

IT Equipment Replacement and Upgrade

Officers' Recommendation

That the Authority agrees with the replacement and upgrade of IT equipment, in FY 2024/2025, as set out in Table 1 in this paper

Authority for Expenditure

The Authority's Financial Probity and Financial and Administrative Regulations state that where the purchase price does not exceed £10,000 the Chief Officer shall be empowered to arrange procurement. However, given the Authority's financial position it was determined that Members should be aware of the scale of the proposed expenditure of £7763.00 plus VAT as set out in this officers' paper

Background

Following the contractual introduction of a hybrid working style in 2023, as well as the rapid increase in the number of remote meetings conducted since 2021, all D&S IFCA's officers are, as standard, issued with a laptop as well as a PC. As it is the case for most companies, the operating system in use is Windows. Windows undergoes updates and new versions are introduced regularly. Although IT hardware will be able to operate using the older version of the operating system for some time after such updates, ultimately the past versions will officially reach the end of their life. The current Windows version is Windows 11, introduced in 2021. All the PCs and laptops currently in use by the officers run on Windows 10 operating system. F&AM has been advised by the D&S IFCA's IT consultant, Ian Davis from FCL Friend Computers, that support for Windows 10 would end in October 2025. After 14th October 2025, Microsoft will no longer provide free software updates, technical assistance, or security fixes for Windows 10 and therefore it is advisable to upgrade any machines to Windows 11 prior to that date.

A full inventory of any relevant equipment was conducted by FCL, and an internal survey has been sent out by F&AM allowing the officers to share feedback about the current machines. It was established that all the PCs were able to support Windows 11. In terms of laptops, most of the machines, due to their age (six to eight years), are unable to support Windows 11. Officers received a recommendation from FCL to upgrade any relevant equipment which means purchasing new laptops to replace any which are not able to cope with the essential updates. The upgrade will guarantee cyber security and improve day-to-day operations, which will be welcomed by officers who reported issues with their current outdated equipment.

New Equipment Required

All aspects of the equipment upgrade have been managed by FLC – Friend Computers, an IT consultancy that has been working with D&S IFCA since 2010, managing day to day enquiries as well as ongoing subscriptions, data storage and purchasing. FLC has a sound knowledge of the officers' work and requirements. The following quote has been prepared by FCL based on the principle that savings should be made when possible, without compromising the quality of service/ equipment as per the D&S IFCA's Financial Probity and Financial and Administrative Regulations.

Table 1:

Item	Unit Price excluding VAT	Number required	Total excluding VAT
Laptop- Dell Latitude 5540 - i7-1365U 16GB 512GB 15.6IN W11PRO	£950.00	7	£6,650.00
Dell Charge Docking station for Laptop /Dual Monitor Support	£109.00	7	£763.00
Adapters / Cables as required	£100.00	1	£100.00
Labour hour	£50.00	5	£250.00
Total			£7,763.00

Equipment Purchase to be Deferred

The review undertaken by FCL has identified a need for an upgrade of the D&S IFCA's IT server. This has been identified as a need for the FY 2025/2026 and therefore will be raised in a paper in 2025.

Summary

- The recent internal survey showed that some officers are having issues with their current laptops (very slow/ short battery life).
- Upgraded equipment will allow the officers to work efficiently and effectively.
- The current operating system – Windows 10 is being phased out in October 2025 and an upgrade to Windows 11 is essential to assure security
- The officers have been advised by the D&S IFCA's IT consultant, FCL that not all the laptops currently in use would be able to be handle an update to Windows 11 because they are too old
- FCL has provided a quote in reference to a purchase of new laptops and associated equipment.

Officers' Recommendation

- Officers recommend that the IT equipment, set out in table 1 above, is purchased in the current financial year 2024/2025.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers

- Financial Probity and Financial and Administrative Regulations V1.5 May 2024

End.