

Supplementary Information

**HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET
WEDNESDAY, 1ST JUNE, 2022**

Please note that the attached supplementary information was unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No Item

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NON-EXEMPT

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

1 June 2022

Report from Task & Finish Panel to Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Council's response to C19 - the disbursement of government funds to businesses as grants

Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

FOR INFORMATION

Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Cllr Lloyd (2021/22)

Key Decision: NO

Report No. HBC/053/2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 12 April 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the recommendations of the Task & Finish Panel which reviewed the Council's response to C19 regarding the disbursement of government funds to businesses as grants.

2.0 Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 Cabinet be advised that:
- (a) Overview and Scrutiny notes the uniqueness and complexity of the situation with which the Council was faced;
 - (b) Overview and Scrutiny notes that without the massive, personal effort made by the key officers in charge of working with Capita to disburse the funds to businesses, the Council would not have helped the Borough's businesses as it did; and
 - (c) Overview and Scrutiny wishes to commend those officers who worked tirelessly to physically process those many cases which demanded further scrutiny at the time, under immense pressure, in order that Havant Borough Council incurred no penalty for any fraudulent activity being possible, within this unique process.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 At its meeting held on 12 April 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the recommendations of the Task & Finish Panel which reviewed the Council's response to C19 regarding the disbursement of government funds to businesses as grants. (Report attached as Appendix A).
- 3.2 In response to a question raised by a member of the Committee, the Head of Customer Services reassured the Committee that the processes were in place to enable the Council to respond quickly to similar situations in the future.
- 3.3 The Committee expressed their gratitude to the way the officers had responded to a such a complex and unique situation.

4.0 Additional Budgetary Implications

- 4.1 None arising from this report

5.0 Background and relationship to Corporate Strategy and/or Business Plans

- 5.1 The review of the disbursements of business grants highlights the key role that the Council can play in helping businesses within the local economy.

6.0 Resource Implications

- 6.1 Financial Implications

None arising from this report

Section 151 Officer comments: None Received

Dated 30 May 2022

- 6.2 Human Resources Implications

None arising from this report

- 6.3 Information Governance Implications

None arising from this report

- 6.4 Links to Shaping our Future Programme

Not Applicable

- 6.5 Other resource implications

None arising from this report

- 6.6 Legal Implications

None arising from this report

Deputy Monitoring Officer Comments

Dated 27 May 2022

The local authority response to the Covid pandemic, and in particular the effectiveness of grant distribution, is of significant public interest. The full report of the Task and Finish Panel, and the resulting recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, are before Cabinet for consideration.

7.0 Risks

7.1 None Arising from this report

8.0 Consultation

8.1 Not Applicable

9.0 Communication

9.1 Not Applicable

Appendices

Appendix A - Report of the Task and Finish Task Panel

Background papers

Report of the Task and Finish Task Panel

Contact

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**REPORT OF THE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
TASK & FINISH PANEL
ON THE COUNCIL'S
BUSINESS GRANTS SUPPORT
DURING COVID 19 LOCKDOWN
2020/2021 & 2021/22**

ABSTRACT

TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID 19 REGARDING THE
DISBURSEMENT OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS TO BUSINESSES AS GRANTS.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK & FINISH PANEL LED
BY CLLR D E LLOYD**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To review the Council's response to C19 regarding the disbursement of government funds to businesses as grants.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny notes the uniqueness and complexity of the situation the council with which the Council was faced.
- 2.1.2 Overview and Scrutiny notes that without the massive, personal effort made by the key officers in charge of working with Capita to disburse the funds to businesses, the Council would not have helped the Borough's businesses as it did.
- 2.1.3 Overview and Scrutiny wishes to commend those officers who worked tirelessly to physically process those many cases which demanded further scrutiny at the time, under immense pressure, in order that Havant Borough Council incurred no penalty for any fraudulent activity being possible, within this unique process.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The decision by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to support businesses with government funded grants paid out through Local Authorities linked to business rates records, was unique, involved huge sums of money, and came at a time of high anxiety on the parts of business owners who faced closure for at least a period of time, if not forever.
- 3.2 The council responded swiftly, communicating with its third-party contractor, Capita, who held the data for all the businesses in the Borough. Given the IT system used to hold the data was not designed to pay out money, it is commendable that the payments were paid systematically. It would not have been possible to turn round applications for business-saving money, in time to pay for some people's wages, if this system had not been used.
- 3.3 There were delays between the Chancellor's announcement, the application system going 'live' and processing; this is unsurprising given the uniqueness of the situation and the volume of claims.

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 The Panel was made up of Councillors Lloyd, Briggs, Kennett, Milne and Moutray. Members met in August, and October 2021 and January 2022. The Panel's meetings were held in private sessions to enable the Panel to interview members and officers in confidence.
- 4.2 The Panel's activity fell into 3 parts:
- Meetings with the Head of Customer Services, the relevant Cabinet Lead at the time of the meetings, and the Client Relationship Director

The Panel wished to gain an insight into the volume of work involved with the distribution of business grants during the Covid 19 initial lockdown, the challenges faced by the Council, how these challenges were overcome, and lessons learnt.
 - Interviews with the Leader of the Council, at the time of the pandemic lockdown and the relevant Cabinet Lead, at the time of the interview

5.0 Findings

5.1 What was the Volume of Work Involved?

5.1.1 The Council had at the time of the pandemic, 5485 businesses operating within the Borough. In total, a sum of £33.7m was paid out to businesses in the form of the grants funded by central government.

5.1.2 As of 3 August 2020:

- 1344 businesses within the Borough received a grant (£16m)
- A total cost of rate relief was £16m
- The total value of discretionary grants given was £840,000

The average time for payment was an estimated 20 days, with a further 2 – 4 business days before funds cleared in accounts.

5.1.3 Corporate Support have processed the following applications between November 20 and March 2022:

- Over 1,300 businesses were supported by various grant schemes – totalling £7,658,000 for the period November 20 to March 21
- A further £4,230,000 (Restart Grants) was paid to 604 businesses in the period April 21 to June 21
- From January 22 to March 22 £419,000 (Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grants¹) were paid to 118 businesses
- Finally, discretionary grants (Additional Restrictions Grant) of £4,600,000 were paid from November 20 to March 22.

