

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance & Resources	DATE 17/06/2010
CORPORATE DIRECTOR	Stewart Carruth	
TITLE OF REPORT	Accord Update Report	
REPORT NUMBER:	CG10/096	

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;

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Accord Scheme provides a means of providing socially inclusive access to a wide range of both national and local services. It is also the vehicle to providing citizens' access to the National Entitlement Schemes as promoted by the Scottish Government.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Personnel

None.

6.0 REPORT

6.1 Main Update

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

6.1.1 Smartcard Migration

6.1.2 As stated in previous reports, the *ITSO board have expressed concerns over the security of the MiFare smartcard (the card used by all other Scottish Local Authorities) and the transaction processing time of the JCOP card (the card used by Aberdeen City Council). As a result of this, both types of card will lose their ITSO certification and a new card type will be required for use by all Scottish local authorities.

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

6.1.3 To allow for a planned card migration process the National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO) agreed with ITSO that a deadline of 31 December 2011 be set for moving to another card type. It has recently been clarified that this deadline only applies to the Mifare smartcard and the deadline for the JCOP card is 31/12/2010. Therefore, an application has been made to ITSO to have the deadline moved for JCOP cards to 31/12/2011 in line with all other local authorities.

6.1.4 The application for the change in date will be considered by the ITSO Board on 26 May 2010. The initial feedback from the ITSO Executive is that the recommendation is likely to be approved.

6.1.5 Since the last report, the manufacturer of the ITSO applet carried on the Accord card has confirmed that a new version that meets the required transaction time can be produced if required. This would mean that there would be no need to migrate to a new card type, rather install the new ITSO applet (subject to ITSO certification) to the card.

6.1.6 The installation of the new ITSO applet is a contingency should the ITSO Board not approve the deadline extension and opens up the possibility of retaining the existing card beyond 31/12/2011. A card migration plan will be developed for Accord once a decision has been made by NECPO regarding the new card type to replace the Mifare card as it may offer best value to move to this card type depending on its compatibility with the existing applications, services and entitlements held on the card.

6.2 sQuid

6.2.1 A new product is to be added to the Accord card called sQuid. sQuid is an electronic cash purse that enables citizens to load money on to their card

and spend those funds at participating outlets.

- 6.2.2 The Council's Policy and Advice legal team and sQuid recently agreed on the final wording of the contract and this has now been signed by both parties. Work will now commence on an implementation plan within the City.

6.3. Card Production for New Secondary School Pupils

- 6.3.1 The production of Accord cards for pupils starting secondary school in August 2010 is well underway and preparations are being made to have these cards ready for the pupils orientation days during May and June.
- 6.3.2 To date, 1,510 applications have been made with the facility to pre-load money (via a cheque) to the card proving popular. Of the 1,510 applications received, 588 (39%) included a cheque for a total value of £10,656.50.
- 6.3.3 In addition to pre-loading cheques, a further improvement to the process has been introduced this year whereby those pupils entitled to a schools catering allowance (free school meal) will have this entitlement pre-loaded to the card.
- 6.3.4 In previous years, Accord Cards were sent to the school and the task of checking who was entitled to a schools catering allowance and loading this entitlement to the card fell to the schools administration team. This year, further improvements in the process have been achieved through collaborative working with colleagues in Education, Culture & Sport it has been possible to extract this information from the school administration database (Phoenix) and import this into the card production process.

6.4 Payment via the Internet

- 6.4.1 The Accord team has been investigating the feasibility of having the cashless catering e-purse credited via the Internet. New developments using the income systems are being progressed and an application clarifying Accord's requirements will shortly be prepared.
- 6.4.2 This application will be assessed by the Project Steering Group and if approved, it has been intimated that it may be possible to have this facility available for the start of the new academic year.
- 6.4.3 Further updates will be provided in future Accord update reports.

6.5 Access Control at Bucksburn Academy

- 6.5.1 The new secondary school at Bucksburn is open and using the Accord cashless catering system which is used in local authority secondary schools. A further development was requested for this school to use the Accord card for secure access control within the school premises.
- 6.5.2 The new school building is linked to a library that is also used by both pupils and the public divided by a door. Until recently the door to the school was staffed by a security guard to ensure members of the public did not access school premises.
- 6.5.3 The Accord Technical team worked closely with the building contractor over the past months to have their security door reader be able to electronically read the Accord card. This has now been achieved and all students at Bucksburn Academy can use their Accord cards to securely access the main school building from the library.

6.6 Operational Performance Update

- 6.6.1 Reviewing performance for the year 2009/ 2010 we note the following:

Table 1 below shows the number of new Accord cards produced during the period 1st November 2009 to 31st April 2010.

New Applications				
Performance Indicator (PI)	Number Received	Within PI	Outwith PI	Overall
90% of cards to be dispatched within 10 days of receipt in the Accord office	3126	3123	23	99%

Table 1

- 6.6.2 Table 2 below shows the number of replacement Accord cards produced during the period 1st November 2009 to 31st April 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	7405	7017	388	94%

Table 2

6.6.3 Table 3 below shows the number of phone calls and emails dealt with by the Accord office during the period 1st November 2009 to 31st April 2010.

