



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

13 SEPTEMBER 2022

**CABINET RESPONSIBLE MEMBER FOR HR & CORPORATE SERVICES:
COUNCILLOR MIKE HALLAM**

Report Title **Decision taken by the Leader of the Council under urgency procedures: Renewal of Microsoft 365 licences**

Report Author Chris Wales, Chief Information Officer
chris.wales@westnorthants.gov.uk

Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West MO	Catherine Whitehead	24/08/2022 (Jeanette McGarry, in lieu of Cath Whitehead)
West S151	Martin Henry	25/08/2022
Other Director/SME	Sarah Reed	
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Record of Decision by the Leader in relation to the renewal of Microsoft 365 licences.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report seeks to notify Cabinet of the decision taken by the Leader of the Council to renew the organisation's Microsoft 365 licences.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 Section 9E provides that the Leader of the Council can take any executive decision alone or with his Cabinet. In West Northants the vast majority of Executive decisions, not otherwise delegated, are taken collectively by the Leader and Cabinet together but in cases of urgency the Leader of the Council can take decisions where it is necessary.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the decisions taken by the Leader of the Council set out at Appendix A.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 Where decisions that would otherwise be taken by the Leader and Cabinet have been taken by the Leader alone, in the interests of transparency, the decision is reported to the next available meeting of the Cabinet.
- 4.2 The decision taken provided the authority for the Council to renew our Microsoft 365 licences, which are critical to the functioning of council systems.
- 4.3 Full reasons for the decision taken are set out in the decision records appended to this report.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Microsoft 365 licences provide basic communication, information storage, email hosting and electronic office tools to all council staff. This includes popular applications such as Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint, as well the videoconferencing tool Microsoft Teams, and the council's main email systems.
- 5.2 Given the size of the organisation, the appropriate licencing is always obtained through a trusted Microsoft partner who act as a reseller.
- 5.3 A failure in process to identify the renewal as a key decision meant that it was not possible to have the expenditure of a renewal approved by Cabinet before the licences would expire. Failure to renew them would consequently have caused a loss of key business systems to the entire council.
- 5.4 Mindful of the need to ensure continuity of business, the decision to authorise the expenditure of a renewal was therefore made on an urgent basis by the Leader of the Council.
- 5.5 A review on the process failures that led to the requirement of an urgency decision will be presented at the next Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The decision taken was necessary to ensure the continued proper running of the Council and its business.
- 6.2 The failure in process that led to the need for an urgent decision, given the predictable timing and nature of the renewal, is being fully investigated to ensure that it is corrected. This will ensure that future, renewals of services requiring approval as a key decision can be guaranteed under normal circumstances to be placed before Cabinet within good time and in the normal fashion.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The Council has committed to a three-year contract for the renewal of these services, at a cost of £4.5 million over the period. This is already included within existing budgets as it is a continuation of an existing service cost.

7.2 Legal

The Procurement team will be consulted to ensure all appropriate process is followed as part of the renewal.

7.3 Risk

In taking the decision, the risk of council services being disrupted by a loss of access to Microsoft application has been mitigated.

8. Background Papers

None