

BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
6th JULY 2021
BRIEFING NOTE
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL E-MAIL ACCOUNTS

1. BACKGROUND

Currently, Tavistock Town Council's e-mail accounts are hosted by its website provider, Cosmic. This includes 31 .GOV email addresses, 17 Councillor and 14 staff/generic.

As previously discussed, Members will be aware of and have experienced functionality challenges with this existing provision, both from a mailbox capacity perspective, but also in relation to security (including GDPR), where the existing provider is no longer able to provide support and updates for our current system, hence the nominal yearly charge of £200 to host the accounts.

Officers have discussed options with both our current website provider, Cosmic, and with Microshade VSM (public sector ICT specialists) who host our remote Citrix operating system.

2. UPDATE

A review of the pros and cons of transferring to either Microshade VSM Exchange mailboxes, or Office 365 mailboxes, specific to features, functionality with Microshade VSM local community cloud for staff, functionality of 3rd party devices (outside of Citrix), for Councillors, support and administration benefits, compliance requirements aligning with Cabinet Office requirements for public bodies, protections for spam and malware filters and impersonation filters, additional services and discounts was undertaken.

Based on the benefits identified by this analysis, your Officers intend to commission the migration of the 31 mailboxes over to Microshade Exchange Server (one off fee of £372.00), with a monthly hosting charge thereafter of £182.86 per month.

The email server (which is completely independent to the Citrix system) will host two email clients. For staff, this will be Outlook for those with a Citrix Login and MS Office, as an addendum to our current operating system and for Councillors, the web browser interface will be Webmail. Councillors can continue to access through their own choice of email client, to ensure compatibility with smart devices utilised.

Each mailbox has up to a maximum of 20GB capacity, compared to our current provision which combined totals 9.21GB for all 31 mailboxes. The capacity would be regulated and each user will have an 'online archive', where emails which are older than 12 months will automatically be moved to the online archive, following the same folder structure as they are in the live mailbox, so they are easily accessible to find, visible through Outlook Professional. The full mailbox for each user is backed up each night, retained for a month, with the back up from the first Friday of the month retained for two years, which means accidental deletions can be recovered within the time period above.

For FOI requests, when staff or Councillors leave, there is the benefit of an automatic static archive of the mailbox created before removing the user account and there is the option of litigation holds in respect of disputes, to ensure sensitive emails cannot be deleted. All accounts will also have applied a standard disclaimer/privacy notice once migration has been carried out.

Finally, the core benefit of hosting by Microshade VSM will include the level of protection offered specific to inbound and outbound spam, malware and impersonation filters, with full unlimited support provided as part of the monthly hosting charge, including administration specific to adding/removing users and any of the functionality explained above.

It is the aim to commission the migration post Full Council on 27th July.

Jan Smallacombe
Assistant to the Town Clerk

Wayne Southall
General Manager

Tavistock Town Council