



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	Council: Wednesday 28 October 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 15
Subject	Motion: Electronic Communications
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Toby Morris, Cabinet Member for Resources, Email: toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the motion originally proposed and seconded at Council on 22 January 2020, in the context of the comments and recommendation of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Annex	Annex 1 : Report considered by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held 7 October 2020 Annex 2 : Draft minute from that meeting
Recommendation	That the Council considers and determines the motion in the light of the recommendation of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Corporate priorities	Not applicable.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Council held on 22 January 2020, the following Motion was proposed by Councillor Jake Acock and seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, namely:-

“West Oxfordshire District Council places great importance upon communications with councillors, whether that be sending out agendas for meetings or through regular email updates.

West Oxfordshire District Council also places great importance upon environmental credentials and cost-effective projects.

Therefore, this council resolves that we will no longer send paper copies of communications including agendas for all meetings and will issue every councillor with an iPad for council business.

This will allow the council to:

- a) have stronger greener credentials and help to tackle the climate crisis.*
- b) be more cost and staff efficient.*
- c) be more GDPR friendly.*

This council resolves that this will be added to the 2020 budget and that all councillors will be issued with an iPad by May 2020”.

- 1.2. The motion having been duly proposed and seconded stood referred without discussion to the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and advice.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. [Annex 1](#) to this report is the report considered by the Committee on 7 October 2020.
- 2.2. Also included, at [Annex 2](#), is the draft minute from that meeting.
- 2.3. After a full and detailed discussion, the Committee’s recommendation to Council is: *“That the motion is not pursued at the present time”.*
- 2.4. Council is invited to consider the recommendation made by the Committee, and is of course free to decide the matter as it sees fit.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. As set out in [Annex 1](#).

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. None

5. RISK ASSESSMENT


- 5.1. Not applicable

6. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 6.1. None applicable.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1. None

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>West Oxfordshire District Council</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 7 October 2020</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>Agenda Item No.</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>Electronic Communications</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Toby Morris, Cabinet Member for Resources Email: toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Phil Martin, Group Manager, Business Support Services Tel: 07764352360; Email: phil.martin@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider the motion regarding electronic communications referred to the Committee by the Council and to submit comments or recommendations accordingly.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That consideration be given to the motion as set out below, and comments or a recommendation be made to Council.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>To meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents and to provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>N/A</p>

I. BACKGROUND

1.1. At the meeting of the Council held on 22 January 2020, the following Motion was proposed by Councillor Jake Acock and seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, namely:-

“West Oxfordshire District Council places great importance upon communications with councillors, whether that be sending out agendas for meetings or through regular email updates.

West Oxfordshire District Council also places great importance upon environmental credentials and cost-effective projects.

Therefore, this council resolves that we will no longer send paper copies of communications including agendas for all meetings and will issue every councillor with an iPad for council business.

This will allow the council to:

- a) have stronger greener credentials and help to tackle the climate crisis.*
- b) be more cost and staff efficient.*
- c) be more GDPR friendly.*

This council resolves that this will be added to the 2020 budget and that all councillors will be issued with an iPad by May 2020”.

1.2. In accordance with paragraph 11(e) of the Council Procedure Rules, it was resolved that the motion should stand referred without discussion to this Committee – minute no. 60 of the meeting held 22 January 2019 refers.

1.3. This report has been delayed as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic, including the cancellation of some meetings earlier in the year, but is now intended to give the opportunity for the Committee to consider the motion and submit comments and/or a recommendation to Council.

2. MAIN POINTS

2.1. The potential financial implications of providing an iPad for all Councillors are included in section 3 below.

2.2. It will of course be for the Council to decide whether or how to proceed in this matter, but it is hoped that the following comments will be of interest:

- In the current circumstances where Councillors are attending meetings via video conferencing, it may not be suitable for them to also need a screen/device for viewing the documents for the meeting in question
- It is already the case that meetings papers are made available in a “document pack” that contains appropriate links and bookmarks to facilitate electronic navigation of the documents. These are in pdf format and can be read on any device; and may be distributed additional to or instead of paper copies, as desired
- That said, if an iPad or similar was used, it is likely that that could be in conjunction with software which would enable the documents to be annotated by the user. It is likely that the CMIS system currently used for administering and publishing meeting documents and councillor information etc will be replaced in 2021, in which case the roll out of devices, if approved, might best be scheduled to coincide with the change
- It is undoubtedly the case that an iPad or similar would be more secure insofar as the councillor would be the only user of the device. It is also relevant that (i) only a very small proportion of documents are not for the public; (ii) they are or would only be supplied to the secure @westoxon email address for each councillor; and (iii) any device supplied by the council would be configured such that it could not be used for

other purposes and locked down via Mobile Device Management (MDM) software to ensure it was secure.

