

## REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: MEMBERS' EQUIPMENT
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 1 October 2004	Ref: JAF/IL	

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise of the evaluation of a pilot project on the provision of laptop computers for members' home-based computing needs.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Committee, at its meeting on 27 August 2003, agreed that, as a pilot project, a laptop be provided for a member's use as part of the members' home working project in order that the practicalities of its use and its maintenance costs might be ascertained. That project has now been evaluated and its findings are as follows.

**3. Findings**

- 3.1 The evaluation of the pilot project indicates that the use of laptops is a viable alternative to the use of desktop PCs where there are space constraints. Given size, the laptop is not totally equivalent to a desktop PC, but for limited use it has been found adequate.
- 3.2 Provision of laptops for home use by members does not provide a totally mobile solution – the main restriction in this is that, to connect to corporate systems, the laptop requires to be connected from the home base.
- 3.3 Locally installed applications necessitate the storage of local data. As a result new risks are introduced to the current server based solution eg
- (a) Data Confidentiality - A stolen or misplaced laptop would expose local data to unauthorised disclosure.
  - (b) Data Integrity - local storage of data without regular back ups will increase the risk of loss of data due to data corruption or media failure and the risk of viruses is increased following subsequent connection from a laptop to the corporate network.
  - (c) Unmanaged Internet access introduces a risk of contravening elements of the Telecommunications and Information Security Policies viruses, worms trojans, hackers and other malicious attacks.
- 3.4 To minimise the risk to the corporate network of using locally installed applications it is considered necessary that laptop users ensure arrangements are in place to ensure that
- (a) Local anti-virus products are regularly updated
  - (b) Laptops are regularly patched with the latest security updates
  - (c) Where possible data transfer by diskette or CD is avoided and
  - (d) The risk of unauthorised disclosure of locally stored data is minimised.

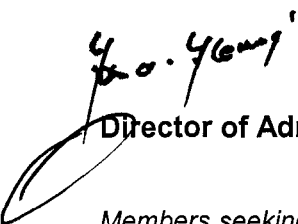
3.5 The software requirements of the laptop involved an additional cost of £190: no additional maintenance costs have been incurred during the pilot.

#### 4. **Consideration**

4.1 On the basis of the pilot it is concluded that the provision of a laptop is, in certain circumstances, a viable alternative to the provision of a desktop computer and, on the basis of no additional maintenance costs and sole additional software costs of £190, provision could be accommodated for members embarking on home working and for other members who currently operate home working arrangements at the stage at which the desktop computers are scheduled for renewal.

#### 5. **Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree that, for any member initiating home working arrangements and for any member currently operating home working arrangements at the stage of renewal and replacement of the computer, the option to provide a laptop computer be made available.



John Fleming

**Director of Administration**

*Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact John Fleming, Head of Central Services on Extension 2228.*