

Meeting:	Council	Date:	18 July 2013
Subject:	Review of Members' ICT		
Report Of:	Corporate Director of Resources		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	None		

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present options for future provision of ICT equipment and related services for elected Members, including consideration of the use of tablet computer devices as a replacement for printed meeting agendas and reports.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** to adopt one of the following options:

- (1) **Option 1** – continue with the existing arrangements for the provision of ICT equipment and services to Members.
- (2) **Option 2** – cease provision of all ICT equipment and related services to Members, including broadband connections, but excluding smart phones, and continue with the provision of printed meeting agendas and reports.
- (3) **Option 3** – replace current ICT equipment and related services to Members, including broadband connections, with the provision of tablet computer devices intended as an alternative to printed meeting agendas and reports whilst retaining the option to have a smart phone.

- 2.2 Should **Option 2** be chosen, to **RESOLVE** that delegated authority be given to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to set up a dedicated fund for Members that no longer have access to broadband wireless connections.

- 2.3 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that the Members' Allowances Panel be requested to consider the impact of any changes to the provision of ICT equipment and related services to Members as part of the next review of Members' allowances.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 In 2011 the ICT Working Group began considering options for the electronic delivery of Council agendas and reports, and in June 2012 six Members volunteered to take part in a trial of tablet devices, to be used for receiving and working on agendas and reports. Feedback from the trial has been positive and it subsequently became clear that it was necessary to consider all ICT provision for Members.
- 3.2 Since the current policy for the provision of ICT equipment and services for elected Members was put in place there have been significant advances in technology and the use of technology has become more widespread, with significant numbers of individuals and families having access to their own ICT equipment and broadband services. Despite offering smart phones to Members, current ICT provision does not appear to meet the needs of all Members and does not offer value for money.
- 3.3 The current policy provides as follows:
- Members may choose to be provided with either a smart phone or a laptop (and printer).
 - Members choosing a laptop will be entitled to either:
 - A broadband connection provided and paid for by the Council, and
 - £10 per month towards the provision of their own broadband (as part of the Members' Allowances Scheme).
 - Members choosing a smart phone will not be entitled to a separate broadband connection or the £10 per month allowance because the smart phone is provided with internet access and a data contract.
- 3.4 It is recognised that a smart phone is not a complete alternative to a laptop (or desktop) computer, but provides essential access to emails whilst on the move. It also provides Members with a dedicated Council phone line. As such, all Members will continue to be offered a smart phone.
- 3.5 All Members were asked to complete a survey regarding access to ICT equipment and broadband and also to provide any additional comments on ICT services for Members. The survey was completed by 32 out of 36 Members and the results have informed the proposals in this report.
- 3.6 The results of the ICT survey show that, of the 32 Members who responded, 29 have access to either a non-City Council desktop, laptop or tablet device. Of those who did not respond, it is known that at least one owns a tablet device. Therefore, if the Council withdrew provision of ICT equipment, at least 91% would already have access to alternative equipment.
- 3.7 Of the 32 Members who responded to the survey 29 have access to non-City Council broadband. Of those who did not respond, given our communications with those Members, it seems likely that all 4 would also have access to broadband. Only one Member indicated that they do not have access to broadband at home. Therefore, if the Council withdrew provision of broadband connections, 3 Members would currently be left without any access to broadband.

- 3.8 Overall, the results of the survey show that the vast majority of existing City Council Members already have access to their own ICT equipment and broadband services, making the withdrawal of ICT equipment and broadband connections a viable option that is in line with the direction taken by other local authorities. To mitigate the impact on those who do not currently have alternative access to equipment or broadband, a separate fund could be set up until such time as the Members' Allowances Panel are able to consider the impact of any changes on allowances.

Option 1 – continue with the existing arrangements for the provision of ICT equipment and related services to Members.

- 3.9 For the reasons stated in paragraph 3.2, it is not recommended that the existing arrangements for the provision of ICT equipment and related services to Members continue. It is also desirable to achieve a more consistent approach that can be clearly communicated to existing and prospective Members.

