

Decision Maker: **GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE**

Date: **20th March 2018/28 March 2018**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **COUNCILLOR IT PROVISION**

Contact Officer: Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager
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Chief Officer: Director of Corporate Services

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

1.1 At its meeting on 24th April 2014 the Council approved new arrangements for the provision of IT equipment to Members of the Council. This report updates the proposals for the new Council starting in May 2018, and in particular offers Members a wider choice of IT equipment than was available in 2014.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

General Purposes and Licensing Committee is requested to note the proposals for Councillor IT provision after the 2018 local election, and provide comments to the Executive as appropriate.

The Executive is recommended to agree the proposals for Councillor IT provision and approve a carry forward of £20k from the under spend in the 2017/18 Democratic Representation budget to support the purchase of the equipment.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Not Applicable
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: The proposals build on the decision of full Council on 24th February 2014 to change the arrangements for provision of IT equipment to support Councillors.
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: Between £30k - £36k
 2. Ongoing costs: £12.2k for mobile/personal phones & MS Office Licenses
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Democratic Representation
 4. Total current budget for this head: £1.07m
 5. Source of funding: 2018/19 revenue budget
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Not Applicable
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Applicable:
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: All equipment can be purchased through existing arrangements with BT, the Council's IT contractor.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Equipment will be offered to all 60 Members of the Council to support them in their role.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 Council on 24th February 2014 agreed that all Members should be offered the following IT provision after the 2014 local elections –
- A Council iPad which can be used for Council email and reading committee papers on the Modern.gov app.
 - Access to the Council's systems via citrix from a Member's own laptop or PC.
 - Either a basic Council mobile phone or a £10 per month allowance to cover use of the Member's personal phone for Council business.
- 3.2 While the introduction of the iPad has been welcomed and appreciated by some Members, particularly for mobile access to emails, it is also acknowledged that a tablet device has limitations, has not freed most Members from paper agendas and is not liked by some Members. The focus on the iPad has also arguably meant that some Members have not taken advantage of remote access to the Council's systems on their own IT equipment through Citrix.
- 3.3 Under the direction of Cllr Graham Arthur, Portfolio Holder for Resources, BT, the Council's IT support contractor, carried out research into appropriate solutions for 2018 based on engagement with Members earlier in 2017 as well as considering the current position and the IT facilities offered by other authorities. BT reached the following conclusions –
- ICT provision must include a capability for Members to obtain paper based copy (i.e. that paper agendas should continue to be available for those who need them.)
 - The iPad (or any equivalent device) should include MS Office tools (Outlook, Word, Excel) mitigating the security risks associated with workarounds, where documents are forwarded to personal equipment.
 - Provision of a smartphone with integrated mail would be useful, but is not currently viewed as essential.
 - The existing security controls are appropriate and there is no evidence that these are inhibiting Members' ability to work with their ICT equipment.
 - Future ICT should be able to facilitate virtual meetings (both internal and public facing) and greater interaction with partner organisations.
 - Windows should be the preferred platform, but with Apple available as an alternative.
 - The deficiencies of the current iPad should be addressed and 2 in 1 Microsoft devices investigated as a potential alternative.
 - Training, How to guides and FAQ should be refreshed (particular concerns are wireless printing and use of personal ICT to access LBB core systems via Citrix).
 - A clear delivery and communications plan is required.
- 3.4 Their headline recommendation is that Members should be offered a wider choice in 2018 of either (i) the latest iPad with Office 365 capability, (ii) a laptop or (iii) a Windows 2 in 1 tablet. These recommendations are being worked up into a final package with specific hardware and software requirements.
- 3.5 The three hardware choices being offered are broadly similar in cost terms, with potential additional costs for MS Office licenses (£7 pcm) and SIM cards for mobile connection (£10 pcm.) The likely cost per machine is in the region of £500-£600. It is proposed that Councillors will continue to be able to access the Council's systems from home using their own personal IT equipment via Citrix. If all Members opt for new Council-provided IT equipment this will require the purchase of 60 new pieces of equipment, plus supporting apparatus, mobile connectivity and licences. This will require expenditure of around £30k -36k, depending on the exact equipment specified.

- 3.6 It is proposed that the current arrangements for provision of either a basic mobile phone or a £10 monthly phone allowance for use of personal telephone equipment for Council business should continue.
- 3.7 Immediately after the election the priority will be on supplying all new Councillors with their chosen equipment as quickly as possible. Once this has been achieved, new equipment for returning Councillors will be provided.
- 3.8 Council IT equipment is supported by BT under the Council's existing IT support contract. The contract does not allow for visits to the homes of Members or officers. In the past, Council IT staff have very occasionally visited Member's homes to resolve IT issues on an informal basis, but with a much reduced client-side this is no longer practical. The potential cost of adding this provision to the contract is likely to be in the region of £45k per annum, for which there is no budgetary provision. As the IT equipment being offered by the Council is all portable, it should always be possible for equipment to be brought to the Civic Centre for attention, and an extension of the contract is not recommended.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Bromley is a member-led authority, and it is important that Councillors are equipped with the latest technology to enable them to fulfil their role.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of providing new IT equipment to Councillors in May 2018 is estimated to be between £30k and £36k, depending on the equipment specification. It is proposed that £20k of this cost be met from a carry forward sum of £20k from the under spend within the 2017/18 Democratic Representation budget. The remaining balance of up to £16k will be contained within the 2018/19 budget.
- 5.2 There are on-going costs for the mobile/personal phones and MS Office Licenses of £12.2k and these will be met from within the overall Democratic Representation budget, where there are specific budgets for Member allowances and mobile phones.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are statutory provisions relating to members Allowances, (the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) regulations 2003 (SI2003/1021)) but there are no specific legal requirements relating to the provision of IT or telephone equipment to Councillors.

8. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The IT equipment proposed to be offered to Councillors can all be supplied through existing arrangements with the Council's IT contractor, BT.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Review of Councillor IT and Telephone Support (Council, 24 th February 2014)