



Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee Meeting, 28th November 2022

Director Leads: Sanjiv Kohli, Director - Resources and Deborah Johnson, Director - Customer Services & Organisational Development

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Report Summary	
Report Title	Members Digital Tools Working Group
Purpose of Report	To provide Members of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee with a summary of the review undertaken by the Members Digital Tools Working Group and to outline their recommendations relating to digital hardware, software and ways of working.
Recommendations	That the proposed recommendations of the Working Group as set out in Section 3 of the report, in relation to the provision of hardware, software and training for the new cohort of Members elected in May 2023 are endorsed, for a final decision to be taken by the Portfolio Holder for Organisational Development & Governance.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Policy & Performance Improvement Committee set-up a working group to look at member digital tools on 13 June 2022. The working group, chaired by Councillor Simon Haynes, was set up to look at member’s current digital tools and practices with a view to making recommendations about what provision should be made for new members elected in May 2023. As of September 2022, the majority of members utilise digital hardware with most using an iPad or tablet and a small amount with laptops. The purpose of the review was to ensure elected councillors have the right digital tools and training to work most effectively and efficiently in their roles on behalf of residents.
- 1.2 During the scoping of the review, members discussed accessibility in relation to digital hardware. As an authority we are committed to examining our practices and policies to ensure all our residents, service users, staff and members are treated equally. You can read more about this policy on [our website](#). For example, a member of staff who is partially sighted may utilise a screen reader on their work device. The same principal applies to members. The needs of each Councillor or staff member are unique therefore each individual is reviewed in isolation and a bespoke plan made for them with the

support of appropriate colleagues and any appropriate measures are put in place on a case-by-case basis. These measures may include physical adaptations, such as a particular office chair or assigned parking space, or software purchased for an individual, such as Grammarly to support someone with dyslexia. As such any digital hardware required for accessibility reasons is not considered within the scope of this review as this is considered on a case-by-case basis as part of the Council's equalities commitments.

2.0 Summary of the Review

2.1 The group met three times between July and September with input from the following working group members;

- Councillor Simon Haynes (Chair)
- Councillor Max Cope
- Councillor Linda Dales
- Councillor Mathew Skinner
- Councillor Yvonne Woodhead

2.2 The working group was supported by a team of officers who, considering the direction given by members, gathered information and data to inform the sessions supporting members to reach an informed decision. The working group was supported by:

- Colleagues from ICT & Digital Services (ICT&DS) who provided a digital overview of hardware, software and training and outlined member hardware options, including the advantages and disadvantages of each, as well as advising on cyber security and risk to the Council;
- A representative from Democratic Services who provided insight into the role of the member to ensure that tools were fit for purpose; and
- A representative from Information Governance who provided guidance on the Council's and member's responsibilities under UK data protection legislation.

2.3 Session 1: Member Feedback

In session one, the group reflected on the experiences of members, including current issues and digital requirements for the future. This feedback created the structure of the following sessions. The key points of this feedback were:

- Members wanted the preferred device to be as lightweight and portable as possible;
- Members wanted key usability features such as split screen;
- Members want to have increased confidence with self-service, such as setting up fingerprint log-in and use of applications such as MS teams;
- Members wanted hardware that is compatible with the systems they use, such as mod.gov;
- Members wanted to better understand the MS Teams tools available to them and the scope and benefits of rolling out additional Microsoft 365 tools and features; and
- Members wanted a greater understanding of the security requirements for members hardware e.g. two-factor authentication, screen lock times.

2.4 **Session 2: Digital Hardware**

In this session members reviewed the digital hardware options available to them to help inform the future hardware provision for members. Three options were considered against member criteria. All options have security controls, as the Council and its members are data controllers, however there were positives and negatives to consider in terms of usability and cost. The group considered the objectives of the review and use the MoSCoW method (Must, Should, Could, Won't) to compare the options and reach an outcome on digital hardware.

Apple iPad (current provision) – Circa £450 per user

Member feedback highlighted that many find the iPad difficult to use. Due to its screen size, lack of multi-tasking functionality, lack of Microsoft applications and poor compatibility with the Council's file storage area. As such the group ruled this out as a future option.