CUSTOMER QUERIES	
Category of query	
Travel & A2L	1962
School	655
General / Other	175
Email enquiries	38
Totals	2327

Table 3

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

6.6.4 Table 4 below shows the number of technical support and maintenance calls dealt with during the period 1st November 2009 to 31st April 2010. This covers all council sites utilising Accord equipment, i.e. schools, leisure sites, registrars, libraries, and Customer Access Points.

Technical Maintenance & Support				
Performance Indicator (PI)	Number Received	Within PI	Outwith PI	Overall
100% of urgent calls to be dealt with within 1 hour	7	7	0	100%
100% of non-urgent calls to be dealt with within 24 hours	148	148	0	100%
100% of standard maintenance calls to be dealt with within 5 working days	6	6	0	100%

Table 4

6.7 Accord Card Developments

6.7.1 Time & attendance recording using smartcard staff ID badge at Crown House & AECC

Further to the previous report, the Accord scheme has implemented a time & attendance recording system using a smartcard staff ID badge at Crown House for proof of concept. It is anticipated that if successful, the system could provide Facility Management with information for roll out at other sites such as Marischal College and Frederick Street Business Centre.

6.7.2 Work on the project commenced in November 2009 following committee approval and good progress has been made throughout the project and each milestone was implemented in time allowing for the computerised time & attendance recording system using a smartcard staff ID badge to go live as planned on 1st March 2010.

6.7.3 The time & attendance recording system using a smartcard staff ID badge has now been live for ten weeks and in general the system is working well, the underlying business processes have been adopted by all staff at Crown House and the time releasing savings apparent. A questionnaire will be prepared in due course to gauge the success.

6.7.4 The following observations that have been made since the time & attendance recording system went live:

- i. Open Options administration, based within the Accord team at Crown House, provides time & attendance related reports to all line managers at Crown House on a weekly basis. There is also the opportunity to request additional time & attendance related reports on an as-and-when required basis. The reports currently in place appear to satisfy the reporting needs of most line managers, however there have been a two queries relating to making administration functionality available to line managers to allow better control of time & attendance recording within the teams.
A questionnaire will be prepared in due course to assess line manager requirements in more detail and this will inform future recommendations.
- ii. Open Options was introduced in approximately 1998 as a trial for financial services. Since then the use of the system was adopted by various services throughout the Council however there appears to be no clear ownership and as a consequence the system has not been updated for some time which subsequently has an effect on the functionality and reliability of the system particularly with regards to processing of flexi leave, sick leave and annual leave. The Accord team will continue to monitor the situation and provide a more detailed report and potential solutions upon completion of a trial period of 4 months.

- iii. The effort required from the Operational Support team to manually record and control any leave is significant and the Accord team is working closely with the Operational Support team on analysing the underlying business processes and devising ways that can streamline processes hence achieve time releasing savings.

6.7.5 A further development to the time & attendance recording system using a smartcard staff ID badge is the retrofitting of the existing clocking terminals at Balgownie 1, AECC. The rationale behind this work is that Payroll, Pensions and Financial Services staff at AECC currently record their attendance using a hybrid staff ID badge at the cost of approximately £8.00 per card. No stock remains of these hybrid badges and there are no plans to procure any further stock. Consequently there is a need for an alternative means to satisfy the requirements for replacement staff ID badges and ID badges for new starts.

Prior to the project, replacements and new starts were issued a fob at £3.56 and standard ID badge at £0.11. Introduction of time & attendance recording system using a smartcard staff ID badge will reduce the costs to £0.51 per smart staff ID badge.

The work required to retrofit the clocking terminals commenced on Monday 29th March with the retrofitting of the clocking terminal on the 3rd floor at AECC. Retrofitting and related test work and badge printing and administration has progressed as planned allowing to deploy the retrofitted clocking terminal into the live environment at 3rd floor AECC on Wednesday 21st April.

The system is working well on the 3rd floor and the Accord team is currently preparing the retrofit of the clocking terminal on the second floor at AECC with deployment into the live environment anticipated for the latter part of May 2010.

6.8 Smart Staff Identity Badge for Frederick Street Business Centre and Marischal College

6.8.1 Further to the trial of a smart staff identity badge at Crown House mentioned above and the successful use of the Accord card for secure access control within Bucksburn Academy, work is now underway to look to incorporate smartcard technology at Frederick Street Business Centre and Marischal College via a smart staff identity badge.

6.8.2 Meetings have taken place between Accord, Service Design & Delivery and the Programme Director Marischal College Programme Director (Andrew Sproull) to identify possible uses of the smartcard technology. The potential uses of a smart staff Id badge are shown below and an

assessment of their viability and how/ if they meet with corporate requirements will be progressed in weeks/ months to come.

