

**Committee: Full Council**

**Date: 21 March 2023**

**Title: Ground Staff Mobile Phones**

**Purpose of Report**

Members to consider quotes to replace two mobile phones

**Recommendation:**

Members to delegate to officers the authority to purchase 2 mobile phones and to negotiate mobile phone contracts and airtime for use by the Countryside Manager and Recreation Manager if required at a later date.

**Report:**

1. Over the past two years members of the outside staff have used both mobile phones and walkie talkies in order for both office staff and other outside staff to be able to contact them when they are working.
2. As Members are aware there are difficulties with mobile phone signals in Ilminster and the same issues affected the walkie talkies that were trialled. Other makes of equipment were investigated by a previous manager, but these were found to be much more expensive
3. The most reliable mobile signal for staff has been found to be O2 and the staff currently have old phones that use pay as you go cards, that are regularly topped up. Over the past 12 months this has been around £160 in total for both phones.
4. We are now in the position that we need to replace both of the phones that are being used as they will not operate the Speed Indication Device software and they are also suffering from broken and cracked screens. These phones are over three years old.
5. In the future the external team will be making use of a tablet to record the playground inspections and also download the SID data. This will require them to be “tethered” to a mobile phone in order to upload live data.
6. To start with we are looking to replace the mobile phones only but would like the option to be able to change to an alternative airtime supplier should it appear to be cost effective. Delegated authority is being sought to allow

officers to make this change without having to bring it to Members at yet another meeting, thereby allowing advantage to be taken of any special deals that are time limited. It will also allow us to consider how much data and airtime they are using once the inspections start to take place and take this into consideration.

7. The adopted Financial regulations state:

*11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:*

*a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:*

*i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;*

8. Ideally we would be looking for contracts that allow cost plans to be flexible and that can be ended at any time. For example Giff Gaff currently allows the option of flexible plans where the plan can be changed monthly or cancelled anytime. They currently offer an £8-00 per month contract that gives 5GB data and unlimited UK minutes and texts. They also use the O2 network the same as Tesco.

9. It is for reasons of flexibility as well as the long-term cost that we are proposing that the phones be purchased outright.

10. A handset that has been identified as suitable is the Samsung Galaxy A13 if purchased from Giff-Gaff a £10-00 contract (Cancel anytime) would be required and for this reason it would be better to purchase it elsewhere and then consider the Sim option at a later date.

11. Current prices from providers of the phone under consideration have been shown below. We would look to see if there were better prices available at the time of ordering.

Phone	Giff gaff £	Tesco £	Amazon
Galaxy A13	179.00	179.99	134.99

12. Members to delegate to officers authority to purchase 2 mobile phones and to negotiate mobile phone contracts airtime for use by the Countryside Manager and Recreation Manager if required at a later date.

**Mark Tredwin  
Town Clerk  
March 2023**