IT equipment required to get the best from Public Access

This briefing note has been prepared to help you get the best performance from Public Access for Planning and Public Access for Licensing.

To use Public Access you will require a computer i.e. PC, laptop or tablet, that has a connection to the internet and has a current version of a web browser installed. At the time of writing (December 2014), Public Access is supported on:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE) versions 9 and 10
- Google Chrome version 39
- Firefox version 30
- Safari version 7

For security reasons, you should always ensure that you are running up to date versions of programmes and computer operating system as well as having a virus checker installed.

It is important that the computer you use has sufficient capacity to run Public Access smoothly. The most important components in a computer are the processor and memory. The speed at which a computer runs programs or completes tasks is determined in great measure by the size of the processor. Processor speed is measured in gigahertz (GHz). The higher this measurement, the faster the processor can run programmes and so provide better performance.

The memory in a computer, often referred to as RAM (random access memory), accesses the programme code and loads it into the processor. Memory is measured in gigabytes (GB). Again, the more memory a computer has the better performance it will give.

Finally, the code for all programmes run by the computer and data is stored on the hard drive. Drive capacity is measured in gigabytes (GB) and terabytes (TB). One terabyte is equal to 1,000 gigabytes. To give it perspective, a one terabyte hard drive can store 1,000 copies of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Since Microsoft Windows is still the most popular operating system for PCs and laptops, the recommended computer specification to run Public Access, at the time of writing, is:

- Intel® Pentium® Processor G3240 (3M Cache, 3.1GHz)
- 4GB Single Channel DDR3 1600MHz memory
- 1TB 7200 rpm SATA hard drive.

A computer with this configuration should cost around £300 to £400 and come pre-loaded with Windows 8 which is the latest version of the Microsoft operating system.