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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 23 August 2011  
**Subject:** Members' ICT Equipment  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones, Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The report proposes a new member allowance scheme for the provision of Members ICT Equipment.

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**Advising Officer:** John Unsworth, Assistant Chief Executive Resources  
**Contact Officer:** Clive Jones, Chief ICT Officer  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** None  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** No  
**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate)** None

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

This recommendation enables the Council to deliver best value for money without impacting on front line service delivery and its strategic vision for Central Bedfordshire.

### **Financial:**

The Government's spending reductions have required the Council to consider all avenues for making efficiency savings. This proposal identifies where revenue savings can be achieved in the provision of member ICT whilst providing a choice of ICT equipment.

### **Legal:**

There are no legal implications.

### **Risk Management:**

There is an increased risk that Members' ICT equipment may not meet the Council's security standards. This risk is mitigated by the inclusion of an "end point analysis" check that occurs each time a Member initiates accessing the Council's network.

There is a risk of a Member inadvertently releasing sensitive data which could lead to large fines by the Information Commissioners Office.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

There is an anticipated reduction of one FTE in ICT and the intention is to achieve this change through not recruiting when a current postholder leaves or retires. Any staffing reductions as a result of these efficiencies will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

In developing the Members' ICT Equipment proposals, the Council must ensure that decisions are made in such a way as to minimise unfairness, and that there is not a disproportionately negative effect on people from different ethnic groups, disabled people, and men and women.

The statutory equality duties must be exercised in substance, with rigour and an open mind. To ensure that they have complied with the equality duties, and to ensure that any decision made does not unfairly discriminate, public authorities should:

- carry out robust equality impact assessments and consult and involve relevant stakeholders as part of the decision-making process;
- consider all relevant, available information in order to anticipate any likely negative impact and to seek to avoid that negative impact by taking alternative courses of action wherever possible;
- keep an adequate record showing that they had actually considered their equality duties and pondered relevant questions; and
- be rigorous in both inquiring and reporting to Members the outcome of the assessment and the legal duties. When decisions are made, decision makers must have the relevant data, including the results of equality impact assessment, and of consultation and involvement, to ensure they reach an informed decision.

**Community Safety:**

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Council has a duty to consider community safety issues across all of its functions. In developing and implementing the detailed business case, implications will be carefully considered to ensure compliance with the Community Safety Partnership's priorities and plans as endorsed by this Council.

**Sustainability:**

None

**Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:**

- This report has not been presented to the Customer & Shared Services Overview and Scrutiny committee.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. to approve the Members' Allowances proposals for ICT equipment set out in paragraphs 22 and 23;**
- 2. that the new scheme be implemented with immediate effect, with all Members migrated to the new arrangements by 31 December 2011;**
- 3. that the Member ICT Equipment Policy be amended to reflect the new allowance scheme;**
- 4. that Part K of the Constitution be amended to reflect the new provisions.**

### *Reason for*

### *Recommendations:*

So that Members are able to select the appropriate ICT equipment and support they require while delivering efficiencies and improving value for money for the residents of Central Bedfordshire.

## **Executive Summary**

This report sets out a proposal for Members to procure their own ICT equipment and support, to meet their specific needs. This would replace the current practice of the Council's ICT Service providing a bespoke service to support Members' individual ICT needs, which is not cost effective. New allowances are proposed that will allow Members to claim for their own ICT equipment and support. The financial case for the proposal is set out in the report.

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to explain the current arrangements for the provision of Members' ICT equipment and support and propose alternative arrangements that will:
  - improve the service to Members by enabling choice;
  - ensure the Council's compliance with the Government's Co-Connection standard (Co-co); and
  - reduce the costs to the Council.

## **BACKGROUND**

2. When Central Bedfordshire was created, Members from three legacy authorities needed to access the new Central Bedfordshire infrastructure, predominantly to gain access to their Central Bedfordshire email accounts. Most Members, initially during transition, did this via the Outlook web client (OWA) as this needed no change to their existing physical legacy equipment. Increasingly now, Members access Citrix and log onto the standard Central Bedfordshire desktop and access email via the standard Outlook client. By logging onto Citrix Members can be granted access to any of the applications that Central Bedfordshire provides.

