

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Notice of Meeting

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 25 November 2003 - Civic Centre, Dagenham, 7:00 pm

Members: Councillor C J Fairbrass (Chair); Councillor C Geddes (Deputy Chair); Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor G J Bramley, Councillor S Kallar, Councillor M E McKenzie, Councillor B M Osborn, Councillor J W Porter, Councillor L A Smith and Councillor T G W Wade.

Declaration of Members Interest: In accordance with Article 1, Paragraph 12 of the Constitution, Members are asked to declare any direct/indirect financial or other interest they may have in any matter which is to be considered at this meeting

14.11.03

Graham Farrant
Chief Executive

Contact Officer Barry Ray
Tel. 020 8227 2134
Fax: 020 8227 2171
Minicom: 020 8227 2685
E-mail: barry.ray@lbbd.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes - To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November (to follow)**

Business Items

Public Items 3 and 4 and Private Items 10 to 12 are business items. The Chair will move that these be agreed without discussion, unless any Member asks to raise a specific point.

Any discussion of a Private Business Item will take place after the exclusion of the public and press.

3. **Reimbursement for Delayed Discharge from Hospital (Pages 1 - 7)**
4. **Supply of Refuse Sacks Contract 2004 - 2006: Pre Packaging and Specification (Pages 9 - 10)**

Discussion Items

5. **Achieving the Decent Homes Standard, Excellence in Housing Services and Estate Regeneration (Pages 11 - 19)**
6. **More Choice in Lettings (Pages 21 - 34)**
7. **Members Telephones and Out of Hours IT Support (Pages 35 - 59)**
8. **Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent**
9. **To consider whether it would be appropriate to pass a resolution to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting due to the nature of the business to be transacted.**

Private Business

The public and press have a legal right to attend Council meetings such as the Executive, except where business is confidential or certain other sensitive information is to be discussed. The list below shows why items are in the private part of the agenda, with reference to the relevant legislation (the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Discussion Items

None.

Business Items

10. **Employment of Interim Managers (Pages 61 - 63)**
Concerns a Staffing Matter (paragraphs 1, 7 and 8)
11. **King George V Playing Field - Playground Equipment Tender (Pages 65 - 70)**
Concerns a Contractual Matter (Paragraphs 7 and 10)
12. **Christmas / New Year Leave (Page 71)**
Concerns a Contractual Matter (paragraph 8)
13. **Any other confidential or exempt items which the Chair decides are urgent**

THE EXECUTIVE**25 NOVEMBER 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

REIMBURSEMENT FOR DELAYED DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL	FOR INFORMATION	
<i>This report concerns the local implementation of a new national policy on reimbursement for delayed discharges from hospital, contained in the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003 (the Act).</i>		
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>The purpose of the Act is to ensure that patients receive the right care in the most appropriate setting; and that NHS beds are available for people who most need them. The aim is to end delayed transfer of care or “bed blocking”. This problem relates mostly, but not exclusively, to the treatment and care of older people.</p>		
<p>The Act requires local authorities to pay NHS Acute Trusts £120 (in London) for each day a bed is occupied by a patient after the discharge date; where the reasons for delay are social care assessment or provision of community care services. A shadow reimbursement system started on the 1 October and financial payments apply from 5 January 2004.</p>		
<p>The government is providing a reimbursement grant to local authorities. This grant acts as an incentive to reduce delayed discharge as any money not required to pay the charge may be invested in community care services designed to reduce both avoidable admissions and delayed discharges. The grant for Barking and Dagenham in 2003/04 is £227,000. The grant in 2004/05 will be in the region of £450,000.</p>		
<u>Conclusion and comment</u>		
<p>This report provides further information about the Act, delayed discharges in Barking and Dagenham and local implementation of reimbursement. Commentators have expressed concern that the Act may have a negative impact on joint working between health and social care agencies and that the quality of care for older people may suffer as a consequence. Our local reimbursement protocol is designed to reduce this risk. Statutory arrangements are in place for the implementation of this new policy.</p>		
Contact: Cathy Mitchell	Director of Older People’s Services	Telephone: 020 8227 2331 Fax: 020 8227 2241 Email: catherine.mitchell@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 Reducing the number of delays is a national and local priority. Older people detained unnecessarily in hospital are at risk of both infection and loss of social skills and networks. The loss of hospital beds for people needing acute hospital care is also significant. The House of Commons public accounts committee has

recently expressed renewed concern that too many people are waiting longer in hospital than necessary. On any given day around 3,500 people are delayed in hospital resulting in the loss of 1.7 million bed days; this is estimated to cost £170 million annually (by contrast the first annual reimbursement grant is £100 million). The Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003 introduces a requirement for hospitals to inform Social Services of people who may need community care services on discharge and penalties / incentives for Social Services to respond within set time scales.

- 1.2 The local definition of delayed discharge and the beds counted for the purpose of agreeing the number of Barking and Dagenham delayed transfers are now in accordance with national guidance. This ensures that comparative data is fair and consistent. At present only general hospital acute patients and those with acute needs in outlying beds are counted. Reimbursement does not apply to people receiving acute care for mental health, maternity or palliative care needs. However, the government has said that it will ask parliament to debate an extension to the liability provisions of the Act to include these groups.

2. The Barking and Dagenham delayed discharge situation

- 2.1 Our target for delayed discharge from acute beds is 15. The position so far this year is:

Average weekly number of people delayed:	11
Average weekly number attributable to the Local Authority:	7
Acute bed days lost (in total and attributable to L.A.):	2240 / 1400
Performance Framework performance quarter 1:	4 blobs (good)

These figures relate to Barking and Dagenham patients. BHR NHS Trust also loses bed days through delays of patients from other boroughs. For example in October 2003 there were between 40 and 46 delayed transfers (3% to 4% of acute beds). In addition, bed days are lost for a range of other medical reasons, of which the largest locally is waiting for cardiac beds in other hospitals.

3. The reimbursement process

- 3.1 The guidance for implementation is contained in Local Authority Circular (2003) 21 and runs to 125 paragraphs. The Department of Health's Frequently Asked Questions with 56 answers is available at

<http://www.doh.gov.uk/reimbursement/qandabill.htm>.

The reimbursement process is administratively complex; there is a system of notifications that must be sent by the hospital to Social Services and the time of day the notification is sent is relevant to the period allowed for assessment and care planning. Each delay is classified according to type to ensure that reimbursement responsibility is correctly identified.

- 3.2 The local authority is not liable for reimbursement if the causes of delay include NHS reasons, but the local authority is responsible for delay caused by housing needs. Delay caused by patient exercise of choice is more complex, but basically the local authority is not responsible if it can show that suitable temporary

arrangements have been offered. A protocol is in place which requires the hospital to be rigorous about insisting people are discharged to an interim placement as it could have been. The process also needs to allow for situations where people are ready to be discharged, but suffer deterioration in their health.

3.3 The London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, and Redbridge; and Essex County Council, working with BHR NHS Trust have prepared a Local Implementation of Reimbursement protocol. The protocol is based on the national guidance and sets out the local organisational arrangements. Some of the key points are:

- A patient must be safe for transfer / discharge
- A multi-disciplinary team must decide that the patient is ready for transfer
- A Section 2 Notification tells Social Services that an assessment is required
- A Section 5 Notification confirms the discharge date
- Assessments must be undertaken quickly (within 3 days of Section 2)
- Services must be provided quickly (within 24 hours of Section 5)
- An agency dispute process will operate to fast timescales.

4. Financial Considerations

4.1 As previously stated the Delayed discharge Grant for Barking and Dagenham amounts to £227,000 for 2003/4 and is estimated to be in the region of £450,000 in 2004/5. The grant is allocated on the basis of the older peoples Formula Spending Share (FSS).

4.2 Local authorities will make a payment to local NHS Acute Trust's for each day of delay (ie blocked bed) that is the responsibility of Social Services . The payment is £120 per day in the South–East, which equates to £840 per week, and the equivalent of £43,680 per year for every “blocked bed “. It is estimated that in a full year Social Services will receive enough Grant to pay fines for between 10 and 11 blocked beds.

