Card Developments

5.6.1 ACE Club membership and Golf Pass

Sport Aberdeen, a trust set up to manage many of Aberdeen City Council's sports facilities, plays an integral part in delivering a new physical activity strategy for the city, as well as increasing participation and promoting Aberdeen as a tourist destination.

5.6.2 The trust offers 'ACE' a sport membership scheme and Golf Passes at discounted prices. To date, the application process and management of both ACE and Golf memberships and administration of the payments for these services is largely manual and paper based. The ACE membership is carried on a paper photo ID card which is not the most secure method of managing the membership.

5.6.3 The Sport Aberdeen membership team requested that the Accord team look into a replacement for both the ACE membership card and Golf Pass. This would see these memberships transfer to the Accord card and be managed electronically across all sports facilities. The key reasons for doing this are to improve service delivery and streamline business processes pertaining to application and management of memberships. One of the key benefits of the new process will be the ability to 'hot-list' and disable a member's cards where the monthly membership payment has not been made.

- 5.6.4 The Accord card was developed as a means of delivering local and national services and already carries Access to Leisure entitlement for approximately 50,000 Aberdeen residents. The hardware and software required to implement and maintain ACE memberships and Golf passes is the same as that used for Access to Leisure, therefore is largely in place already.
- 5.6.5 Following approval of the functional requirement specification in May 2010, a data cross-matching and cleansing exercise has been undertaken in preparation for contacting existing ACE members. In November/ December 2010 ACE members will be invited to one of a number of sign-on events where they will apply for an Accord card which will carry their ACE membership.
- 5.6.6 Applications from these events will be processed during December with the Accord card being used as the ACE membership card from January 2011 onwards. The transfer of Golf memberships onto the Accord Card is planned for Spring 2011 to coincide with the start of golf season 2011.
- 5.7 Access control using a smartcard staff ID badge**
- 5.7.1 The Accord team has been working with the Marischal College project team on specifying an access control solution based on Paxton's Net2 system utilising a smartcard staff ID badge for proof of identification.
- 5.7.2 In addition to Marischal College, there was a requirement to have an access control system at the Frederick Street building prior to Marischal College in order to facilitate access to the corporate training facility for the end of October 2010.
- 5.7.3 The Accord team has worked closely with external and internal partners and provided support and assistance on the steps necessary leading to a fully functional access control system which, over time, will be rolled out to Marischal College and indeed any other Council site should that be required.
- 5.7.4 As a result of this work, the smart staff ID badge can now be used for access control purposes within the Frederick Street building. To this end, the Accord team is providing the ID Office with encoded smartcard staff ID badges for badge production. To date approximately 400 staff ID badges have been produced for those staff requiring access to Frederick Street and staff attending training at the new corporate training facility.
- 5.7.5 The smart staff ID badge is now multifunctional enabling use in areas such as time & attendance recording, access control, as well as serving the core function of being a staff ID badge. The functionality available

on the smart staff ID badge can now be extended to include a sQuid purse, which is covered in section 5.8 below.

5.8 sQuid as payment method at Town House Restaurant

Following the launch of sQuid at both Council and Sport Aberdeen facilities, the Facilities Management Team have requested that sQuid is accepted as a method of payment at the Town House restaurant. As with other Council sites accepting sQuid, this will provide a fast, convenient and secure method of payment for staff which is free to get and free to use.

5.8.1 To facilitate this, a method is required to ensure staff have access to a sQuid enabled smartcard. As only a limited number of staff have an Accord card (which will have the sQuid e-purse) the smart staff ID badge was seen as a solution to this. Therefore, approval was sought and obtained from the Chief Executives office to add the sQuid e-purse to the smart staff ID badge with the unique card number and appropriate livery printed on the reverse of the smart staff ID badge.

5.8.2 To achieve this, the software used to encode the smartcard staff ID badges for secure access control purposes was enhanced to encode a sQuid e-purse also. This means that staff could either use their smart staff ID badge or their Accord card as a means of payment.

To introduce sQuid to the Town House restaurant, the following steps would be necessary;

- i. Site-survey to ensure that the Town House Restaurant meets the pre-requisite requirements;
- ii. Resolve any actions following the site-survey if required;
- iii. Set-up merchant account for Town House Restaurant;
- iv. Ensure firewall settings are up-to-date;
- v. Install & test sQuid terminal and reader ;
- vi. Provide training to staff at Town House Restaurant;

5.8.3 There would be a requirement to purchase sQuidcard equipment (single terminal, reader and installation) for this site at a 'cost' of £460.00. However, it is recommended that this site is launched at the expense of one Sport Aberdeen site which is not yet live. The original Accord/ sQuidcard Development report to Committee was costed and approved for all fourteen leisure sites and sQuid has only been installed at seven. Therefore, the cost of installation will be off-set against one Sport Aberdeen site and remain within the previously approved spend.

5.8.4 It is recommended that sQuid be introduced to the Town House Restaurant as a method of payment via the smart staff ID badge and the Accord card.

5.9 Lunch pre-ordering at Town House Restaurant

In addition to the introduction of Squid as a method of payment within the Town House Restaurant, a further development has been identified to improve service delivery. This is a pre-ordering service that will enable staff to pre-order and pre-pay online for a selection of cold lunches using the sQuid purse on the smart staff ID badge and/ or the sQuid purse on their Accord card.