Option 2 – cease provision of all ICT equipment and related services to Members, including broadband connections, but excluding smart phones, and continue with the provision of printed meeting agendas and reports.

- 3.10 There is no requirement for the Council to provide Members with ICT equipment or related services and in the present challenging economic environment it is necessary to consider all options for identifying savings, including ceasing such provision, including broadband connections.
- 3.11 Arrangements at other district councils within Gloucestershire vary, ranging from allowances being paid to purchase equipment and broadband to Members being expected to provide their own ICT equipment. Those Councils also continue to provide printed agendas to Members. They also offer their Members network access from their own devices via a browser-based Citrix portal.
- 3.12 Currently 11 Members have been provided with a City Council laptop and, via the laptop, they have VPN access to the Council's network. The Council is currently working towards a solution whereby Members will be able to access the Council's network from their own devices using a VMWare based Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI). This VDI will allow Members to access the network and relevant applications whilst ensuring that the appropriate security and data protection obligations can be met. This will include access to an email client as an alternative to Outlook Web Access. The availability of VDI on Members' own devices will eliminate the need to provide laptops to enable access to the Council's network and is expected to be available within the next 5 months dependent upon resources and project prioritisation. Members would also continue to be able to access their City Council email account from a smart phone or via Outlook Web Access from a browser. If this Option was chosen, the 11 Members currently in possession of a Council laptop could be permitted to retain them on the understanding that they would not be replaced in the future, thus allowing some time for these Members to prepare to provide their own equipment.
- 3.13 If Gloucester City Council ceased provision of all ICT equipment and related services to Members, including broadband connections, but excluding smart phones, and continued with the provision of printed agendas and reports, the only short-term savings would relate to the cost of broadband services and would

therefore be minimal. The potential would exist for longer-term savings associated with not replacing equipment.

- 3.14 Option 2 is not recommended because, based on existing provision, savings would be minimal.

Option 3 – replace current ICT equipment and services to Members, including broadband connections, but excluding smart phones, with the provision of tablet computer devices intended as an alternative to printed agendas and reports.

- 3.15 As stated in paragraph 3.1, the impetus for reviewing Members' ICT provision came from a desire to identify a cost effective alternative to providing printed agendas and reports.
- 3.16 Each year the Council spends approximately £12,000 on printing agendas and reports for its formally constituted Council and Committee meetings and in 2011-12 in excess of 270,000 pages were printed. The cost of posting agendas to Councillors is estimated to be in the region of £4,000 per year. Other costs include staff time associated with collecting agendas from the County Print Room, enveloping documents and checking distribution lists. These figures do not include the cost of printing and posting documents to Members by other departments across the Council.
- 3.17 The provision of tablet devices offers an alternative to printed agendas and reports as Members are able to access papers on the tablet as soon as they are published via the Modern.gov committee management system (CMS), subject to wireless broadband availability. The tablet solution would also eliminate any problems of post being delayed or not received.
- 3.18 The Council would have to continue to print a number of agenda packs for use by members of the public at meetings as this is a legal requirement, and thought would need to be given to committees with non-Council membership, but the intention would be to cease all other printing, including for officers. Solutions for officers attending meetings regularly will be considered separately and those attending for specific items will be required to print their own papers should they deem it necessary.
- 3.19 The tablet solution being proposed includes the following components:
1. Device – the recommended device is the Apple 16GB WiFi only iPad for the following reasons:
 - 16GB of memory is the cheapest iPad option and would be sufficient for the purpose proposed.
 - The Modern.gov software provider has developed an application or 'app', which allows Members to specify committees of interest and automatically keeps itself updated with the latest meeting papers thus enabling all committee documents to be accessed in one place on the device. A fully functioning version of the app is available for use with the iPad, with only a more limited version currently available for Android devices. It is likely that the iPad version will remain the most up to date with any updates being released in advance of Android versions.

