

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny**

Date: **13 June 2019**

Title: **IT System Update**

Portfolio Area: **Support Services**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision)

Author: Mike Ward Role: **Head of IT Practice**

Contact: Mike.Ward@swdevon.gov.uk

Recommendations:

1. That Overview and Scrutiny support the approach as set out in this report

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Following appointment to Council in May 2019, all South Hams District Council Members have been issued with Microsoft Surface Go's to enable them to connect to the council network, access emails and to enable paperless committee meetings in a safe and secure way
- 1.2 The chosen devices were purchased following an options appraisal which identified a number of options and a trial of the preferred device (Microsoft Surface Go)
- 1.3 An overview induction of the devices was delivered to all Members as part of the initial week of Induction, followed by the availability of tailored training sessions for Members
- 1.4 While feedback on the devices themselves has been largely positive, throughout May, Members have experienced a number of issues connecting to the Council network through the devices.
- 1.5 This report provides an update on the issues and an outline plan for reducing the impact of future issues

2. Background

- 2.1 During the previous Council term, the decision was taken to implement paperless agendas and as such, all Members were provided with iPads
- 2.2 While the iPads enabled us to implement a largely paperless committee process, there were issues with supporting the devices
 - 2.2.1 Remote support to resolve iPads was not possible – which meant that there was a requirement for Members to always come in to get any issues resolved.
 - 2.2.2 The technology used for iPads to connect to our network was not as reliable as was expected and offered reduced functionality compared to devices running Windows
- 2.3 As a result of these issues, in January 2019 we considered replacing iPads alongside two alternative options- laptops or Microsoft Surface Go devices
- 2.4 An options paper was developed and considered by officers in consultation with a number of members. The options paper can be seen in Appendix 1 to this report. The preferred option to proceed to trial was for Microsoft Surface Go devices. We did not consider a trial necessary for laptops given that some Members had already been using them and the Surface Go's lent themselves particularly well to reading and annotating Committee papers and agendas
- 2.5 In January we agreed to proceed to order some trial devices. In all, 10 trial devices were tested across South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council over a 6 week period by both Members and Officers. This meant we could test the devices on heavy duty software processes to really test the resilience of them
- 2.6 The feedback received was positive and highlighted no significant issues with the ability to access the full versions of Microsoft Skype and Office being particularly positive points as well as their light weight and portability
- 2.7 As a result, Microsoft Surface Go devices were ordered and provided to all Members in their first week of induction
- 2.8 An issue first came to light on 8th May when we received reports of members encountering problems connecting
- 2.9 This issue was quickly identified as relating to a change to Members email addresses causing the authentication tool to no longer recognise the devices, and therefore not connect to the network. This initial error required Members to physically come in to the office for an updated certificate to be applied
- 2.10 While the team were resolving this issue, an unrelated problem occurred with the Pulse technology itself on 13th May

- 2.11 Members of the team worked into the evening investigating the issue but no conclusions could be drawn at the time as there seemed to be no pattern or commonality between those connecting and those failing
- 2.12 Investigations continued and by Friday 17th it became apparent that the only course of action was to apply the latest software to the Pulse devices and upgrade the Pulse clients on all Council machines
- 2.13 It is important to state that the recent issues that have been experienced affects both Surface Go devices and all council laptops accessing the network remotely
- 2.14 Applying new software to the Pulse devices requires the removal of the remote access facility which can be very disruptive given the number of remote workers we have and activities requiring out of hours working during this time
- 2.15 The preparation for the EU elections on the 23rd May and the statutory requirement to close the Councils Accounts by 31st May meant that officers were working through the evenings and weekends to meet these critical deadlines during this two week period.
- 2.16 Balancing the contention between these business requirements, resources, risk and workarounds for those experiencing difficulty connecting. The IT Head of Practice considered the optimal path would be to delay the software upgrade and potential disruption until Monday 3rd of June
- 2.17 The IT team work commenced to upgrade the software on the evening of the 3rd of June but encountered a problem part way through relating to the deployment of the new Pulse client software to all devices
- 2.18 This issue was investigated and resolved on Tuesday 4th June and work successfully completed late in the evening on the same day in order to minimise further disruption
- 2.19 The root cause of the issue has been identified as a conflict between the latest Windows10 updates and the version of the Pulse client software we were using. Usually if Windows patches cause software conflicts, the supplier will highlight the incompatibility in their support knowledgebase. No such notice was provided in this case.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 Members of the IT Community of Practice have been liaising with the software provider in addition to conducting their own investigations to ensure that the current issue is resolved and staff have been kept informed. Where staff members have not been able to connect, they have been asked to come in to the office
- 3.2 It is acknowledged that the communication with Members about the system outage and anticipated resolution timescales has not been as frequent as it could have been and this will be addressed for any future issues
- 3.3 Steps will be taken to ensure that additional methods of communication are available to Members in notifying of system outages. Currently Members can provide a mobile phone number to the service desk and we can send a text message. Over the next few weeks we will be asking Members if they are also able to provide us with a personal email address so that more in-depth updates and instruction can be provided where the issue prevents them from connecting altogether
- 3.4 We have not currently invested in a test version of the Pulse technology which has meant that any software upgrades have to be applied to the live versions before testing, and therefore the Head of IT will be purchasing an additional appliance for the purposes of testing software upgrades prior to live release version. This will ensure that future tests can be undertaken in a controlled environment
- 3.5 Our agile way of working is dependent on remote access to council resources seven days a week and at almost any time of the day therefore a test device will enhance the robustness of remote access services. We anticipate the cost to be under £3,000 and given how critical this software is to the way we work, will be a worthwhile, and critical investment

