

**30 September 2021****Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES / MONITORING OFFICER****UPDATE ON USE OF RESOURCES BY COUNCILLORS****Purpose of the Report**

1. To present Committee with an update on the use of resources by Councillors.

**Information****Background**

2. At the meeting of Full Council on 10 May 2018, a revised Code of Conduct for Councillors and Co-opted Members was agreed. The new Code included a range of protocols, including the Councillor and Co-opted Member Protocol for use of Resources (attached for the Committee's reference at **Appendix A**). This Protocol's guiding principles include the need to be mindful of costs and not using resources for political purposes.
3. Governance and Ethics Committee is responsible for taking an overview of this issue and this is the latest update for the Committee.
4. At its meeting of 7 September 2020, the Committee agreed to move to an annual reporting cycle on this issue – this report covers the period April 2020 – March 2021. Under the six month reporting cycle the threshold for reporting printing charges was set at £10. This has therefore been doubled to a £20 threshold to cover the new annual reporting cycle.
5. No Councillors incurred charges over the £20 threshold in this period. The printing charges incurred by Group support officers are included in Appendix B.

**Out of Contract Charges – Calls and Data Usage**

6. County Councillors are provided with smartphones and laptop devices from which calls can be made free of charge within the existing contract limits.
7. In recent years, an increased number of out of contract charges have been evident. These charges include international calls and data usage and multi media calls. In the 2020-21 year these totalled £164.91, albeit this was not a typical year due to the lack of travel abroad.

8. It is recognised that Members might legitimately choose to use their ICT equipment to undertake their Council business whilst abroad on holiday. Prior to doing so, they should always speak with ICT officers in advance of such trips to ensure that any charges incurred can be kept to a minimum.
9. It should also be noted that due to the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, the security arrangements for taking ICT equipment out of the country has also changed. Democratic Services will be contacting Members separately to explain these changes.
10. The Committee is asked to agree that a reminder about out of contract charges (to include appropriate ICT advice) be sent to all County Councillors.
11. The Committee is also asked to agree the inclusion of itemised out of contract charges in future annual monitoring reports.

### **Printing and Photocopying Costs**

12. A breakdown of relevant printing and photocopying costs for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 is included at **Appendix B**.
13. The Committee's views are sought on the expenditure and whether any further information or actions are required on specific items of expenditure.

### **Other Issues**

14. As agreed by the Committee in January 2019, the Team Manager – Democratic Services, from his monitoring of the relevant Democratic Services budgets, will highlight any areas of concern on an ongoing basis (as per the out of contract charges issue highlighted above). Currently there are no other specific wider issues raising concerns.

### **Other Options Considered**

15. None – the report provides an update on expenditure as required in the revised Code of Conduct and the revised Councillor and Co-opted Member Protocol for use of Resources and seeks relevant approvals where required.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

16. To update the Committee and seek relevant approvals in line with the requirements of the revised Code of Conduct and the revised Councillor and Co-opted Member Protocol for use of Resources.
17. To consider the issue of out of contract charges.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and

the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee:-

- 1) Considers the relevant resources expenditure for the period March 2020 to April 2021 and decides whether there is any further information required or any actions required on specific items of expenditure.
- 2) Agrees that all County Councillors be reminded of the need to avoid out of contract charges for ICT equipment wherever possible and best practice on that issue.
- 3) Agrees that an itemised breakdown of out of contract charges for ICT equipment be included in future annual monitoring reports.

**Marjorie Toward**

**Service Director, Customers, Governance and Employees**

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### **Constitutional Comments ()**

19. Governance and Ethics Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report. If Committee resolves that any actions are required it must be satisfied that such actions are within the Committee's terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments ()**

20.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All