



**Un Llais Cymru
One Voice Wales**

**Community & Town Councils
Digital Guidance
Procurement**

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Introduction: Procuring IT Equipment for Community and Town Councils

Procuring IT equipment can be a significant investment for any organization, particularly for small organizations where resources may be limited. Therefore, it's crucial to ensure that you're obtaining the best value from your IT procurement. Here are some key considerations:

Follow your Council's Financial Rules: Procurement must be undertaken in accordance with your Council's Financial Regulations and any other procurement rules.

Optimising the Equipment Specification: It's important to clearly define your needs before making a purchase. This includes understanding the purpose of the equipment and how it aligns with your organization's requirements. It is useful to understand the key elements of the specification which drive price and performance. Over-specifying can lead to unnecessary costs, while under-specifying can result in equipment that doesn't meet your needs.

Ensuring Accessibility and Usability: The equipment should be user-friendly and accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. This includes considerations such as the layout and design of the equipment, ease of use, and compatibility with assistive technologies that support access to devices - such as screen readers for those who are visually impaired.

Total Cost of Ownership: The total cost of ownership (TCO) includes the purchase price of the equipment, as well as ongoing costs such as maintenance, repairs, and operational costs. It's important to consider the TCO when making a procurement decision, as the cheapest option up front may not always be the most cost-effective in the long run.

Leasing vs Purchasing: Leasing equipment can be a cost-effective option for small organizations, as it allows for regular upgrades and avoids the upfront cost of purchasing. However, it's important to carefully consider the terms of the lease and compare it with the cost of purchasing the equipment outright.

Supplier Selection: Choosing the right vendor is crucial. Consider factors such as the vendor's reputation, the quality of their customer service, and their ability to provide ongoing support and maintenance.

Sustainability: Consider the environmental impact of the equipment, including energy efficiency and the manufacturer's policies on recycling and disposal.

Security: Ensure that the equipment has appropriate security features to protect your organization's data and information.

Equipment Relevant to Community and Town Councils

Computers (Personal Computers, Laptops, Desktops)

Description and Purpose: Computers are used by councils for a variety of tasks, including document creation, email, internet browsing, and video conferencing.

Specification: The key elements of a computer specification are

The “form” – as well as a laptop or desktop there are a range of options which are a “hybrid” between a computer and a tablet. Consider how often the device will be carried from home to an office or more widely for a user who is travelling on a regular basis.

The processor – This is a key element in the computer’s speed. However, the typical work of community and town council staff and councillors will not require a high grade processor to perform well.

The memory – Windows 11 typically requires at least 8GB of Random Access Memory (RAM) but 16GB would help to ensure the computer will have a good useful life.

The storage – If the council has a policy of using cloud based storage then there should be no need to invest in laptops or desktops with large onboard storage. 256G would be enough to hold the operating system and key applications.

The build quality - Laptops designed for frequent travel often use higher grade materials such as aluminium as opposed to plastic. This will increase the price but might be a good investment to ensure durability. Premium laptops will have higher quality screens and keyboards, but consideration should be given to if a laptop will primarily be used connected to external peripherals (as described below).

Lifetime:

A well-maintained laptop should last 3-5 years.

A desktop is usually less subject to physical wear and tear and more straightforward to upgrade. It should last 5- 7 years

Ongoing Costs: Software licenses, maintenance, potential repair costs, and electricity costs.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Tablets

Description and Purpose: A “tablet” is a flat computing device without any separate keyboard. They typically have a screen size between 7 and 12 inches. The market is dominated by Apple’s Ipad range but a large variety of devices at different prices are available. Tablets can be used by councils for all the tasks which can be

accomplished on a desktop or laptop but, given the smaller screen and lack of external keyboard, they are best suited to media consumption, internet browsing and communications functions such as video conferencing.

Specification: The key elements of a tablet specification are

The Operating System/Manufacturer – As noted above Apple Inc dominate the market for tablets with their iPad range. These devices run Apple's IOS operating system. However, they are typically higher priced for an identical technical specification than competing tablets from other manufacturers running the Android operating system. A key consideration will be the familiarity of staff with these systems to avoid any learning curve in their use.

The memory – Current releases of Android and IOS operating systems benefit from running on a device with at least 8GB of Random Access Memory (RAM).

Lifetime:

A well-maintained tablet should last 2-3 years.

