

**Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, POLICY, PLANNING &  
CORPORATE SERVICES****PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY  
(ICT) SUPPORT FOR NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval for an updated approach to ICT provision for Councillors, to be implemented following the County Council elections in May 2013.

**Information and Advice**Background

2. Currently, Councillors are given access to a desktop Personal Computer (PC) at County Hall to assist them in undertaking their role. This access includes some 'hot desking'. Following the election, such access will continue to be provided.
3. Councillors are also able to currently choose from a range of County Council provided ICT equipment and services to enable remote working.
4. Some Councillors already have ICT equipment, which they have purchased themselves for their own personal use or which is provided by other local authorities or organisations for which they work. It is understood that Councillors are keen to reduce the amount of ICT equipment which they have and to use the same piece of equipment to undertake their different roles.
5. In recognition of this, it is proposed that Councillors should be allocated a single amount at the start of their term in office in order to assist them in purchasing, maintaining, supporting and using ICT equipment and unsupported software (including mobile phones) in order to fulfil their role as a County Councillor. The proposed maximum allocation is up to £2000 per Councillor (equating to £500 per municipal year). This overall approach is being taken by an increasing number of other councils and the proposed payment is of a similar level. This allocation would cover a term of office.
6. This payment could be used by Councillors to cover:-
  - the purchase, support and maintenance of ICT equipment and software (including mobile phones);
  - call charges and line rental costs;
  - appropriate security and anti-virus software;
  - broadband provision and data charges (including BT 'Home Working' provision);

- consumables such as printer paper and ink cartridges;
- the costs of secure remote access to the County Council's network - for example to access County Council e-mail accounts or folders stored on the Council's network.
- The type of access required and the costs arising from this will differ depending on the type of equipment being used (for example, 'Get Connected' and 'Good for Enterprise' remote access software).

Any costs in excess of the maximum allocation during a Councillor's four year term will need to be personally funded by that Councillor.

7. After the May election, every Councillor (new and returning) will be offered a session with ICT officers to discuss their needs and agree a suitable ICT package. If a Councillor is considering purchasing new equipment then advice will be offered about compatibility, security and remote access issues. Councillors will also be able to seek such advice on their existing equipment. An ICT guide, 'Information and Communication Technology for Councillors – An Essential Guide', is also being developed to assist Councillors in their ongoing use of ICT).

### **Other Options Considered**

8. To continue the existing practice of providing all equipment and services for Councillors. However, this approach is not recommended as it is potentially more expensive and would continue the problem of Councillors having to use a proliferation of equipment, for example, in their working life; personal life; and when undertaking other roles (including as Members of other Councils).

### **Reason for Recommendation**

9. It is understood that Councillors would welcome the opportunity to reduce the number of different pieces of ICT equipment which they have to use to undertake their different roles. The proposed approach is also likely to be a more cost-effective approach than continuing to provide equipment.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.
11. To ensure that the County Council is not exposed to risks, Councillors' use of ICT equipment must be in accordance with relevant or applicable laws and terms and conditions and must be in accordance with other relevant Nottinghamshire County Council policies including IT Security General Policy, ICT Security Policy, E-mail and Internet Policy, Councillors' E-mail and Internet Code of Practice, Removable Media Usage Policy, High Level Information Security Policy, Social Media Policy, Data Protection Act 1998. Further details are included in the Essential Guide.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the proposed revised approach to ICT provision, whereby Councillors will receive a maximum allocation of £2000 per four year term of office to cover all costs relating to ICT equipment and services, be approved.

**Jayne Francis-Ward**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Policy, Planning & Corporate Services**

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### **Constitutional Comments (SG 01/03/2013)**

The Committee is the appropriate body to decide the issues set out in this Report. Under its Terms of Reference the Committee has responsibility for approving the level and nature of support services for County Councillors including IT.

### **Financial Comments (RWK 01/03/2013)**

The costs arising from the proposals for ICT provision for members detailed in the report will be met from existing 2013/14 revenue budget allocations for Members Allowances and Democratic Services.

### **Background Papers**

None.

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

All

