



# TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

## REPORT TO THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	<b>Colin Hill – Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer</b>
<b>TEL NO</b>	<b>01706 548135 / 07306109131</b>
<b>EMAIL</b>	<b>townclerk@todmorden-tc.gov.uk</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> July 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>IT Provision for Members Accessibility</b>

### PURPOSE:

1. To remind Members of some of the challenges being faced by both Officers and Members during this period of remote working and use of virtual meetings.
2. To consider in light of the Covid 19 impact remaining in the short term, how we fully enable Members to be able to fully participate, including having individual printing capability going forward.
3. To ask Members to recognise that in having to deal with the immediate challenges of adapting to remote working and virtual meetings, there is a strong likelihood that a hybrid arrangement of public/virtual engagement will emerge, that may provide greater flexibility for both Members and the Public moving forward.
4. To enable this to be a possibility, and to recognise that investment now up front will have longer term operational benefits for both Members and Office Administration, Members are asked to approve a proposal that will result in all Members and Officers having remote/virtual access and printing capacity.
5. To recommend that the Emergency Committee approves the release, of £3,600, from the IT Earmarked Reserve of £8,500, to revenue budget, to meet the cost of providing six laptops.
6. To seek Member's view as to whether they wish to lease purchase 21 printers at an annual cost of £1,058 per year over 5 years – total £5,292 or to purchase outright at a capital of £4,476 - see Appendix 1 for Cost/Benefit Analysis.
7. To ask Members to note that whilst many Members wish to continue using their own IT provision for receipt of emails/meeting papers, by implementing this proposal, should any Member in the future wish to avail themselves of Council provided Laptops, they will be entitled to do so.

## **BACKGROUND:**

8. The introduction of the Emergency Committee Structure initially reduced the need for all Members to have remote working options and or virtual meeting access. As we now move towards returning to normal Council/Committee structures, the need to enable all Members becomes a priority.
9. Restrictions of office staff to office facilities in the early days of lockdown, meant that the photocopying of papers was just not an option, and given the volume of such papers, increasingly challenging for Members to read all on screen and or refer to them at meetings without a second device capability.
10. Two officers have continued to use their personal computers short term to enable Council business to continue. Office based system are Desktop PC based and must remain connected to enable remote access to be maintained to council network drives.
11. As time has gone by and we have sought to enable more Members with remote access, we have already purchased three laptops out of revenue, and need to purchase one more for a Member as well as two for Officers, so they can move from use of their own home devices.
12. Several Members have struggled without the option of paper copies being available to refer to. Where they are viewing electronic copies from a Tablet this is difficult.
13. We also need to recognise that working from home for Officers may be required in the future to maintain safe working social distancing in the office. Given good productivity levels achieved during the current need for working from home, this may also be an ongoing flexible option that adds to improving productivity.
14. Procurement of the existing photocopier and all-inclusive option happened in June 2019 after seeking alternative quotations. A move to individual printer use will not be cost effective to provide on an all-inclusive copy basis for individual printers, simply because of reduced volumes and therefore the choice rests with either leasing or outright purchase.
15. Our existing supplier is recommending the use of a “workhorse” type black and white only printer (Utax P3522dw - Appendix 2 ) that from experience indicates that a 10 year life would be expected. Given a history of low call out on these items, our existing supplier is prepared to provide a call out/repair service within a price of £214 per printer, if purchased outright through them. Internets searches indicate a price ranges exclusive of call out at circa £230 plus per printer.
16. Use of photocopier paper is excluded from these calculation as we will provide to Members as opposed to use ourselves, and is funded from the stationary budget as normal.

## **PROPOSAL**

17. To fund the purchase of six laptops .Three are already purchased with another three to procure ( two of which are a necessity for officer use to work from home), at a cost of c £600 each including set up cost and user licences – total £3,600 from the Earmarked Reserve.

