

Administrative Committee



7 July 2022

Title	Members ICT post 2023 election (being purchased in 2022)
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Alistair Corkish – ICT Manager</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	Service delivery
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Recommend the purchase of 41 Surface Pros (one for each councillor, one for Committees and a “hot spare”) Approve the continued optional one off cash allowance of £200 for the 4 year term (equating to the equivalent of £50 per year) as a contribution towards broadband costs.
Reason for Recommendation	<i>Following the 2019 election, all councillors were given a tablet to conduct council business. They were also given a one off £200 allowance towards home broadband. It is proposed that this arrangement continues.</i>

1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 This report seeks to get approval for the purchase of 41 Microsoft Surface Pro tablets for the Councillors to use to conduct Council business. It also seeks approval for the continued payment of the one off £200 cash allowance towards home broadband costs.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 Prior to 2019, Councillors were given a cash allowance of £1500 each to cover all their ICT costs for conducting Council business. They were expected to purchase and support their own equipment. Spelthorne ICT recommended devices but because the choice was ultimately that of each Councillor, they ended up having a very wide range of devices. Understandably, Councillors looked to Spelthorne ICT to help with support issues on their own devices and providing support on such a myriad of devices became very challenging. So, in 2019, it was agreed that all Councillors would be issued with a tablet – either an Apple iPad Pro or a Microsoft Surface Pro. The devices had to be bought and set up in advance of the election so, because it was unknown

which devices the incoming Councillors would want, the already elected Councillors decided that we should purchase 20 of each device.

During the Councillors' current term of office, Spelthorne has moved to Office 365. Since then, Councillors have, in general, found the Surface Pros far easier to use because, as a Microsoft product, it has much greater compatibility with the Office 365 suite.

- 2.2 Once it had been agreed that Councillors should be issued with a tablet in 2019, it was also agreed that the allowance be reduced to £200 for each Councillor to help with home broadband costs (although, not all Councillors elect to take the allowance). In 2019, Surface Pro users were given an additional £100 allowance to purchase Microsoft Office. This additional £100 is no longer applicable as Spelthorne now licenses each of the Councillors through Office 365.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 The first part of the proposal is therefore to keep the available allowance as £200. Councillors would be asked to apply for it, if they wish, by ticking a box on the forms used for their induction.
- 3.2 The £200 allowance would be on a pro-rata basis so that any Councillor starting mid-term would receive a reduced amount. (But there would be no expectation for any Councillors leaving mid-term to repay any portion of the allowance).
- 3.3 During May 2022, Cllr Nicholls, when he was leader, conducted a survey amongst all Councillors to enquire which tablet they would prefer for the coming term (May 2023 onwards). Not all councillors replied, but all those that did were unanimous in choosing the Surface Pro. The proposal is, therefore, to buy Surface Pros for all Councillors. One additional Surface Pro would be bought for the Committees team, and one would be bought for Spelthorne ICT to have in stock and to assist with any support issues. This simplifies procurement, set up and support.
- (Other (cheaper) tablets are available but are not being recommended because their operating systems have limited ability to be supported and controlled remotely. Councillors are familiar with the Surface Pros. They like the bigger screen of the Pro version and the features of the full Windows operating system)
- 3.4 The devices would be, as they are currently, non-cellular (i.e no SIM so can only operate with Wi-Fi).
- 3.5 The device would be a Surface Pro 8 for Business, which comes preloaded with Windows 11 Pro. The proposed specifications is Intel i5, 8GB RAM, 128GB SSD with 13" touchscreen. A signature keyboard, a protective sleeve case and a tempered glass screen protector will also be provided. The current retail price for this specification of Surface Pro, with the keyboard, is £1,258.99 including VAT (£1,049.15 net of VAT). Cases and screen protectors are around £10 each.
- 3.6 Capital is already in place for this procurement within ICT's 22/23 budget.
- 3.7 The tablets would need to be purchased in the latter part of 2022 to allow for them to be ordered, delivered and set up in time for the May 2023 election.

