

## Report of the Head of Democratic Services & Chief Transformation Officer

Democratic Services Committee – 18 October 2016

### COUNCILLORS' BROADBAND AND TELEPHONE, ICT AND MOBILE PHONE ALLOWANCES - MAY 2017 & BEYOND

<b>Purpose:</b>	To review the “Councillors ICT – May 2012 and Beyond” policy thereby ensuring that Councillors are provided with an ICT provision suited to their needs and is compliant with the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW).
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee support the report and its recommendations and recommend its adoption to Cabinet.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The report be forwarded to Council prior to Cabinet in order to obtain any additional comments from Councillors;</li><li>2) The current arrangements for Councillors to purchase their own ICT equipment be continued;</li><li>3) Access to Office 365 to enable cloud technology for more resilient, secure information sharing system, subject to successful pilot be noted;</li><li>4) The Councillors' ICT Allowance as outlined within the report be noted;</li><li>5) The Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance as outlined within the report be noted;</li><li>6) The Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance as outlined within the report be noted;</li><li>7) The section relating to Councillors' Self Service be noted.</li></ol>
<b>Report Author:</b>	Huw Evans & Jo Harley
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Carl Billingsley
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Tracey Meredith
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Phil Couch

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the role of Councillors, Broadband, ICT and Voice Communications equipment and systems are essential in enabling that their responsibilities are delivered effectively and securely.

- 1.2 The current “Councillors ICT - May 2012 and Beyond” policy arrangements have been reviewed prior to the Local Government Elections scheduled for May 2017. The review allows for new technologies to be made available and to align Councillors role to the new Digital strategy of the Authority. Councillors will be leading the way in the Authority wide rollout of a new Digital culture ambition aiming to make Swansea a lead Authority in the UK.
- 1.3 This report also seeks to review the Councillors’ Broadband and Telephone Allowance and the Councillors’ Mobile Phone Allowance.
- 1.4 This approach links with the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) by which the Authority is bound. Details of the latest IRPW Annual Report and other information may be viewed on their website. <http://gov.wales/irpwsb/home/publication/?lang=en>

## **2. Supporting the Work of Local Authority Members – IRPW Determinations**

- 2.1 Determinations 6 and 7 of the IRPW Annual Report of February 2016 state:

*“Determination 6: The Panel has determined that each Authority, through its Democratic Services Committee, must ensure that all of its members are given as much support as is necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively. All elected members should be provided with adequate telephone and email facilities and electronic access to appropriate information”;*

*“Determination 7: The Panel has determined that such support should be without cost to the individual member. Deductions must not be made from members’ salaries by the respective Authority as a contribution towards cost of support which the Authority has decided necessary for the effectiveness and / or efficiency of members.”*

## **3. Current ICT Arrangements**

- 3.1 Currently the Authority provides each Councillor with an ICT Allowance in order to enable them to fulfil their duties. The ICT Allowance allows Councillors to purchase their own equipment. The ICT Allowance should be used to purchase items such as desktop or laptop PC, Tablet Computer, Printer and Software), ICT Peripherals (such as storage, backup facilities, printer paper and ink) and ICT Support to Councillors”.
- 3.2 This current arrangement allows the flexibility that Councillors requested prior to the Local Government Elections in May 2012. It effectively provides bring your own device (BYOD) technology to Councillors, which was an innovative decision 4 years ago. Councillors are able to purchase which ever device they find beneficial for their work.

3.3 The Authority provides the technology for the Councillors to use to access their emails and files. The options enabled are CITRIX for files and emails and webmail for emails. Due to the decision to enable BYOD also required a separate WIFI connection to be installed to access these systems from within the Authority's main buildings.

