



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire District Council

Name and date of Committee	Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 7 October 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 10
Subject	Electronic Communications
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Toby Morris, Cabinet Member for Resources Email: toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Phil Martin, Group Manager, Business Support Services Tel: 07764352360; Email: phil.martin@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the motion regarding electronic communications referred to the Committee by the Council and to submit comments or recommendations accordingly.
Annexes	None
Recommendation	That consideration be given to the motion as set out below, and comments or a recommendation be made to Council.
Corporate priorities	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.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

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 (ii) 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 device 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. The total costs for the proposal based on the mid-range priced iPad in the table above are:

Capital

Item	Cost	Total cost
iPad Air – 10.9 Inch Screen, 64 Gb Storage	£579	£28,371
Replacement iPads x 4 due to damage	£579	£2,316
		£30,687

NOTE

1. As the life cycle of the devices is three years, Councillors would need to include a similar sum in the capital budget for 2024/25.

Revenue

Item	Cost	Total cost
MDM software	£100	£4,900
Cases x29	£15	£435
Keyboards x20	£179	£3,580
Sub Total		£8,915
Less – Paper / printing costs		£7,000
Total		£1,915'

NOTE

1. This does not include additional ICT support time that based on our experience is approx. 5 hrs per week nor the potential time saved by the Democratic Services team who wouldn't be printing and posting agendas and meeting minutes.

3.9. Currently there isn't any funding available 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. Should the Council wish to proceed, it will need to be subject to the budgetary process and to it being in a position to make a decision in the knowledge of what consequential impacts there may be.

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.