Windows Laptop – Circa £600 per user

The laptop is not as lightweight as the iPad or tablet, but the group valued the larger display, enabling full desktop application displays, ability to use Microsoft applications, ability to access the Council's file storage area and capability for split-screen. This was noted to be advantageous for committee chairs who need to view the agenda overview and papers simultaneously.

Windows Tablet – Circa £700 per user (includes required editions such as a keyboard and case)

The tablet is a hybrid of the iPad and laptop. It offers the combined preferences of advanced multi-tasking and is also lightweight and portable. However, it is the most expensive option.

The 'bring your own device' (BYOD) options were also considered. BYOD allows members to use their personal device for Council work. This must be a personal device and cannot be a device owned by another company. BYOD can be easily set-up on a member's personal device with direction provided by ICT&DS. This could be a laptop or phone (iOS or Android device). One of the solutions works by members accessing the Council network through a remote desktop via a webpage. The advantages of this are that members can use a single device if they prefer, empowering them to work and collaborate in the way they prefer, with the freedom to use a device that is familiar to them. This was tested by a group member with positive feedback. The council already holds a licence to enable staff to work this way, as such there would be no additional cost for setting members up with BYOD. After initial set up, the personal device will be 'unsupported' by ICT. This means it is the member's responsibility to maintain the device, including its safety and condition, for example making sure the device has the latest software downloaded. In preparation for members being able to BYOD, from May 2023, ICT will develop a BYOD Policy outlining these roles and responsibilities.

2.5 **Session 3: Digital Software and Ways of Working including training**

The Information Governance and Data Protection Officer presented to the group on the data security and GDPR responsibilities of the Council and outlined the digital tools, controls and good practice, including training and risk management, in place to keep our and our residents' data safe. The group also reviewed the digital software tools

available to members and were satisfied with the current offer. Considering this information and reflecting on member appetite to increase their digital confidence, they reviewed the current training programme for members and proposed additional elements (see 3.c).

3.0 Working Group Recommendations

- 3.1 In relation to hardware, the working group recommend the laptop. It is the best value for money option that meets the needs of members. The group propose the laptop is offered to all members as standard with the windows tablet available as an alternative option on request. For example, where a member sits on planning committee and would prefer a lightweight device as they regularly attend site visits. This change in hardware would be implemented from May 2023 for the new cohort of elected members. Due to the lead time for ordering devices, ICT will order an equal number of laptops and tablets in preparation for May 2023 to ensure that both hardware options are available for all members on their induction. Once members have selected their device all remaining devices, not used by members, will go into the pool of devices used by ICT for new staff or in the replacement of devices for employees.
- 3.2 BYOD to be offered to all members as an optional extra (subject to Corporate Information Governance Group approval). There may be some members who wish to utilise this as their primary device but for most this would be a supplementary offer.
- 3.3 In terms of supporting members to utilise the digital hardware and software available to them, the group propose the following training programme delivered in-house by ICT and Information Governance. The recommended frequency and topics for members to be trained in;

One off training for new members (part of Member Induction)

- Set up of hardware e.g. finger print login
- Microsoft 365 software
- Council Intranet and website
- Mod.Gov system (Delivered by Democratic Services)
- Cyber Security and UK GDPR

To be followed by 6-month drop-in sessions to ensure understanding and offer further support and guidance on an individual or group basis.

Annual training for all members on Cyber security and UK GDPR, to include;

- The controls set by policy,
- How the controls protect members, the council, and residents, and
- Councillors' responsibilities as elected members.

Ad-hoc Refresher training available to all members on Microsoft 365

- Features and utilisation of; MS Teams, Outlook, OneDrive and SharePoint.

4.0 Implications

4.1 In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN22-23/8757)

4.2 The Capital Programme has a budget to replace the Apple iPads in 2022/23 in preparation for members elected in May 2023 of £17,000.

4.3 Based on the above information, the costs of replacing the three different devices are as follows:

Number of Members	Apple iPads	Laptops	Windows Tablet
39	£17,550	£23,400	£27,300

4.4 Therefore, if the Council were to require 39 Laptops and 39 Windows tablets instead of the Apple iPads and additional budget of £33,700, following relevant approval would need to be added to the Capital Programme in 2022/23.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Members Digital Tools Topic Request Form