

Croydon Council

For General Release

REPORT TO:	GENERAL PURPOSES AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 29 JUNE 2016
AGENDA ITEM NO:	8
SUBJECT:	MEMBERS' ICT PROVISION
LEAD OFFICER:	Graham Cadle, Assistant Chief Executive, Customer and Transformation
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs & Councillor Simon Hall, Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: The review of ICT provision to Members is set in the context of the Council's drive to be a digital authority and the requirement to achieve £100m savings by 2020.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT: The changes proposed to ICT service provided to Members will deliver initial one-off savings of £17,000; on-going savings of £58,000 per annum and will enable future savings of up to £116,000 per annum.	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:	

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 GPAC is recommended to consider the proposals detailed in the report and approve the adoption of the revised Scheme of Members' Allowances Part 06.A of the Constitution detailed in appendix A.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 At its annual meeting on 23 May 2016, the Council considered a report that included recommended changes to the provision of ICT to Members. The Council resolved to delegate the decision on ICT provision for Members, in regard to its impact on the Members' Scheme of Allowances, to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 2.2 This report details the proposed changes to the provision of ICT equipment for elected Members that will deliver significant savings to the Council through the Members' Scheme of Allowances. The changes will deliver a more agile and tailored IT service for Members at a dramatically reduced cost to local residents.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Croydon Council traditionally provides ICT equipment, telephony and broadband services and continuous support to all 70 elected Members. ICT equipment is currently prescribed centrally and support services are delivered both directly and through several third party contractors.
- 3.2 As the Council is required to deliver significant budget savings, the opportunity has been taken to identify alternative ICT provision for Members that provides financial savings and greater flexibility and agility for Councillors.

4. PROPOSALS FOR A NEW ICT OFFER TO MEMBERS

- 4.1 As the Council is making significant strides overall in improving its ICT capabilities, it is anticipated that the ICT service will be able to provide new ICT solutions to Members that had previously unavailable, which alongside the improved provision of home broadband across Croydon facilitates the redesign of a much reduced service that expects Members to utilise their own equipment to fulfil their role.
- 4.2 These changes to Members' ICT provision will also align the approach to the Council's wider programme to be a digital Council. Provision of tailored and agile ICT equipment will assist in enabling a move to paperless meetings and achievement of greater savings by significantly reducing expenditure on printed agenda papers. This has already been supported by the introduction of WiFi to the Town Hall building and investment in electronic agenda production equipment and a Members' Web Portal.
- 4.3 To that end, officers have worked with representatives of both political parties on the Council to agree a proposed new ICT offer for Members. The cessation of home broadband and telephony support has already been progressed alongside the provision of affordable smartphones, which also significantly improves the availability of members to their constituents. The proposed next stages of the future service provision include:
- The cessation of printing provision
 - The cessation of direct provision of laptops, desktops and support
 - A one-off transition allowance to Members to part fund the direct purchase of ICT equipment and support
- 4.4 The one-off ICT transition allowance will allow individual Members discretion in determining what IT equipment will support them best as Council provision is withdrawn. Officers will provide Members with minimum system requirements for IT hardware to ensure they can access Council email, calendar and electronic agenda paper services that will continue to be provided. From that point members will be responsible for the support, maintenance and upkeep of the equipment, connectivity and any other accessories they may require. The transition allowance is not designed to cover all ICT costs for Members, rather a portion of those costs as Members move to their own direct provision and is being awarded in recognition that Members will incur additional ICT costs

through greater use of equipment and services in relation to Council business and to reduce ongoing Council costs.

- 4.5 Benefits of moving Members to their own direct ICT provision include:
- It frees Members to take advantage of new technologies at a pace that suits them;
 - It frees Members from having to carry and maintain multiple devices;
 - It will deliver significant savings to the Council; and
 - As printers will no longer be provided, it will help the Council's transition towards paperless meetings.

4.6 The one-off ICT transition allowance will be incorporated into the revised Scheme of Members' Allowances as detailed appendix A and, as with all allowances, will be subject to taxation in accordance with national tax rules.

