



Corporate Policy and
Resources Committee

Thursday 9 February 2023

Subject: Provision of Members' ICT from May 2023

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To approve the maximum ICT offer for Elected Members from May 2023 and required funding.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members:

1. **Agree the maximum ICT Offer for Elected Members from May 2023, this being the provision of up to:**
 - * **one i-pad, case and keyboard and/or**
 - * **one Laptop, mouse and carry bag per Member:**
2. **Approve the transfer of £28,000 for the provision of IT devices to Members in 2022/23 from the IT earmarked reserve into a new Members IT earmarked reserve to be utilised for Members IT devices; and**
3. **Agree an additional maximum budget of £42,200 to be transferred from General Fund Balances to the IT earmarked reserve in 2022/23. This increases the total reserve £70,200.**
4. **Agree that all funding (total £70,200) is to be placed in a separate earmarked reserve for IT equipment and drawn down as needed as the expenditure requirement will vary depending on Member continuity between elections. Noting that the initial drawdown in March 2023 is expected to be £38,700.**

- 5. Agree that wherever possible devices will be reused and recycled, where Members continue into the next term they will retain their existing devices if it is their device of preference**
- 6 Officers report back the total amount spent against the maximum budget to Committee in the first budget monitoring report proceeding the Election.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO

Financial : FIN/145/23/MT

There is currently **£28,000** included and assumed within the 2022/23 Capital Programme to fund new Member equipment, funded from the ICT Reserve.

It is difficult to project the number of devices that will be needed depending on Member continuity between elections. We therefore need to set aside enough funds within an earmarked reserve to allow funding to replace all devices.

The maximum amount needed is expected to be

Devices	Numbers	Price (£)	Total (£)
Ipads, case and keyboard	36	750	27,000
Laptops, warranties, mice and carry case	36	1,200	43,200
Total Cost			70,200
Funding – IT reserve (original capital scheme)			(28,000)
Additional Funding – required from General Fund Bal			(42,200)

However for the reasons outlined in the report it is highly unlikely that expenditure will be anywhere within that region:

Returning members will keep their existing devices. Modern.Gov have advised that there are no immediate concerns around existing devices not being capable of running future Modern.Gov upgrades.

Previous stock shortages of both devices are no longer a concern and therefore it is recommended that in advance of the election, due to the unknowns regarding Member continuity 24 lap top devices and 14 i-pad devices are purchased initially. It is possible to obtain both devices with a 72 hour delivery time and therefore if further devices are required, orders can be placed by the Section 151 Officer from the Count meaning that devices can be received early during the week after the election.

The initial drawdown is detailed below:

Devices	Numbers	Price (£)	Total (£)
Ipads, case and keyboard	14	750	10,500
Laptops, warranties, mice and carry case	24	1,200	28,200
Total Cost			38,700
Funding – IT reserve (original capital scheme)			(28,000)
Additional Funding – required from General Fund Bal			(10,700)

The maximum amount required in the reserve is expected to be £70,200, and the capital scheme budget for Members ICT Provision will be increased to this figure in 2022/2023.

This assumes that every single Member would change, that no devices could be recycled and that every Member would take the two devices – this is highly unlikely.

However, when reviews of previous elections have been considered we **anticipate the draw on reserves to be lower.** Wherever possible, devices will be recycled and it may be that Members not wishing to stand in May return their devices earlier which can then be recycled and further reduce the drawdown.

When the existing allocation (£28,000) is considered Members are being asked to approve a further maximum reallocation of £42,200, funded from General Fund Balances

There will be no impact on revenue costs.

IT have confirmed that there would be no additional cost for using the Microsoft Office suite across all the new devices as the number of licenses will not change

Staffing :

Regardless of the device selected Members will require support from the Democratic Services Team. Training materials will need to be created to suit the devices used and training sessions held to support Members as part of their induction and on an ongoing basis.

IT will need to ensure the resources to 'build' the ipads and laptops prior to the induction day, and it would be most beneficial if a suitably skilled member of IT was available on the day of hand over to ensure that any technical issues are able to be addressed straight away.

This will need to be met from within existing staffing resources.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Revisions to the IT offer will be made for individuals where there is a documented need

Data Protection Implications :

Council owned devices allow for end to end encryption; a process mandated for email communication by the Cabinet Office.

Council owned devices also allow for data to be safely cleared in the event that the device is lost or the Councillor ceases to hold Office.

