
Finance and Resource Committee Meeting – 17 September 2009

Provision of Laptop computers for Council and Committee members

Executive Summary

The paper is to update the Finance and Resources Committee on plans to facilitate the use of laptop computers by Council and Committee members at meetings.

Current position

Currently, a 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.

By facilitating the use of laptops there will be two benefits. Firstly, it will assist Council members who prefer to use this method to receive and read papers. Secondly, the cost of printing and distribution papers will be reduced.

Given the small size of HPC's IT Department, it would be onerous for it to take on a new responsibility of supporting geographically distributed computer equipment and so the maintenance and support function would be the responsibility of the member.

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.

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					DD: None	RD: None

- 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 and so appropriate software will be required for this purpose.
- 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.
- 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 install sufficient security software to ensure that if the laptop is lost or stolen any 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 some savings in printing and postage costs.

Recommendation

Finance and Resources are requested to discuss and approve the proposal contained within the paper.

Date of paper

7 September 2009