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Date: *17 March 2011*

NOTIFICATION OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION

On 17 March 2011, Cllr C A Wise, the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder, made the following decision. Any member of the Council, who is not a Portfolio Holder, who considers that this decision should be reviewed should give notice to the Monitoring Officer (Grainne O'Rourke) (in writing or by e-mail) to be received **ON OR BY 5.15 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 24 MARCH 2011.**

Details of the documents the Portfolio Holder considered are attached.

DECISION: To agree arrangements for the payment of Members' ICT allowances from May 2011

REASONS: Following recommendations from Corporate Overview Panel which has reviewed the current arrangements

ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED: See attached report

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED: None

For Further Information Please Contact:

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FINANCE & EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION

MEMBERS' ICT ALLOWANCES

1. DECISION REQUIRED

- 1.1 To agree the arrangements for members' ICT with effect from May 2011, including the level of ICT allowances and conditions attaching thereto, following recommendations from the Corporate Overview Panel.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members of the Council currently receive an annual allowance of £575, or a lump sum of £2,300 (to cover a four year period), to provide ICT equipment, appropriate software, broadband and consumables, to a standard agreed by the Head of ICT, necessary for Council business. The lump sum of £2,300 is intended to cover the purchase of new equipment if members require it.
- 2.2 Prior to this arrangement, members were provided with laptops, as well as printers and consumables, with use of the equipment being restricted to council-related business only. Rather than taking advantage of the annual allowance, a limited number of members chose to retain Council-owned equipment, and they continue to be supported by the Council's ICT Services.
- 2.3 The Corporate Overview Panel on 18 November 2010 reviewed the provision of ICT for members and made recommendations to the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER BY THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW PANEL

- 3.1 The Corporate Overview Panel found that there was a high satisfaction rate with the current arrangements and recommended to the Portfolio Holder that these should continue after the 2011 election, without the option of retaining Council-owned equipment and support.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 All members of the Council were invited to submit their comments on the current arrangements. Responses were considered by the Corporate Overview Panel which has made recommendations to the Portfolio Holder.

5. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S VIEWS

- 5.1 The Portfolio Holder agrees that the annual allowance of £575 should remain, as it has previously been demonstrated that allowance-based arrangements are a cost-effective way of ensuring that members are on-line and accessible in this way to the organisation and to constituents. He agrees further that it is

no longer necessary to provide Council-owned equipment and support to members because all members' use and confidence of ICT have grown over the past four years. He does not favour continuing the arrangement whereby members can elect to receive a lump sum of £2,300 as it is unlikely that members will find it necessary to acquire a suite of ICT equipment and software.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There will be no financial implications over and above the existing requirements over a four-year period.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL, CRIME & DISORDER AND EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Ensuring that all members are on-line reduces the amount of paper and postage on documents that would otherwise be sent to them.
- 7.2 Electronic communication with councillors helps members of the community, some of whom might be disabled, to access their elected representatives.

8. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S DECISION

- 8.1 That the current allowance of £575 for the provision by members of their own ICT hardware and software, broadband and consumables, continue with effect from May 2011, subject to:
- (a) members signing an undertaking to provide the ICT equipment to the satisfaction of the Head of ICT; and
 - (b) to maintain a broadband connection for the purposes of enabling effective communication with others in their role as Councillor.
- 8.2 That the option for a lump sum allowance of £2,300 to cover a member's four year term in office be withdrawn.
- 8.3 That after 30 June 2011 ICT Services no longer support members using NFDC laptops, and that all NFDC laptops be returned to the Council by that date.

Signed:
Councillor Colin Wise, Finance & Efficiency Portfolio Holder

Dated: 17/3/11

DATE NOTICE OF DECISION GIVEN: 17 March 2011
LAST DATE FOR CALL-IN: 24 March 2011