2. Internet access – WiFi only connection is proposed due to the increased cost of 3G connectivity. It is considered that WiFi only is sufficient given that Members will continue to have access to emails on the go via a Council-provided smart phone and, the vast majority of Members have their own broadband service to enable them to download agendas and reports. In addition, WiFi connectivity is now available in North Warehouse and across the The Docks offices at a later date, with wireless access being available in the Group Rooms from October 2013. Members will need to be made aware that newly published documents can only be accessed when a WiFi network is available, but that once downloaded, the content will remain on the device.
3. Tools for working on agendas – applications would be installed on the device for the purpose of annotation. The Modern.gov app provides this functionality, allowing Members to view and work on documents in one place.
4. Access to exempt papers – the iPad version of the Modern.gov app offers secure access to exempt papers when subscription is taken out. The initial cost of the three year contract is £1000 and thereafter the contract cost will be approximately £350 per annum.
5. Access to email and other programmes – tablets would be provided with an email client installed, allowing Members to access their Council email accounts, subject to WiFi network availability, without using Outlook Web Access via a browser. Devices would also be supplied with Polaris Office, allowing access to Microsoft Office programmes. Access to the Council's network is possible via the device; however, specific consideration of the applications that Members wish to access would be required. The 11 Members currently in possession of a Council laptop could be permitted to retain them, but this would have to be on the understanding that they would not be replaced in the future.
6. Mobile Device Management (MDM)/Security – MDM software allows for security, monitoring and management of mobile devices, including applications, data and configuration settings. It is essential for enforcing corporate governance and security compliance and enforcement against security risks and other types of abuse. MDM gives the Council the ability to remotely wipe a device thereby ensuring its data is securely destroyed if a device is lost, preventing the finder from accessing sensitive information.
7. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) – the use of MDM will make it possible for Members with their own tablet to be offered the same solution, should they opt to use their own device. MDM will only affect the area of the device that holds Council data and the Council will not be able to access or wipe any other areas of the device. It is known that at least nine Members currently have their own tablet and, should they choose to use it for Council business, the costs of the proposal would be reduced.
8. A fully charge Ipad would last approximately 9 hours whilst surfing the net. In addition multiple chargers would be made available for the Group Rooms and Meeting Room for those Members who needed to charge their I pads in advance of a meeting.

3.20 It is recognised that some Members will still wish to use a laptop or desktop computer for some aspects of their Council work and, as detailed in paragraph 3.13, Members will soon be able to access the Council's network using their own equipment. Again, Members without access to a non-City Council laptop could be permitted to retain their Council laptop on the understanding that they would not be replaced in the future, thus allowing some time for these Members to prepare to provide their own equipment.

3.21 The costs associated with the proposed tablet solution over three years are as follows:

Based on providing all 36 Member with a WiFi only tablet device

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Hardware	£11,160	-	-	£11,160
Device	£1,152.00	-	-	£1,152.00
Accessories (case and screen protector)				
Software	£2,280.99	£1,256.00	£1,256.00	£4,792.99
Maintenance	£1,746.00	£752.00	£752.00	£3,250.00
Insurance	£215.00	£215.00	£215.00	£645.00
Warranty	£1,584.00	-	-	£1,584.00
Total	£18,137.99	£2,223.00	£2,223.00	£22,583.99

3.22 The savings identified over three years are as follows:

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Printing	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£30,000.00
Broadband*	£2,736.00	£2,736.00	£2,736.00	£8,208.00
Postage	£3,978.98	£3,978.98	£3,978.98	£11,936.94
Total	£16,714.98	£16,714.98	£16,714.98	£50,144.94

*based on ceasing provision of full broadband connections. The broadband allowance is a matter for the Members' Allowances Panel and does not form part of the proposals.

3.23 The return on investment over three years is as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Costs	£18,137.99	£2,223.00	£2,223.00	£22,583.99
Savings	£16,714.98	£16,714.98	£16,714.98	£50,144.94
Return	-£1,423.01	£14,491.98	£14,491.98	£27,560.95

3.24 It should be noted that there is significant potential for additional savings to be made if other services are instructed to send documents to Members by electronic means wherever possible. Further savings will be made if Members choose to use their own tablet devices.