- It is certainly the case that the electronic circulation of documents is quicker and more efficient than copying and posting, as well as being more environmentally friendly but, as stated above, this does not necessarily require the provision of a device.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. The capital costs for the options outlined in the main body of the report are:

Device Options	Costs	Total
iPad – 10.2 Inch Screen, 32Gb Storage	£329	£16,121
iPad Air – 10.9 Inch Screen, 64 Gb Storage	£579	£28,371
iPad Pro – 11 Inch Screen, 128Gb Storage	£769	£37,681

- 3.2. In addition to the device costs, Councillors may require a keyboard, which also acts as a screen cover and cost between £159 and £179 depending on the model.
- 3.3. As the device will operate on the Council's ICT network it will need to be lockdown to ensure it complies with the Council PSN requirements. The revenue costs associated with the implementation of a Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution is approx. £100 per device so totally £4,900 per annum.
- 3.4. Based on the experience of supporting Cheltenham Borough Council who had issued iPads to their Councillors and have now chosen to replace them with laptops there is an increase in ICT support time that should be factored into any consideration along with the need to also budget for replacements and accessories such as covers.
- 3.5. The expected live cycle of a device such as an iPad that is constantly updated is on average 3 years, therefore an allocation would need to be made in the capital programme to fund an ongoing replacement programme
- 3.6. If all Councillors agreed to have Ipads and adopt a paperless approach in terms of the previous of meeting agendas and minutes the annual revenue saving would equate to approx. £5,000 to £7,000.
- 3.7. Whilst the issuing of an iPad to all Councillors would result in savings in time, and in printing and postage costs, it would require a full sign up otherwise a mixed approach could create work, which would then erode the potential to offset the costs.
- 3.8. Currently there isn't any funding set aside in either the Council's capital programme or revenue budgets so this needs to be taken into consideration as part of the recommendation to Council.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None identified

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. A potential risk associated with issuing Councillors with iPads is the loss of data if the device is misplaced / stolen, this is mitigated by locking down each devices so ensuing they will not have sensitive data stored on them.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1. The Council could choose not to provide Councillors with an iPad and continue paying an allowance for Councillors to purchase a device that suits their own personal needs.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Extract from the draft minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 7 October 2020

MOTION; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Group Manager, Business Support Services, which asked that consideration be given to the motion as set out below, and comments or a recommendation be made to Council.

At the Council meeting on 22 January 2020, the following was proposed by Councillor Jake Acock and seconded by Councillor Andy Graham:

“West Oxfordshire District Council places great importance upon communications with councillors, whether that be sending out agendas for meetings or through regular email updates.

West Oxfordshire District Council also places great importance upon environmental credentials and cost-effective projects.

Therefore, this council resolves that we will no longer send paper copies of communications including agendas for all meetings and will issue every councillor with an iPad for council business.

This will allow the council to:

a) have stronger greener credentials and help to tackle the climate crisis.

b) be more cost and staff efficient.

c) be more GDPR friendly.

This council resolves that this will be added to the 2020 budget and that all councillors will be issued with an iPad by May 2020”.

It was resolved at the meeting that the motion would stand referred without discussion to the Finance & Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the minutes from the Council meeting was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report noted that this work had been delayed as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic, including the cancellation of some meetings earlier in the year.

Officers had investigated the option of providing l pads to all Councillors and the cost implications associated with this were detailed in section 3 of the report. Additional costs were also detailed which needed consideration including the provision of keyboards, screen covers, implementation costs and ICT support time.

Members noted that there was not any funding available for this project and should the Council choose to proceed, it would need to be subject to the budgetary process.

Some Members felt that the move to electronic documents was a positive one and many had experience of this way of working through their town councils. However, some Members also felt that it may not be a sensible use of public money at this time.

Councillor Langridge proposed that Council be advised that the Committee did not feel the motion should be pursued at this time. This was seconded by Councillor St John.

RECOMMENDED: That the motion is not pursued at the present time.