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 The Council has already invested in the Microsoft Surface Go devices and so options are limited without a further large investment in alternative devices but even then this would not prevent the issues currently experienced
- 4.2 The feedback on the actual Surface Go device has on the whole been positive. Training sessions have been made available to all Members and we would encourage Members to attend them as it offers guidance on enlarging and well received
- 4.3 The Councils have used the Pulse software for over 12 months with no problems given the volumes of remote workers and so it is not recommended that we look to procure and alternative

solution for this software – in fact this would cause further disruption

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 To continue to embed the use of Microsoft Surface Go Devices
- 5.2 For IT Head of Practice to consider the best methods and frequency for communicating system outages and resolution times to Members
- 5.3 For the Council to purchase an additional Pulse appliance dedicated to testing which will assist greatly with troubleshooting and upgrade testing

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	N	There are no Legal or Governance issues
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	The report recommends purchasing a test version of the Pulse solution however this can be from within existing ICT service budgets. Loss of productivity by members and officers. Additionally we have extended the dedicated IT Training support until the end of July to enable Members more opportunity to attend sessions.
Risk	Y	There is a risk that if the network connectivity issues occur too frequently, the ability of Members to undertake their roles and access committee reports is hampered and the ability of the officers to go about their work is impacted Overall the Councils network is resilient and has very limited down time.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Efficient and Effective Council – ensuring that IT issues are minimized increases the efficiency of the organisation and our ability to respond to our customers
Equality and Diversity	N	There are no Equality and Diversity implications

Safeguarding	N	There are no safeguarding implications in this report
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	There are no Community Safety, Crime and Disorder implications
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	There are no Health, Safety and Wellbeing Implications
Other implications		Environmental impact as officers who would normally work from home, will have to drive in to an office in order to work.

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Options Appraisal

Background Papers:

None

Approval and clearance of report

All reports must have Finance clearance from the s151 Officer and, Legal clearance from the Monitoring Officer. Your report will only receive clearance if the implications in Section 6 are considered by the Finance and Legal Services to be complete and accurate. Make sure you contact Finance and Legal officers early on for advice where there are potentially financial or legal implications. If there are other resource implications you must forward your report to the appropriate Head of Practice for clearance. If those clearing the report make amendments they will advise you of that fact and refer you to the relevant changes. As report author you are responsible for finalising the report and its content but you are required to have regard to the comments of the Finance and Legal Services and clear reasons for not following their advice.

Process checklist	Completed
Portfolio Holder briefed/sign off	Yes/No
SLT Rep briefed/sign off	Yes/No
Relevant Head of Practice sign off (draft)	Yes/No
Data protection issues considered	Yes/No
Accessibility checked	Yes/No

Appendix 1

Options Appraisal

Members IT			
Senior Responsible Owner or Director	Neil Hawke (Business) Mike Ward (IT)		
Date Updated:	07/03/2019	Version:	v1
Programme/Project Description:	Members IT		
Reviewers:	SLT		
Author(s):	Neil Hawke		

Document History			
Version	Date	Author	Change
1.0			Version ready for approval

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1. Executive Summary

This section should provide the top level summary under each of the following headings. For more detail refer to the subsequent sections in this document.

1.1 Context

In May 2019, both South Hams District Council and Wet Devon Borough Council will be holding elections.

Currently Members of both Councils use iPads as their primary device for Council business. There are a few exceptions for Hub and Executive members where they also have a full Laptop, primarily as it is easier for using Word and Excel than it is on the iPad.

Thanks to the implementation of iPads, Committee meetings are now largely paperless (with specific savings being realised in the budgets)

We know that the choice of IT is critical to Members being able to successfully communicate with residents and to contact officers / and likewise for officers to keep them updated.

