

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Corporate Policy and Performance
<b>DATE</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2010
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Stewart Carruth
<b>TITLE OF REPORT</b>	Internet Access – review of prior six months
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CG/10/041

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides Members with their requested review of internet access in the six month period from the committee decision to provide internet access to staff and members on the basis of controlled access using technological methods. This method provides a means of making manageable the reporting of transgressions of the agreed access.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Members are asked to note the review on internet access in the past 6 months.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report has no financial implications.

### **4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT**

The core service impact issue is the need to have available the data required by Services to conduct their business; to hold that data securely; and to use that data as per the governing regulations permit.

### **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

The implications of not properly controlling the Council's ICT infrastructure and use of that facility are many. The fact that the ICT infrastructure holds and controls access to the data the Council holds in trust and uses daily means that any transgression will have implications for the Council as determined by the relevant Acts.

## 6. REPORT

6.1 Access for Aberdeen City Council employees and Members to the internet while at work has the following controls in place. The control on access to the internet is achieved by technological methods.

- Employees and Members – certain internet sites are not accessible by anybody. These blocked sites are detailed in the ICT Acceptable use Policy and include gambling sites; adult / sexually explicit sites, etc.
- Members have no further restrictions placed on their internet access.
- Employees, unless their line manager authorises differently, have access to all unblocked sites between the hours of 12:00 to 14:00 hours and 16:00 to 18:30 hours (non core hours) Monday to Friday.

6.2 The committee asked to receive a review of internet access in the six month period from their decision on the provision of internet access to staff and members. This report provides that review.

6.3 The review is based on the demand for bandwidth and the sources of that demand. Bandwidth is at the core of all internet access and is concerned with the ability to access the internet and the cost to the Council of doing so. Therefore there is a balance sought between providing sufficient bandwidth for efficient operating and managing that cost.

6.4 The sources of the demand for the purposes of this report are concerned with authorised access and non authorised access. Non authorised access is deemed to be attempted access to blocked sites be that in core or non core hours.

6.5 Within the non authorised access there is a significant potential for accidental attempted access. This will arise from the likes of URL links and embedded images in emails, such as a user receiving an email from Ebay; from adverts and pop ups that the user does not seek but are delivered to their email address due to a authorised access.

6.6 It is possible to determine where non authorised access is likely to be deliberate, so not of the accidental nature described above. These incidents are referred to as transgressions and are always followed up on.

### **Overview of access to internet in the past 6 months**

6.7 The overview that emerges from the last six months is that during core-hours the top 10 categories of connection are to trusted sites, Search Engines, News, Reference, Adverts & popups, Government, Business, Education and Computing & Internet and infrastructure sites. This is what would be expected for normal business usage.

6.8 There is an increase in bandwidth demand in the non-core hours for the shopping, travel and entertainment website categories. The shopping and travel sites regularly feature in top 10 categories in non core hours.

- 6.9 What is interesting here is that the increase in access to shopping, travel and entertainment website categories also increases in non core hours for those users who have authorised access to these sites for work reasons and therefore can access these sites in core hours. This seems to be highlighting that users are observing the terms of their authorised access in their use of the internet.
- 6.10 More specific detail on the access in the past 6 months is:
- [www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk) is consistently in the top 3 site connections both in core hours and non-core hours. Search engines such as Google also consistently appear in the top 3 connections.
  - During September 2009 the web site [planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk) was the top site connection due to live implementation of online planning applications. In putting the online site live there would have been multiple connections by staff uploading and checking the site before the live date. All would have been noted as bandwidth demand.
  - Access to Council business applications such as Covalent, Registration for Births Marriages and Deaths, PECOS and the Council's own website consistently feature in the top 20 sites during core hours.
  - During non-core hours the activity shifts to sites which are restricted in core hours such as [www.eveningexpress.co.uk](http://www.eveningexpress.co.uk), [www.pressandjournal.co.uk](http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk), [www.aspc.co.uk](http://www.aspc.co.uk), [www.boxofficeaberdeen.com](http://www.boxofficeaberdeen.com), Ebay and shopping sites Debenhams, Tesco and Argos etc.
  - This is the pattern of activity between 12:00 and 14:00. There are differing activities after 16:00. In October the top site after 16:00 was site [www.colonypark.org.uk](http://www.colonypark.org.uk) the website of a Juvenile Football club in Inverurie. While in January the top site after 16:00 was [www.fsmilkround.com](http://www.fsmilkround.com) the postgraduate website FS=Further Student. Neither of these sites features in top 100 in any other month.
- 6.11 Over the past 6 months there has been attempted non authorised access. As noted above a significant proportion of this is accidental access and not always known about or driven by the staff member or Elected Member.
- 6.12 Surfcontrol internet filtering is set to block access to the categories of sites deemed not to be accessible by anybody. Reports show that adverts and popups is consistently the top category of connection being blocked during core and non-core hours. These are blocked to prevent undesired cookies, viruses, Adware and Spyware from being downloaded to the Council's network.
- 6.13 However the accidental access does not explain all attempts to access blocked sites. There are still a significant number of attempts on blocked

sites daily, with shopping, unauthorised downloads, entertainment, travel, media, video sharing sites and social networking sites all being targeted for access. This access is being sought in core hours.

- 6.14 Further in both core and non core hours there are still attempts to access sites that have been deemed as not accessible for anybody.

### **Transgressions**

- 6.15 Where it can be determined that either the access being sought is to a banned site or the access is not accidental access there must be action.
- 6.16 In the past 6 months there have been 16 incidents where staff members have been investigated and action taken in respect of non authorised internet access.

### **Service initiated - Total of 5 cases**

Housing and Environment – 4 cases  
Corporate Governance – 1 case

### **SDD initiated – Total of 11 cases**

Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure – 5 cases  
Housing and Environment – 2 cases  
Education, Culture and Sport – 1 case  
Corporate Governance – 2 cases  
Social Care and Wellbeing – 1 case

### **6.17 Summary**

**In general terms the demand and therefore the call on bandwidth and associated cost has not differed from the established pattern of internet use.**

**In respect of the source of demand on bandwidth then it is evident that the majority of staff are observing the agreed terms of access.**

**However there are still a number of staff that do not adhere to the agreed policy and action is being taken in these specific cases.**

**Equally it is evident that the use of Surfcontrol and application of managed access is ensuring that the infrastructure as a whole is protected.**

## **7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are none for this report.