4.3 As mentioned at 2.1 previously, the average number of blocked beds this year attributable to Social Services is 7 . if these current levels are maintained (and stay below 11) it is not envisaged Social Services will be net losers from this policy.

4.4 Any residual money left after paying fines can be used for preventive services to avoid delayed discharge from hospital.

5. Conclusion and comment

5.1 The Association of Directors of Social Services has expressed concern that whilst delayed discharge is a whole system problem; reimbursements represent a partial diagnosis of where the cause of the problem is located and penalise one partner.

5.2 The Democratic Health Network (DHN) policy briefing (October 2003) draws attention to the significant increase in administrative requirements and notes that the scheme will add pressure to the discharge process.

- 5.3 Age Concern (England) has warned of the dangers of reimbursement causing a “quick fix” mentality which fails to adequately involve older people in their care and may rely too heavily on residential care rather than community packages that may take longer to arrange.
- 5.4 However the Act is now in force and it will be the responsibility of local health and social care partners to ensure that we continue to focus on improving services, and are not distracted by a process of managing fines.
- 5.5 Barking and Dagenham is performing well in comparison to the rest of London, as the attached monthly total monitoring report indicates (Appendix 1).

Background papers

- The Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003
- Local Authority Circular (2003) 21
- Local Implementation of Reimbursement (draft)

Borough	20/04/03	27/04/03	04/05/03	11/05/03	18/05/03	25/05/03	01/06/03	08/06/03	15/06/03	22/06/03	29/06/03	06/07/03	13/07/03	20/07/03	27/07/03	03/08/03	10/08/03
Barking & Dagenham	9	8	12	12	12	12	7	6	11	11	11	8	14	10	11	19	21
Barnet	20	22	27	21	15	24	22	22	30	26	25	33	26	44	26	19	27
Bexley	13	20	15	13	12	16	20	15	17	16	15	13	12	14	16	18	15
Brent	22	30	21	17	19	20	31	19	15	17	16	21	24	18	19	22	23
Bromley	10	22	21	18	14	16	18	22	21	15	14	18	21	14	21	15	20
Camden	12	19	24	18	25	29	22	17	21	18	23	25	25	32	27	22	17
Corporation of London	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Croydon	32	28	29	24	24	29	32	30	40	33	26	22	20	21	18	18	22
Ealing	47	50	46	41	41	44	43	50	40	40	40	47	42	48	42	45	42
Enfield	12	16	12	15	14	16	16	20	20	24	19	29	30	23	26	18	22
Greenwich	19	18	23	17	18	17	16	19	17	15	12	13	15	14	14	14	14
Hackney	12	12	11	10	13	13	16	18	16	15	18	18	20	12	14	14	15
Hammersmith & Fulham	17	20	28	32	18	25	25	21	22	19	12	25	22	28	19	22	15
Haringey	15	13	11	9	7	14	17	13	12	16	14	17	20	21	23	19	34
Harrow	8	15	15	21	16	14	12	13	13	9	7	10	14	16	21	16	15
Havering	28	20	23	29	26	27	27	24	20	17	13	12	20	17	21	19	25
Hillingdon	43	37	36	44	44	43	40	45	52	54	49	46	43	50	46	35	31
Hounslow	15	21	20	22	20	23	18	18	18	15	12	14	15	18	15	10	14
Islington	19	21	20	19	16	13	16	15	21	22	23	26	26	23	25	24	19
RB K&C	13	15	11	11	14	12	13	11	10	9	9	8	10	8	6	10	7
Kingston Upon Thames	7	10	11	14	22	29	23	28	18	17	19	24	18	11	12	16	13
Lambeth	41	41	38	41	36	36	33	25	28	29	26	26	28	23	23	19	17
Lewisham	22	20	21	20	21	18	17	17	15	14	17	21	15	11	11	15	15
Merton	15	14	19	19	20	16	13	19	17	10	8	9	11	12	13	12	11
Newham	8	10	3	12	14	9	9	12	8	7	6	5	1	5	6	8	6
Redbridge	11	8	10	12	15	9	6	4	7	13	13	19	20	16	10	18	18
Richmond	16	16	23	31	29	26	26	18	16	12	26	21	30	22	25	20	15
Southwark	24	22	23	24	24	22	26	35	32	26	24	23	18	16	19	14	18
Sutton	25	25	35	40	35	38	32	32	30	23	20	21	25	23	27	28	22
Tower Hamlets	18	11	15	17	9	14	12	14	18	7	7	12	10	7	10	20	10
Waltham Forest	4	6	5	8	18	25	18	17	12	16	20	17	21	17	24	25	22
Waltham Forest	24	23	28	37	25	29	22	27	25	23	15	25	32	28	23	24	14
Wandsworth	17	32	41	23	26	26	16	26	23	29	28	20	16	15	14	13	15
Westminster	47	54	59	61	64	52	65	63	54	52	61	49	61	76	67	78	68
Other	646	699	736	752	726	756	729	735	718	674	648	697	725	715	694	699	692
Check Totals Match																	

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SCR	Star Rating	CPA Rating	Council	Target 31/3/2003	10/08/03	17/08/03	24/08/03	31/08/03	07/09/03	14/09/03	21/09/03	28/09/03	05/10/03	12/10/03
London	*	fair	Barking and Dagenham	25	21	22	12	14	17	18	16	10	11	6
London	*	fair	Barnet	14	27	19	21	18	32	23	23	31	33	37
London	***	excellent	Bexley	13	19	19	12	9	14	13	12	12	12	15
London	*	fair	Brent	12	23	19	24	22	18	27	29	28	33	30
London	-	weak	Bromley	21	20	21	21	23	18	20	19	18	28	21
London	**	excellent	Camden	12	18	22	16	19	20	27	31	30	21	21
London	**	excellent	City of London		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
London	*	good	Croydon	28	23	18	19	19	19	18	18	15	14	17
London	*	weak	Ealing	46	44	50	44	39	38	43	41	44	42	57
London	*	weak	Enfield	10	22	18	16	11	10	25	24	26	22	28
London	*	fair	Greenwich	24	15	12	9	14	11	12	13	22	22	15
London	*	poor	Hackney	8	16	13	14	14	23	20	19	16	19	20
London	**	excellent	Hammersmith and Fulham	11	15	15	15	17	10	18	19	18	25	21
London	-	weak	Haringey	18	34	26	20	20	25	31	32	34	31	25
London	*	weak	Harrow	11	15	12	8	16	10	21	25	23	21	20
London	*	weak	Havering	25	26	21	25	17	15	16	20	17	24	24
London	*	fair	Hillingdon	31	34	28	26	25	21	14	23	24	19	19
London	*	fair	Hounslow	20	21	15	18	27	22	20	24	22	12	16
London	*	poor	Islington	19	19	20	20	23	21	21	15	16	17	16
London	***	excellent	Kensington and Chelsea	6	7	7	8	7	10	8	9	4	7	9
London	***	excellent	Kingston upon Thames	8	14	9	19	21	19	17	23	13	19	18
London	*	poor	Lambeth	23	18	20	16	22	22	12	14	22	19	27
London	*	good	Lewisham	33	16	14	16	13	16	16	18	14	10	12
London	*	weak	Merton	16	11	8	7	12	10	14	16	20	14	10
London	*	fair	Newham	7	6	7	10	14	18	12	7	9	7	7
London	**	fair	Redbridge	22	18	12	9	7	15	13	21	19	19	18
London	*	good	Richmond upon Thames	12	16	16	25	19	13	9	16	17	15	16
London	**	weak	Southwark	20	17	22	19	22	24	24	22	24	20	19
London	*	good	Sutton	23	22	20	22	31	32	41	36	32	27	20
London	**	good	Tower Hamlets	8	10	7	8	4	6	5	4	6	4	10
London	-	poor	Waltham Forest	8	22	18	18	14	13	13	14	15	22	17
London	***	excellent	Wandsworth	10	16	16	19	19	16	15	15	12	17	20
London	***	excellent	Westminster	10	16	20	16	27	28	25	26	20	23	19