There has been resistance to using iPads, although great steps have been taking in overcoming the issues Members experience. It is therefore important that from the outset, the choice of IT is fully tested and thorough training and support is provided.

1.2 Options for review

There are three key options for consideration

Option 1 – All Members Issued with Laptops

Option 2 – Continue to use iPads – although it is likely that many will need to be updated / replaced

Option 3 – All Members issued with Surface Go devices

These options are considered in this report

1.3 Issues and Risks

Choosing the right IT equipment for new Members is critical and there are a number of risks

Risk	Impact (1 Low- 5High)	Timescales
That the chosen solution does not deliver the right functionality for Members <i>Mitigation:- We know that IPADS and Laptops already work as these are in use within the Council. We are currently trialling Surface Go devices with Members and Officers to understand the functionality and any issues</i>	4	Now
There is resistance to changing away from iPads as Members have been using them for 4 years <i>Mitigation:- We will identify Members Champions from the current cohort to use the new solutions before the elections</i>	3	May 2019

<i>and to communicate the benefits to the wider membership. Any new solution must provide enhanced user experience</i>		
<p>There is not sufficient training and handover, resulting in Members not maximising the functionality leading to a negative perception of the device</p> <p><i>Mitigation:- 1) Communications will develop some training videos for the devices and store them on the Member Intranet 2) We appoint a temporary resource to provide dedicated focus on supporting Members with training and resolving issues at first point and being on hand at Committee to help with any issues (3 days a week for 8 weeks)</i></p>	5	May / June 2019

1.4 Recommendations and Next Steps

This options appraisal recommends that both Councils look to implement Microsoft Surface Go devices for all Members and that

- 1) We place an order for 62 x Microsoft Surface Go by 14th March 2019
- 2) Communications proceed to develop training videos for the new devices with them being reviewed by a small group of Members to ensure they make sense
- 3) We seek to engage with a dedicated resource for 8 weeks (3 days per week) to focus on ensuring Members have robust training and induction on using the devices

2. Introduction

2.1 Introduction

This report sets out the options for future Member IT devices from May 2019 onwards.

Any device must fulfil the following criteria

- Easy to use
- As a minimum, have access to Email, Skype, Modern.gov (ability to comment and make notes not just read only), offer a spreadsheet and word processor application
- Be able to access the Members Intranet
- Able to be supported remotely by the ICT Service Desk
- Not increase the Councils overall expenditure on ICT
- Be future proof (for the next 4 years)

Each Council has provision of £15,000 capital in order to purchase devices (31 per local authority)

Context

2.2 Current Situation

Currently both Councils Members use iPads (with a few Hub/ Exec Members having laptops)

While the iPads have enabled us to implement a largely paperless committee process, there have been issues with supporting the devices

- Remote support to resolve issues is not always possible – which particularly for West Devon Members results in them waiting until a Tuesday when ICT service desk are on site, or officers arranging to get the iPad across to Follaton to be looked at
- Airwatch is not as stable as the rest of the Council network
- Some documents prepared by Officers appear fine on a Council Laptop but on the iPad they can lose functionality (such as the interactive budget model which is not interactive on the iPad)

As such, some Hub and Exec committee members found they required laptops in addition to their iPads so that they could have the ease of accessing the Microsoft Office suite.

A decision needs to be made by end of March at the latest in order for orders to be placed, devices to be built, service desk training to support them and training resources for Members can be developed.

2.3 External Trends

There are no specific trends in the technology employed by other Councils for their members – it really depends on local preference. iPads and similar tablets are a relatively inexpensive and portable solution for Members to use

2.4 Why we are reviewing options

We are reviewing options to ensure that the technology for our Members from May 2019 is fit for purpose and reliable

3. Options for Review

3.1 Options Summary

The Head of IT Practice has undertaken to explore a range of options for consideration. There are of course many different options for make and model of device but the key options considered have been

Option 1 – All Members Issued with Laptops

This is an affordable option with the ability for Members to access a wide range of software as currently available to staff. The main drawback to this solution is the size of the device – there is one way to use it and in terms of portability, this is larger device than the current iPads used by Members. Some members of Hub and Executive have laptops for use primarily when they're at home (preferring to use iPads when in the office)

Option 2 – Continue to use iPads – although it is likely that many will need to be updated / replaced

This is the current solution in use across the Councils and so would be a familiar IT solution for Members to use. Training would still need to be arranged for new Members and refresher training for existing Members. It does however have limitations and would mean that remote fix of issues is limited. There is also a balance to be struck between offering Members ease of use while achieving the right level of security to our system – this sometimes requires compromise on iPads connected to our network which can result in a poor user experience.

