

9a REFERRAL FROM CABINET: 15 DECEMBER 2020 – IT CAPITAL – PURCHASE OF LAPTOPS

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) That the capital programme for IT spend is amended as detailed in 7.4 Table 2 to enable IT to progress the procurement of laptops for staff to facilitate more effective home working arrangements. The net impact is an increase in spend in 2021/22 of £55k as detailed in 7.5 and shown in Table 3;
- (2) That £50k of the capital is bought forward into this year's budget so that the IT Manager can progress the procurement of the first batch of laptops so that delivery to staff can happen at the earliest opportunity.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To enable a continued agile way of working which has been brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic, increasing flexibility and business continuity resilience and ensuring a future proofed approach;
- (2) To avoid additional capital costs associated with a requirement to increase Microsoft licences where users have a personal computer in the office and an NHDC provided device at home;
- (3) To respond to feedback from the staff survey regarding the need for staff to be provided with equipment that have cameras and microphones to enable council wide participation in meetings and similar activities;
- (4) To enable the procurement, build and distribution of laptops to take place ahead of the new financial year, considering supplier lead in times and scheduling of resources in the IT team.

The Executive Member for Finance and IT presented the report entitled IT Capital – Purchasing of Laptops.

He advised that recommendation 2.1 in the report should be amended to read:

“That the capital programme for IT spend is amended as detailed in 7.4 Table 2 to enable IT to progress the procurement of laptops for staff to facilitate more effective home working arrangements. The net impact is an increase in spend in 2021/22 of £55k as detailed in 7.5 and shown in Table 3.”

The Executive Member for Finance and IT advised Members that:

- The content of this report would be included in the budget papers due to be considered by Council in February 2021;
- The reasons for bringing this paper ahead of the budget is:
 - That if approval is granted, the IT team can progress the purchase, build and distribution of laptops to staff in this financial year;

- The issue of laptops would meet the requirements of staff, as identified in the staff survey, to enable them to undertake remote working and participation in remote meetings more effectively;
- The move to laptops would enable staff to have one core device for use remotely and in the office which would have the added benefit of savings on licence fees.

The following Member took part in the debate:

- Councillor Judi Billing.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb seconded and it was:

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NB: The report considered by Cabinet at the meeting held on 15 December 2020 can be viewed at Minute 71 here:

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2404&Ver=4>