London Total	554	621	566	552	579	586	611	645	634	629	631
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THE EXECUTIVE**25 NOVEMBER 2003****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

SUPPLY OF PLASTIC REFUSE SACKS CONTRACT 2004 – 2006: PRE PACKAGING AND SPECIFICATION	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report is presented to the Executive as it relates to the intention to seek tenders for a contract with a projected value in excess of £200,000.</i></p>	
<p><u>Summary</u></p>	
<p>The existing contract with Sai-Pac Ltd for the supply of refuse sacks, issued to both trade customers and residents, originally expired in 2000 but due to the uncertainty of future refuse collection arrangements a 3 year extension was granted to 2003 (Minute 115, Technical Services Committee, 2 June 1999 refers).</p>	
<p>It is now necessary to re-tender this contract to appoint a supplier who can supply the quality and quantity of sacks required at the most competitive price and to comply with EU Procurement Regulations. The new tender will ensure continued supply of black refuse sacks to residents, blue trade refuse sacks to businesses with a trade refuse agreement with the Council and plain black sacks for general distribution to Council offices and schools.</p>	
<p>The proposed contract will run for a period of two years starting 1 March 2004 and the anticipated value is approximately £150,000 per annum. This equates to approximately £135,000 for residents refuse sacks, £2,500 for trade refuse and £12,500 for general distribution, each of which is paid for out of individual departments' general estimates.</p>	
<p>Suggestions for change and any problems, are reviewed by the Transport and Cleansing Manager with customers and operational managers on a regular basis. It is recommended that the tender process for the above contract is started as soon as possible with the aim of the new contract starting 1 March 2004.</p>	
<p>As the existing contract with Sai-Pac Ltd expires on 31 December 2003 and a new contract will not start until 1 March 2004, it is proposed to obtain competitive prices for one cycle of deliveries from a selection of suppliers. As the value will be approximately £35,000 (Class C contract), this will be undertaken through the formal tender process.</p>	
<p>It is intended that from April 2004 that delivery frequency of sacks to residents will be twice a year and each delivery will provide 26 bags (in two 13 sack rolls). This will be reflected in the tender documentation.</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation</u></p>	
<p>The Executive is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked in accordance with Constitution (Contract Rules 3.6), to advise if Members wish to be involved with the packaging and specification of the above mentioned contract for the supply of refuse sacks and decide the nature of their involvement in the subsequent evaluation and award of the contract; 	

2. Recommended to agree that the supply of plastic refuse sacks should be undertaken through an agreed contract for a period of 2 years with the option of a 12 month extension bearing in mind the uncertainty at this time of the long term use of black sacks; and
3. Note that should the Executive be content with officers proceeding without direct Member input in the packaging and specification and evaluation of the tender, a further report will be presented on 10 February 2004 advising of the results of the tender evaluation process and requesting approval to appoint the successful contractor.

Reason

To enable preparation and execution of consultation, documentation and seeking of tenders.

Wards Affected - All (Refuse sacks are supplied to all Wards in the Borough)

<p>Contact Heather Cutler</p>	<p>Procurement and Stores Manager</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 3787 Fax: 020 8227 3705 Minicom: 020 8227 3034 E-mail: heather.cutler@lbbd.gov.uk</p>
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Consultation

The following people have seen this report and are happy with it as it stands.

Stefanie Goldsmith, Corporate Procurement Officer
Bob Cooper, Interim Head of Finance, LESD

Background Papers

Minute 115, 2 June 1999, (Technical Services Committee).

THE EXECUTIVE

25 NOVEMBER 2003

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & HEALTH

ACHIEVING THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD, EXCELLENCE IN HOUSING SERVICES AND ESTATE REGENERATION	FOR DECISION	
<p><i>This report deals with meeting the Government's targets for completing an appraisal to achieve decent homes standard.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The report gives the background to the Government's initiatives on the decent homes target and the appraisal process. It sets out the outline of the project plan that has been developed to accomplish the appraisal and indicates the comprehensive nature of stakeholder involvement. The report also proposes that a Housing Futures Forum be established which reports to the Barking & Dagenham Partnership and brings recommendations to the Executive to achieve the decent homes target and estate renewal. The proposals make strong links between achieving decent homes and the regeneration of the borough.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposals to progress the appraisal to achieve decent homes; and 2. Set up the Housing Futures Forum to include the Executive leads for Housing, Health and Social Care and Regeneration. <p><u>Reasons</u></p> <p>These proposals will ensure that a robust appraisal process is delivered within the timescales set by ODPM and which will engage with tenants, Members and other stakeholders.</p>		
<p>Contact: Ken Jones</p>	<p>Interim Head of Housing Strategy.</p>	<p>Tel: 020 8227 5703 Fax: 020 8227 55905 Minicom: 020 8227 5755 E-mail: ken.jones@lbbd.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has been planning its approach to deliver the Decent Homes Standard since 2001. Good progress has been made so far and the HRA Business Plan has been judged to be fit for purpose.

- 1.2 The Communities Plan published by the Deputy Prime Minister in February 2003 incorporated as a high priority that all social housing must meet the decent homes standard by 2010. This was reinforced by the insistence that all local housing authorities must carry out a fundamental appraisal of how to achieve the decent homes target. The appraisal must have tenants, furnished with independent advice, at its heart and also needs to define whole housing service priorities.

This appraisal must be completed and signed off by the Government Office by July 2005. Failure to do so will bring sanctions.

The Decent Homes Standard features within the Community Strategy as a corporate priority.

- 1.3 The Executive agreed on 9 September 2003 to establish an Appraisal Team within Housing & Health Department and allocated resources from within the HRA for this major piece of work.

2. Member involvement and overview of the process

- 2.1 To secure the success of the appraisal project it is vital to have Member involvement and commitment to the objectives and the process. It is recognised that Members will need information and support to engage in this - the project plan identifies this.

- 2.2 The essential elements of the appraisal process are:

- find out the needs and aspirations of tenants and public in general in relation to housing and housing related issues
- to aid tenants in this an Independent Tenant Advisor is to be brought in
- evaluate the resources needed to meet the decent homes standard and needs and aspirations which go beyond that level; then quantify the resources that will be available
- as it is anticipated that there will be a shortfall in resources to meet the decent homes target for the entire Council stock and any further aspirations, we will work closely with tenants and Members to arrive at choices which best fit local circumstances to secure decent homes, regeneration of estates and excellent housing services
- the appraisal is to be conducted in the context of a Best Value Review framework.

- 2.3 For this to succeed there must be a viable project plan in place and strong project management. There must also be clear accountability. The following sections of this report respond to these imperatives.

- 2.4 The Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has invited outline proposals from authorities who wish to pursue round three PFI projects for HRA & Non-HRA housing. They have also invited applications for the 2004 Housing Transfer Programme. Officers do not recommend that these applications be pursued.

3. Planning and Project Management

The Project Management and Communication Flow chart (Appendix A) outlines how the project is to be resourced and shows the communication links.

Although a complex project, the appraisal process will consist of three distinct though overlapping phases.

PHASE 1

- Member training and support
- Resident capacity building
- Creation of tenant/leaseholder forum
- Recruitment of ITA
- Develop communication strategy
- Sign off with Community Housing Task Force (CHTF)
- Housing Needs Study
- Stock Condition Survey and assessment

PHASE 2

- Specific leaseholder consultation
- Stock evaluation
- Appoint appraisal consultant
- Technical appraisal
- Report on position

PHASE 3

- Informing residents of decision

Sign Off

- Council
- Government Office for London

4. Housing Futures Forum

The Housing Futures Forum will be a sub group of the Barking & Dagenham Partnership. It will oversee the delivery of the strategic vision and management of the programme. The Forum will report to the Partnership and provide a range of recommendations to the Executive so that decisions can be taken. A key purpose of this report is to outline the role of the forum, to propose Member representation and gain agreement for other suggested representatives.

