REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: TO ADOPT THE BUSINESS CASE FOR A DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Purpose of Report

To seek the agreement of Members to move to Microsoft 365 to assist the transition to a Digital Workplace.

Introduction/Background

In December 2019, Members were presented with a paper that outlined two IT licencing options. These were to move to Microsoft 365 licences, at what was expected to be an annual cost of around £48K or to stay with Office 2019 on-premises licence and incur a one–off cost of £108K, which was expected to cover the period up to 2025. At that time, it was considered that the Authority was unlikely to make a full use of the functionality of Microsoft 365 and therefore Members approved the recommendation to stay with the Office 2019 option.

However, the situation has changed significantly over the last 15 months, with the main changes being:

- The requirement to hold virtual meetings meaning that the Authority makes extensive use of Video Conference facilities. The Authority has used Lifesize, which has worked well, however, it has limited functionality and we expect the cost to increase from an annual cost of £500 to £6,000. Relatively few organisations are using Lifesize and some organisations have difficulty in accessing Lifesize;
- There has been a move to a more digital way of working and therefore there is a benefit to using programmes such as OneDrive and Sharepoint, which limit the need to print copies and have multiple versions of documents being shared;
- Functionality and connection to other programmes is becoming more challenging. For example we are unable to fully utilise the full functionality of the APAS system (the IT system that the Development Management Department use to manage applications) without transitioning to Microsoft 365. Other platforms such as Google Workspace is unable to provide this functionality;
- Cyber Security – this is an area which is becoming increasing challenging and the Audit and Corporate Review Committee recently considered two reports on this issue.

In seeking to look at suitable IT systems consideration needs to be given to:

- Effective Internal & External Collaboration
- Business Process Improvement
- Enable Business System Currency
- Improved Data and System Security

A review of the suitability of Microsoft 365 outlined the following:

Capability	Analysis	Capability Rating
Internal & External Collaboration	• Available as a desktop and web based (plan and subscription dependent) platform, 365's product suite is available anywhere and on any device. • The Microsoft Teams platform enables a combination of communication methods and file access enabling optimal collaboration both internally and externally. The Teams platform includes a video conference capability.	✅ YES
Business Process Improvement	The integrated Office suite and additional products such as Visio can be used to capture and analyse existing processes and document potential improvements, transformation via identified digitisation and automation opportunities can be realised through the integrated tools sets such as App creation (Power Apps) to capture of data and further automation and workflow capabilities using Power Automate.	✅ YES
Enable Business System Currency	The major Business Systems used by the Authority are Exchequer (Finance) and APAS (Planning) with a move to Cezanne for HR very soon. • The Exchequer system has been recently upgraded to the latest On Premise version for which Office 2016 is fully compatible, a move to the 365 platform will enable the opportunity to consider a future migration to a hosted platform. Note: Microsoft Office 365 is only compatible where the Office Desktop Client has been downloaded and installed via the full installation option. Microsoft Office Online is not currently supported. • The APAS system is a subscription based license solution delivered via the Microsoft Cloud. The Authority will be able to exploit the full functionality of APAS if this option is selected. • Cezanne can be fully integrated with Outlook and Calendars.	✅ YES
Improved Data and System Security	The Enterprise and Mobility plan and subscription will enable the Authority to place tighter safeguards and controls over access to systems and data,	✅ YES

Capability	Analysis	Capability Rating
	whether when using an authority device or personal. Recent TIAA recommendations such as preventing access to sensitive data on unencrypted devices can be met and risks mitigated.	

Financial considerations

In 2019, it was estimated that the annual cost of Microsoft 365 licences for the Authority would be around £48K. This is dependent on the number of staff and based on the assumption that all staff would access the full Microsoft 365 package. However, there are significant differences between the use that staff in different roles make of IT and a more recent analysis provides an option to have two types of licences, based on requirements and use. These would be for:

- **Information Worker:** Typically accesses technology from an assigned Authority laptop or desktop with the flexibility of accessing via a mobile device (Authority or personally owned). Makes full use of the collaboration tools and Microsoft Office platform as part of their role.
- **Front Line Worker (including Members):** Typically accesses technology from a shared Authority device (desktop or mobile) or a personal device. Utilises Email and collaborative platforms, likely to be consumers of Office Platform rather than creators but may create the occasional document.

This enables us to reduce our annual costs to around £25K annually.

A move to Microsoft 365 would see a reduction in cost of use of other systems such as Lifesize, leading to potential savings of between £10K and £15K.

Conclusion
The past year has seen a significant change in how the Authority utilises IT systems and it is considered that a change to Microsoft 365 would support the move to a more digital approach to its work.

Recommendation
Members agree to move to using Microsoft 365.

(For further information, please contact Debbi Church, Business and IT Manager)