3. Today, Members have a combination of two physical options available to them when selecting how to access Central Bedfordshire email and systems. The table below is a reproduction of the current Members' ICT Policy:

4. **Elected Member ICT Provision as approved by Council on 12 May 2009**

Item	One off Cost	Annual Cost	Total 4 year Cost
Equipment	£800	-	£800
PC Support etc	-	£240	£960
Fixed Line + Broadband	-	£500	£2,000
Mobile Phone / PDA	-	£200	£800
<b>Total</b>	<b>£800</b>	<b>£940</b>	<b>£4,560</b>

### ISSUES WITH CURRENT SYSTEM

5. The main issue with the current system is that there are two options available to Members who can pick and mix between the two. Some Members have a Council provided PC but take the allowance for broadband. Other Members use their own mobile but take all of the other Council provided services. Neither option is compliant with the Government Co-connection (CoCo) standard.
6. Having the ability to pick from either option means ICT Services has to provide support to Members on an individual basis. There is no standard operating model. This creates a varying range of difficulties and as a consequence is costly to support. As a result, Members have different experiences of what they can and can't do and the services ICT provides for them differs. This leads to a perspective of ICT services not being consistent.
7. In addition to this perceived inconsistency, Members when accessing the standard Central Bedfordshire desktop have to be compliant with the Government's Co-Connection standards (CoCo). These standards are in place to prevent the inadvertent loss of data, either by having a laptop stolen or a paper report being left somewhere to fall into the wrong hands.
8. The recent fines issued by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) to Hertfordshire County Council of £100,000 for inadvertently releasing sensitive data, provide a clear example of the financial risk the authority has, if it is proved that we are not taking every precaution possible to protect our data.
9. A further consideration is that Council equipment that was provided under the existing policy was purchased using a capital budget and is an asset of the Council. Moreover, as the Council has a duty of care for the equipment it owns, it is necessary for the Council to restrict use to ensure the equipment is fully compliant with licensing and security.
10. To avoid any restriction in Members' use of equipment it is necessary to regularise this situation. It is therefore proposed that Members return any Council owned equipment. This applies to any equipment supplied by one of the legacy authorities.

11. The current policy also has an option for Members to be provided with a Council mobile phone/PDA with a requirement on Members to pay for their personal calls. It is proposed that Members should instead provide their own mobile phone. This will fall in line with cost saving measures applying to officers where only mobile workers will be provided with mobile phones.
12. There are three key differences in the provision of ICT to officers and to Members:
  - some Members already use their own or their employers' ICT equipment. Another set of ICT equipment from the Council is in some cases not convenient or acceptable to them.
  - Members tend to use ICT equipment at night and weekends when there is currently no ICT support available. Introducing new ICT Service working arrangements to cover these periods would incur associated costs.
  - Members access email mainly from home while on Council business.
13. For Members, any proposed solution should ideally meet the following requirements:
  - Be cost effective;
  - Be easy to use;
  - Be reliable; and
  - Meet their personal preferences

The current arrangements do not meet these criteria.

## **PROPOSAL**

14. Key requirements for Members are:-
  - the ability to print at home
  - the ability to send and receive email
  - the ability to make phone calls on Council business
  - the ability to access support particularly out of hours.
15. It is not cost effective to provide a bespoke solution for every Member, which is what is provided currently.
16. It is proposed instead that Members may claim an allowance that will enable them to select their own equipment and commission their own support to meet their specific needs.
17. Therefore, it is proposed that ICT would supply Members with guidance on the technical equipment specification to ensure CoCo compliance. ICT Services would also issue the Security Token which enables secure access to the Council's systems.

18. Members will have the choice to spend the allowance on the equipment they need.
19. Access to CBC systems and email will be via the Citrix gateway. A possible alternative to accessing email is being investigated that will enable Members to access email without having to access the Citrix Gateway but this is not currently available.
20. Members requiring a mobile phone should procure a mobile contract which has inclusive call minutes. Currently Orange is the only mobile provider with coverage at Chicksands. Broadband packages can also include fixed line telephony. The Councillor 0300 number can be directed to any number if ICT are informed.
21. With reducing costs of ICT equipment and broadband in the market, it is possible for Members to procure appropriate ICT equipment, mobile, printer, supplies and ICT support within the proposed £4,200 allowance for a council four year term.
22. **Proposed Allowances:**

<b>Proposed allowance</b>	<b>Monthly amount</b>	<b>Total 4 year cost (48 payments)</b>
Equipment allowance	£12.50	£600
PC support & consumables allowance	Initial payment £19.80 and 47 payments of £16.60	£800
Fixed Line + Broadband allowance	Initial payment of £34.90 and 47 payments of £33.30	£1,600
Mobile allowance	£25	£1,200
<b>Total</b>	Up to a maximum of an initial payment of £92.20 and 47 payments of £87.40	<b>£4,200</b>

23. The proposal is therefore as follows:
  - Members will have the option to claim one, two, three or all four of the allowances depending on their personal requirements. Obviously a Member who already has their own computing equipment will not need to procure equipment and therefore will not necessarily need to claim the equipment allowance. Some Members will have all inclusive TV and broadband packages in existence. The principal being adopted is that where additional expense is incurred by Members to fulfil their duties as a Councillor they will make a claim for the appropriate allowance. Members claiming any of the allowances should ensure they have proof of purchase for subsequent potential audit reasons.