The Forum will require high level representation from the major Council stakeholders as well as tenant, leaseholder and staff representatives.

Due to the overlap that this project has with the regeneration agenda, it will be of paramount importance that Housing and Health and Regeneration, and their associated project leaders work in collaboration. As such the Executive lead Members and Directors are represented.

A suggested composition would be:

- Members - Executive Members for Housing, Social Care & Health and Regeneration, Scrutiny Member
- Tenant and Leaseholder representatives
- The Independent Tenant Advisor
- GOL representative
- Chief Executive
- Directors of Housing & Health, Leisure & Environmental Services and Finance
- Chair of Barking & Dagenham Partnership Housing sub group

The local Members of Parliament and GLA member would be invited for specific events and meetings on issues as would other stakeholders such as Police, Health, voluntary sector and business communities.

5. Project Management

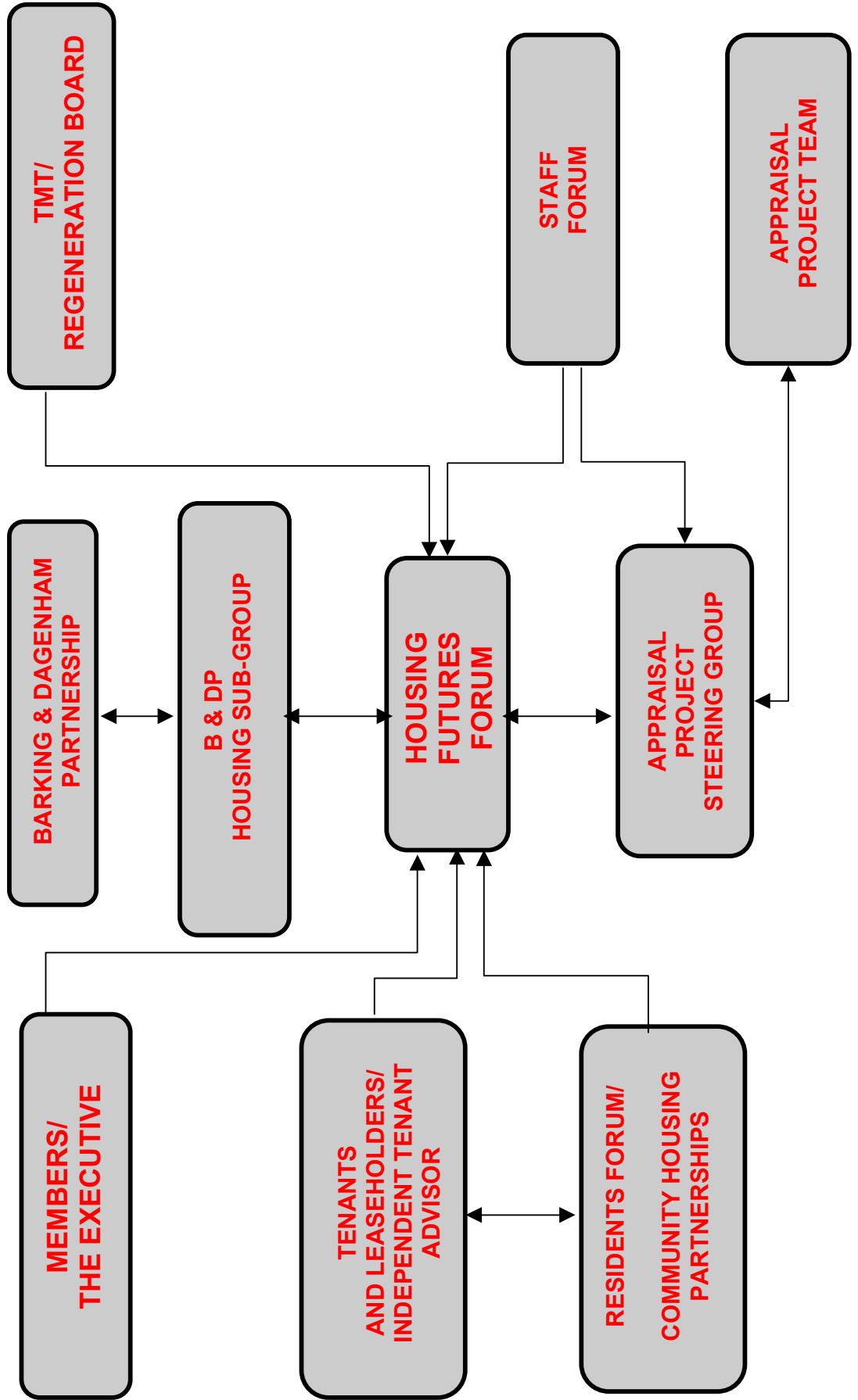
Appendix B. gives an outline of project management and progress on the project since the report presented to The Executive on 9 September 2003.

The following Background Papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Executive Report - 'Review of Service Provision in Housing and Health - Taking the Next Steps in Modernisation and Service Delivery' - 9 September 2003 (Minute 94 refers)

PROJECT MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION FLOW

HOUSING FUTURES



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PROJECT UPDATE

1. Appraisal Project Steering Group

The Appraisal Project Steering Group (APSG) has held its first project meeting and is chaired by the Director of Housing & Health. The group is a senior management meeting comprising of key Housing officers who will play a critical role in delivering the Decent Homes Standards and the Appraisal process.

It acts as the senior Housing & Health Department management body reporting to the Housing Futures Forum. It channels issues, reports progress to the Forum and is responsible for the agreed actions.

The APSG also has the strategic remit for overseeing the delivery of the Appraisal Programme and meeting the Decent Homes Standards. It also ensures that the key messages received from the Forum are turned into action through procurement and application of appropriate resources.

2. Project Team

In a report presented to The Executive on 9 September, it was agreed that Housing and Health would recruit a dedicated project team comprising a Project Leader, Co-ordinator and Administrator. The Project Leader has been successfully appointed and recruitment to the remaining posts is underway.