#### **4. Consultation Process for Review of Councillors' ICT Arrangements**

4.1 In order to ensure that all Councillors views were considered as part of the review of the Councillors ICT – May 2012 and Beyond policy, the Democratic Services Committee discussed the issue and instructed the Head of Democratic Services and Chief Transformation Officer to liaise directly with the Political Groups on the Council. During September 2016, meetings took place with the Labour and Liberal Democrat Political Groups and discussions with the Independent and Conservative Political Group Leaders regarding the ICT requirements of Councillors.

4.2 Councillors were briefed on how the new Digital Strategy would provide Councillors with increased functionality taking advantage of new cloud technology. This would enable secure information sharing opportunities as part of the increased partnership working. The Digital Strategy is putting in place new infrastructure to support the principals of self service and mobile working.

4.3 Councillors have agreed that the current flexible arrangement, of purchasing their own equipment, is the preferred option post May 2017 election. The principle of Councillors being able to use the equipment for their personal use, without the restrictions that a corporate device would impose, is also welcomed.

4.4 Councillors referred to the recognised limitations of CITRIX and Webmail and these will be addressed through a pilot of Office 365 which is cloud technology. This pilot is currently being progressed in the Information and Business Change Section. It is proposed that this is rolled out to a pilot group of Councillors from January 2017.

4.5 Office 365 has many benefits as it is a web-based version of Microsoft Office which will provide increased resilience and shared service options for partnership. Benefits to using Office 365?

- a) Anytime, Anywhere Access – Email, important documents, contact and calendar on nearly any device from almost anywhere;
- b) Easy to Use – it works seamlessly with the programs a lot of people know and use most, including Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint;
- c) Ability to work either online or offline – Office 365 provides users with the ability to work online or offline via office desktop applications on your PC.

4.6 Another issue raised by Councillors was the perceived lack of support from the Authority in relation to the devices that Councillors themselves purchased. Councillors were reminded that they should use an element of their Councillors' ICT Allowance to fund such support from a Third Party provider. This will enable Councillors to receive the relevant technical support for the device(s) they purchased. Guidelines are provided and will be updated to assist technical support arrangements in the future.

## 5. Councillors' ICT Allowance

5.1 The Authority currently pays a Councillors' ICT Allowance to all Councillors providing:

a) Councillors produce a receipt proving their purchase of relevant ICT items. Relevant ICT items being desktop or laptop PC, Tablet Computer, Printer and Software, ICT Peripherals (such as storage, backup facilities, printer paper and ink) and ICT Support to Councillors.

5.2 The Councillors' ICT Allowance shall be subject to Tax and National Insurance deductions. **Appendix 1** shows the Councillors' ICT Allowance Claim Form.

5.3 The Councillors' ICT Allowance is as follows:

In the Year immediately following the election of the Councillor	£1,008
Each Year Thereafter (Councillor may take this in advance from Year 2, i.e. £800 (£200 x 4 year Remaining Term of Office). The Authority will not pay any additional monies until following next Local Government Election (Currently scheduled for May 2022)	£200 p.a. (£800) over the term.

5.4 The Authority recommends that an element of the Councillors' ICT Allowance be used to purchase an ICT support service. **ICT Support is defined as:** Either an ad-hoc or fixed contract with a third party (Not the Authority) aimed at providing ICT support should any element of your ICT equipment fail.

5.5 Councillors ICT Support will not be provided by the Authority other than issues directly linked to the Authorities systems, such as Password Reset and General Guidelines when an external ICT Support supplier is required to deal with any issues that occur.

5.6 The software package used by the City and County of Swansea is Microsoft Office. The Authority therefore recommends that Councillors ensure that any device that they purchase is compatible with Microsoft Office. Without such software Councillors may not be able to open certain documents sent to them by the Authority and in turn the Authority may not be able to open documents which the Councillor sends them.

5.7 Should a Councillor cease to remain a Councillor the Councillors' ICT Allowance shall cease and any ICT Support contract taken out by the Councillor shall remain the sole responsibility of the Councillor as will any repayments. Please also refer to the section relating to **“What happens if a Councillor ceases to remain a Councillor?”**

## **6. Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance**

6.1 The Authority currently pays a monthly Broadband and Telephone Allowance to all Councillors providing:

- a) Councillors produce proof on an annual basis of their Broadband and Telephone connection at their home;
- b) Councillors are not in receipt of a payment for Broadband and Telephone at their home from a third party such due to their employment or other election.

