AGENDA 11, Enc xv) OFFICE AND WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENTS

1. *Purpose of report*

To ask Members to approve a budget of up to £3,500 to complete the reorganisation of the Council office. This covers replacement and new desks, a modern workstation for our new member of staff, a video doorbell to replace the shared intercom, and a small dishwasher for the upstairs kitchen.

2. *Background*

Officers have been working steadily to create a more modern, less cluttered office. Unnecessary paperwork has been cleared, records have been reviewed and surplus filing cabinets have been removed, freeing up space and making the office a better place to work.

The arrival of our new member of staff, Stef, means we now need a properly equipped additional workstation. This is a good opportunity to finish the job: the proposals below would fully realise the office transformation in one coordinated piece of work.

Likewise, we have been looking at all tools and equipment used outdoors. A date is set to continue clearance and new battery powered tools bought and tested have exceeded expectations, so we would like to extend our range.

3. *Proposals*

3.1 Office desks

The desks used by Gary and Alan are functional but in poor condition and no longer suit the layout of the office. It is proposed to replace both and purchase a matching new desk for Stef, giving a consistent and tidy layout across the office.

3.2 Workstation for new member of staff

It is proposed to equip Stef with a modern laptop-based workstation rather than a traditional desktop tower. This includes:

- **Laptop and set-up** – the laptop itself, plus configuration: Microsoft 365 licence and email, security and antivirus software, access to shared drives and Council systems, and data protection safeguards.
- **Associated workstation kit** – a laptop riser to bring the screen to eye level, a full-size external monitor, a docking station so the laptop connects to the screen, network and power with a single cable, and a wireless keyboard and mouse.
- **Office chair** – a fully adjustable ergonomic chair.

This set-up supports good posture and display screen equipment (DSE) requirements, and gives the flexibility to work from other desks, or home when needed.

3.3 Electrical and connection works

Moving desks may mean relocating power sockets, network points or cabling. A contingency is included so this can be carried out safely and without delay.

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3.4 Video doorbell for building access

NCC Customer Services are due to move out of the building in January. The Council is currently the only occupant that answers and is connected to the existing intercom system, and this is expected to cause problems once NCC leave.

Gary has looked at a video doorbell linked to the office tablet as a better solution, allowing staff to see and speak to visitors before going downstairs to meet them, or to signpost them to the service they need (a frequent ask). As NCC owns the building, any signage installation would need to be arranged through them. We have discussed this with the building manager and do not anticipate any issues. We are regularly the only tenant in the building and act as the gatekeeper. This will need further planning, but setting the budget aside now gives us a helpful start.

3.5 Dishwasher for upstairs kitchen

A dishwasher in the downstair kitchen would save staff time following meetings. As building owner, NCC would need to carry out the installation.

3.6 Tools and equipment

The Council has recently invested in Husqvarna battery-powered tools. It is proposed to extend this range with a pole pruner, a hedge cutter, a second strimmer and a mower, at a cost of £2,000. This gives the team a consistent battery platform with shared batteries and chargers, and reduces noise, fumes and fuel costs. As with the office, this continues the work of modernising how the Council operates.

4. *Financial implications*

The total budget requested is £5,500. Some costs are estimates and all purchases will follow the Council's Financial Regulations.

Item	**Qty**	**Unit cost (£)**	**Total (£)**
Desks (Gary, Alan, Stef)	3	300	900
Laptop and IT set-up	1	1,000	1,000
Workstation kit (riser, monitor, dock, keyboard, mouse)	1	400	400
Office chair	1	100	100
Dishwasher, installed by NCC	1	350	350
Video doorbell and installation via NCC (allowance)	1	450	450
Electrical and connection contingency	–	–	300
Office subtotal			**3,500**
Tools and equipment (pole pruner, hedge cutter, strimmer, mower)	–	–	2,000
Total			**5,500**

Any unspent contingency will be returned to reserves or reported back to Council.

5. *Future direction*

For information, it is my intention to move all officers onto the same modern laptop and screen set-up over time. This would happen as and when budget allows, or when existing desktop towers reach the end of their life or fail. No further budget is requested for this at present, noting officers have laptops some new, some that have been part of Council's IT assets for several years.

6. *Recommendations*

Members are asked to:

- Approve a budget of up to £5,500: £3,500 for the office reorganisation, equipment, video doorbell and dishwasher, and £2,000 for a pole pruner, hedge cutter, second strimmer and mower, as set out in this report.
- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk to procure the items in line with Financial Regulations, and to agree the doorbell and dishwasher installations with NCC as building owner.
- Note the intention to move all officers to laptop and screen set-ups over time, as budget allows or as existing equipment fails.