3. Tenant/Leaseholder Involvement

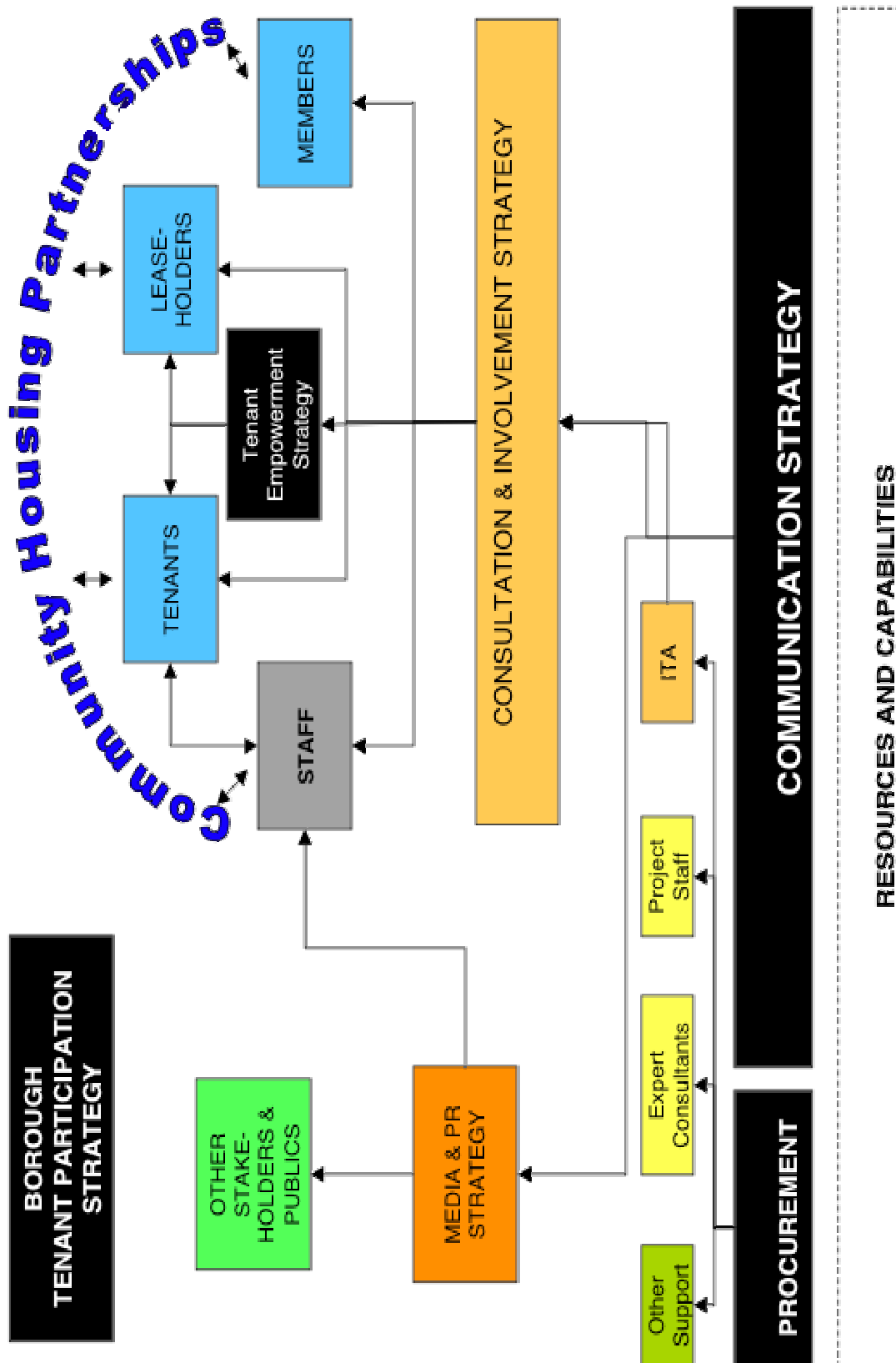
Expressions of interest from appropriate organisations and individuals, to fulfil the role of an Independent Tenant Advisor are now being sought. This appointment is a requirement of the Appraisal process and tenants and leaseholders will be involved in the recruitment process. It is the intention to invite tenants and leaseholders to form the Residents Forum. . It is intended that the initial group with consist of six representatives. Their first task will be to recruit the Independent Tenant Advisor (ITA).

The invitation to tenants and leaseholders will commence with the next round of Community Housing Partnership meetings due to take place in November. A report will be presented to each CHP outlining the Appraisal process and inviting representatives to sit on the Group. It is proposed that the CHPs will act as the umbrella group for this. The detail of how tenants and leaseholders will be involved with the Council will be covered by the Tenant Involvement Strategy.

4. Communication Strategy

Once appointed, an immediate task for the ITA, in partnership with tenants/leaseholders, will be the development of the Tenant Involvement Strategy. This strategy will need to be signed off as approved by the Community Housing Task Force of ODPM. Appendix C is a draft model for the development of the underpinning Communication Strategy which will seek to manage the remaining areas such as media management, web-site development and ensure liaison with other key stakeholders such as the Thames Gateway Partnership and LDA. As can be seen from Appendix C, CHP boards are integral to the Communication Strategy.

Feedback from the CHTF on the draft model so far is that, although ambitious, their view was that it would be held up as Best Practice should we manage our involvement and consultation on the project in this way. The Tenant Involvement Strategy, however, will be defined by tenants/leaseholders themselves.



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THE EXECUTIVE**25 NOVEMBER 2003****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH**

MORE CHOICE IN LETTINGS	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report is being submitted to the Executive, as it requires Executive endorsement in accordance with the Council's constitution.</i></p>	
<p><u>Summary</u></p>	
<p>This report details the principles of More Choice In Lettings, outlines the alternative preference systems in operation, proposes a programme of consultation, and provides two cost options; joining the existing East London Lettings Consortium, and a stand alone Barking and Dagenham system.</p>	
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p>	
<p>The Executive is asked to agree to:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End the existing policy of only offering houses to transfer cases; 2. Become full members of the East London Lettings Consortium (ELLC) and adopt a More Choice in Lettings (MCIL) Policy based on the pure waiting time model in use in LB Newham; 3. The costs of participation in ELLC as outlined in paragraph 7.5, and note that budget provision of £73,000 on More Choice is already contained in the 2003/2004 budget of Landlord Services; 4. Conform with recent changes in legislation by agreeing that the authority should adopt an open housing register, with preference to those applicants who can show a local connection; 5. The public consultation process outlined in paragraph 6.3; 6. The arrangements for transitional protection as outlined in paragraph 3.1; and 7. The Tenants Incentive Scheme outlined in paragraph 5.1, and that Members note that the budget provision of £30,000 is already contained in the 2003/2004 budget of Landlord Services. 	
<p><u>Wards Affected</u> - All Wards</p>	
<p><u>Reason</u></p>	
<p>This report will ensure that More Choice in Lettings can be implemented in Barking and Dagenham. More Choice in Lettings will enhance the Community Priority of Developing Rights and Responsibilities with the Local Community and is in line with Government policy.</p>	

Contact: Jim Ripley	Head of Landlord Services	Tel: 020 8227 3738 Fax: 020 8227 5705 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail jim.ripley@lbbd.gov.uk
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Barking and Dagenham was an original member of the East London Lettings Consortium made up of Barking and Dagenham, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest. The council's choice system was based on maximising the areas of Barking and Dagenham that applicants could prioritise on their application, and shifting all applicants to one of three broad 'bands', in preference to the finely graded points system. However, as further work was carried out on these proposals it became clear that the multiplication of areas of choice generated a highly complicated administrative process and would be difficult for applicants to understand. In response to these concerns members received a presentation of the Newham MCIL system. Following that presentation members made a decision in principle to pursue a more choice in lettings initiative, and requested further information on the range of choice based systems in operation. At the Executive meeting on July 20th 2003 it was decided to suspend the move towards a banded allocation system and that a programme of consultation should be undertaken on more choice in lettings.
- 1.2 This report explores further the principles of MCIL, outlines the alternative preference systems in operation, proposes a programme of consultation, and provides two cost options: joining the existing East London Lettings Consortium, and a stand alone Barking and Dagenham system.
- 1.3 It should also be noted that MCIL is in line with the government's wish to see more tenant and applicant choice in the operation of social housing. This is part of the overall drive to build on the legacy of previous labour governments by modernising the welfare state in the light of changing social conditions and culture. The present tenants of social housing and the applicants for social housing exercise consumer choice in some form or another everyday, but gaining access to a council home is to experience an almost total absence of choice. This, among other things, has led to a steep decline in the popularity of social housing, with most people with any choice avoiding the sector if they can. MCIL is one element of the governments desire to modernise the welfare state. The government recently announced that they expect that all authorities will be running a MCIL system by 2010.
- 1.4 The application of information and communications technology to customer access in the MCIL systems fits very closely with the council's customer access plans in the Customer First Initiative. Indeed MCIL will effectively act as a precursor for the wider system changes envisaged in Customer First – the driving principle for both MCIL and Customer First is ease of customer access to information and advice through the effective use of new technology. In particular MCIL will achieve remote access to the service through the location of Internet Kiosks in a variety of locations around the borough. Through this initiative it will be possible to assess customer feedback on the use of internet kiosks and thus assist with the planning of Customer First.

