Council Meeting – 7 October 2009

Provision of Laptop computers for Council and Committee members

Executive Summary
The paper is to inform the Council of a proposal to facilitate the use of laptop computers by Council and Committee members at meetings. This proposal was considered at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 15 September 2009 and referred to Council for further discussion.

Current position
Currently, the majority of Council and Committee members receive paper copies of meeting papers. A small number of members are using their own personal laptop computers at HPC meetings to access meeting papers received as computer zip files sent to them by e-mail.

Increasing the use of laptops has a number of benefits. Firstly, the cost of printing and distributing papers will be reduced. Second, reducing paper use wherever appropriate is part of HPC's corporate social responsibility policy. Third, it will reduce dependence on postal routes for safe and prompt delivery. Finally, it will assist Council members who prefer to use this method to receive and read papers electronically, for environmental or other reasons.

Proposal
A £1500 allowance, payable on receipt of the hardware, will be made available to Council and Committee members for the cost of purchasing a laptop for the explicit purpose of reading electronic version of HPC papers.

- If so desired, the grant can be used for part payment of a more expensive laptop.

- Only one grant will be available within a period of three years.

- Council members may be liable for tax on the cost of the laptop.

- For non-laptop users, paper copies will continue to be distributed.

- Additional copies of papers will not be available at meetings.

- Internet access at members' home and/or place of work will not be provided by the HPC.

- A zip-file of data would be emailed to members at the same time that the paper version is sent out.

- The cost of printing zip-file data will not be reimbursed by the HPC.

- The current files are in a mixed format of PDF, Excel and Word and it will be the responsibility of the members using laptops to ensure they are able to receive and read these formats. In addition, private papers will be encrypted before they are e-mailed out.

- Responsibility for maintenance and security of the laptop, including the provision of appropriate insurance, will reside with Council and Committee members and not the HPC. Given the size of HPC's IT Department, it would be not be possible to take on a new responsibly of supporting geographically distributed computer equipment. The maintenance and support function would be the responsibility of the member.

- No technical support will be provided to members by HPC's IT department concerning their laptop.

- Members will be responsible for ensuring that their laptop is working and available for meetings.

- Members will be required to ensure that sufficient precautions are taken that if the laptop is lost or stolen any sensitive data relating to HPC could not be accessed.

- Trailing extension leads will be provided by the HPC in Council and committee meeting rooms.

Resource implications
There will be minimal resource implications to the Finance Department.

Financial implications
It has been assumed that ten grants will be made before the end of the 2009/10 financial year, costing a total of £15,000. The cost has not been budgeted for in the current financial year but there will be savings in printing and postage costs, as currently each set of Council member papers cost an average of £826 per annum

Recommendation
The Council are requested to discuss and approve the proposal contained within the paper.

Appendices
Appendix One - Minimum Specification for Committee & Council member laptop
Appendix Two - Costing details

Date of paper
24 September 2009

Appendix One - Minimum Specification for Committee & Council member laptop

Although HPC cannot give specific recommendations due to the wide choice of computer brands and models supporting a diversity of uses, we can provided a minimum specification to run the key software required. The specification has been determined by the software vendor and is relevant to 'Internet Ready' computers running a Microsoft operating system (Windows XP or later).

The computers will need to received documents via the HPC Extranet or email and will consequently need to have an anti-virus programme installed. The document types used will typically be Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Adobe Acrobat (pdf) files. Any sensitive documents will be encrypted using WinZip.

The minimum application list is:
- Anti-virus programme. Any mainstream product will be applicable.
- Microsoft Word 2007 standard edition.
- Microsoft Excel 2007 standard edition.
- Microsoft Powerpoint 2007 standard edition.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader.
- WinZip v12.

Note: the Microsoft products can be bought bundled as part of the Office Standard 2007 suite.

The minimum specification as directed by the application vendors of the software is:
- Processor speed - 1.3 GHz
- Memory - 1 Gb
- Free hard disk space - 1.5 Gb

Although this represents a minimum specification, purchasing a computer with more memory and with a higher processor speed will give a better experience for general computer use. This also presumes that only these applications and the operating system are installed on the computer. If more applications are used then the specification of the computer will need to increase.

Appendix Two – Costing Details

Below are the workings for the estimated current cost of publication per copy of council and committee papers.

Assumptions –
The new format of bound council and committee papers is used as basis for costing.
Discussion with secretariat has confirmed that the examples used are representative of average documents.

Cost Details

Council or committee Meeting	Full Council July 2009		Finance July 2009		Education July 2009	
	No.	£	No.	£	No.	£
Pink Pages @ 4.5p each	8	0.36	7	0.32	9	0.41
Blue Pages @ 4.5p each	23	1.04	16	0.72	11	0.50
B&W A4 Pages @ 4.0p each	467	18.68	139	5.56	159	6.36
B&W A3 Pages @ 8.0p each			2	0.16	2	0.16
Colour Pages @ 38p each	74	28.12	21	7.98	6	2.28
Tab Dividers		2.40		1.75		1.75
Blinding and Covers		2.02		2.02		2.02
VAT on Above		7.89		2.77		2.02
Post and package costs		8.00		3.00		3.00
Total Cost per Pack =		**68.51**		**24.28**		**18.50**

Annual costs per member for papers   £
Council papers   £68.51 * 8 meetings per year =   548.08

Committee papers (assumed each member is on two committees
with a combined total of 13 meetings per year.
Average committee paper costs
(£24.28 + £18.50)/2 =£21.39 * 13 meetings =   278.07

Estimated Total annual cost of papers per member =   826.15