Ongoing Costs: potential repair costs and electricity costs.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Computer Peripherals

Description and Purpose: Computer peripherals include devices like keyboards, mice, and monitors that are used to input or output information from a computer.

Specification: Look for peripherals that are comfortable to use, durable, and compatible with your existing systems. Wireless peripherals can offer more flexibility.

Lifetime: Peripherals can typically last up to 10 years, depending on usage and maintenance.

Ongoing Costs: Potential repair or replacement costs.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Mobile Phones

Description and Purpose: Mobile phones are a ubiquitous feature of modern life. Councils may like to consider supporting staff to use their personal mobile phone for council business though consideration needs to be given to data security and privacy issues. If councils prefer to acquire a mobile phone for their staff then these are key considerations

Specification: Council staff will not typically need a “flagship” specification phone. A mid-range phone which will cost around £300 will be suitable for calls, messaging, basic photography and email access

Lifetime: Mobile phones can typically last 3 years, depending on usage and maintenance. Check that the manufacturer will provide software updates for the planned lifetime of the phone

Ongoing Costs: Data and call plan with a mobile Telco.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and phone stores.

Headsets for Home Working

Description and Purpose: Headsets are used for audio communication, particularly during video calls. They can help reduce background noise and improve sound quality.

Specification: Consider a headset with noise cancellation, comfortable ear pads, and a good quality microphone. Wireless headsets offer more mobility.

Lifetime: A well-maintained headset can last up to 5 years.

Ongoing Costs: Potential repair or replacement costs.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Speakerphones for Meeting Rooms

Description and Purpose: Speakerphones are devices that enable hands-free communication during meetings. They are equipped with microphones and speakers that allow multiple people to participate in a conversation.

Specification: Look for a speakerphone with noise cancellation, echo reduction, and a sufficient range to cover the meeting room. It should be compatible with your existing communication systems.

Lifetime: Typically, a good quality speakerphone can last up to 5-7 years.

Ongoing Costs: Maintenance and potential repair costs.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Microphones for Meeting Rooms

Description and Purpose: Microphones are used to amplify a speaker's voice during meetings.

Specification: Consider a microphone with a wide frequency response and high sensitivity. It should be easy to install and use.

Lifetime: A well-maintained microphone can last up to 5-10 years.

Ongoing Costs: Maintenance, potential repair costs, and replacement of parts like batteries or cables.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Video Conferencing Cameras for Meeting Rooms

Description and Purpose: These cameras are used for video conferencing, allowing for visual communication between participants in different locations.

Specification: Look for a camera with high resolution (1080p or higher), auto-focus, and a wide field of view. It should be compatible with your video conferencing software.

Lifetime: A good quality camera can last up to 5-7 years.

Ongoing Costs: Maintenance and potential repair costs.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Large Screens for Meeting Rooms

Description and Purpose: Large screens are used to display information during meetings, such as presentations, videos, or video calls.

Specification: Consider a screen with high resolution (4K or higher) and a large size (50 inches or more) to ensure visibility for all participants. It should have multiple input options (HDMI, VGA, etc.).

Lifetime: A well-maintained screen can last up to 5-10 years.

Ongoing Costs: Maintenance, potential repair costs, and electricity costs.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Printers, Scanners, and Copiers

Description and Purpose: These devices are used to print, scan, and copy documents. They can be separate devices or combined into a multi-function device.

Specification: Look for devices that offer high-quality output, fast printing/scanning speed, and low cost per page. Consider the size of the device and its compatibility with your existing systems. There are many options to lease print devices or to pay e.g. per page printed

Lifetime: These devices can typically last 5-7 years, depending on usage and maintenance.

Ongoing Costs: Ink or toner cartridges, paper, maintenance, and potential repair costs.

Potential Suppliers: Local electronics stores, online marketplaces, and specialized IT suppliers.

Planning Procurement

When planning procurement, consider the following steps:

1. **Identify Needs:** Determine what equipment is needed and the specifications required as listed above
2. **Research Suppliers:** Look for potential suppliers local to your council or across Wales and compare their offerings.
3. **Evaluate Costs:** Consider both the upfront cost of the equipment and any ongoing costs.
4. **Plan for disposal of current equipment.** Any equipment being taken out of use needs to be considered for trade in, sale or appropriate recycling
5. **Asset Management:** Keep track of all equipment, including details of purchase, warranty, maintenance, and disposal. Ensure the devices are treated appropriately in accordance with your financial regulations and accounting approach

Version History

	Date	Issuer	Reason	Review Date
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