- This self procurement option provides Members with a customised solution to meet individual preferences. Those requiring additional support can procure this from a provider which could include cover for out of hours support if needed. Those who are self sufficient may choose not to procure support and instead choose to procure a new Windows tablet device. Providing the equipment procured meets the minimum security requirements in the provided specification, Council Members will have complete freedom to select whatever meets their personal needs.

## **TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS**

24. Some Members who were re-elected will have council equipment in service. The proposal is to leave this in place until Members have procured their own solution. Council broadband and equipment will then be recovered and the allowance paid for the remaining months of the four year term. All members are required to have transferred to the new arrangements by the end of December 2011.
25. Mobile telephone provision is being withdrawn from officers and Members as part of the efficiencies drive and this will occur at the end of the current mobile contract term. For some Members this will be immediately.
26. Once all Members are on the new arrangements, the Council ICT equipment provision and support for Members at their homes will cease and there will only be access to the standard ICT Service Desk for issues relating to council supported applications. Councillors are expected to make their own equipment support arrangements with a commercial supplier if required.
27. Removing Council-provided ICT and mobile provision and support, and moving to a self procurement model, will reduce the costs of Member ICT support. While the physical costs of equipment will move from a capital expenditure to a revenue cost, ICT will be able to reduce support, saving revenue staffing costs.
28. Members who claimed the £800 equipment allowance under the existing scheme will not be able to claim the new equipment allowance until April 2013.

## FINANCIAL CASE

29. The financial case is presented in the following tables.

32 Members currently are self provided. They may not have all claimed the appropriate allowances but if they did, the claims would have cost the following:

<b>Existing Self Provide Scheme</b>	<b>One off Cost</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>Total 4 year cost</b>	<b>National Insurance at 13.8%</b>	<b>Less VAT claimed back</b>
Equipment	£800		£800	£0	-£133
National Insurance	£0				
PC support etc	-	£240	£960	£110	-£160
Fixed Line + Broadband	-	£500	£2,000	£230	-£333
Mobile Phone/PDA	-	£200	£800	£92	-£133
<b>Total</b>			<b>£4,560</b>	<b>£432</b>	<b>-£760</b>
<b>Total cost per member per 4 year term</b>					<b>£4,232</b>

30. 34 Members were supplied with council equipment costing the following:

<b>Council Supported</b>	<b>One off Cost</b>	<b>4 Year Cost</b>	<b>Less VAT claimed back</b>
Equipment	£410	£410	-£68
PC support & consumables allowance		£480	-£80
Fixed Line + Broadband		£1,200	-£200
<b>Total</b>		<b>£2,090</b>	<b>-£348</b>
<b>Cost per member of ICT provided solution</b>			<b>£1,742</b>

31. The new proposals cost the Council the following:

<b>Proposed allowance</b>	<b>Monthly amount</b>	<b>Total 4 year cost (48 payments)</b>	<b>National Insurance at 13.8%</b>	<b>Less VAT claimed back</b>
Equipment allowance	£12.50	£600	£83	£0
PC support & Consumables allowance	Initial payment £19.80 and 47 payments of £16.60	£800	£110	£0



<b>Proposed allowance</b>	<b>Monthly amount</b>	<b>Total 4 year cost (48 payments)</b>	<b>National Insurance at 13.8%</b>	<b>Less VAT claimed back</b>
Fixed Line + Broadband allowance	Initial payment of £34.90 and 47 payments of £33.30	£1,600	£221	£0
Mobile allowance	£25	£1,200	£166	£0
<b>Total</b>	Up to a maximum of an initial payment of £92.20 and 47 payments of £87.4	£4,200	£580	£0
<b>Proposed Total cost per member per 4 year term</b>				<b>£4,780</b>

32. Therefore the net revenue impact on the revenue fund of the Council is as follows:

<b>Revenue Impact</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Existing Scheme</b>	<b>New Proposal</b>	<b>Cost Over 4 Years</b>
Self Providers	32	£4,232		£135,437
Council Supported	34	£1,742		£59,217
ICT Support		£43,560		£174,240
<b>Total Existing</b>				<b>£368,893</b>
New Proposal	59		£4,780	£281,996
<b>Net Revenue Saving</b>				<b>£86,897</b>

33. This equates to £21,724 revenue saving per annum.

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)  
Existing Member' ICT Equipment Policy

**Location of papers:** CBC Network S drive.