Agenda Item 7

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR OPERATIONS AND ASSETS

ICT ACCESS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

PURPOSE

This report is to gain endorsement to release contingencies in order to procure hardware to enable efficient access to ICT systems, data and infrastructure for all Elected Members.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet release £15k from the Specific Contingency revenue Budget, in order to replace existing Members laptops with a new standard Council owned device.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There are two options considered ;

(a) Do Nothing

Whilst there is no immediate cost to this option, there will be unplanned spend required over the next two years to replace devices as they fail. Additionally, members may be left for significant periods of time with no suitable device to access Committee reports. Given the current situation with a planned reduction in printing, this will invariably cause difficulties for Members in conducting their Council related business;

(b) Replace Members' Existing Laptops with a New Standard Council Owned Device

A pool of devices would be procured, in consultation with Members to ensure they are allocated the device most suitable for them to use. The devices being considered offer different benefits and limitations, however they will be configured to ensure they are fit for purpose for use on the Authority's infrastructure. Members will be informed of the benefits and limitations offered by each device as part of a wider consultation activity, prior to a procurement activity commencing. On receipt of a new device, Members will return their existing devices for secure disposal.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The recommended option would see an initial outlay of £15k, for which a call on the Specific Contingency revenue budget is made. This will reduce the remaining budget available to £85k for this year. It should be noted that, in the event of devices failing outside of warranty cover, or being unsuitable for re-commissioning to new Members, this may require additional funding in the future.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

There are no Legal Implications arising from this report.

There is a medium to high risk that if Members Laptops are note replaced then this could

comprise the ability for Members to be appropriately informed re decision making, governance arrangements and comply with statutory legislative requirement..

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no Sustainability Implications arising from this report, other than those detailed within Resource Implications.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In order for the Authorityl to deliver some of its statutory duties, and to communicate securely with other public sector bodies, the organisation has a requirement to utilise the Public Sector Network (PSN). This enables interaction with Central Government, predominantly the transmission and receipt of data.

In order to access this network, each organisation must make a submission to the Cabinet Office, detailing security and management arrangements of technical infrastructure. On successful assessment of this submission, the Cabinet Office awards a Certificate of Compliance (Formally known as the Government's Code of Connection - CoCo). It should be noted that the requirement for submission is annual, and that the obligations needing to be fulfilled have become significantly more stringent in the last 12 months.

Currently, the majority of Elected Members utilise a Council-owned device to access the organisation's data and information. This means they are included in the requirements set by the Cabinet Office and these laptops operate all of the security protocols in place at the Authorityl. Members are peripatetic, working various hours from a variety of locations, and as such they require an ICT solution that supports these requirements. There is a pool of approximately 30 devices which are allocated for each Members Term of Office and returned when that term ends for re-distribution to new, incoming Members. However, the process to re-commission these devices is cumbersome and many of the devices are now in excess of five years old.

ICT Services are of the view that the equipment is ageing, no longer fit for purpose and, in some cases, already negatively affecting Members' abilities to operate efficiently. In the ICT industry[1], the optimum age for hardware replacement is three years. Beyond this, device productivity decreases, support and maintenance costs can increase and devices are more likely to experience failures. This, along with the Council's ongoing commitment to print reduction, means that members will need enhanced access to data and systems going forward.

REPORT AUTHOR

Nicki Burton
Director – Technology and Corporate Programmes

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
None

APPENDICES
None

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[1] Cibecs "The Corporate PC Refresh Project : Optimizing Refresh Cycles and Ensuring Data Integrity"