

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

DECISION

meeting date: 12 SEPTEMBER 2023
title: UPDATING MOBILE CONNECTIVITY
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: LAWSON ODDIE

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To request approval for an additional capital programme scheme to enable the bulk replacement of the Council's mobile phone handsets.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – none identified.
- Corporate Priorities – to continue to be a well-managed council, providing efficient services based on identified customer need.
- Other considerations – none identified.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Over a number of months a review has been undertaken of the mobile phone estate and the future needs of users. This included an assessment by Heads of Services of the staff within their service area where there was a need for the provision of a mobile phone for work purposes. Such reasons varied and included reasons such as management responsibilities, access to emails, lone working, out of hours access, remote working and the speedy reporting of incidents. It had been hoped that replacements could be funded through existing budgets.

2.2 The assessment of future needs identified that the cost of replacement and additional handsets was such that savings would not be able to be identified to fund the purchase from existing budgets. This was assessed by Corporate Management Team and it was agreed that a report should be submitted to committee to seek approval for a new capital scheme for this bulk purchase.

3 PROPOSED SCHEME DETAILS

3.1 The proposed scheme looks to replace the current handsets across all mobile phone users at the council as well as providing some further handsets to other members of staff.

3.2 A number of the current handsets will soon no longer be supported for software updates meaning that the Council would be exposed to potential security vulnerabilities if a handset replacement scheme were not to be undertaken.

3.3 There may be some residual income from the sale and recycling of our current equipment and we will be using a third party to help facilitate this recycle/reuse process. The full value of this would not be known until the equipment is inspected by the third party but is likely to be minimal.

3.4 In addition, the majority of the handsets being purchased will be refurbished 'good as new' handsets from the same third party that we would be using for the recycle/reuse process for our old handsets.

4 PROPOSED SCHEME COSTS

4.1 The scheme will cover the purchase of just over 100 mobile phone handsets of varying types, dependant on the user's job role, and therefore their needs. The capital scheme budget requested is for £30,000 and will cover the one-off purchase of the handsets.

4.2 The new equipment will greatly improve the ability of staff to undertake their roles, notably when away from the main offices or depot, allowing better reactive responses to issues that may arise around the borough.

- 4.3 The handsets also provide better security and safety for staff whilst working alone or remotely.
- 4.4 The running costs (calls and data usage) will be funded from existing revenue budgets, so there is no additional revenue impact from approving this capital scheme.
- 4.5 In respect of funding the scheme, it is proposed to use some of the residual Covid New Burdens monies that we have available in earmarked reserves, as the scheme will enable improved working practices, particularly when working remotely, reflecting some of the potential purposes for which these monies were originally received.
- 4.6 A capital scheme bid will separately be submitted in the next capital scheme bidding round for potential inclusion in the future five-year capital programme to facilitate future replacements.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The request for a new capital scheme covers the procurement of over 100 new mobile phone handsets at a total cost of £30,000. The majority of these handsets will be refurbished 'good as new' handsets. The scheme would be completed over the next few months and certainly by the end of the December 2023.
- 5.2 It is hoped that future replacements can be programmed through the five year capital programme.
- 5.3 All old equipment will be passed on to a third party for secure recycling/reuse.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The risks associated with this report are set down below:
- Resources – The procurement will be carried out in line with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – All old equipment will be processed securely through a third party to allow for a recycle/reuse process. The majority of the new handsets bought will also be refurbished 'good as new' handsets.
 - Political – None.
 - Reputation – None
 - Equality and Diversity – None as a direct result of the approval of this report

7 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 7.1 Approve the inclusion of a new capital programme scheme in 2023/24 financial year for mobile phones at a cost of £30,000.
- 7.2 Subject to approval of 7.1, approve the use of Covid new burdens monies that are within our earmarked reserves to fund the new capital scheme.

HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PF59-23/LO/AC
24 AUGUST 2023

For further background information please ask for Lawson Oddie.
BACKGROUND PAPERS – None