

Request 8291 – Video Conferencing

Please could you provide:

- The amount spent by your council on video-conferencing apps such as Zoom since March 2020.
- The amount spent on any other costs incurred by holding meetings virtually since March 2020.
- The amount spent on hosting council meetings (including staff costs, hosting costs etc) in the calendar year 2019.

Response

- The amount spent by your council on video-conferencing apps such as Zoom since March 2020.
SCDC has spent roughly £3,700 on Zoom since March 2020.

- The amount spent on any other costs incurred by holding meetings virtually since March 2020

With regards to any other money spent on virtual meetings, this is hard to define. The Council already pays for Microsoft Teams for corporate usage, so there should have been no extra cost associated with this. Indeed, as outlined by Jo below, the Council has so far for this financial year a cost saving of around £15,000 on Members' expense claims, which far exceeds any additional costs for licenses or headsets (although headsets were purchased by each individual). I could not however, provide the cost of any licenses purchased.

There have been few tangible costs associated with virtual meetings. The main cost would be staff resources, with double the amount of staff resources needed to carry out each meeting. Each committee lasts for a varying length of time, given what is on the agenda, so I could not provide a figure for the staff time that has been required. We have however, hired an agency member of staff to assist with the staff resource pressure. At the time of writing, SCDC had spent roughly £9,500 on this agency member of staff.

- The amount spent on hosting council meetings (including staff costs, hosting costs etc) in the calendar year 2019.

With regards to the amount spent on Council meetings in the 2019 calendar

year, there were no costs to host meetings as all meetings are held at South Cambs Hall, which is owned and managed by the Council itself.

It is again, not possible to provide an exact figure on staff costs to run meetings due to a varying grade structure in the team and an unknown amount of time spent by each of those individuals involved. There were however, significant costs for Member expenses, which equated to £24,515.74. The costs for member expenses are in the public domain and can be found here: Document Members' Allowances Paid since 2001 (modern.gov.co.uk).

£500 pounds was spent on posting out agendas and roughly £25k was spent on printing those agendas.