5.1.5 Between Nov 2020 and February 2021 the Economic Development Team dealt with over 120 enquiries. In total the team dealt with over 600 business enquiries between March 2020 and February 2021¹.

5.2 How is this support coordinated for businesses?

5.2.1 The timescales expected for the payment of the grants, limited the number of options available to the Council to process grant applications. In view of the Council's close ties with Capita and Capita's in-house expertise, the Council, together with the other parties in the Five Councils' contract, accepted an offer by Capita for them to process the grant applications. This was to meet a tight set of timescales set by the Government, who, having announced the scheme the second week in March, were expecting payments to commence by early April. This is something they enforced via regular reporting, use of national performance tables, and interventions with Authorities up to ministerial level.

¹ Information provided by the Business and Economy Manager

It was unfortunate that a communication, based on Capita's usual turn-round times for their processes, was released, giving an unattainable timescale for the processing of the business grants applications. This oversight caused anxiety among the business cohort which led to more chasing communications coming into the council direct, or via agents and councillors. The Panel noted that this work was provided outside the 5 Councils' contract.

- 5.2.2 The Council created a Covid-19 business support taskforce, led by a senior officer and supported by a number of officers from across a range of teams - including Revenue and Benefits, Economic Development, Finance, Communications, Corporate Support and Programme Management - was established. It must be acknowledged that HBC officers with no previous business rates' experience took up their new roles with a flexible and positive attitude.

Initial work of this taskforce was to assist with business survival during the early weeks of the pandemic. This included the administration of the business rate relief scheme and business grants, signposting businesses to other support packages, query handling, guidance and bespoke support for complex or non-standard businesses.²

- 5.2.3 Although Capita processed grant applications, the payments had to be reviewed and signed off by the S151's team, uploaded onto the Finance System
- 5.2.4 As the processing of grants by Capita was part of a coordinated Five Councils response, a joint coordination group was set up, involving Authority leads, and key Capita representatives, which met twice weekly, Key developments were discussed and agreed via that forum and matters for specific local approval fed back via said leads. This included, for example, approval of the application forms for grants, discretions to be applied where cases were lodged with the Valuation Office Agency, and approval of any formal notification letters. In addition, the matter was also monitored via existent Five Councils Governance, notably the Joint Tactical Board and the Chief Executive's joint meetings.

5.3 How was the support monitored?

- 5.3.1 The Council established a tracking process to enable the Council to have oversight of the process and held two meetings a week with Capita to chart progress³

5.4 Were there any problems identified with arrangements for supporting businesses and how were they resolved?

- 5.4.1 It became clear during regular review of progress by all 5Cs Authorities, with benchmarks made against national performance, that Capita did not commence this exercise with sufficient resources. This issue was taken up to the Chief Executives of the Councils involved, who persuaded Capita to increase the resources available for this process. The number of staff working within Capita on this process went from 3.5 FTE employees to 22 FTE employees, within a matter of weeks from the announcement of the available monies by government. This gives an idea of how working practices changed, by how much and how quickly. The work of Capita was supplemented by the Revenues and Benefits Client Team and the Capita Face-to-Face reception team.

² Cabinet Report section 4

³ Reported by officers at a meeting of the Panel held on 3 August 2020

5.4.2 Initially, limited help could be provided to businesses as not all Council staff had access to the rates system. As soon as this information was available via access to an extract of the Business Rates database and sight of the customers queries, the Council's teams were in a better position to help to business.

5.5 What were the challenges?

- Keeping up with the pace and speed of change in government advice and packages which evolved throughout the process
- Although rating system was the most appropriate system to use to distribute the grants, little thought had been taken on the impact of the schemes on local authorities and on how it could be implemented
- Although Capita hold a database, which gives details of business within the Borough, it was found that the contact details on this database, which is mandatory, was not up to date or was missing. There was also an issue where some business had given their contact address as the business premises, which during the lockdown were, in some cases, closed.
- Capita did not commence this exercise with sufficient resource, as it was an unforeseen development.
- To deliver a scheme using a system which was not designed to **give out** money
- The Council was under pressure from the Government and local businesses to deliver the payments quickly
- The sheer volume of applications generated by the schemes in a short period
- Working as a team within the pandemic restrictions

5.6 How were the challenges met?

- Regular meetings held with all parties concerned to identify issues and provide solutions
- Capita provided more staff resources to meet the demand
- A payments system was created to deliver the grants
- Council officers (and in some cases, councillors) provided support by dealing with queries
- Council officers (and in some cases councillors) directly dealt with business to deal with their queries and provide

5.7 Lessons learnt

- It is important to make sure the systems are in place before inviting applications
- Set realistic deadlines
- Control communications – to ensure action which follows can be enacted
- Councillors can play a role acting as advocates
- The lessons learnt from the delivery of the first grant scheme helped the Council to administer the following schemes more efficiently
- Businesses have learnt the importance to keep the Council informed of any changes in their businesses

6.0 Additional Budgetary Implications

6.1 None arising from this report

7.0 Resource Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

None arising from this report

Appendices

Exempt minutes of the meetings of the Panel held in October 2021 and January 2022

Background Papers

None

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NON-EXEMPT

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

1 June 2022

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee from the Task & Finish Panel regarding Paperless Agendas for Members

Recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

FOR INFORMATION

Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Cllr Lloyd (2021/22)

Key Decision: NO

Report No. HBC/052/2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 12 April 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the recommendations of the Task & Finish Panel which scrutinised how best to proceed towards sending agenda papers & supplementary papers to Members by soft copy only.
- 1.2 This report relates to the report submitted under Item 9 of the agenda for the Cabinet to be held on 1 June 2022

2. Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 Cabinet be recommended to agree that:

- 1 the option of offering all councillors the opportunity of giving up all or part of their modernisation allowance to finance a new laptop provided and supported by the Council be explored
- 2 the current cost of supporting Councillors using their own IT equipment be explored and
- 3 the default position be that Councillors will **not** receive paper copies of agendas unless they specifically request them.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 At its meeting held on 12 April 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the recommendations of the Task & Finish Panel which

scrutinised how best to proceed towards sending agenda papers & supplementary papers to Members by soft copy only (report attached as an appendix).

