



## RYDE TOWN COUNCIL

Information To: Finance Committee – 20 November 2018

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Following the meeting of the Finance Committee in October where the first briefing paper on provision of ipads for members was discussed, members asked for a second paper to come back to the next meeting giving further details on costs and how members would benefit from the provision of ipads to members.

### Introduction

Councillors have indicated that they take up a civic office in order to make a real difference to the community. Local councils need active, interested and committed people to engage with the community in positive and proactive ways. Having diversity in a local council is a strength as councillors will have different backgrounds and have different interests and skills to bring and to work as a team representing interests of the whole community. At a recent Full Council meeting a councillor mentioned that all councillors should have the access to the same tools in order to best represent the local community and therefore the availability for ipads for all members would allow for them to communicate efficiently and on an equal footing. Not having the financial means or technical know how to purchase the IT equipment to perform the role of councillor should not be a consideration when wishing up take up a civic office. Training would be considered for members who were unfamiliar with ipads or how to use them. It could be argued that the provision of IT equipment may encourage those who may not have previously considered becoming a councillor to stand for election and therefore increase diversity in the Town Council.

### What implications will this have to the budget?

As stated in the report for the October meeting, the annual cost for printing agenda papers for councillors has been calculated as £320.00 for the Finance Committee and £442.00 for Full Council. Staff costs annually to print and collate papers is calculated to be 45 hours and for 32 hours for Finance. This cost equates to a total cost in excess of £1,250.00 annually in salary terms. The planning officer already circulates planning committee papers via email as members view planning applications on screen at the meeting and do not have copies printed off for them. There are a small number of papers available at the meeting for those present. With regards to various working parties, these meet infrequently with few reports but copying costs in the region of £100.00 and staff time costs of say £200.00.

This gives a total annual cost for printing which can be saved by the issuing of Ipads at approximately £2300.00 annually. Furthermore, this makes the capital costs of purchasing the Ipads recoverable over 2 years.

PCC have confirmed that Ipads have a serviceable life-span of 3 to 5 years and will if reasonable treated give good service for that period.

**Practical advantages to members having Ipads are as follows:**

- Collection of Agenda papers  
At the moment members are informed when paper copies are ready to collect, usually 24 hours after publication, and then they may visit the office to collect a full set (including confidential reports) of papers. For some this necessitates an extra visit into the centre of Ryde during office hours which may not be convenient for a councillor who has work commitments, does not drive or is away from the Island for a period of time. By emailing all papers, members not only receive papers at the time of publication it could save needless trips into Ryde.
- Carrying of Papers  
If all reports were available on Ipads members would no longer have the need to carry bundles of papers to meetings or have to dispose of them once collected and if then unable to attend the meeting.
- Loss of Sensitive Information  
Members would be assured that no sensitive data including personal details of members of the public or commercially sensitive information could be forwarded or copied/pasted if a facility called Data Loss Protection was enabled.
- Note Taking  
Members have mentioned that the ability to make notes on paper copies is helpful to them. On the iPad there is not only the facility to make notes, but these can be either public i.e. able to share with colleagues or can be kept private. Documents on OneDrive can also be annotated.
- Accessibility Issues  
For those who find the size of print problematic to sometimes read, the font size can be enlarged to be more comfortable.
- Retention of Data  
Issuing all members with Ipads would allow data to be controlled and stored with access via a web browser and thus no sensitive information would be downloaded onto the device. As members would not be using their own electronic equipment to undertake RTC work, this would be reassuring as when members were to step down/not be re-elected as the iPad would simply be returned to the Town Council to be wiped and no personal and sensitive data would be retained on their own personal devices to which RTC would have no rights.

**Benefits to security for members being issued with RTC Ipads include the following:**

- Earlier this year the Town Council commissioned an Information Security and GDPR Health check in relation to Information Security and in readiness for GDPR. A number of areas were highlighted for improvement and have already been acted upon and resolved, in particular the use of a secure RTC email address for all councillors. Subsequently further information has been supplied by PC Consultants that have advised that the purchase of Ipads would further enhance security and help ensure GDPR compliance as all correspondence would be encrypted. If professional advice is sought and then not taken, robust reasons for not following this advice should be given and if these prove insufficient could reflect poorly on the business reputation of the organisation and in turn individual members. In addition should a breach occur the existence of this professional advice may have a bearing on the severity of the breach and any sanction imposed.

**The risks of breaching GDPR regulations**

- Breaches of data reported to and investigated by the Information Commissioner's Office have resulted in councils receiving heavy fines. For example, Basildon Borough Council was fined £150,000 for publishing sensitive personal information about a family. Norfolk County Council was fined £60,000 for leaving sensitive paper copies in public place and the London Borough of Barnet was fined £70,000 for the loss which occurred when a social worker took paper records home to work on them out of hours. The social worker's home was burgled and a laptop bag, containing the paper records and a computer, was stolen. Such breaches would result in loss of Ryde Town Councils business reputation and embarrassment and stress and aggravation for the individual member involved.

*Publications used in the preparation of this note:*

Briefing Paper to Finance Committee 16 October 2018  
Information Commissioners Website