4.7 It is recommended that all Members receive one-off transition allowance of £800 towards their ICT costs for the remainder of this electoral term and is included in the amended Scheme of Members' Allowances at appendix A to this report. As the council is currently in the process of renewing its out of date ICT equipment due to its age and incompatibility with current software solutions, this new approach will provide a one-off saving as well as on-going annual efficiencies as below:

One-Off Savings

	£000
Expected purchase costs of technology refresh	73
Less cost of member allowance*	56
Total one-off saving	17

*member allowance costs are based on all members taking allowance and therefore may reduce if some members choose to disclaim this allowance.

Initial Ongoing Annual Savings

	£000 savings per annum
Reduction in ongoing cost of ICT support	50
Reduction in phone and broadband costs	8
Total annual savings from new service arrangement	58

Future Ongoing Annual Savings facilitated by these changes

	£000 savings per annum
Move to substantially paperless approach	116

4.8 In future years, Members will be able take into account the new approach to ICT provision when considering the basic allowance for all Members in the scheme of Members' allowances. However, and for clarity, there is no intent to amend that allowance at this stage.

- 4.9 Officers will continue to work with representatives of both groups to effect the swift delivery of the new ICT provision and this will continue to be a Member-led process. An initial pilot of the use of paperless solutions is being progressed in the Planning Committee to ensure the approach can work and that the right advice and device set-up is determined. That pilot will run from the end of June into July. This will help determine
- guidance on the type of equipment
 - software requirements (including possible specific software for meeting papers which could be provided by the Council)
 - training and transition support requirements
 - whether there may be some exceptions to the paperless principle.
- 4.10 The changes to Members ICT provision will play a key role in enabling Members to move to paperless meetings, which has potential to save a further £116,000 on printing costs.
- 4.11 Once arrangements are agreed the implementation will be phased, with an aim to move to a fully paperless approach by the end of the current municipal year. A detailed approach and timetable will be worked through and communicated across members

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Members of both political groups have been informally consulted on options detailed within the report. The proposed changes to Members' ICT provision have been developed following cross party meetings on the respective proposed changes.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no unfunded costs arising from the contents of this report. The changes to ICT provision for Members will deliver one-off savings of £31k and ongoing savings of £58k per annum.
- 6.2 Potential future savings of £116k per annum will also be enabled as a consequence of the changes to Members' ICT provision.

(Approved by: Richard Simpson, Assistant Chief Executive Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer.)

7. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 The Council Solicitor comments that publicity requirements in terms of amendment to the scheme of Members Allowances are dealt with in regulation 16 of the Local Authorities (Members 'Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. As soon as reasonably practicable after making or amendment of the scheme, arrangements must be made for its publication. In any event, annual publication

of the scheme is necessary irrespective of whether the scheme has been amended during the previous twelve month period.

(Approved by: J Harris Baker, on behalf of the Acting Council Solicitor and Acting Monitoring Officer.)

8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

8.1 There are no direct or immediate Human Resources considerations arising from this report for Croydon Council staff or workers.

(Approved by: Michael Pichamuthu, HR Business Partner, on behalf of Heather Daley, the Director of Human Resources).



CONTACT OFFICER: Graham Cadle, Assistant Chief Executive, customer and transformation

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

**Councillors' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances
including ICT transition Allowance**

June 2014 – May 2018

Allowance	Recipient	£
Basic Allowance	All Members	11,239
	Mayor's Allowance	19,103
	Deputy Mayor's Allowance	9,552
Special Responsibility Allowances	Paid in addition to Basic Allowance	
	Leader of the Council	41,984
	Deputy Leader Statutory	35,246
	Deputy Leader	34,605
	Cabinet Members	32,100
	Deputy Cabinet Members	10,132
	Chair - Scrutiny and Overview Committee	24,105
	Deputy Chair - Scrutiny and Overview Committee	10,522
	Vice Chair - Scrutiny and Overview Committee	10,522
	Majority Group Secretary	10,132
	Majority Chief Whip	14,747
	Chair - General Purposes & Audit Committee	10,106
	Chair - Licensing Committee	10,106
	Chair - Planning Committee	12,507
	Chair- Health and Well Being Board	12,507
	Elected Member (s)- Adoption Panel x2	4,225
	Chair - Pension Committee	8,852

Allowance	Recipient	£
Largest Minority Group		
	Leader of the Opposition	21,574
	Deputy Leader(s)	9,036
	Shadow Cabinet Members	6,747
	Chief Whip	6,747
	Group Secretary	6,747
ICT Transition Allowance 2016/17 only	All Members - one off payment	800