- 3.2 The Committee examined, via a question-and-answer session with the relevant Cabinet Lead and officers, the aspects of the Panel's report set out below:
- 1 The costs of providing a laptop to all members of the Council and the methods of financing this provision
 - 2 The security reasons supporting the provision of a laptop, supported by the Council, to all members of the Council
 - 3 The use of all or part of the Members' modernisation allowance, to help finance the recommendation in 2.1.1 and point 3.2.1 of the report.
 - 4 The savings that would be realised if the recommendations set out in the submitted report was adopted.
- 3.3 It was acknowledged that in the absence of the author of the report, the officers and Cabinet Lead could not comment on whether the members of the Council were asked to identify the equipment they wished to be supplied with.
- 3.4 The Committee acknowledged that the Panel's recommendation (recommendation 1 or another version of 1, meaning a laptop owned by HBC would be lent to the Member) would improve security, but it considered that the insignificant savings which would be realised by this recommendation could not justify the provision of a laptop to all Councillors.

Instead, the Committee supported an option whereby members were given the choice of having a standard laptop, provided and supported by the Council, in lieu of all or part of their modernisation allowance, to help pay for the equipment, software and support.

However, the Committee accepted that this preferred option would need to be fully costed and compared with the costs of the current system before a final decision could be made. The Committee also considered that the default position for receipt of committee papers be that Councillors do not receive paper copies of agendas unless they specifically request a paper copy.

4.0 Additional Budgetary Implications

- 4.1 None arising from this report

5.0 Background and relationship to Corporate Strategy and/or Business Plans

- 5.1 As set out in the Task and Finish Panel's Report (Appendix A)
- 6.0 Options considered
- 6.1 See Appendix A
- 6.0 Resource Implications
- 6.1 Financial Implications
 - None arising from this report

Section 151 Officer comments

None received

Dated: 30 May 2022

- 6.2 Human Resources Implications
 - None arising from this report
- 6.3 Information Governance Implications
 - None arising from this report
- 6.4 Links to Shaping our Future Programme
 - Not Applicable
- 6.5 Other resource implications
 - None arising from this report
- 6.6 Legal Implications
 - None arising from this report

Deputy Monitoring Officer comments

Dated: 27 May 2022

This report is submitted in accordance with Constitutional provision and in order to assist the Cabinet in discharging its executive function. Cabinet is asked to consider the findings of the Task and Finish Panel and the overall recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.0 Risks

7.1 None Arising from this report

8.0 Consultation

8.1 Not Applicable

9.0 Communication

9.1 Not Applicable

Appendices

Appendix A - Report of the Task and Finish Panel

Background papers

Report of the Task and Finish Panel

Contact

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APPENDIX A

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK FORCE ON PAPERLESS MEETINGS 2021

ABSTRACT

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO WAYS OF ENCOURAGING MEMBERS TO RECEIVE
AGENDA PAPERS IN ELECTRONIC FORM**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK FORCE LED BY
COUNCILLOR SCOTT**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Panel was appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise how best to proceed towards sending agenda papers & supplementary papers to members by soft copy only.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet be recommended to agree to the provision of laptops to all Councillors

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 Legal restraints prevent the Council from going completely paperless for its Council meetings

- 3.2 The Council cannot impose electronic agendas upon members; the decision whether to receive electronic agendas rests with each member

- 3.3 There are many reasons to reduce the reliance on paper agendas which include a need to make savings in the Council's budget, to help fulfil the objectives of the Council's Corporate Strategy, to promote a more efficient and environmentally-friendly way of working and the need to protect the Council against cyber attacks.

- 3.4 A move away from a reliance on paper agendas would require a significant shift in practice at the Council and this would need to be carefully managed.

- 3.5 A survey of members indicated that it is unrealistic to expect all Councillors to consent to receive electronic versions of the agendas for Council meetings

- 3.6 When considering the options available the Panel considered that:

3.6.1 Option 1 – Remain the Same

The disbenefits of the current practice outweighs its benefits. In particular, it is considered that the current practice made the Council vulnerable to cyber-attacks and is not in accordance with the Council's corporate or environmental strategies

3.6.2 Option 2 - Council Provides A Laptop to Members

This is preferred option. Although this option will incur costs it will largely overcome the problems associated with Option 1 and could encourage the 18 Councillors who still rely upon paper copies of committee papers to consent to receiving electronic versions of committee papers

3.6.3 Option 3 – The Council provides Surface Pro 7s to Members

Although this option overcomes a majority of the issues with Option 1, it is considered too costly.

3.6.4 Option 4 – The Council provides iPads to Members

This option is considered too costly in monetary and resource terms.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Current Practice and Costs

- 4.1.1 At present, the Council prints agendas (including the summons, associated reports and any supplementary information) for:
- Councillors who are a member of the meeting
 - Relevant officers
 - Councillors who have requested a copy of the agenda
 - If a public meeting, a 'reasonable'^{*1} number of copies for members of the public
- 4.1.2 In addition to the above, copies are also sent to the British Library (this is a statutory requirement), Full Council agenda packs are printed and sent to Honorary Aldermen, and a resident group receives posted copies of Full Council and Planning related agenda packs.
- 4.1.3 Currently 52% of the members receive paper agendas and committee papers.

4.2 Why Do We Need to Move Towards Paperless Meetings

4.2.1 Corporate Strategy

- 4.2.1.1 The Council's Corporate Strategy is committed to financial sustainability, and innovation and creativity. Within these priorities is one key principle:
Evaluate the way we do things and transform our services, so we are more effective and agile – allowing us to focus our resources on prevention and intervention where required
- 4.2.1.2 The Council is clear about the values that underpin its work. Firstly, that the customer and their diverse requirements sit at the very heart of everything the Council does. Secondly, services should be delivered at a high quality and an affordable price, and in achieving this quality the organisation should be innovative in its approach to service delivery and seek to learn from others. The move towards paperless committee meetings supports these two aims.
- 4.2.1.3 The Corporate Strategy also sets out the Council's ambition to harness the capabilities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which refers to the continuing use of digital, green and physical technologies. The move towards paperless committee meetings can be seen as a key outcome of this approach.

4.2.2 Financial Costs

- 4.2.2.1 Local Government continues to face significant challenges in terms of budget constraints, the drive to do more with less and rising customer expectations. To date, Havant Borough Council has pursued and secured efficiencies and service improvement through business transformation. It is felt that alternative ways to deliver further efficiencies should be considered.