- 3.8 All the devices will come preloaded with a range of applications for conducting Council business, These include (but are no limited to) Office 365 (Teams, Outlook, Word, Excel, SharePoint, PowerPoint etc), Citrix Receiver (for VDI), Mod.Gov, Clickshare (for screen sharing in Knowle Green meeting rooms)
- 3.9 All the devices would be managed using Microsoft InTune (endpoint management software).
- 3.10 All Councillors are issued with a direct dial phone number in Teams. This is available to use on the tablet. Councillors can also use this on their own personal mobiles, if they wish.
- 3.11 The tablets will not be covered by any council insurance policy. This is a considered risk taking into account the fact that we will provide a protective case and based on our experience over the current term of office. The cost of cover for all the devices would outweigh the cost of replacement devices for the anticipated number of losses or breakages.
- 3.12 Any loss or repairs due to negligence will need to be paid for by the Councillor. The Council will only have a single tablet of the same specification in stock as a replacement device. In the event of loss or damage, Councillors need to report it to the helpdesk. They may need to wait for a replacement to be ordered and set up, if one isn't available. (In most instances, a lower specification tablet could be provided on a temporary basis whilst awaiting a replacement).
- 3.13 Any losses or theft of devices will need to be reported to ICT or Committees immediately so that action can be taken to remotely wipe the device (where possible). Any data breaches that occur as a result of loss or theft will need to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
- 3.14 Spelthorne will permit Councillors to set up personal email accounts on their tablets and store personal photos and media on the understanding that this will be the responsibility of the Councillor and the Council will reserve the right to auto-wipe the tablet should it be lost or stolen.
- 3.15 All the tablets will be issued with Council asset tags. They will remain under the ownership of the Council at all times (during the four year term and beyond).
- 3.16 If a Councillor's term of office ends before the full four year term, then they will be expected to return the device. The Committees team will have the responsibility of enforcing this.
- 3.17 At the end of the four year term, Councillors will be expected to return the tablets to Spelthorne ICT. The tablets will be wiped and issued to staff for the remaining life of the tablet. (The useful life of the tablets is considered to be around four years, after which time the batteries degrade and the devices need frequent charging). Any Councillors that have been elected for a further four years (in 2027) will then be issued with a new tablet (upon return of their current tablet).
- 3.18 If Councillors wish to buy any additional peripherals for their tablets during the four year term, this will be at their own expense. They will need to check with Spelthorne ICT before making any purchases to ensure that what they are buying is both compatible and secure

- 3.19 It is the obligation of every Councillor to ensure that the tablet has the most current security updates. Most of the management will be done via InTune but Councillors must almost take personal responsibility to keep software up to date.
- 3.20 Councillors must not do anything to hinder Spelthorne's remote management of the device. If this is found to have been done Spelthorne will reserve the right to remotely block access to the device.
- 3.21 Councillors will all be expected to abide by Spelthorne's Corporate Security Policies which govern all staff. In addition, there is a separate security policy which specifically deals with members tablets. These are available through Spelnet.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 One off purchase price the Surface Pros plus keyboard, case and screen protector (based on current pricing) is £1070 per unit. 41 tablets would therefore cost a total of £43,870.
- 4.2 Retail prices of tech are subject to large fluctuations because of global factors, so these figures could be subject to change.
- 4.3 The cost of the allowance is £200 per Councillor. For the 39 Councillors the total would be £7,800. (Accountancy have confirmed that there is sufficient budget already in place for this, under the Members Expenses codes).
- 4.4 Total cost: £43,870 + £7,800 = £51,670

5. Risk considerations

- 5.1 Risk: Lack of familiarity with new devices may result in new technology not being utilised efficiently or effectively.
Mitigation: whilst Councillors are reasonably familiar with Surface Pro, training resources and IT support will be made available to all Councillors
- 5.2 Risk: Theft/ loss/damage of devices - the tablets will not be covered by any council insurance policy.
Mitigation: Please refer to Para 3.11 for rationale and proposed controls/mitigation arrangements.
- 5.3 Risk: Retail prices of tech are subject to large fluctuations because of global factors, so these figures could be subject to change.(Please refer to para 4.2).
Mitigation: There is sufficient budget allowance to cover this in the event of price increases.
- 5.4 Risk: Occurrence of security incidents and data breaches eg through installing additional software on new devices or failing to adhere to Council security policies on appropriate use and/or storing of media. Reputational implications where misuse detected.
Mitigation: Council reserve the right to block access (para 3.20).
- 5.5 Risk: Devices held cannot be accounted for.
Mitigation: Committees team allocated responsibility for ensuring devices are returned to the Council where appropriate; asset tags allocated and recorded.

6. Legal considerations

6.1 Consulted with Legal Team 09/06/22 – no feedback given

7. Other considerations

7.1 None

8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 N/A

9. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

9.1 The use of apps such as Mod.Gov encourage the Councillors to become paperless when conducting Council business.

10. Timetable for implementation

10.1 Purchase of the tablets: September/October 2022

10.2 Delivery: November/December 2022

10.3 Set up: January to April 2023

11. Contact

11.1 Alistair Corkish – a.corkish@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

None.