



Report 2020/05

Agenda Item No: 17

Committee: Full Council

Date: 14 May 2020

Title: Councillor Laptops/Tablets

By: Victoria Fear, Assistant Clerk

Purpose of Report: To present research (from May 2020) into the feasibility of replacing hard copy Council papers during meetings and for Councillors to work from laptops/tablets during meetings

Recommendations

You are recommended:

1. To note the information within this report.
 2. To take no action and to continue to receive hard copy Council papers during meetings.
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1. Information

- 1.1 The Parish Council continually assesses the way in which it functions to ensure it is both cost effective and sustainable. This report presents research conducted, during May 2020, for Council's consideration, on the possibility of discontinuing the provision of hard copy Council papers during meetings and for Councillors to work from laptops/tablets instead.
- 1.2 In order to consider whether it would be cost effective to replace printed meeting papers with electronic devices, please find the estimated printing costs listed below:

Meetings	Number of meetings (average per year)	Average Total of A4 Sheets per meeting	Number of Copies required for Councillors and Staff	Cost (5.65p per double-sided sheet *) double-sided printed A4 page) per annum/£	Total cost over 3 years (3 years being the anticipated lifespan of IT tablet/laptop and usual warranty duration)/£
Staffing Committee	4	3	6	4.07	12.20
Annual Parish Meeting	1	14	18	14.24	42.71
Annual Meeting	1	6	18	6.10	18.31
Full Council	8	5	18	40.68	122.04
General Purposes/Finance/ Planning/Health & Safety	8	6	10	27.12	81.36
TOTAL					276.62

* Cost per double sided printed page includes cost of paper and ink (excl VAT) calculated as 1.26p per sheet of paper plus 4.39p to print on both sides

1.3 The costs, pros and cons for the two types of IT as a general guide.

Microsoft Surface Go 10 Inch Pentium 4GB 64GB 2-in-1 laptop (operates as both a laptop and tablet) with Surface Go Type Cover keyboard

Pros:

- Has a keyboard and touch screen, offering the versatility of both a laptop and tablet
- Great if you are used to Microsoft Windows

Cons:

- May be harder to use if not very tech-savvy
- Can't be engraved to show 'Property of Worplesdon Parish Council'

£478.99 per laptop including keyboard (which also acts as a protective cover) excluding pen. (Price obtained from Argos)

£7,663.84 for 16 devices (one for each Councillor)

Apple iPad Wi-fi 64GB

Pros:

- Easy to use
- Lightweight/easy to carry
- Item can be personalised to show it is the property of Worplesdon Parish Council
- Microsoft 365 (formerly Office 365) can be accessed from the iPad.

Cons:

- It has no keyboard. An official Apple keyboard costs £159.

£479 per tablet excluding £69 for 2 years of Apple technical support and any additional keyboard, cover or pen (price obtained from Apple website)

£7,664 for 16 devices (one for each Councillor)

- 1.4 Generally, electronic devices would save on paper usage, although the Council does recycle (and shred) used paper; and a minimal saving on officer time, as it does not take much time to send an item to print and collect it from the printer plus some paper-version packs still would need to be printed to be provided for members of the public attending meetings.
- 1.5 With reference to 1.4, it is somewhat counterproductive for officers to still have to print items for members of the public, whilst additionally providing laptops/tablets to Councillors.
- 1.6 The level of carbon emissions for continuing to utilise paper copies is estimated to be
- 1.7 Councillors do write notes on paper agendas and paperwork, so to replicate on either a tablet or tablet-laptop, for an Apple iPad, an Apple pencil costs £89, and for a Microsoft Surface Go, a Microsoft pencil costs £99.
- 1.8 Scrolling through larger documents on a laptop or tablet can be frustrating, as can flicking between multiple documents during meetings.
- 1.9 The IT Policy would need to be updated to reflect the IT hardware handed out to Councillors.
- 1.10 If Councillors experienced issues with technology, it is likely that their first port of call would be the office staff, who are not qualified to offer technical support and who do not have the time to assist with the support of an additional 16 devices.
- 1.11 Accessibility has pros and cons for both paper vs tablets/laptops, i.e. ability to zoom on computer screen whilst some people may struggle to focus on a screen, and prefer paper.

- 1.12 GDPR issues would need to be taken into account. Tablets or laptops that were not adequately secure could be stolen/lost and personal data (likely to be resident's information in the form of email addresses and phone numbers) could be misappropriated.
- 1.13 The Parish Council would need to increase insurance cover to include these additional items and their storage at various residential addresses.
- 1.14 Whilst the price for the Microsoft tablet-laptop includes a cover, one for the iPad costs £55 when purchased from Apple.
- 1.15 Worplesdon Parish Council has experienced a high turnover of Councillors over the last 3 years. There are potentially significant difficulties in recovering IT and ancillary equipment (such as chargers and covers) when a Councillor leaves.
- 1.16 Extended warranties, anti-virus software, external technical support costs have not been investigated at this preliminary stage.

2. Financial Appraisal

The most significant implications as a result of this report are detailed within the body of the report, i.e. the initial outlay on hardware, of at least £7,664 vs the predicted cost of providing paper copies over 3 years, of £276.62.

3. Environmental Appraisal

The carbon footprint for the paper used over a period of 3 years is estimated to be 101.5kg for 1,692 pieces of A4 paper (carbon footprint of 6,000kg to create 100,000 sheets of paper – source: www.goodenergy.co.uk/good-stats-on-carbon-saving/).

The carbon footprint for 16 tablets, excluding the electricity to keep them charged, is 1808kg (113kg CO₂ per tablet).