Option 3 – All Members issued with Surface Go devices

This option would be new and a solution which offers the range of software available to our staff along with the portability of an iPad (the device is designed to operate as a mini laptop or tablet depending on user preference). A significant benefit is that the service desk can remote on to the machines to take control of them and resolve issues.

3.2 Analysis of options

	IPADs (current solution)	Laptops	Surface Go
Positives	<p>Familiar solution Lightweight and portable</p> <p>Good modern.gov functionality</p> <p>Keyboards require additional case to hold in place</p>	<p>Remote support</p> <p>Standard build in line with staff laptops</p> <p>Full skype functionality</p> <p>No need for additional accessories</p> <p>Full access to network and Intranets</p>	<p>Lightweight device Full Microsoft Windows and Office software</p> <p>Remote support</p> <p>Keyboard automatically attaches and acts as screen cover</p> <p>Full skype functionality and access to Intranets</p>
Negatives	<p>Only partial remote support – service desk cant "take control" to resolve issues</p> <p>Reduced skype version</p>	<p>Bulkier device and charger than current solution</p>	<p>Screens slightly smaller than iPad</p> <p>No USB or HDMI ports – so adapter required from USB-C</p>

	Limited software applications (without incurring significant cost)		
	Issues with file compatibility between officers and staff		
Cost	IPad - £390 Cases (Keyboard) - £30 Adapter for Monitor - £10 Total - £430 X 62 Members £26,660	Laptop - £500 Case - £20 Total - £520 X 62 Members £32,240	Surface Go - £380 Keyboard - £60 Case - £10 Accessories - £30 Total - £480 X 62 Members £29,760

4. Recommendations and Next Steps

4.1 Recommendations

While it would cost £50 per Member extra than an IPad, the recommended solution is the Microsoft Surface Go. The ability to provide remote, instant support to them when things are going wrong is considered to outweigh the extra cost. We would also then be able to reduce our Airwatch licences (which are IRO £90 each) although this saving would be offset slightly by the increased cost of Microsoft licence fees.

4 Members have been trialling the devices along with an Officer (using it as a full time solution)

The device functions well with the full range of general software (Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer, Skype etc) and has also been pushed a bit further by operating Remote Apps, Civica Financials and W2 – all of which worked fine with no slower speed than that of the laptop.

Modern.gov has been tested and works as it does on the IPad – although some initial configuration required to ensure that the correct Menus show to enable editing etc. This would be undertaken before handover.

Member Feedback so far has been:-

- *Good device but just need more training on how to use it*
- *Screen is a bit small compared to the IPad but I've learnt how to zoom in (by pinching the screen)*
- *A good compromise device (between IPad and Laptop) but I do still like the laptop – feels a bit more robust!*
- *Need to be able to send printing to a home device*

While it operates in exactly the same way as a laptop, but with the ability to turn into a tablet, significant training plan will be required to ensure that all Members are clear how to operate the device. It is therefore also recommended that a dedicated resource be brought in to provide Member Training. The previous fixed term Member ICT training officer received extremely positive feedback from Members and attended Committee to ensure any issues could be resolved immediately. He has confirmed that he could return to support the implementation of the new devices. This would have a cost of approx. £3,500 for the two months

4.2 Next steps

		8 wtg W/c 04/03/2019	7 wtg W/c 11 /03/2019	6 wtg W/c 18/03/2019	5 wtg W/c 25/03/2019	4wtg W/c 01/04/2019	3 wtg W/c 08/04/2019	2 wtg W/c 15/04/2019	1 wtg W/c 22/04/2019
Trial of Surface Go (Moody/Hopwood/ Wright/ Edmonds)	Members	End Trial 12/03							
Evaluation of Surface - Talk to Members / get feedback	Chris Johns		11&12/03/2019						
Present suggested tech & costing to SLT	Mike Ward		SLT 13/03						
Place order for preferred tech	Chris Johns		Thu / Friday						
Training for Service Desk and ICT in supporting devices	Andrew Baker								
Delivery of tech	Supplier								
Comms to make training video (30 minutes)	Lesley Crocker								
Build Tech - x 62 devices (3 days)	Chris Johns								
Test actual tech - make sure each device works	TBC								
Send message in Friday Flash advising reduced service from SD on w/c 6th May	Mark Widgery								
ICT requirements for Election day - see separate Elections Timetable	Liz / Clare								
Service Desk to set up email accounts for WD first (as they will be collecting devices first)	Mark Widgery								
Service desk to set up email accounts for SH second	Mark Widgery								
Draft ICT Welcome Email	Lesley Crocker / Mike Ward								
Send welcome Email from ICT - with the basics (Comms to review)	ICT Service Desk								
Hand out devices - Kilworthy x 31	ICT Service Desk / Specialists								