4.2.2.2 Printing and Postage Relating to Council Meetings

¹ An assessment of 'reasonable' number is conducted by the relevant Democratic Services Officer, taking into account the matters to be discussed at the meeting and the likely public interest.

The total approximate costs for Agendas during 20/21 £2,781.92. During a five year period the costs equates to £13,909.60

The detail provided below is taken from the two most recent HBC meetings for each of the main committees.

The table below illustrates the costs that are associated with printing and posting Agenda Packs for meetings. The illustration shows the additional postage cost element attached to this paper based process. To aid extrapolation across all meetings (where packs are printed) a figure for the percentage for the postage element against the total cost incurred has been included below. This shows that the most significant cost associated with the current process is postage.

Meeting Name (2 most recent dates as examples)	Date	Number of Cllrs / attendees packs sent to or at meeting ²	Number of pages in agenda pack	Total pages printed	Total print cost for packs	Total Postage cost for packs Pack No x postage rate. (£1.14-£2.05)	Total cost (pages*pack no*click ³ cost + postage cost)
Full Council	22 nd Sept	23*	215	4945	£17.30	£47.15	£64.45
	16 th June	40*	45	1800	£6.30	£45.60	£51.90
Cabinet	8 th Sept	6	64	384	£1.34	£6.84	£8.18
	30 th June	9	152	1368	£4.78	£18.45	£23.23
O&S	29 th Sept	10	114	1140	£3.99	£20.50	£24.49
	23 rd June	16	69	1104	£3.86	£18.24	£22.10
Planning	9 th Sept	9	169	1521	£5.32	£18.45	£23.77
	12 th Aug	9	69	621	£2.17	£10.26	£12.43
					19.54%	80.45%	100%

² Additional copies of Council Agendas are also sent to outside bodies e.g. libraries
Paper costs are below

³ The click charges are those HBC are charged by the company that looks after the print room machines – this covers the costs of toners and maintenance. The machines are owned by HBC but the company supplies the servicing.

Cost Item	Unit cost	Rate
Print room cost	Per click cost	£0.0035p
Postage Rate	Small agenda / Supplementary information	£1.14 per pack
Postage Rate	Large agenda	£2.05 per pack

Number of meetings per year

To arrive at an order of magnitude on an annual basis, the cost of providing posted paper copies to the major meetings has been calculated.

Meeting Name	Number of Meetings per year	Ave Print cost per meeting	Ave Post cost per meeting	Split print / post costs	Total PA
Full Council	7	11.80	46.37	82.60 / 324.59	£407.19
Cabinet	7	3.06	12.65	21.42 / 88.55	£109.97
Overview & Scrutiny	7	3.93	19.37	27.51 / 135.59	£163.10
Planning Committee	16	3.75	14.36	60.00 / 229.76	£289.76
Licensing Committee / Sub Committee	1-2				
Audit & Finance Committee	6				
Standards Committee	4				
Total					£970.02

Print Room – Committee Agendas / Papers 2020/2021 – Paper and Staff Costs⁴

Item	Unit Cost	Volume	Total
Paper	£2.61 per ream	257 reams (128,500 sheets)	£670.77
Staff*	£10.65 ph	3 hours per week	£1661.40
			£2332.17

4.2.3 National Trends

- 4.2.3.1 There are an increasing number of Councils moving towards paperless meetings, with some of these authorities being highlighted as examples of best practice. For example, Teignbridge Borough Council's Democratic Services were awarded the MJ Achievement Award 2010, with the award noting that the Council's use of laptops and paperless working had helped '*to improve efficiency and participation by both Councillors and the public ... the scheme has helped Councillors work more effectively, putting democracy first while cutting costs and supporting Teignbridge's green agenda*'.

⁴ No on costs added to this around NI, pension etc. This is the average time spent on Agenda's. The staff costs are there regardless of how many Agendas are printed.

At a local level, Hampshire County Council has issued all County Councillors with tablets to access meeting documentation and mainly restrict printed copies of papers to members of the public only. Winchester City Council and Eastleigh Borough Council have also made similar moves towards paperless committee meetings.

4.2.4 Security Implications

- 4.2.4.1 The Council is experiencing more frequent cyber attacks leading to an increasing need to ensure equipment in use is up to date in terms of anti-virus and application security controls in order to protect the Council's services and data. How this is delivered via the options outlined below has implications for the level of assurance the Council can have that adequate protection is in place.

4.2.5 Business Need

- 4.2.5.1 There is a commitment to make savings across the Council.

The move towards producing fewer paper agendas would also promote a more efficient and environmentally-friendly way of working

4.2.6 There a System in Place to Accommodate Paperless Meetings

- 4.2.6.1 Since 2013, the Council has used the modern.gov committee administration system for the administration of all agendas, reports and minutes. The system allows for remote access to historic papers, while also providing links to the published documentation for forthcoming meetings.
- 4.2.6.2 This system in its current form can facilitate a move towards paperless committees. There is a free-to-download application which enables the user to download all public papers for Council meetings to a tablet device, while Councillors are also able to access exempt papers by logging in to the main system. Accessing exempt papers in this fashion can be a laborious process however, with additional log-in information required.
- 4.2.6.3 There is an additional 'paperless meeting application' available from modern.gov that reduces the need for multiple passwords and enables the smooth access of confidential or private papers. To provide some local context, Hampshire County Council has purchased this application as part of its move to paperless meetings. Uniquely, one license allows unlimited users to access it. This would represent an annual cost of £3,000 to the Council, but Councillors may wish for the Council to purchase this to help the transition to paperless meetings. Purchase of this application would allow for a more effective move toward paperless committee meetings. This application is referred to as 'software' throughout this document.

4.3.6.4 The current costs for the modern.gov system are covered within budgets for Business Transformation. It is assumed that any additional expenditure towards this software would also be funded from budgets for this service.

5.0 **Barriers to Change**

5.1 The Panel has identified the following barriers that may hinder a move towards paperless meetings:

a **Legislative Restraints**

The below table lists the relevant legislative requirements for local authorities in providing summons, agendas and reports to Councillors and members of the public.