6.2 The Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance shall be subject to Tax and National Insurance deductions.

6.3 The Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance is currently set at £25 per Councillor per month. This is split as £15 Broadband and £10 Telephone. It is not proposed to amend the amount of this Allowance.

6.4 The Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance shall:

- a) Only be paid once per Councillor household (i.e. if there are 2 or more Councillors living at the address then only one person shall receive the payment);
- b) Not be paid to a Councillor who does not have Broadband at their home address. If a Councillor does not have Broadband at home then they shall be paid £10 per month towards their Council related telephone calls.

6.5 Should a Councillor cease to remain a Councillor the Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance shall cease and any Broadband / Telephone contract taken out by the Councillor shall remain the sole responsibility of the Councillor as will any repayments. Please also refer to the section relating to **“What happens if a Councillor ceases to remain a Councillor?”**

## **7. Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance**

- 7.1 The Authority currently pays a monthly Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance to qualifying Councillors in order to supplement their mobile phone bills due their increased use for Council business providing:
- a) Councillors produce proof on an annual basis of their Mobile Phone contract.
- 7.2 The Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance shall be subject to Tax and National Insurance deductions.
- 7.3 There are 12 Qualifying Councillors: Cabinet Members, Presiding Member and the Leader of the Largest Opposition Group. The Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance is currently set at £25 per Qualifying Councillor per month.
- 7.4 The Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance is payable from the date when the Councillor is appointed by Council / Leader of the Council to a Qualifying Councillor position.
- 7.5 Should a Councillor cease to remain a Councillor the Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance shall cease and any Mobile Phone contract taken out by the Councillor shall remain the sole responsibility of the Councillor as will any repayments. Please also refer to the section relating to **“What happens if a Councillor ceases to remain a Councillor?”**

## **8. What happens if a Councillor ceases to remain a Councillor?**

- 8.1 If a Councillor ceases to remain a Councillor for whatever reason during their term of office, the Authority will immediately cease payment of any Allowance that the Councillor had previously been entitled to in their role as a Councillor.
- 8.2 Any contract taken out by the Councillor during their period as a Councillor will be the sole responsibility of that individual. The Authority will not make any payments towards the remaining period of the contract(s).
- 8.3 Any ICT equipment and ICT support purchased during a Councillors time as a Councillor shall automatically become the property of that Councillor. The Authority shall have no legal claim to it.
- 8.4 Should the Councillor cease to be a Councillor within the first 12 months of being elected the Councillor must repay the balance of the £1,008 on a complete month pro rata basis. This paragraph is waived should a Councillor die during their term of Office.

## **9. Data Protection Act / Security Advice (Anti-Virus, Anti-Spam, Firewall and Encryption)**

- 9.1 Councillors are likely to handle personal information about individuals; as such they have a number of legal obligations to protect that information under the Data Protection Act 1998. Should a Councillor fail to comply with this Act then they would be liable to a fine of up to £5,000. The Authority pays the fee for each Councillor to be a registered Data Controller.
- 9.2 The Authority strongly advises that Councillors install Anti-Virus, Anti-Spam and Encryption software on any PC, Laptop, Tablet, Mobile Phone etc. used for Councillor Business. The use of a personal Firewall should also be considered. For advice in this area, Councillors should take appropriate security advice from their external ICT Support provider.

