

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Report to	Finance, Governance and Asset Management Committee
Meeting date	30 November 2022
Report author	Andy Crick
Agenda item	11

MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the introduction of multi-factor authentication for Microsoft software on town council devices.

2. Summary

- 2.1 To update councillors on the introduction of multi-factor authentication for Microsoft software on town council devices, as recommended by the town council's IT provider and introduced on 24 November 2022.

3. Action required

- 3.1 The committee is asked to note the report.

4. Link to strategic plan and objectives

- 4.1 This links to the town council's key objectives 2 and 3 as effective IT is essential for the proper functioning of the council. In particular, the town council must have resilient, secure IT systems in place and must ensure that those systems operate effectively.

Key objectives

2. To develop a resilient, sustainable town which will provide a home for residents now and in the future.
3. To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet for the needs of the community now and in the future.

5. Background

- 5.1 Following meetings with the town council's main IT provider, Redsquid, the town council was recommended to introduce a higher level of security for its IT systems in line with general trends in this area arising from increased threats to online

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security. One option recommended was multi-factor authentication, an additional level of security for Microsoft Office which requires users to log-in using two steps. This was recommended by Redsquid in February 2022 and has been part of ongoing considerations with regard to improving the town council's IT functioning and security. Multi-factor authentication is common in many IT applications, including banking apps and any systems requiring a higher level of security, such as those which may store sensitive confidential data.

- 5.2 On Wednesday 23 November 2022, Redsquid contacted the town council to advise that the server would need to be updated. This was done overnight and on 24 November 2022, multi-factor authentication had been introduced. This was brought to the attention of the Community Services and Events Officer by an enquiry from members of museum staff and they were advised on how to address this.
- 5.3 This change had not been notified in advance and Redsquid were contacted about it. The failure to advise the town council in advance was acknowledged by Redsquid and instructions on how to use the new security process were provided. These instructions were shared with staff and councillors in the weekly update sent out on 25 November 2022 and recipients were invited to contact the Community Services and Events Officer in the event of any queries or difficulties.
- 5.4 To date there has been one enquiry, from a councillor and in consequence advice on alternative methods of logging in has been requested from Redsquid. To date no other councillors or members of staff have contacted the Community Services and Events Officer for advice.
- 5.5 The requirement for multi-factor authentication will only be needed in the event that a user logs out of their Microsoft account. If they do not, as is normal with most current IT, there will be no need to follow this process.

6. **Key information and options**

- 6.1 None.

7. **Climate change/green implications**

- 7.1 None.

8. **Financial/budget implications**

- 8.1 None.

9. **HR implications**

- 9.1 There may be an additional time commitment on the part of the Community Services and Events Officer in dealing with queries arising from this change but to date this has only required four emails.

10. **Supporting papers and appendices**

10.1 None.

Andy Crick
Community Services and Events Officer
29 November 2022