The Council is required to send a summons to Councillors to attend a meeting, specifying the business to be transacted, time and place of the meeting (further details in 5.2).	Paragraph 4, Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972
A summons must be sent by post unless a Councillor has consented to receiving electronic versions of the summons to a meeting	Paragraph 4, Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015)
Any document in the possession of the Council (or its committee or sub-committee) is open to inspection by a Councillor (with certain exceptions i.e. exempt / confidential information)	Section 100F of the Local Government Act 1972 (extended to executive meetings by Section 16 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Documents) (England) Regulations 2012)
The Council must make a 'reasonable' number of copies of agendas and reports available for members of the public at any public meeting of the authority (further details below)	Section 100B(6) of the Local Government Act 1972

The Local Government Act 1972 requires a summons to specify '*the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting and authenticated by the proper officer of the council*' be sent to all members of a meeting. In current practice, this is included as the front sheet of the agenda papers, which sets out the time and location of a meeting, the Councillors who are required to attend and the business to be considered at the meeting, signed off by the Monitoring Officer. Under the Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015 a member may consent to receiving a summons of a meeting by electronic means in place of paper copy (a member may, at any time, withdraw this consent).

There is also a requirement under Section 100B (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 that local authorities must ensure that where a meeting is held in public, "*there shall be made available for the use of members of the public present at the meeting a reasonable number of copies of the agenda and ... reports for the meeting*". This requirement prohibits the Council from having fully paperless meetings. However, there is scope to reduce the number of public copies. In determining the 'reasonable' number of public copies of agenda packs, Democratic Services currently consider the matters to be discussed at the meeting and the likely public interest. The number of printed copies is then estimated as accurately as possible to meet the expected demand, but this is not an exact science and can lead to instances where the supply is under or overestimated. There are also cases however where members or officers use paper copies provided for the public.

Under common law principles councillors have the right to access information held by their authority where it is reasonably necessary to enable the member to properly perform their duties as a councillor. The principles of 'need to know' are set out in Standing Order 56 of the Council's Constitution, stating that Councillors may be entitled to access certain committee papers, if they demonstrate a genuine 'need to know' in order to perform their duties. There is however no requirement for this to be supplied in hard copy.

Therefore, the current legislation and case law does allow for the Council to introduce paperless committee meetings for councillors and officers but not for members of the public. Documents available for inspection may also be provided in an electronic format. However, to comply with the law, consent must be given by each Councillor and a 'reasonable' number of copies of papers must still be made available at public meetings for members of the public.

b Culture and Practice

Evidence from other Councils making similar moves towards paperless committee meetings has shown the challenges that such a transition presents. The main issues reported are commonly the shift in culture and practice, and the resource and support needed for such a move.

Several of the options explored in this report would result in a significant shift in practice at the Council and this would need to be carefully managed to ensure any move would be successful. Councillors may be opposed or hesitant to adopt new styles of working and may feel unable to properly contribute to meetings without access to meeting papers. There would need to be full support from political parties to ensure any move towards paperless committees was successful.

There may also be issues in ensuring Councillors have the correct equipment to enable full access to electronic copies of papers at meetings, whether this be the capabilities of individual devices or internet connections in meeting rooms.

Several Councils who have made the move to paperless committee meetings have commented on the importance of providing a number of training sessions, along with on-going support, to ensure all Councillors are able to effectively use the paperless solution (more at 10.6).

There may be resistance from Councillors that they are being forced to purchase expensive and complex IT equipment in order to fully operate and contribute to paperless meetings.

c Financial Restraints

Local Government continues to face significant challenges in terms of budget constraints, the drive to do more with less and rising customer expectations. The Panel, when making its recommendations took into account the need to ensure that any additional costs incurred could result in a saving in the long term.

It has been suggested that the Councillor Modernisation Allowance of £461 could be used to help contribute towards the costs of supplying standard IT equipment. This allowance is included in the Councillors Allowances Scheme using it for this single purpose may require a review by an Independent Review Panel.

6.0 The Way Forward

6.1 Options Considered

The Panel considered the following options:

1. Remain the Same

2. Council Provides Laptops
3. Council Provides Service Pros
4. Council Provides iPads

Detailed costings for Options 2, 3 and 4 are set out in Appendix A

OPTION 1 – REMAIN THE SAME

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
This option would not require any further expenditure	This option does not fit in with the Council's ambitions for innovative and creative thinking.
This represents the current system and as such, would not need any encouragement or support for any Councillor to embrace new practices	This option does not fit in with a number of Councillors who would welcome a move towards a paperless committee solution.
This option would ensure the Council complies with current legislation.	The current environmental impact on printing agendas would continue without change.
	The current system represents a security risk
	It has however been demonstrated by other Councils that this is not the most efficient way of publishing and distributing papers and this does not fit with the Council's drive to be a modern, forward thinking authority.
	The private devices used by Councillors are not supported by Capita
	Council Officers have to try and provide advice and support a wide range of different devices

OPTION TWO – Council Provides A Laptop to Members

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
This option would ensure that the Council complies with current legislation.	This option would represent a significant change to the current system and as such, would need to be fully communicated with Councillors and officers to ensure an effective transition.
This option fits with the Council's ambition for innovative and creative thinking.	Without the consent of all Councillors, the full savings under this option would not be realised.
This option would reduce the	This option would result in significant additional

environmental impact of the production of paper copies.	expenditure for the Council, and this would continue for the foreseeable future under this option for paperless meetings.
This option allows Councillors to move towards a fully paperless committee solution (if consent is given).	Council resource would be required to ensure all Councillors received sufficient training on IT equipment.
All Councillors receiving IT equipment would ensure consistent access for all Councillors. It would also be easier to support as all Councillors would be using Council-provided equipment.	The Council may receive complaints from Councillors or officers for the lack of printed supporting information.
This option provides easy access for all Councillors to meeting papers (including confidential papers)	There may be questions raised over the Council's decision-making, if Councillors were not to fully appraise themselves of all related issues via the electronic reports
A more user friendly application may encourage more councillors to opt out of paper copies of committee papers.	The Council would have liabilities in relation to providing equipment for Councillors
CAPITA will support this device	There may be issues in reclaiming equipment from Councillors following the end of their term
The provision of uniform laptops supported by CAPITA would reduce the security risk	This would require a full time equivalent post to support Councillors
	There would be an increase in expenditure (please see Appendix A)