2. The Principles of MCIL

- 2.1 The existing points based allocations systems have developed over the past 30 years in an effort to ensure that local authorities lettings schemes take account of relative need in the allocation of council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) homes. Unfortunately the entirely laudable desire to ensure that those in greatest need should get priority access to a council or RSL home has led to a highly bureaucratic process which drains all free choice from the system. This generates dissatisfaction on all sides.
- 2.2 Points systems try to take account of the huge variety of different housing needs, with the result that they are inevitably very complex, and difficult to understand. In particular applicants find it extremely frustrating that they cannot be told with any certainty how long they are likely to have to wait. As new applicants with 'greater needs' join the system so existing applicants can be 'leapfrogged'. Because the time you might have to wait to be re-housed is determined by the flow of future applicants it is not possible to predict waiting time with accuracy. Because applicants can only take or leave what they are offered refusals are common. Having built up sufficient points to get an offer applicants are naturally reluctant to accept a less than fully satisfactory property. In order to minimise refusals a penalty system is introduced; applicants who refuse a 'reasonable' offer commonly get suspended from the system. Amongst other things it is this penalising culture which has brought council housing into disrepute.
- 2.3 But it is not only applicants who find this system frustrating, it is also very frustrating for housing staff who are constantly faced with managing the dissatisfaction that the system generates. The systems dysfunctions also generate an administrative burden. Where the access to a council home, or a better council home is determined by needs points then it is inevitable that applicants will 'chase points'. This results in a round of GP's letters, consultants letters and members enquiries, leading to officers having to spend time reviewing the application which, more often than not, makes absolutely no difference to the applicants chances of being rehoused. To deal with these problems points systems become increasingly complex with extra-needs, and extra-extra-needs categories introduced to cope with all the 'special' cases.
- 2.4 Most MCIL based systems seek to overcome these problems by (a) abolishing the system of bureaucratic allocation and replacing it with a system of advertising available properties; (b) replacing the points system with a system based on broadly drawn 'needs' bands; and (c) removing, as far as possible, all penalties from the system. Applicants then 'bid' for the available property and in most systems the 'allocation' is determined by waiting time within the 'queue' formed for that particular property, with higher needs bands taking precedence over lower needs bands. Councils can manage the flow to different groups, eg to transfers or waiting list applicants by labelling the property for one group or groups or another. All systems use the internet and automated telephone systems for making bids in conjunction with a weekly or fortnightly property magazine.
- 2.5 Fundamental to making the system work effectively is feedback information from previous lettings rounds. Applicants can then see their prospects of getting their ideal property and can make an informed decision. Every edition of the property magazine contains information on the results of the last round of bidding; (see appendix 1) applicants can see the waiting time required for the range of properties let in that round and can begin making adjustments to their expectations based on real

information. These are the principles common to all choice based systems: the open advertising of available property; an open bidding process; and feedback on bidding results. However, within that common framework of principles a variety of different policy regimes operate.

There are a variety of methods of prioritising applications to ensure that MCIL conforms with the current legislation. These methods are outlined in appendix 1. Officers recommend the 'pure waiting time' system currently in use in Newham.

The Newham system has the advantage of transparency and it fits very closely with the existing Barking and Dagenham ethos where waiting time is already a major component of the lettings system. This is particularly pertinent in respect of the current policy, which reserves houses almost exclusively to transfer applicants. There is some concern that this policy could open the authority to legal challenge. The proportion of ethnic minority households on the waiting list is likely to be significantly greater than on the transfer list, it is therefore possible that the policy could be indirectly discriminatory.

- 2.6 Fortunately however, the core principle of the pure waiting time method is that waiting time in less desirable property should be the most important element in determining the allocation of the most desirable properties. This matches very closely with the existing Barking and Dagenham policy where waiting time plays a very important role. MCIL based on the Newham system will ensure that the most desirable properties only go to those with the longest waiting time, but will put transfer applicants and waiting list applicants on the same footing. Applicants who have lived for say, 5 years in an unsatisfactory private rented property will not find themselves automatically in a less advantageous position in comparison with applicants who have been living in unsatisfactory public sector property. Such a policy will overcome the potential for a legal challenge presented by the current policy.
- 2.7 For these reasons it is recommended that the Newham system should be adopted, that the existing policy of houses only to transfer applicants be ended, and that Barking and Dagenham should become full members of the East London Lettings Consortium (ELLC).
- 2.8 The Council's community priorities will not be affected by these changes to lettings policy. For example the needs of prospective foster carers will be protected. The overall effect of MCIL will be to develop rights and responsibilities within the local community.

3. Transitional Protection

- 3.1 If the single band system is to work effectively, then the number of applicants who are made offers of accommodation outside the system must be kept to an absolute minimum. That is, as far as possible, an offer outside the system should only apply in emergency situations, for example a medical emergency, or because of threats of violence. In which case some households currently accepted as 'override cases' would not be accepted in the new system, they would be expected to bid using their waiting time along with everybody else in need of a home. In some cases households who currently have override status but little waiting time might lose out, and given that they expected to be offered a new home under the override system this could be considered unfair. In order to avoid this it is proposed that current override cases likely to be affected should get a direct offer of appropriate

accommodation within the next two years. These cases will therefore for a period of two years have two routes to re-housing, a direct offer and access to the bidding system. It is estimated that transitional protection would apply to not more than 60 households. In addition other categories of override where the council interest is furthered by a move will receive direct offers, e.g. decants, children leaving care etc.

4. Easing Sub-regional movement

- 4.1 The government has made it clear that it expects local authorities to work together on problems at a sub-regional level, this includes making it easier for tenants to cross borough boundaries. In line with this expectation the ELLC intend establishing a 'quota' system to enable tenants who wish to move to a neighbouring authority within the system to do so. The ELLC now includes the London boroughs of Redbridge, Newham and Waltham Forest, and it is likely that Hackney and Havering will join in the near future. The proposed quota system is, perhaps, the most sensitive part of the system. Given the problems of high demand all authorities are naturally reluctant to do anything that might have the effect of increasing demand. It should be stressed that the quota system is not yet operational and it is already agreed that the system must be reciprocal. The system will be managed to ensure that movement is equalised across the authorities in the system. The effect will be neutral. However, it is recommended that should members decide to join the east London consortium no move to cross borough quotas is made for at least a year. This will provide time to ensure that the Barking and Dagenham system is working effectively and that the east London quota system is functioning smoothly and equitably.
- 4.2 The Newham system has recently faced a legal challenge. A court case involving the London Borough of Lambeth established that councils must take multiple needs into account when awarding priority. In this case, where applicants fall into more than one reasonable preference category, the system must be able to take that fact into account. Following legal advice Newham have made a change to the system whereby the number or RP categories the applicant falls into is considered in the process of awarding priority within the system.

5. Policy Changes

- 5.1 The current Barking and Dagenham lettings policy offers no incentives other than increased points to households under-occupying a council property. This has not proved very effective in persuading under-occupying households to move to a smaller property, and free up a large property for a household in greater need. It is therefore proposed that the following scheme of financial incentives should be introduced.

- Giving up 3 bedrooms, e.g. moving from a 4 bed to a 1 bed: £5,000
- Giving up 2 bedrooms £3,500
- Giving up 1 bedroom £1,000

In the first instance this policy will only apply to: 2/3/4 bed houses, ground floor 2/3 bed flats with gardens and ground floor 2/3 bed maisonettes with gardens. The amounts that are proposed are broadly similar to other comparable schemes. A review of the success of the policy will be carried out at the end of one year.

- 5.2 It is further proposed that a maximum annual budget of £30,000 should be established to implement this policy.
- 5.3 Recent changes in the legislation relating to homelessness and allocations require that the council must have an open housing register. At the present time the borough operates a residence qualification for joining the register. The recent homelessness bill outlawed this form of 'blanket' exclusion and a new policy must now be adopted. However, while the council cannot exclude any applicant who wishes to register on the housing list, it can apply less preference to applicants who cannot prove a local connection. Government guidance defines local connection as:

- Normally resident
- Local employment
- Family associations
- Special circumstances such as the need to be near local care

The authorities registration rules should be amended accordingly.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Before the implementation of a substantial change in policy is carried out the law requires that the authorities secure tenants and waiting list applicants should be consulted.
- 6.2 Some initial consultation has been carried out. Two presentations have been made to an invited audience of staff and tenants. These presentations generated a lively debate and the response was generally positive.
- 6.3 The following further programme of public consultation is proposed.
- An article on the proposed MCIL system in the Citizen, with a request for feedback.
 - Citizen article on the authorities website with provision for online feedback.
 - A personal letter to all tenants and waiting list applicants explaining the proposed new system and again asking for feedback.
 - An article on the proposed system in People Matters
 - Presentation of the proposed system to each of the Community Housing Partnerships.
- 6.4 In addition the authorities partner RSL's, and Voluntary Sector organisations dealing with special needs will be consulted.

