

**PAPER NO. 1**

**REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2016.**

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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2016  
**Subject:** Councillor ICT provision  
**Report of:** Chris James, ICT Services Manager  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr James Hallam, Portfolio holder – Corporate Services  
**Status:** Information / Decision  
**Relevant Ward(s):** All

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1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To review the feedback received from participants in the Google Chromebook pilot and determine whether the technology is suitable to be the standard ICT equipment offering for all councillors.

2 Recommendations:

**Executive approve:**

- 2.1 **A continuation of the Councillor Chromebook pilot for a further three months.**
- 2.2 **Investigation into the suitability, for councillors, of a Harborough District Council supplied mobile phone providing e-mail and calendar functionality only.**

3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 It is necessary to review the services offered to councillors to enable them to gain access to Council information systems; ensuring that a suitable and cost effective solution is provided.
- 3.2 This review and its resulting decisions will help formalise ICT provision, clarifying the level of service expected and provided.

- Standardised equipment and services will provide consistency for Harborough District Council's (HDC's) councillors, remove duplication of equipment & services and increase their usability.
- 3.3 Councillor feedback from the Chromebook pilot has been mixed. However, the limited number of officers using the devices have provided positive feedback. An extension of the pilot will allow more councillors to use a Chromebook; increasing the feedback received and helping confirm whether our implementation of Chromebooks is a suitable solution for councillors.
- 3.4 Councillors will continue to be able to use an ICT device of their own to gain access to HDC systems instead of HDC provided ICT equipment. However, councillor's equipment can only be used where a current Citrix client is available and supported. Whilst Citrix clients are available for a number of Operating Systems HDC ICT's Citrix client knowledge is predominantly based around Microsoft Windows; work on other Operating Systems is performed on a "best endeavours" basis.
- 3.5 HDC ICT's support of councillor equipment will be limited to support for the Citrix software required to connect a nominated single device to HDC systems.
- 3.6 Feedback received suggested that a potential option for councillors might be the provision of mail and calendar functionality (rather than a full desktop environment) via a mobile phone. Work is currently being performed to upgrade the Council's mobile phone infrastructure and the potential for councillors' use of this new infrastructure will be evaluated. Due to device size a mobile phone solution is not suited to attachment viewing or content creation; councillors would need to use their own ICT equipment for this type of content rich work instead of an HDC mobile phone if one was to be supplied.
- 3.7 If the mobile phone based solution (referenced above) was to be offered HDC would supply councillors with one device only, minimising cost and simplifying support. That is, HDC would provide councillors with a computer or a mobile phone, but not both.

#### 4 Key Facts

- 4.1 Enquiries were made with other Local Authority partners to understand what equipment they provide for councillors; this includes Leicestershire County Council and a number of District & Borough Councils (including Hinckley & Bosworth, Blaby, Oadby & Wigston and Melton).
- Leicestershire County Council (LCC):
    - One LCC device of either iPhone/iPad. iPad can be Wi-Fi or 3/4G.
    - Alternatively councillors can choose to use their own equipment.

- Hinckley & Bosworth BC, Blaby DC, Oadby & Wigston BC and Melton BC:
  - The offer varies across the local authorities from very little to sporadic provision as detailed below at each site.
  - Some councillors use the standard remote working provision (Citrix with Two Factor Authentication – 2FA).
  - A few Thin Clients have been provided in councillors’ meeting rooms at various sites.
  - Consideration of iPad type devices; whether these devices will be full or partially managed (through a Mobile Device Management tool) is also being evaluated.

4.2 It is important to note that whatever solution is selected for use it will need to comply with the relevant security restrictions imposed upon all Local Authorities by the Cabinet Office.

4.3 Any potential solutions also need to provide a suitable user experience at the same time as reducing the need for support. If councillors intend to use their own equipment a single nominated device reduces the support overhead on ICT caused when having to support multiple devices for individual councillors.

4.4 The Council’s paper light working directive might suggest a lessening of importance for remote printing support. Similar to removable media, remote printing increases the possibility of data leakage.

4.5 Chromebooks as well as the Windows laptops previously supplied to councillors rely on an active internet connection to gain access to Harborough District Council e-mail via a Citrix Desktop.

4.6 The need to confirm what access councillors need will shape what solution provides the best fit. If all that is required is e-mail and calendar access then a mobile phone based solution may be suitable. However, extended periods of typing, attachment viewing and other Harborough District Council system access may suggest something different.

4.7 A corporate solution rather than a councillor specific one will be more cost effective. Harborough District Council’s mobile phone infrastructure is shortly to be updated and this could provide a different option for councillor access.

## 5 Legal Issues

5.1 Councillors will continue to be bound by the relevant ICT policies when using HDC provided equipment and information systems.

## 6 Resource Issues

6.1 Predominantly ICT resource is required.

## 7 Equality Analysis Implications/Outcomes

7.1 As per section 6.3 of the ICT Security Policy ICT will continue to evaluate requests for any non-standard hardware and software and make changes as necessary. Examples of specialist hardware and software include: specialist keyboards or mice and screen readers. ICT Services will also offer assistance, if required, to improve system accessibility using built-in functionality of software; for example changing screen resolutions or font sizes.

## 8. Risk Management Implications

8.1 The provision of ICT equipment for Councillors is a shared Key Activity (with Democratic Services) for 2015/16. Risks and opportunities identified within both departments' team plans are:

- Opportunity – standardised HDC supplied equipment, easier to support
- Opportunity – clarity on the services supplied and their use
- Risk – in the event of equipment and services not supplied councillors unable to perform their duties
- Risk – without training members will be unable to perform their duties
- Opportunity - for further training of re-elected members to ensure greater understanding

## 9 Consultation

9.1 Feedback received from those councillors and officers included in the Chromebook Pilot. Draft versions distributed to ICT's Portfolio Holder and discussions subsequently held to refine the final report and its recommendations.

## 10. Options

10.1 Remain with existing Windows laptops – traditional laptops are: expensive, require more configuration and setup, are heavier and have less battery life than next generation mobile devices.

10.2 Standardise on Google Chromebooks. Feedback from councillors has been mixed and it could be concluded that they may not be suitable as a standard device for all councillors. An extension to the pilot will help clarify this.

10.3 Investigate other options available to Harborough District Council that utilise existing or planned technology investments; particularly mobile phone options made available by an upcoming upgrade.

11 Background Papers

11.1 None.

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**Previous report(s):** The Councillor Broadband Provision report was taken to the Executive of 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.

**Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure:** Y/N

**Ward Members Notified:** Y/N

**Appendices:**

**A. Appendix A - Chromebook Pilot - collated feedback**