OPTION THREE – Council Provides a Surface Pro 7 to Members

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
This option would ensure that the Council complies with current legislation.	This option would represent a significant change to the current system and as such, would need to be fully communicated with Councillors and officers to ensure an effective transition.
This option fits with the Council's ambition for innovative and creative thinking.	Without the consent of all Councillors, the full savings under this option would not be realised.
This option would reduce the environmental impact of the production of paper copies.	This option would result in significant additional expenditure for the Council, and this would continue for the foreseeable future under this option for paperless meetings.
This option allows Councillors to move towards a fully paperless committee	Council resource would be required to ensure all Councillors received sufficient training on IT

solution (if consent is given).	equipment.
All Councillors receiving IT equipment would ensure consistent access for all Councillors. It would also be easier to support as all Councillors would be using Council-provided equipment.	The Council may receive complaints from Councillors or officers for the lack of printed supporting information.
This option provides easy access for all Councillors to meeting papers (including confidential papers)	There may be questions raised over the Council's decision-making, if Councillors were not to fully appraise themselves of all related issues via the electronic reports
A more user friendly application may encourage more councillors to opt out of paper copies of committee papers.	The Council would have liabilities in relation to providing equipment for Councillors
CAPITA will support this device	There may be issues in reclaiming equipment from Councillors following the end of their term
The provision of uniform devices supported by CAPITA would reduce the security risk	This would require a full time equivalent post to support Councillors
	There would be an increase in expenditure (please see Appendix A)

OPTION FOUR – Council Provides an IPad to Members

Pros	Cons
This option would ensure that the Council complies with current legislation.	This option would represent a significant change to the current system and as such, would need to be fully communicated with Councillors and officers to ensure an effective transition.
This option fits with the Council's ambition for innovative and creative thinking.	Without the consent of all Councillors, the full savings under this option would not be realised.
This option would reduce the environmental impact of the production of paper copies.	This option would result in significant additional expenditure for the Council, and this would continue for the foreseeable future under this option for paperless meetings.
This option allows Councillors to move towards a fully paperless committee solution (if consent is given).	Council resource would be required to ensure all Councillors received sufficient training on IT equipment.
All Councillors receiving IT equipment would ensure consistent access for all Councillors. It would also be easier to support as all Councillors would be	The Council may receive complaints from Councillors or officers for the lack of printed supporting information.

using Council-provided equipment.	
This option provides easy access for all Councillors to meeting papers (including confidential papers)	There may be questions raised over the Council's decision-making, if Councillors were not to fully appraise themselves of all related issues via the electronic reports
A more user friendly application may encourage more councillors to opt out of paper copies of committee papers.	The Council would have liabilities in relation to providing equipment for Councillors
CAPITA will support this device	There may be issues in reclaiming equipment from Councillors following the end of their term
The provision of uniform devices will reduce the security risk	This would require a full time equivalent post to support Councillors
	There would be an increase in expenditure (please see Appendix A)
	Apple devices are not currently supported by Capita and there is no standard support model i.e., something off the shelf. If support for IPADS is required, a full impact assessment to determine the intended usage would be needed to consider (among other things) the following: 1. Operating system support, 2. Application support, 3. Patching, 4. Break/fix and or swap out, 5. Security, Any integration requirements into the current environment.

7.0 Additional Budgetary Implications

7.1 As set out in Appendix A

8.0 Resource Implications

8.1 Financial Implications

See Appendix A

8.2 Legal Implications

- 8.2.1 The potential for paperless meetings was introduced by the Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015. This order amended Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 and allowed local authorities to send summons for meetings in electronic format in situations “*where the member has given consent for the summons to be transmitted in electronic form to a particular electronic address (and consent has not been withdrawn), sending it in electronic form to that address.*”
- 8.2.2 It is important to note that Councillors must provide consent to receive electronic copies of all papers. Relating to this, the Cabinet has also requested that political group leaders encourage their members to consent to receiving electronic versions of all committee papers.
- 8.2.3 There is also a requirement under Section 100B (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 that local authorities must ensure that where a meeting is held in public, “*there shall be made available for the use of members of the public present at the meeting a reasonable number of copies of the agenda and ... reports for the meeting*”. This requirement means there will still be a small printing cost for the Council at each meeting, but this will be considered on a meeting-by-meeting basis to ensure ‘reasonable’ copies are available.

Appendices

Appendix A - Councillors IT- Investment Options: Capita Quotation Dated 6th December 2021

Appendix B – Results of Members’ Survey

Contact

Name: Councillor Scott

Telephone:

E-mail: issy.scott@havant.gov.uk

Appendix A - Councillors IT- Investment Options: Capita Quotation Dated 6th December 2021

<u>Costs</u> <u>One-Off</u>	Option A - Laptop				Option B -Surface Pro 7				Option C - IPAD			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Devices	24,474				44,833				20,262 ⁵			
Build (estimated)	2,000				1200				NA ⁶	NA	NA	NA
<u>Recurring</u>												
Capita Support	8,381	8,381	8,381	8,381	8,527	8,527	8,527	8,527	NA ⁷	NA	NA	NA
Support FTE	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464	18,464
Modern.Gov Tool	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
TOTAL COSTS	56,319	29,845	29,845	29,845	76,024	29,991	29,991	29,991	41,726	21,464	21,464	21,464
<u>Savings - Cashable</u>												
Print & Postage (major committees estimated)	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02	970.02
Paper	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77	670.77
TOTAL SAVINGS	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79	1640.79
Modernisation Allowance	17518	17518	17518	17518	17518	17518	17518	17518	17518	17518	17518	17518
TOTAL CONTRIBUTION	19158.79	19158.79	19158.7	19158.7	19158.7	19158.7	19158.7	19158.7	19158.7	19158.7	19158.7	19158.7
COST IMPLICATION PER ANNUM	,160	-10,686	-10,686	-10,686	-56,866	-10,832	-10,832	-10,832	-22,568	-2,305	-2,305	-2,305

⁵ Average cost of IPAD (64GB v256GB) (314.77 v 436.90)