- a. Secure access control via Paxton Net2 software to doors, lifts and parking barriers;
- b. Secure printer access (pool printing);
- c. Cashless catering (vending machines);
- d. As part of a two factor virtual desktop environment authentication process;
- e. Time & attendance recording.

6.9 Schools Catering Allowance (Free school meal) revalidation

- 6.9.1 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 then this information is stored on the Accord Card and the till knows automatically if a pupil is entitled. As no cash/tickets are exchanged in the process, the receipt of free school meals is anonymous.
- 6.9.2 Parents/ guardians can apply for free school meals for their children if they are in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker Allowance or Child Tax Credit/Working Tax Credit. Free school meal revalidation is undertaken twice a year and parents or guardians are being asked to provide evidence of the receipt of benefits in February and September of each year. The current free school meal revalidation process is largely manual hence time consuming and parents with more than one child will have to revalidate the entitlement for each child potentially at various schools.
- 6.9.3 As the Accord Card is being used by all secondary school pupils and the qualifying criteria for free school meals are being held on the Council Tax and Housing Benefit database, the Accord team could assist in streamlining the revalidation process to the benefit of both the school and the parents. Potential benefits of streamlining the revalidation of free school meals would be that parents or guardians don't have to provide evidence twice a year, pupils would no longer be required to have the free school meal entitlement updated on their Accord Card twice a year and recovery procedures could be significantly reduced which would lead to time releasing savings.
- 6.9.4 A meeting has taken place between Education, Learning & Leisure staff and the Accord team to discuss the proposal in more detail and it was agreed that streamlining the free school meal revalidation process would result in time and efficiency savings for the school, parents and pupils. The project will be sponsored by Education, Learning & Leisure and the Accord team will put together a business case for Education, Learning & Leisure SMT with the recommendation to approve for the work to be undertaken by the Accord Scheme.

6.10 Foyer Music

- 6.10.1 The Accord Card was developed as a means of making local and national government services accessible to the people of Aberdeen. The Accord team is always looking for new and attractive benefits that can be added to the Accord Card to offer the various age groups in Aberdeen access to a wide range of local services. In November 2009 the Accord team has teamed up with Foyer Music offering discounts to young Accord Card holders aged 12 – 18 (40% discount) and 18-26 (20% discount) in an effort to make music more accessible to young people particularly those from underprivileged background.
- 6.10.2 The Accord team is working closely with the Council's marketing team on the design and development of promotional material for both age groups. The first posters went live in early April and Foyer Music have indicated that they start to see an increase in young people taking up the offer.
- 6.10.3 Aberdeen Foyer is a charitable organisation providing a variety of services ranging from supported accommodation through to learning, health services and music – Foyer Music - to young people in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

6.11 ACE Club membership and Golf Pass

- 6.11.1 Aberdeen City Council offers a wide variety of sport facilities to anyone interested in these activities. ACE, the Council's sport membership scheme and Golf Pass, the Council's golf membership scheme gives its members access to the over 14 sports centres and swimming pools and 3 golf courses respectively at discounted member rates.
- 6.11.2 To date the process of applying and managing both ACE and Golf memberships and subsequent payments is largely manual and time consuming. Furthermore the ACE entitlement is carried on a paper based photo ID card which has proved to be susceptible to fraudulent activities and the magnet stripe Golf pass costly.
- 6.11.3 As a consequence the ACE/Golf Pass membership team have asked the Accord team to look into a replacement for both the ACE membership card and Golf Pass that would improve service delivery and streamline business processes pertaining to application and management of memberships.
- 6.11.4 Transferring both ACE memberships and Golf Passes to the Accord Card contributes towards providing customers with seamless access to local and national services on one card. The use of a smartcard also helps to reduce the risk of using a membership card for purposes other than intended.

- 6.11.5 The Accord Card was developed as a means of delivering local and national government services and the Accord card already provides Access to Leisure. As a consequence the hardware and software required to apply and maintain ACE memberships and Golf passes is largely in place already. For this reason it has been decided that transferring existing memberships onto the Accord Card and subsequently adding ACE and Golf Passes as a service to the Accord Card meets the need of the customer and service for improved assess, experience and outcomes.
- 6.11.6 Business analysis work on ACE memberships commenced in November 2009 and is now complete with the functional requirement specification being approved by the ACE/Golf membership team on 6th May 2010. Work is now underway on developing a project plan for implementation with a 'go live' target date of 1st September 2010.

6.12 Trading Standards – Proof of Age

- 6.12.1 Following the inclusion of PASS (Proof of Age Standards Scheme) hologrammed Young Scot/National Entitlement Cards (NEC) aka the Accord Card in Aberdeen City, in the Licensing (Scotland) Act and recent Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act, trading standards across the UK have been reminded local government bodies to encourage licensees and door stewards to accept the Accord Card/ NEC as proof of age.
- 6.12.2 The Councils Trading Standards team is preparing PASS promotional material and have asked the Accord team to provide further information on the Accord Card and PASS and it has been decided that the Accord team will print in the area of 200 sample cards to be added to the promotional material for licensees.

7 AUTHORISED SIGNATURE

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9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.