

**Councillor IT Hardware Refresh
(Linda Norman, Customer, Digital & Collection Services)**

Synopsis of report:

Runnymede provides councillors with IT devices to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities in the community.

This paper summarizes the feedback received from the councillor IT device survey and recommends next steps for the future device replacement cycle.

Recommendation(s):

The Corporate Management Committee are asked to:

- 1. Note the findings and outcome of the Members survey on IT devices as outlined in Appendix A.**
- 2. Approve the recommendation to begin procurement and rollout of replacement IT devices in early 2024. This will allow us to deploy new devices following the May 2024 elections.**
- 3. Approve the recommendation to extend the replacement cycle for councillor IT devices from four years to a minimum of six years. Devices may be replaced sooner if they are lost, stolen, or beyond economic repair.**

1. Background

- 1.1. In 2019 Councillors for the first time were provided the same device as part of an effort to rationalise and improve IT support for Runnymede Councillors.
- 1.2. At the time Microsoft Surface Pros were procured and rolled out and in the main this approach has been successful.
- 1.3. Four years on, technology has evolved and so has the way that Digital Services support devices across our organisation.
- 1.4. Cyber security has become a priority for any organisation and therefore we must ensure end user devices are fit for purpose and fully protected with the latest security patches as soon as practicable.
- 1.5. An IT device survey was sent to all Councillors to get feedback on the current device and any future requirements.
- 1.6. A total of 16 Councillors responded to the survey which was open from the 24th February 2023 to 5th March 2023.
- 1.7. A high-level summary of findings:

Device usage

Most councillors use their devices daily or monthly. The most common uses for devices are viewing committee meeting papers, viewing and writing emails, and scheduling appointments.

Device preferences

Councillors would like devices that are simpler to use, have better access to part two papers, and provide additional support and training. The number one priority for a replacement device is a bigger screen, followed by a touch screen and full size keyboard.

Appendix A includes the full breakdown of questions and answers.

- 1.8. In addition to the survey results Digital Services also received direct feedback via email, summarised below.

Device replacement: Councillors are divided on the need to replace devices. Some councillors feel that there is no need to replace devices unless they are broken or outdated. Others feel that it is better to replace devices every 5-6 years, even if they are still working, to ensure that they are up-to-date and secure.

Environmental and cost benefits: Replacing devices every 5-6 years has both environmental and cost benefits. Councillors have feedback that it can help to reduce the amount of electronic waste that is sent to landfills, and it can also help to save the council money on device repairs and replacements.

Councillor satisfaction: Some Councillors are happy with their current devices and would be reluctant to support a replacement device. Others are open to a new device, but would like to have a say in the selection process.

2. Proposed action and next steps

- 2.1. The council has taken on board the feedback from Councillors on device usage and preferences. The council understands that Councillors need devices that are easy to use, secure, and have good support. The council also understands that it is important to strike a balance between the needs of Councillors, the environmental benefits of device replacement, and the cost of device replacements in the future.
- 2.2. Taking onboard Cllr feedback, budget pressures and the Council's commitment to tackling climate change, it is recommended to refocus the Cllr device refresh to an ad hoc programme driven by need rather than time scale.
- 2.3. If agreed by CMC, Councillor devices will be replaced at a minimum of every six years, or before if the device is lost, stolen or damaged and cannot be repaired by the manufacturer.
- 2.4. Councillor devices will continue to be returned and reallocated to new Councillors post elections where the device is still available and in good working order.
- 2.5. It is recommended to progress the procurement and implementation of new Councillor laptops in early 2024 to enable this new approach to be adopted and embedded.
- 2.6. The council needs to progress the replacement of Councillor devices in 2024 for the following reasons:
- To provide remote access, so Councillors can be supported from any location reducing the need for Councillors to drop their devices into the Civic Centre.
 - Ability to sync device with wider security and policy patches using Microsoft Intune.

- Improve security by using TPM (Trusted Platform Module) version 2.0 to improve the security of the devices. This will help to protect the devices from malware and other security threats.
- Ability to extend the life of the devices by being able to upgrade RAM, Hard drives, batteries and screens in house extending the life of devices where needed.
- Moving to standard laptops will be straightforward to maintain and support by Digital Services .

2.7. It is recommended to procure devices consistent with Manufacturer and Specification of Officer roll:

- HP Laptops with convertible touch screen
- 13.3 inch touch screen
- Full size keypad
- HP track pad (mouse)
- Smart Pen
- Laptop sleeve
- Extended Warranty

3. Resource implications

- 3.1. £40,000 has been allocated within the Council's Capital programme for the procurement of replacement Councillor IT devices (£30k) and peripherals (£10k). This includes reasonable adjustments and potential additional costs to meet equality requirements.
- 3.2. We are allocating a unit cost of £650 per new device, procuring a total of 45 devices with extended warranty. Due to the volume of devices being ordered we hope to secure a good discount throughout an open tender procurement process.
- 3.3. Microsoft licensing for Councillors is already budgeted for in our annual corporate license count and renewal, no additional revenue is required as a result of this proposal.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1. The council propose to procure the new laptops for Councillors following an open tender process in accordance with Contract Standing Orders. The contract opportunity will be advertised on Contracts Finder and all interested suppliers will be invited to submit a tender. The council will then assess the tenders and select the supplier that offers the best value for money.

5. Equality implications

- 5.1. The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010. Section 149 of the Act provides that we must have due regard to the need to;
- 5.1.1.1. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - 5.1.1.2. to advance equality of opportunity;
 - 5.1.1.3. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share protected characteristic
- 5.2. An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken for this procurement exercise. Feedback has been received from Councillors that they would benefit from larger screens and full-size keyboards to make using the devices easier and more

comfortable. This feedback has been taken on board, the new devices will have both these requested features.

- 5.3. It is anticipated that the new IT devices will have the required capacity and tools to deliver the Council's equality and diversity objectives.

6. Environmental implications

6.1. Increase device life span

The council will increase the life span of councillor devices from 4 years to 6 years. This will be done by moving to a laptop model, which allows for in-house repairs and replacements of batteries, screens, RAM, and hard drives.

6.2. Remote support

Moving to laptops will also allow for remote support from Digital Services, which will reduce the need for councillors to visit the civic centre for support. This will save time and reduce carbon emissions.

6.3. Larger screens

Laptops with larger screens will make it easier for councillors to view large volumes of papers, which will support the council's goal of having paperless meetings.

6.4. Community and digital inclusion

Old Microsoft Surface Pro devices and future devices will be reset to factory settings and reprofiled for future community work. This will support the council's corporate business plan by repurposing old assets, reducing IT equipment waste, and providing devices for much needed digital inclusion work in the community.

6.5. Damaged devices

Damaged devices will be disposed of through the council's asset disposal company, Stone Group. Devices are recycled in accordance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. In conclusion, this paper recommends to CMC that the council should refocus its Councillor device refresh program to an ad hoc program driven by need rather than time scale.
- 7.2. Councillors have expressed a preference for a more flexible approach to device refresh, with devices being replaced when they are needed rather than on a fixed schedule.
- 7.3. The council is facing budget pressures, and a more flexible approach to device refresh would help to reduce our replacement costs.
- 7.4. Finally, the council is committed to tackling climate change, and a more flexible approach to device refresh would help to reduce the environmental impact of device procurement and disposal.

(To resolve)

Background papers

None