⁶ Device only not a Capita build

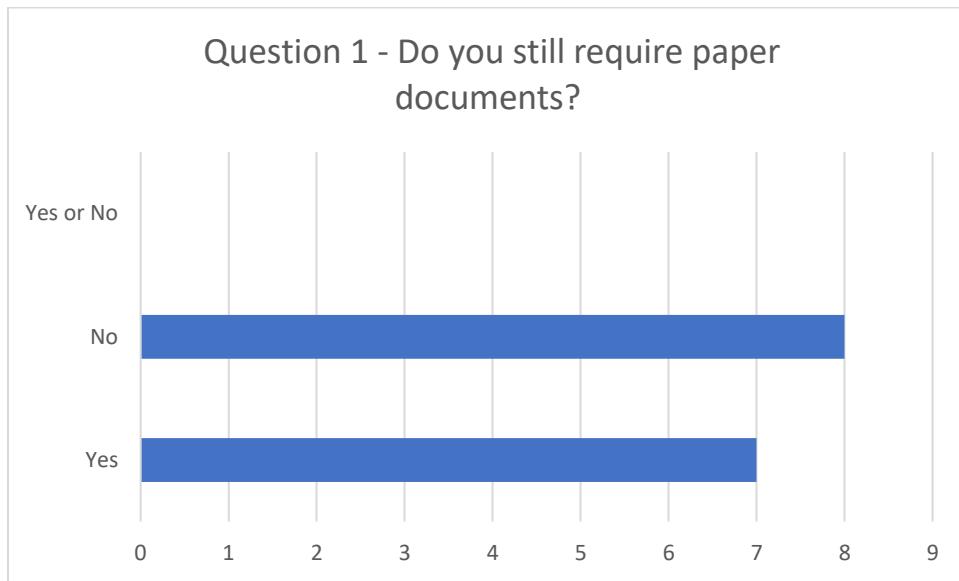
⁷ Apple devices are not currently supported by Capita and there is no standard support model i.e., something off the shelf. If support for IPADS is required, a full impact assessment to determine the intended usage would be needed to consider (among other things) the following: 1. Operating system support, 2. Application support, 3. Patching, 4. Break/fix and or swap out, 5. Security, Any integration requirements into the current environment.

Appendix B - Paperless Agendas: Members' Survey - Results

Response Rate

42% (16 out of 38 Councillors responded)

Question 1 – Do You Require Paper Documents



14 out of the 15 respondents answered this question

	Yes	No	Yes or No	Didn't answer
Do you still require paper documents?	7	8	0	1

Question 2 - Why do you require paper documents?

Some documents are very long (200-300 pages or more). I do not expect to print them myself; I do not wish to read them from my computer; I like to write on them and fold pages for quick reference and carry them to the meeting.

Because I cannot read and rotate on my iPad or phone because it's too small. I use a laptop at home but do not want to bring my laptopthe tool of my work and personal life - into the Plaza. plus it was difficult being in meetings on line through my laptop and looking up documents on my laptop or phone at the same time.

I find it easier to work through documents

I prefer paper copies as I use a laptop/computer mostly and as I have poor eyesight, paper gives my eyes a (relative) rest.

My current laptop/notepad needs replacing and I haven't got round to it

If it is a large document – e.g. Local Plan, I would still like a paper copy

Question 3 - What experience of HBC committee work have you had?

I have been using my iPad for all HBC committees including planning.

I believe the Chairman of committees should have a paper agenda. (Not necessarily reports). I have needed this when I have chaired committees but have followed the reports on my iPad.

I have been happy to have online agendas for HCC meetings including council meeting which sometimes extend to 400 pages.

I currently sit on the overview and scrutiny panel and the licensing committee panel, which has yet to convene this electoral cycle. No it doesn't. So long as I am able to read anything electronically beforehand, I see no reason to use paper copies of anything whatsoever.

Over 3 years experience, Licensing Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Planning Policy Committee, Langstone Harbour Board,

I have been on the Council, on and off, since the 90s and have served on most committees except Planning, which I avoided. In former days all agendas and papers were delivered to our home addresses on Friday, and Friday nights (and at times, the weekends) were spent reading, thinking and preparing

DMC/Planning Committee, Scrutiny Board (old days), Panel Lead. Happy to have electronic documents, preferably accessible from 'Modern Gov'.

I've been on most committee's, Licensing, O&S, DMC, HR. I prefer paper copies, I can pick up and put down a paper copy.

Member of PLANNING Committee for 4 years, Chair of OPS SCRUTINY BOARD 3 years, Chair of OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE [REDACTED]

I have been a councillor for nearly 4 years, My main reason for not wanting paper copies is purely environmental. I have a tablet, iphone and laptop so am fully able to locate all documents online

GAF/BACs

OPS, Councillor Development, Joint HR, Overview and Scrutiny, Planning, West of Waterlooville

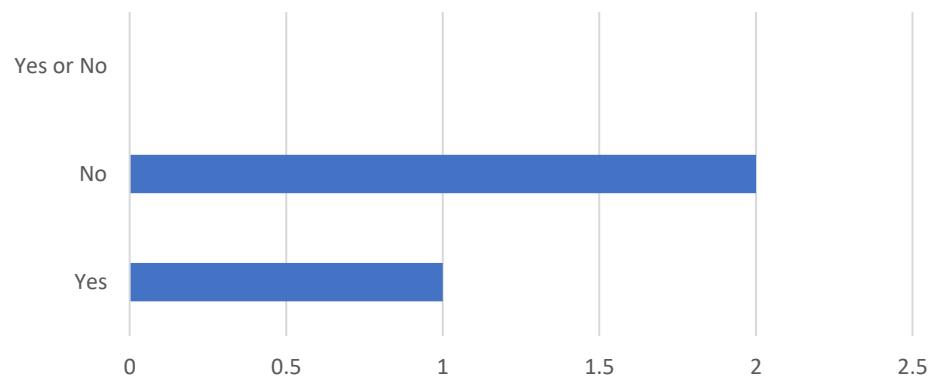
I am a new councillor so have had very little experience of HBC committee work

Electronic

I have had experience working with all committees and this does not effect my requirement for a virtual agenda. I do have sympathy with planning committee members who have extensive documents to peruse

I don't have a lot of experience but am happy for electronic

Question 3 - Does Your Experience determine your attitude to your preference for a particular type of Agenda – electronic or paper?



3 out of 16 respondents answered this question

	Yes	No	Yes or No	Didn't answer
Does your experience determine your attitude to your preference for a particular type of Agenda – electronic or paper?	1	2	0	0

Question 4 - Do you read agendas online?



