CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 2nd September 2014
Report of: Brian Reed, Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Subject/Title: Notice of Motion – Use of iPads and Tablet computers
Portfolio Holder: Cllr J P Findlow, Governance

1.0   Report Summary

1.1   At Council on 17 July 2014, a Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillors Simon McGrory and Michelle Sherratt requesting that iPads or suitable alternative tablets should be made available to Members at the earliest opportunity

1.2   This report outlines the options that are open to the Council in relation to the extended use of tablet computers by Members.

2.0   Recommendations

2.1   This report recommends that the Council agrees in principle to the rollout of tablet computers to all Members as soon as is feasible.

3.0   Reasons for Recommendations

3.1   Tablet computers provide an easy to use and very accessible way for Members to access e-mails, Council papers and the Internet. However, the rollout of such devices has a cost (both the cost of the tablet itself and the infrastructure and software licences that support them) and requires support from the Council's ICT service and from Governance and Democratic Services. In addition to use of such devises to date has demonstrated that connectivity has not always been as robust as would be desired. For these reasons a phased rollout would be required.

4.0   Wards Affected

4.1   All wards.

5.0   Local Ward Members

5.1   Not applicable.

6.0   Policy Implications

6.1   Not applicable.

7.0   Implications for Rural Communities

7.1   Not applicable.

8.0   Financial Implications

8.1   A phased rollout of tablet computers could be met from existing budgets.

9.0   Legal Implications

9.1   There are no legal implications to the recommendations contained in this report.

10.0   Risk Management

10.1   Appropriate ICT security measures are in place to safeguard Council tablet computers against inappropriate use. However, part of the rollout to Members would include a detailed briefing on the way in which these devises should be used and the data protection implications of using them.

11.0   Background and Options

11.1   A small number of Members already use tablet computers and their use over an extended trial period suggests that they can provide a very effective tool to enable them to undertake their duties efficiently and flexibly. Such devices provide a secure and safe way for Council business to be transacted. However, connectivity has not always been as robust as would have been desired.

11.2   Any rollout of tablet computers would need to be phased to meet budget constraints and ensure that the necessary infrastructure and support was in place at the appropriate time. A rollout timetable would also need to recognise that there will be newly elected Members following the Council wide elections in May 2015.

11.3   The Members IT Panel, chaired by Councillor David Brown, would appear to be well placed to oversee the rollout of tablet computers to Members.

12.0   Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:
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