## **10. Claiming of Allowances and Providing Receipts / Proof of Purchase**

- 10.1 **Claiming the Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance.** Councillors must produce proof of Broadband and Telephone connection at their home on an annual basis in order to receive this monthly allowance. Proof shall be required during May / June each year and should be given to the Cabinet Office / Democratic Services Team as appropriate.
- 10.2 **Claiming the Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance.** Councillors must produce proof of their Mobile Phone Contract on an annual basis in order to receive this monthly allowance. Proof shall be required during May / June each year and should be given to the Cabinet Office / Democratic Services Team as appropriate.
- 10.3 Failure to provide proof of a Broadband / Telephone / Mobile Phone contract during May / June each year will result in payments being stopped until proof is provided. The Authority shall not backdate any payments beyond 3 months.
- 10.4 **Claiming the Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance.** Councillors should purchase the ICT equipment they require and complete the Councillors' ICT Allowance Claim Form as shown in **Appendix 1**. The Claim Form should be returned to the Cabinet Office / Democratic Services Team as appropriate.

## **11. Councillors Self Service**

- 11.1 The Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on 28 June 2016 received and noted an information report reminding Councillors of the Authorities "Sustainable Swansea - Fit for the Future" programme.

11.2 The objectives of Sustainable Swansea - Fit for the Future are:

- To transform services;
- To deliver better outcomes for residents;
- To achieve financial sustainability.

11.3 In order to achieve objectives, Councillors will need to play their role in the change agenda and embrace Oracle. Oracle is the Authority's integrated HR, payroll, finance, procurement stores and job costing system. It is used across the Authority in every Service Unit.

11.4 Councillor Self Service will allow Councillors to view, amend and apply for things via Oracle including:

- Payslips, P60's and P11d's;
- Changes to personal details (address, bank etc.);
- Car Parking Permits;
- Mileage and Expenses Claims.

11.5 By encouraging Councillors to use Oracle Self Service, it will reduce printing costs, save administration time and costs. All of which will assist the Authority in managing its financial deficit. Oracle Self Service will also allow Councillors to update their information in real time.

11.6 With immediate effect, no new Councillor shall receive a paper payslip and will be required to use the Self Service on Oracle. All current Councillors will be encouraged to shift to the Self Service system; however it will be compulsory from the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2017.

11.7 The shift to Oracle Self Service Mileage and Expenses Claims will also commence in May 2017; however a number of Councillors will be invited to start using the system sooner, so that the process can be trialled.

11.8 Training will be provided to all Councillors in order to manage this process of change. User Guides are available on the Authority's StaffNet site <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/staffnet/mileageandexpenses>

11.9 This approach compliments the Authority's Digital Strategy.

## **12. Equality and Engagement Implications**

12.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process took place prior to the consultation period. The outcome indicated that it was low priority and a full report was not required.



### **13. Financial Implications**

13.1 Each of the Allowances referred to in this report shall be subject to Tax and National Insurance deductions.

13.2 The proposals outlined in the report are contained within existing budgetary constraints.

### **14. Legal Implications**

14.1 The proposals identified are in accordance with relevant legislation.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Appendices:** **Appendix 1** – Councillors' ICT Allowance Claim Form.

# Councillors ICT Allowance Claim Form

<b>Councillor Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Post Code:</b>	

Please provide details of ICT items or support purchased. In accordance with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Councillors' ICT Allowance payments will only be made to Councillors following the completion of this form **together with the relevant receipt(s)**.

<b>Date Purchased</b>	<b>Item / Service Purchased</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Total Amount Claimed</b>		£

**Note:**

- i) I have incurred these costs to enable me to fulfil my duties as a Councillor in accordance with the IRPW.*
- ii) Councillors' ICT Allowance. Year of Election is £1,008. Remaining Term of Office is £200 p.a. x 4 years (£800). The sum of £800 may be taken as a lump sum from Year 2 providing a receipt is provided. The Authority will not pay any additional monies until the following Local Government Election.*

<b>Councillor Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
------------------------------	--	--------------	--

<b>For Office Use</b>	<b>Checked By:</b>		<b>Payroll No.:</b>		<b>Month Paid:</b>	
-----------------------	--------------------	--	---------------------	--	--------------------	--