

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Finance and Resources Committee
DATE	21 June, 2012
DIRECTOR	Stewart Carruth
TITLE OF REPORT	Members' Laptops and Printed Agendas
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/12/078

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report addresses requests for a number of Members that they continue to be provided with paper copies of agendas in addition to the recently issued laptops. Council had decided previously, as a PBB option, that Members would be provided with laptops to facilitate the electronic delivery of agendas which would bring significant savings as a result of greatly reduced print runs and also have environmental benefits.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That the Committee determines if it wishes Members to continue to be provided with printed agendas.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Council, at its meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, (Article 19 of the minute of meeting refers) accepted PBB option CG\_LDS\_09 to maximise the capabilities of the Modern.Gov committee administration package. This would give a saving of £79,000 a year through the reduction in the establishment of the Democratic Services Team by one post and through greatly reduced printing and copying, giving a significant saving in the use of paper. Instead, agendas would be delivered to Members electronically and Committee Room 2 was enabled for this purpose through the provision of wi-fi and sockets. An allocation of £40,000 for the purchase of tablets/laptops for Members was transferred from the Democratic Services budget of 2011/12 to a Members' code in 2012/13, and the laptops provided recently to Members have been met from this source.

- 3.2 Recently, a number of Members have indicated that they would wish to continue to receive complete paper agendas, and I have been asked to provide all Members of the Labour Group with complete sets of every agenda. This would increase the printing costs significantly. At a very rough estimate, providing every member with a copy of each agenda, would run to approximately 2.5m pages a year; the maximum print run permitted annually in terms of the Council's contract for the two bulk copiers operated by Democratic Services is 2.64m and any printing above this amount would be surcharged by 0.9p per page.
- 3.3 It would not be intended to increase the establishment by an additional post to cover the return to printing on a large scale; the print duties are now shared between a number of staff and it is hoped that cover will always be available. There have been occasions when both of the Council's bulk copiers are unavailable, and when this occurs it may be necessary to send printing to Woodhill House which incurs an additional expense. However, it is expected that the additional costs of providing agendas to all Members will not be greater than £15,000, which includes a small element to cover any potential surcharge. The Director of Corporate Governance has indicated that this amount could be accommodated within the wider Corporate Governance budget.

#### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 At a time when other authorities are moving to electronic delivery or providing Members with ipods, there may be a perception in some quarters that returning to printing full sets of agendas for Members would be a retrograde step and would not be environmentally conscious.

#### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 There is no statutory requirement for Members to be provided with complete sets of printed agendas, although this has clearly been the case for many decades. There is a requirement in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that Members who require it be provided with printed copies of the calling notice, (i.e. the yellow agenda pages not the complete agenda) at their home or such other address as they may identify and a small number of Members have specified this requirement. Complete agendas, however, do not require to be delivered to home or other addresses and these are left in each Member's room at the end of the day by the Town Sergeants. Accordingly, there are no additional delivery costs associated with the return to the printing of agendas.
- 5.2 The reasons for Members wishing to return to paper agendas is something which colleagues in ICT may wish to investigate further as

electronic delivery is seen as the way forward in many areas of business. One drawback highlighted by a number of Members is the fact that, in the Council Chamber, battery packs would require to be used as there are a limited number of sockets and these are around the periphery of the room; however, this issue will be addressed in the forthcoming refurbishment of the Council Chamber later this year. In other areas, it may be that additional training would be necessary to allow Members to be more comfortable with the technologies available to them. This is perhaps something which can be addressed prior to the renewal of the Council's contract for the two bulk copiers (which runs until December, 2014) and a decision can be taken as to whether this is a facility which the Council should continue to provide at that time.

## 6. IMPACT

- 6.1 Following the acceptance of PBB option CG\_LDS\_09, the Council's position was that the printing of agendas for Members would cease and delivery would take place electronically. Any decision to change this would have the financial implications identified earlier in this report.
- 6.2 Some Members have raised health concerns in respect of the use of electronic equipment. It was always the case that officers would make arrangements to assist those Members who had particular needs.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

## 8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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