18. To procure 21 personal black and white only A4 printers, one for each Member and one for each Officer.
19. To consider options for printer purchase of a capital one-off purchase £4,476 against lease purchase of £5,292.
20. To recognise that the current office printer is a heavy duty machine that has a very low per copy rate that is based on volume use – which will considerably reduce if the requirement to post out papers is eradicated altogether. There will be therefore be a compensatory increase in cost per copy that will need to be considered and is included in the analysis as per Appendix 1
21. To note that the Administrative Officer currently spends an average of 5 hours per meeting preparing approximately 10 full packs per meeting for Members distribution and that depending upon the extent of papers, postage costs can range from £2 to £3 per item posted.
22. Options considered in Appendix 1 exclude the benefit of Officer time that can be diverted to a more effective management of our Website and intended social media presence.
23. Where Members have printed out papers and no longer require them, on reopening of the office, they can drop these off for shredding.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

24. The current prediction for the revenue budget indicates that an initial investment of £4,476 in printers is affordable thereby saving £816 against lease purchase.
25. Given this is in practice a capital purchase, it is reasonable to look at this as being funded over a 5 to 10 year period, given a projected asset life of 10 years.
26. Substantial revenue savings are expected from postage reduction in not sending out Members packs, with options for Members to print out what they then require from home.
27. In factoring in postage savings, but increased personal cartridge provision and slightly increased copy charge for our main office copier, payback is anticipated to take 7 years

<b>Current- exc inflation</b>	<b>5 year cost</b>	<b>6 year cost</b>	<b>7 year cost</b>
Postage	£5,000	£6,000	£7,000
Copier	£3,291	£3,949	£4,607
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>£8,291</b>	<b>£9,949</b>	<b>£11,607</b>

<b>Revised- exc inflation</b>	<b>5 year cost</b>	<b>6 year cost</b>	<b>7 year cost</b>
Postage	£1,000	£1,200	£1,400
Copier	£1,511	£1,814	£2,116
Personal Cartridges	£2,340	£2,808	£3,276
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,851</b>	<b>£5,822</b>	<b>£6,792</b>

<b>Savings towards purchase</b>	<b>£3,439</b>	<b>£4,127</b>	<b>£4,815</b>
<b>Capital purchase</b>	<b>£4,476</b>	<b>£4,476</b>	<b>£4,476</b>
<b>% cover of cost</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>108%</b>

28. The purchase of Laptops is not an investment-based decision, but one that is required to enable both Officer and Members to operate effectively.
29. The purchase of laptops was an element included within the initial purpose of the Earmarked Reserve, relating to office relocation/improvement in IT infrastructure.
30. The remaining Earmarked Reserve of £4,900 is felt at this stage to still be sufficient to cover revised infrastructure need for either office relocation or if required to remain at the existing office location.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

31. That the Emergency Committee confirm the transfer of £3,600 from Earmarked Reserve to meet the cost of six laptops for exclusive Council related use.
32. That the Town Clerk develops an IT policy for approval by Council and for subsequent agreement by Members receiving such laptops to adhere to.
33. That the Emergency Committee also resolves that should any Member not currently requiring the provision of a Council owned laptop, require one in the future, they would be provided with one.
34. That should there be a revenue underspend at the end of the 2020-2021 financial year, the Town Clerk establishes an Earmarked Reserve of £3,000 for Member Laptop purchase and for subsequent year each ahead of the next Town Council Elections, in case new or elected Members require these.
35. That the Town Clerk procures 21 Black and White printers by way of outright purchase in an amount of £4,476 and establishes
  - a. Increase in the existing Office and IT equipment revenue budget to reflect the purchase of printers and laptops partially funded by a movement of £3,600 from earmarked reserves
  - b. Adjustments to the postage and printing/photocopying budget to reflect a net annual savings of £687 per year
36. That the Town Clerk bring to the next Emergency Committee meeting an IT Policy for adoption.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

37. Transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves require Council Approval
38. Entering into a longer-term printer supply arrangement requires Council Approval.
39. A new IT Policy will require to be adopted by Council.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

40. An IT use policy will be required to govern the use of Council laptops and an opportunity taken to consider within this a use of council emails.

**DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:**

41. None

**SUPPORTING PAPERS**

42. Appendix 1 – Cost Benefit Analysis for Printer options.  
Appendix 2 – Proposed Printer Specification ( proposed model has only single draw paper tray)

**For further information please contact : Colin Hill**