The restriction of certain activities on council owned devices maintains data integrity.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

Providing committee papers electronically reduces paper use.

Greater facilitation of remote meetings reduces the need for travel and office accommodation

The use of appropriately re-commissioned devices, where appropriate, can assist with reducing carbon impacts.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :

Health Implications:

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Provision of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) to Members and Paperless Working – Policy and Resources Committee – 28 July 2011

Provision of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) to Members – Policy and Resources Committee – 19 February 2015;

Refresh of Members' IT Devices – 14 February 2019

Risk Assessment :

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1 Background and Introduction

- 1.1 May 2019, for the first time, saw Members move to IT devices issued and maintained by Council, the chosen device being an iPad. There was also a commitment, at that time to review and refresh the offer available to Members every four years in-line with the election cycle.
- 1.2 The report considered by Members at that time can be viewed at <https://democracy.west-lindsey.gov.uk/documents/s12286/Refresh%20of%20Members%20IT%20Devices.pdf> and sets out the rationale and needs identified at that time.
- 1.3 The way the Council and its' Members work has changed beyond recognition over that four period. The Pandemic saw the introduction of hybrid working, online meetings and unarguably a greater reliance on IT systems and the need for Members to use devices for more than simply reading their Committee papers.
- 1.4 Having identified and recommended that Members would likely require two devices to facilitate remote meetings during the Pandemic, a number of Members (approximately one third of the Council) were issued with a second device, this being a laptop.
- 1.5 These "new" ways of working are now standard practice and as such, what Members are now expected to use their IT devices for has fundamentally changed.
- 1.6 Whilst no formal consultation has been undertaken with Members regarding the IT devices to be provided, it is anticipated, that given the additional choice the IT offer now affords, the below proposal accommodates the views expressed and the experiences over the last four years.

2. Proposal for May2023 onwards and rationale

- 2.1 It is being proposed that each elected Member from May 2023 will be afforded **a maximum of:** -
 - 1 x iPad (wifi) with a detachable keyboard and cover; **and/or**
 - 1 x Laptop akin to those issued to staff and mouse and carry bag
- 2.2. Members will also be permitted, if they so require, to access their Council e-mails, MS Teams and MS Office Products from their personal mobile (subject to that device being of an approved operating standard). Something that Members have been keen to see facilitated
- 2.3 Whilst a number of Members have had a positive experience with their iPads and have indicated they would not want to move away from the

device, it is fair to say this has not been the view expressed by all. With many of those provided with a laptop mid-term choosing to surrender their I-pad due to lack of use.

- 2.4 It is therefore suggested selecting only one device that will suit all Members, their individual working styles and IT literacy would be difficult. This proposal seeks to offer Members a greater element of choice than previously afforded and recognises the changing ways elected members are expected to use their devices.

3 Process for Purchase and Issue of New Devices and Returning of Old Devices.

- 3.1 The i-pads currently in circulation will continue to be supported until at least late 2024, to obtain maximum value for money we will replace existing and recycle devices when they are no longer supported. Initially an order will be placed in April following a procurement process in March for 14 additional devices to allow for Member continuity. Suppliers are currently well stocked and delivery times are short. If the outcome of the election requires further devices an order will be placed from the Count venue to ensure that devices are in place for induction.
- 3.2 There are currently 15 laptops in circulation across elected Members, these devices are relatively new and will remain supported throughout the next term of office. A further 24 devices will be procured in March for April delivery. Again stocks of devices remain satisfactory and if further devices are needed an order will be placed from the Election Count.
- 3.3 All devices will be procured using our procurement regulations to ensure value for money.
- 3.4 Members will be provided with a **maximum of two devices** (as set out at 2.1) but will be **permitted to “opt out”** and select their preferred device on day 1 Induction.
- 3.5 All non-returning Members will need to return their devices to the Council as they are the property of West Lindsey District Council.
- 3.6 The weekend following the Election, and prior to day 1 Induction (Tuesday 9 May), those Members who have either retired or who have not been successful at re-election will have their current devices remotely disconnected, and their access to Council documents will cease. Former Members will be contacted the week following the election, as is standard at present, and arrangements will be made for devices to be returned along with other council property.
- 3.7 Returning Members’ devices will remain active during this period and on day 1 induction: -