3.25 If this option is approved, in order for the return on investment to be achieved, it will need to be communicated clearly to Members and officers that they will not be able to request any printed agenda packs.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 The options are detailed in the main body of the report

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 To determine an approach for the future provision of ICT equipment and services for elected Members that meets the needs of modern Members and provides value for money.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

6.1 If **Option 1** is approved, no further work is required.

6.2 If **Option 2** is approved, existing equipment will need to be returned to the Council by Members and any broadband contracts terminated by the Council. For those who would no longer have access to equipment or broadband, further consideration of dedicated fund would need to be undertaken. Delegated authority would need to be given to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to set up a dedicated fund.

6.3 If **Option 3** is approved, in addition to purchasing the equipment and organising the software, insurance and maintenance, thought will need to be given to providing charging points in meeting rooms. Members would also need comprehensive training on how to use the devices.

6.4 The issue of the £10 broadband allowance is a matter for the Members' Allowances Panel and it is recommended that the Panel be asked to consider this during their next review along with the wider impact of the chosen option. The issue of consumables, such as paper and printer toner cartridges, should also be considered by the Members' Allowances Panel to clearly identify what items Members are expected to purchase from their allowance.

6.5 Option 3 is preferred over Option 2 because, in addition to providing a return on investment over a three year period, it is considered to meet the needs of a modern Member and a modern Council. This option, including the details contained in paragraph 3.20, has been endorsed by the ICT Working Group and forms the basis of their recommendation to Group Leaders and Council.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Details of the respective savings and costs are provided in paragraphs 3.14 and 3.21-3.24.

7.2 Should Option 3 be approved, the initial costs in Year 1 will be funded entirely from existing budgets. The costs in subsequent years can be funded from the savings achieved and the standard ICT budgets.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There is no legal requirement for a Council to provide its Members with ICT equipment or broadband services.
- 8.2 In respect of Option 3, the Council's legal obligations with regard to security and protection of data are met through the use of MDM as it meets the requirements of the Information Commissioner's Office for data privacy and allows the Council to create policies which can then be applied to both BYOD and GCC owned devices to enforce passwords, encryption and the remote wipe of either corporate data and or a complete device wipe should the device be lost or stolen.
- 8.3 Paragraph 4 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) requires that a copy of the summons to attending a full Council meeting specifying the business to be transacted (i.e. the agenda front sheet, but not specifically any reports or other documentation) should be left at or sent by post to the usual place of residence of every Member of the Council. In respect of other meetings, this is taken as applying to the Members of the committee in question.
- 8.4 Paragraph 3, however, permits a Member to give notice in writing of an alternative address for the delivery of summonses.
- 8.5 In order for Option 3 to be financially viable, Members would be asked to give notice in writing that their chosen address for the delivery of summonses is the Council offices. This would eliminate the need for posting any agenda front sheets.

Legal Services, have been consulted in the preparation this report.

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 9.1 Option 2 could result in individuals being put off from standing as a Councillor if they do not have access to ICT equipment or broadband; however, it must be recognised that electronic means of communication and ICT solutions in general are a feature of modern Councils and essential tools for driving efficiencies and savings.
- 9.2 There is a risk that Option 3 would not be suitable for all Members, however, individual circumstances can be considered. See Section 10 for further detail.
- 9.3 Option 3 provides the opportunity to make a return on investment in addition to offering a viable alternative to the costs of printing and posting Council agendas, while also meeting the ICT needs of modern Members.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 10.1 While the aim of the preferred option is to achieve a consistent approach to Members' ICT provision, this will not preclude consideration of individual requirements and where it is identified that an individual Councillor requires equipment that is different or additional to the device issued in order to meet the requirements of their role as a Councillor, such circumstances will be considered and the appropriate equipment will be provided if it is deemed to be necessary.

- 10.2 If Option 2 is approved and no equipment is provided, consideration can be given to establishing a fund to which Members can apply if they are unable to provide their own equipment. Additionally, the Members' Allowances Panel should be asked to consider the level of basic allowance in light of any agreed changes to ICT provision.
- 10.3 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 11.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

Sustainability

- 11.2 Proposals to cease printing documentation for Councillors will have a positive impact on the environment.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 11.3 There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

Background Documents: None