7. Costs

- 7.1 Outlined below are two cost options. The first is the costs of developing a choice based letting system using the Novalet system but entirely independently of the ELLC. The second is the cost of becoming a full partner of the ELLC consortium.
- 7.2 In theory it would be possible to join any existing web based system. But the development of MCIL sits squarely within the governments drive to see local authorities working together at a sub-regional level, the ELLC is effectively the East London sub-regional consortium and it was on this basis that Barking and Dagenham originally participated in the ELLC choice based bid.

7.3 As can be seen the cost of option 2, participating fully in the existing east London consortium, is significantly cheaper than the independent option. In addition joining ELLC will enable the authority to further develop its ongoing participation in sub-regional initiatives. It is therefore recommended that LBBB should become a fully participating member of the ELLC.

7.4 Cost option 1

Non Recurring Costs

User licenses for the Novalet software for LBBB and RSL partners	£ 25,500
Implementation support including configuration, Installation, testing, report production and Post implementation support	£ 23,400
Design of Web site, property magazine and Property advert	£ 4,375
Two days training	£ 1,300
Interfaces to in-house systems, including Telephony integration	£ 11,924
Total	£ 66,499

Internet Kiosks x6	£ 18,000
IT costs in house	£ 15,000
Consultation (estimate)	£ 10,000
Publicity (estimate)	£ 5,000
Printing (new forms etc, estimate)	£ 5,000
Total non-recurring costs	£119,499

Recurring costs

Property Magazine (fortnightly)	£ 62,650
Software Maintenance (without remote access)	£ 18,000
Computer telephony service, including line Rental for 8 line solution (2 year contract).	£ 20,000
Total Annual cost	£100,650

7.5 Cost option 2

Non Recurring costs

Novalet Licence fee	£ 15,000
Implementation consultancy (Costs dependent on support required but £20,000 is a maximum.)	£ 20,000
Internet Kiosks x 6	£ 18,000
Consultation (estimate)	£ 10,000
Publicity (estimate)	£ 5,000
Printing (new forms etc, estimate)	£ 5,000
Total non recurring	£ 73,000

Recurring Costs

Property Magazine	£ 62,650
Software support and maintenance	£ 5,000
Server hosting	£ 2,000
Total annual costs	£ 69,650

- 7.6 The target date for the commencement of the scheme is April 2004; these recurring costs will not be incurred until the start of the scheme and so will fall into financial year 2004/05.
- 7.7 The introduction of MCIL will necessitate a restructuring of the lettings function. Some of the existing functions will disappear as the automated bidding system will take over the task of matching applicants to properties, and, depending on the nature of the system adopted, most of the current work calculating points will also disappear. The new system should also generate a reduction in the day to day administration of the lettings system as refusals decline and there is less demand for staff to explain the system to applicants and deal with telephone enquiries. The work of nominating tenants to RSL's could reduce if RSL's connect directly with the web based bidding system. Some new tasks will be required, such as the advertising of property. The annual costs of MCIL will be contained within the existing Landlord Services budgets.
- 7.8 The one off cost of establishing the system will almost all be incurred in the financial year 2003/04, it is proposed that these costs be met from the HRA underspend consequent on the delay in the full implementation of the restructuring of Landlord Services.
- 7.9 The cost of advertising property in the property magazine is the largest part of the recurring costs. The ELLC are already considering means by which the cost of advertising can be reduced. In addition officers will investigate the possibility of advertising Barking and Dagenham properties in the Citizen. Such a proposal would require a fortnightly production cycle rather than the current monthly cycle so will need

careful consideration of the costs and benefits. It should be noted that such a change is potentially beneficial to the Citizen, a fortnightly cycle would be more up to date and therefore more popular, these benefits could be partly funded from Landlord Services budgets. In addition of course the Citizen is delivered to every household so easy access to advertised property is ensured.

- 7.10 It is possible that the London Borough of Hackney and the London Borough of Havering may join the East London Lettings Consortium. Discussions are currently under way. If the consortium is expanded then it is likely that the costs of option 2 will reduce, however it is too soon to quantify any benefits.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The MCIL pilots have proved popular with tenants and staff, in many instances have contributed to a reduction in void turn round times, and have reduced costs. Perhaps the most important benefit- is the improvement in the quality of service to tenants. The use of new technology has made possible a new approach, which brings an entirely new element of choice, and self-determination into one of the most important elements of housing management and in that process can promote a different relationship between the council and its tenants. MCIL is another important improvement in the quality of service provided by Barking and Dagenham to its residents.

Background Papers

Report to the Executive 12 August 2003 (Minute 79 refers) - Introducing More Choice in Lettings.

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1. Managing reasonable preference

- 1.1 All lettings systems must take account of relative need. This is enshrined in legislation. The law requires that 'reasonable preference' should be given to applicants with particular needs. The lettings system must ensure that such applicants be in a preferential position with regard to applicants without preference. The choice based pilots ensure the application of reasonable preference in a variety of different ways.
- 1.2 The Newham system is the simplest and easiest to explain and understand. Newham has, effectively, only two categories of applicant. Those with a reasonable preference, and those with both a reasonable preference and an urgent need to be rehoused. There is obviously a third category which is those applicants who would like to have a council or RSL home but who do not fall into a reasonable preference category. While these cases may be on the system they are excluded from bidding. There is provision for making offers to non 'RP' cases but only where there are no other bidders. The urgent category is very tightly drawn and only applies in those cases where the applicant simply cannot live in their current home. This may be because of medical problems made worse by the home, or where a household is suffering harassment and simply cannot continue in their home because of the imminent danger of violence. In urgent cases direct offers are made, and a one offer only policy generally applies. Urgent cases, can, of course, also use the bidding system. The bidding system in Newham thus applies to all applicants or transfer cases falling into a reasonable preference category, and only those applicants or transfer cases.
- 1.3 The London Borough of Redbridge operates a variation of the above system. In the Redbridge system there are essentially two categories of applicant, as in the Newham system. The difference is that instead of an 'urgent' group Redbridge has an 'additional preference' group. However, in practice the additional preference group is an 'urgent' group with a different name. As in the Newham system 'additional preference' is very tightly drawn. A further, and perhaps more important difference, is that applicants falling into the 'additional' preference' group are only made direct offers in exceptional circumstances. In general 'additional preference' applicants use the bidding system. At the close of bidding those applicants with 'additional preference' are ranked above applicants with reasonable preference or with no preference, irrespective of length of waiting time. Waiting time then applies to those applicants in the 'AP' category.
- 1.4 The west London consortium, (the London boroughs of Hillingdon, Hounslow, Harrow, Ealing and Brent) (called Locata) operates a variation where applicants are placed in one of four 'priority bands'. These bands correspond roughly to urgency of need, in effect the previous points system has been converted in to a set of broad bands. Bidders for a property are automatically ranked by band, that is, a bidder from a higher band will always outbid a bidder from a lower band irrespective of waiting time, as in the Redbridge system. Only when the band ranking has been done does waiting time apply. The west London scheme has also retained a paper based application. Applicants can send in a coupon to make a bid.

- 1.5 The Camden system has added advertisements and bidding to the existing points based allocation system. All Camden applicants are awarded needs points by officers as in the traditional points system. When properties are advertised applicants bid in the usual choice based fashion but the system ranks applicants by their points level, waiting time will only have a determinant effect when more than one applicant for a property has the same level of points. Currently the Camden system only applies to property on two housing areas, in the rest of Camden the traditional allocation system still applies.