- 5.9.1 This service would enable staff to access a secure sQuid website on which they can select a range of food and drink from a set menu and pay for this using sQuid. This service would be available to staff between 08:00 and 11:00 each day with their choices ready for collection in the restaurant from 12:00 onwards.
- 5.9.2 In the restaurant, an area separate from the main servery would be set-aside where staff can collect their order. In the restaurant, the orders are managed via a printer that prints orders as they are made on-line and a reports section of the sQuid web-site that confirms and manages all orders. The restaurant staff will prepare all orders and place each one in a bag with a receipt (automatically printed via the receipt printer) attached confirming the order and the name/ account number of the staff member.
- 5.9.3 The benefits of this development are;
- Promote use of the restaurant;
 - Enhance existing service;
 - Enhance the appeal of the restaurant to staff;
 - Increase use (and revenue) of the restaurant;
 - Assist in making the restaurant self funding;
 - Proof of concept for other facilities (e.g. Kittybrewster restaurant).
- 5.9.4 Initially, the 08:00 to 11:00 ordering period for a 12:00 collection will be in place. However, there is scope to develop this to allow other patterns that may better suit staff to meet their requirements, e.g. order before 09:00 collect from 11:00. Furthermore, once Marischal College has opened, there is scope to have these pre-orders delivered to an area (s) in Marischal College for staff collection – further enhancing the appeal of the service.
- 5.9.5 The costs associated with this development are;
- 5.9.5.1 £2833.13 to purchase the required hardware and customise the software for Aberdeen City Councils requirements;
- 5.9.5.2 £75.00 per month to host the application; initial trial period of 12 months, therefore, total cost of £900.00
- 5.9.6 These costs will be met from the Modernising Government Funds already allocated to the Accord card scheme. Therefore, there is no

impact on either the Accord or Facilities Management operational budgets.

5.9.7 Facilities Management has advised that the introduction of this functionality can be managed within existing staffing resources, albeit this will need to be monitored for uptake. Should uptake reach such a level that additional resources are required, a business case/ report will be presented to Committee by Facilities Management.

5.9.8 It is recommended that this new service be introduced for a 12 month trial period. At the end of this period its success will be assessed and further recommendations made.

5.10 **Accord Card/ sQuid and Transport**

As mentioned in previous reports, one of the benefits in adopting the sQuid e-purse to the Accord card is that further areas for deployment can be investigated. One of these areas is for bus travel, both in terms of 'pay as you go' individual journeys and season tickets (e.g. monthly pass). This functionality has already been achieved on buses in Bolton and the bus operator National Express recently announced they will be offering all their season tickets serving the Dundee area via the National Entitlement Card.

5.10.1 In order to progress this opportunity in the Aberdeen area, an initial presentation regarding the sQuid transport ticketing and settlement scheme was provided to the Public Transport Units of both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council along with representatives from NESTRANS. This was followed up by a similar presentation to LABOF Executive Group (Local Authorities Bus Operators Forum) which included representatives from FIRST and Stagecoach.

5.10.2 Following this meeting a further discussion has taken place with the Commercial Director of FIRST Aberdeen, sQuid and the Accord Operations Manager. This matter is now with FIRST Aberdeen for consideration and further updates will be provided to committee when available.

5.11 **Time & attendance recording utilising a smartcard staff ID badge at Crown House & AECC**

5.11.1 Time and attendance recording using a smart staff ID badge at Crown House and 2nd and 3rd floor AECC has now been fully functional for approximately 8 months. The underlying business processes have been adopted by all staff and generally the system is working well.

5.11.2 A staff satisfaction survey was issued the latter part of September 2010 to all members of staff at Crown House to gauge general feedback and the impact this has had on the time management of the individual.

5.11.3 High level survey analysis:

- i. The staff satisfaction survey has been issued to all 140 staff at Crown House (incl. 25 staff with line managing responsibility). 89 surveys have been returned (of which 21 were from staff with line managing responsibility). Of the surveys returned 14 were incomplete (4 of which from staff with line managing responsibility) hence have not been analysed. The remaining 75 complete surveys built the base for analysis, in terms of response rates this equals to **54% overall response** and **75% response from staff with line managing responsibility**.
- ii. The main aim of introducing a computerised time & attendance system utilising a smartcard staff ID badge was to achieve time releasing savings. **68% of the responders (72% of the line managers)** felt that the system has **freed up time** otherwise used to record time & attendance.
- iii. **52% of the responders (67% of the line managers)** agreed that the system allows them to **focus more on the job** and less on time & attendance recording
- iv. **91% of the individuals** that responded (**100% of the line managers**) that they have all necessary **information available at their finger tips**.
- v. Asked to rate the overall satisfaction with the computerised time & attendance recording system utilising a smartcard staff ID badge, **90% of the responders (94% of the line managers)** are **satisfied or very satisfied** with the system.

5.11.4 Overall, this is a positive response to the introduction of this functionality and consideration will now be given to other sites to which this could be introduced.

6. IMPACT

The services carried on the Accord card help promote social inclusion through the delivery of Access to Leisure and Free School Meals. Secondary Schools catering is accessed solely through the Accord card which helps promote the health and well being of pupils as stated in *Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking*.

Scotland-wide free bus travel entitlement is carried on the card making it easier for citizens to move around the area – this also applies to the Young Persons Concessionary Travel scheme accessible via the Accord card.

The Access to Leisure scheme carried on the card and the ACE membership soon to be carried on the card help maintain the health of Aberdeen citizens. Furthermore, this helps increase the participation in sporting activities as stated in *Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking*.

The operations and developments of the Accord card scheme are contained in the Accord Team plan which feeds into the Service plan that supports the Corporate Governance Service Business Plan.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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