- If a Member currently has an i-pad, they will be expected to bring this with them to induction. They will also be offered a second device of a laptop.
 - If a Member currently has a laptop, they will retain the laptop (as they are relatively new) and bring this to induction but will also be offered a second device of an i-pad at Induction day.
- 3.8 It is accepted that returning Members will have had experience of using a Council owned device and will be in an informed position to determine which device best suits their needs. **They will be permitted to opt out of taking two devices away with them, if they so wish.**
- 3.9 Only newly elected Members, will be encouraged to take both devices initially to ascertain what works best for them, choosing to either keep both or return their least preferred device to stock.
- 3.10 Members who wish to take up the offer to “access their Council e-mails, MS Teams and MS Office Products from their personal mobile” will be able to express their desire at their day 1 Induction and this will be facilitated during the first two weeks of them taking up office.
- 3.11 If Members are not re-standing and are not using their devices the Council would appreciate early return of devices in advance of 2 May 2022 so that they can be recycled for new Members; reducing carbon footprint and ensuring value for money. Similarly, if Councillors currently have two devices, and are only using one, informal approaches will be made for early returns.

4 Maximum Cost of the Total Proposal

- 4.1.1 The **maximum** cost of the proposal is estimated £70,200
- 4.1.2 However this assumes that every single Member would change and that no devices could be recycled and that every Member would opt to have two devices. It cannot be stressed how highly unlikely this scenario is.
- 4.1.3 It is important to note that there was an assumed budget of £28,000. The initial purchase indicated in this report is £10,700 above that assumed budget.
- 4.1.4 Reserving the total maximum budget imaginable, ensures the devices can be delivered in a timely manner, regardless of the unknowns relating to continuity.
- 4..1.5 By of way assurance, if the proposal is agreed, Officers will report back the total amount spent against the maximum budget to Committee in the first budget monitoring report proceeding the election.

4.2 I pads

- 4.2.1 The current I pads in circulation are anticipated to be effective until at least the end of 2024. I pads are not used by any other Officers at West-Lindsey District Council and therefore cannot be utilised as part of our IT stocks. For this reason, it is recommended that an initial order of only 14 I pads is placed to stop the Council purchasing in advance of need when there are suitable devices in circulation. The cost of an I pad with supporting equipment is approximately £750 per device.
- 4.2.2 Something that will be investigated post May 23, is whether i-pads could be used in the Public Gallery at Committee Meetings, making re-use of unused stock and enabling the Council to move further away from the provision of paper copies for visitors.

4.3 Laptop computers

Members will be offered and provided with a Lenovo thinkpad device with a minimum I5 specification processor. Standard devices will be provided to all Councillors. These devices are consistent with the stock provided to Officers and therefore these can be held in stock and utilised if not taken up by Members. An initial order for 24 devices will be made. The estimated cost per device is £1200 including peripheral equipment of desktop mouse and laptop carry bag.

4.3.2 Return of historic devices.

Unallocated laptop devices will be returned to stock and be issued to Officers, offsetting the cost against the general IT Budget for Staff.

4.4 All applications will pre-installed by the IT team. These will include as standard on both devices: -

- * the Microsoft Office suite, including MS Teams
- * Internet Access
- * access to the Modern.gov app
- * secure email and internet access.
- * a link to the Extranet (an alternative way to view both public and private committee reports) and a host of useful information including parish council information, councillor contact details and the library.
- * access to the Council's on-line training platform – Learning Pool – due to be launched to Members in the New Year.
- * access to the Cloud to save their documents.

4.5 It is not envisaged that Members will be able to: -

- * download additional applications
- * use a USB for saving or transferring data*1
- * use home printers*2

This is in line with policies applied to staff at WLDC.

**1 without prior consent and only with approved business need and the USB must be encrypted and supplied by the Council.*

**2 without prior consent, only with approved business need and all costs to be borne by the individual printing. Councillors are strongly discouraged from printing information given the Council's commitment to Climate change.*

5 Training and Development

- 5.1 Regardless of the device selected Members will require support from the Democratic Services Team. Training materials will need to be created to suit the devices used and training sessions held to support Members.
- 5.2 Members will be provided with a brief overview of their devices' key functions on hand over with "Masterclasses" being made available to Members in the week following the election. These are being built into the induction timetable, with Members able to pre-book their slots with Democratic Services on Induction Day.
- 5.3 The guidance documents for the iPad previously provided will be updated, and new documents created for the laptops. These will be made available to all Councillors, in their induction handbooks.
- 5.4 Both the Democratic Services and IT teams are committed to providing Members with high quality support both upon roll-out of the new devices and thereafter.