
REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW and SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	19th OCTOBER 2016	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
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SUBJECT:	A REVIEW OF iPad PROVISION FOR ELECTED MEMBERS	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: Article 6 of the Constitution

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the option of replacing iPads with a more suitable device to meet the updated needs of Members is pursued.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 To provide an update on options for upgrading or replacing current iPads which would provide increased functionality for Members.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 In accordance with its approved work programme for 2016/17, the Committee considered a report on the current use of iPads at its meeting on 7th September. This followed a consultation exercise with Members to review their usage, individual experiences of using the device for Council business, together with ascertaining future requirements.
- 3.2 The current iPads were introduced in October 2013 with a clear purpose to replace paper, printing and postage associated with the Committee process. Generally, this has proved to be successful as evidenced by the consultation exercise and other feedback.
- 3.3 The initial capital cost of purchasing the devices was completely outweighed by the on-going revenue savings of a paper system which, at that time, was costing the Council £25,000 per year.
- 3.4 However, in other aspects, the devices are limited in functionality as previously reported. The iPads were introduced mainly to provide an E-Committee solution via a reading device.

- 3.5 Members have increasingly used them to deal with email, for research in connection with Council business, with several Members previously requesting connectivity and access to Microsoft Office.
- 3.6 However, Members indicated through the consultation exercise that dealing with email was cumbersome and general ease of use of the current iPad was difficult.
- 3.7 Following discussions at the meeting in September, further analysis has been undertaken on options to improve functionality. Effectively, there are two options. Firstly, to upgrade the current devices or to replace them with a more modern, mobile and user-friendly device.
- 3.8 However, initial analysis soon reduces the options to one, i.e. to consider replacement. Clearly, there is an option to do nothing and to continue to use the current device until it becomes unsupported. With this option, it is considered that life expectancy could be for several years, but this is uncertain.
- 3.9 Over the last 3 years, the “hand-held” device market has developed significantly to the point that the current iPad used by Members is becoming out-dated. Advice from the Council’s ICT service provider indicates that it would be technically difficult to individually upgrade the functionality of the current devices and to network them to Council systems.
- 3.10 In addition, additional licence and software costs would be incurred and it is estimated that these could be as much as procuring a batch of new modern devices.
- 3.11 Therefore, it is recommended that resources are concentrated on procuring a suitable replacement to meet the needs of Members. If this is agreed, the Council can have free access to some trial devices which can be tested before a final recommendation is made.
- 3.12 This would then help to determine the final solution for Members.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 If ultimately the replacement option is approved, then this would be subject to a procurement exercise following the compilation of the final specification. At this stage, the estimated capital cost of replacing up to 45 devices (to allow for spares and for use by visitors to Committees) is £18,000.
- 4.2 This would allow for increased functionality compared to the current devices. The capital cost has been allowed in the ICT replacement programme and the estimated cost would be contained within the budgeted amount.
- 4.3 The on-going costs of support and maintenance is not expected to be any greater than it is now and the support contract is funded through the Council’s ICT budget.

- 4.4 The current devices will need to be used in the interim and this will ensure that further usage is made to get the maximum return on the initial investment. It is expected that a replacement could take up to 6 months after allowing for selecting the most suitable device, procurement, training and implementation, etc.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The existing devices could be maintained for continued use elsewhere in the Council, for visitors, or to act as spare devices for Committee meetings.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 In addition, the Council has previously passed on equipment to local voluntary organisations for training and educational purposes; this ensures that full use is made of any hardware no longer required by the Council.

7.0 Background Papers

- 7.1 Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 7th September 2016.