16 out of 16 respondents answered this question

Yes	No	Yes or No	Didn't answer

Page 2 of 7

Do you read
agendas online? 15 1 0 0

Comments Received

I will look at them, but I prefer to sit in my armchair and comfortably take my time to read, mark and digest.

I suspect that some Councillors use their phones which must be hell. Every Cllr should be equipped with a properly equipped and prepared HBC laptop.

DMC/Planning Committee, Scrutiny Board (old days), Panel Lead. Happy to have electronic documents, preferably accessible from 'Modern Gov'.

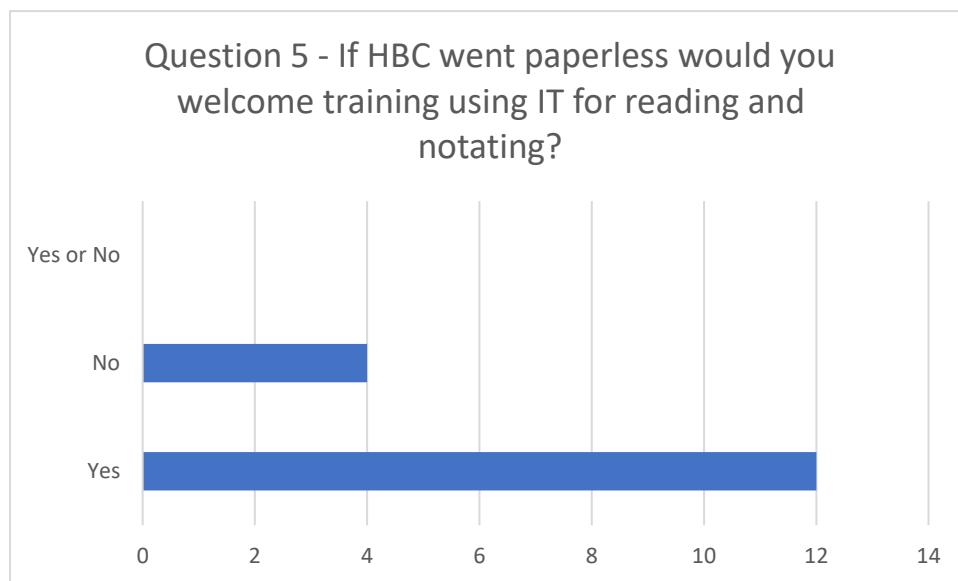
Not very often.

Sometimes, ahead of paper copies being received.

Agenda Yes, Reports No

Yes, but attending and chairing requires paper

Question 5 - If HBC went paperless would you welcome training using IT for reading and notating?



16 out 16 respondents answered this question

	Yes	No	Yes or No	Didn't answer
If HBC went paperless would you welcome training using IT for reading and notating?	12	4	0	0

Comments Received:

Yes, though I would likely not require it.

I would have to with regard to notating.

I'd give it a go.

Happy with Modern Gov

Yes, because I use my laptop for my work and for personal use

My iPad needs updating to cope with council papers but I do not feel I should have to buy a special piece of IT equipment and software for council work, when some councillors have been given kit for free. This is blatantly unfair.

I wouldn't need that, but I would prefer to still receive paper copies.

Yes – although I tend to use my ipad and its pen to be able to notate documents already

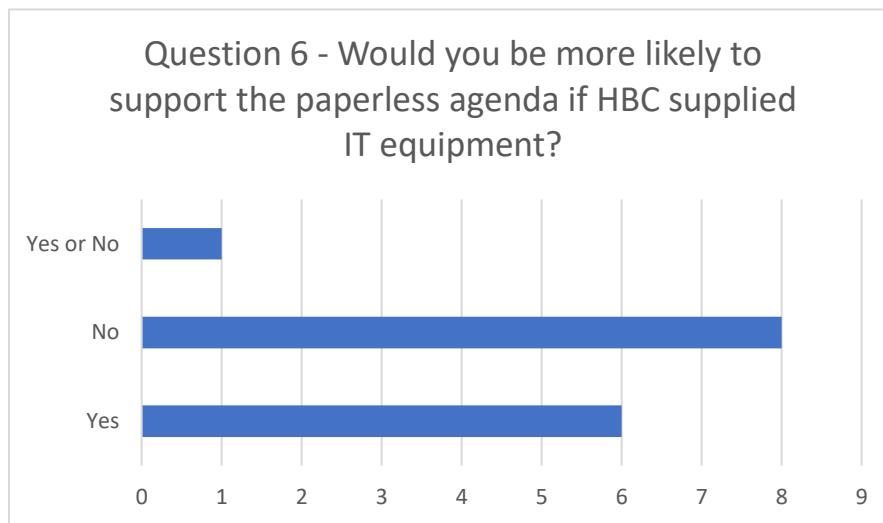
No, I wouldn't need that, but I would prefer to still receive paper copies

I would be prepared to try my method on a device after training. However, if I found that it didn't suit my way of working, I would revert back to paper documents

Yes I would, I have some knowledge

No not required

Question 6 - Would you be more likely to support the paperless agenda if HBC supplied IT equipment?



15 out of 16 respondents answered this question

Yes	No	Yes or No	Didn't answer
-----	----	--------------	------------------

Would you be more
likely to support the
paperless agenda if HBC
supplied IT equipment? 6 8 1 1

Comments Received:

I'll support it either way but do think supplying IT equipment is better for online security.
If it is necessary for us to do our roles, I don't really see why the money should come from our own pockets.

I have all my own IT equipment

NO - but I support the provision of IT equipment. Officers don't expect to load up their private equipment with HBC stuff and neither should Cllrs.. In addition, HBC equipment would be more secure.

I do not need any additional IT equipment to fulfil my role. The only time it is difficult, is large documents associated with planning applications where hard copies of A3 sized pages would be beneficial at formal Planning Committee meetings.

Yes, definitely.

I would not need any further IT. Maybe this should only be supplied to those who request it – to save money

Probably yes, but still have concerns as outlined above

Yes - A laptop would be extremely handy.

No but I would be supportive of equipment being offered to colleagues that required it

If we could get a grant towards it that would be helpful,

For me, the issue is how I work, not a lack of IT equipment

Cllr Bains outlined the history and the input of the Cabinet Lead and officers emphasised data security