2. Homelessness

- 2.1 When Choice Based Lettings was being introduced some two years ago the issue which caused the most anxiety for the those pilot authorities in high demand areas was the management of homelessness. There was a general concern that the system should not have a negative effect on the authorities ability to manage the rehousing of homeless households.
- 2.2 Different council's have managed the rehousing of homeless households in different ways. In Newham the vast majority of applicants accepted as homeless are placed in leased temporary accommodation, from where they can bid for properties using their waiting time.
- 2.3 In the west London system homeless households are placed in one of the top three bands depending on the urgency of their circumstances. Households in satisfactory leased accommodation are placed in the third band. In cases where a household in B&B or hostel accommodation fails to make a successful bid within 40 weeks then a direct 'one reasonable offer' policy comes into effect.
- 2.4 In Camden homelessness generally attracts a high level of points, but, depending on where the homeless household is housed, and the pressure to ensure a move, the points level increases with time. In all cases authorities monitor very closely the effects on homelessness in order to ensure that costs are effectively managed. So far the experience of the London pilots is that Choice Based Lettings has not had a detrimental effect on homelessness and there is some evidence that it is having a positive effect.

3. The Pros and Cons of the Policy Variations

- 3.1 The great advantage of the Newham system is its simplicity and transparency. In Newham every property that is advertised will be offered by length of waiting time and length of waiting time only. Those households who have an urgent need of rehousing will get a direct offer and the property they are offered will not be advertised and will not therefore be available for bidding. The Newham system avoids almost completely the problem of 'leapfrogging', when an applicant bids for a property then he/she can be sure that if they have been waiting the longest of all the bidders then they will get first refusal. The disadvantage is that there is a proportion of properties (currently around 20% of allocations) which are not available for bidding. Also the Newham system makes no attempt to make finely graded judgements of need and this could be seen as disadvantageous to some needs groups. On the other hand, from another perspective, this can be seen as an advantage. It reduces to an absolute minimum the problem of 'points chasing'. The 'urgent' category is very clear so it is virtually impossible to add

'incrementally' to need until you become an 'urgent' case. You can either live in your home or you can't.

- 3.2 The Redbridge variation has the advantage of keeping all properties in the bidding system, but at the cost of losing transparency. Some bidders do not have to rely only on waiting time.
- 3.3 The Locata system again keeps all the properties in the bidding system, but the broad banding opens the way for 'band' chasing. Hillingdon, for example, has a Social Welfare Panel for hearing 're-banding' appeals. And, of course, it may not be waiting time that counts so there is a loss of transparency in comparison with the Newham system.
- 3.4 Camden has the advantage of enabling finely graded need awards and making allocations accordingly, but at the cost of keeping a large amount of the control over who gets what with officers rather than with applicants. With the corollary that the system is hardly more transparent than the old allocation system and points chasing must continue.
- 3.5 If Barking and Dagenham were to pursue the Camden model there would be minimal policy changes required, the current points system could be grafted onto the existing ELLC choice system. However, there would be very little increase in transparency for the applicant, a continuation of points chasing and little opportunity for cost reductions. The Camden model is not recommended.
- 3.6 The Locata system of 4 bands does reduce points chasing and is a system where all properties are advertised, however, officers are still involved in allocating to bands and so 'band chasing' can develop. The system is necessarily less transparent than the Newham system because 'leapfrogging' can still occur. The Locata system offers few policy or practical advantages in comparison with either the Newham system or the Redbridge system.

Summary of Pros and Cons

Newham

Pros: Transparent, efficiency savings, easily understood, no 'leapfrogging', close to existing B&D culture.

Cons: initial losers need transitional protection, more substantial system change, more direct offers.

Redbridge

Pros: fewer direct offers, savings

Cons: less transparent, less easily understood

Locata

Pros: fewer direct offers, savings

Cons: open to 'band' chasing, less transparent, less easily understood

Camden

Pros: little system change

Cons: more control with officers, non-transparent, no savings, points chasing continues.

THE EXECUTIVE

25 NOVEMBER 2003

**JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE STRATEGY
AND THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

MEMBERS' TELEPHONES AND OUT OF HOURS I.T. SUPPORT	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report is submitted to the Executive at their request further to a previous report on 23 September 2003 concerning I.T. for Members.</i></p>	
<p><u>Wards</u> - This is not a Ward related issue but it does affect ALL Members.</p>	
<p><u>Summary</u></p>	
<p>On 23 September the Executive agreed to replace the current ISDN computer connection for Members with an ADSL connection. ADSL provides a broadband digital system which, amongst other things, is much faster than ISDN, offers a secure point to point connection between the Member's home and the Civic Centre, is simple to connect and more resilient to viruses. It also offers longer-term revenue savings with a fixed monthly charge and unlimited usage at no extra cost.</p>	
<p>A decision was not, however, taken on the recommendation within the 23 September report to remove the telephone handsets at the same time as the ISDN lines. A number of Members had raised several issues concerning the lines and the use and cost of telephones generally, and a further report was asked for.</p>	
<p>This report addresses the telephones aspect, sets out the background, tries to cover all the concerns that have been raised, offers several options and comments on the possible advantages/disadvantages and cost implications of each. The options range from Members not receiving any special allowance or provision through to them receiving and using, at no cost to them, a standard telephone and a mobile telephone for Council business use. The report also provides, for information, a summary of responses received from other London Boroughs following a request for details from them about the provision/payment of telephones for Members in their areas. From this it will be seen that the majority expect their Members to pay for Council business telephone costs and that the Members' Allowance is intended to cover this. Also, that it is uncommon to issue all Members with mobile telephones.</p>	
<p>The report reiterates the point made in the 23 September report that, under national guidance, the Members' Allowance is intended to cover the cost of telephones.</p>	
<p>As requested on 23 September, the report additionally covers Information Technology (I.T.) out of hours support for Members. It also clarifies the position about audit checks of computer and telephone usage, as this was another area, which Members were concerned about. Lastly, it comments on the timescales for the Broadband connections.</p>	
<p>The two relevant portfolio Members (Councillors Fairbrass and Smith), together with Councillor Mrs Rush, who made a number of points on behalf of other Members at the Executive on 23 September, have been consulted. Officers who have been consulted are shown at the end of the report.</p>	

Recommendation

1. The Executive are asked to consider the options associated with Members' provision and use of telephones, and decide on which to pursue.
2. If relevant, the Executive should consider whether a chosen option is to be provided to all Members or to selected Members only, or whether it is simply to be offered to all Members who can choose to take up the offer or not. Also, where appropriate, criteria for the use of any facilities may need to be considered and determined.
3. If the chosen option does not include the provision of mobile telephones or the installation of the Centrex system for all Members, the Executive should confirm whether or not current allocations should continue as described in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6 respectively.
4. The Executive are also asked to consider whether they wish the Director of Finance to go ahead with an out of hours I.T. support facility for Members.

Reason

To clarify the issues associated with Members and telephones, and, if appropriate, tie in the provision or removal of telephone handsets with the installation of the ADSL computer connections.

Contact Officers:		
Nina Clark	Head of Democratic Support	Tel: 020 8227 2114 Fax: 020 8227 2171 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail: nina.clark@lbbd.gov.uk
Paul Offen	Head of Information, Systems and Technology	Tel: 020 8227 2015 Fax: 020 8227 2060 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail: paul.offen@lbbd.gov.uk
Steve Winman	Telecommunications Manager	Tel: 020 8227 2700 Fax: 020 8227 2060 E-mail: steve.winman@lbbd.gov.uk

1. The Current Arrangements

- 1.1 Members are expected to use their private telephones for Council business. Alternatively they can use the telephones available in the Members' Rooms at the Civic Centre and the Town Hall. The Leader of the Council has a telephone in each of his rooms at both these locations.
- 1.2 Those Members who have been provided with home computer equipment have also been given an associated telephone handset. Unfortunately, at the time that the equipment was installed, Members were wrongly told that they could use the telephones for incoming and outgoing calls. In fact, they were only meant for

incoming calls. The line is also available for faxes. In late 2002, the Chief Executive, realising that some Members had inadvertently been using their lines for making calls out, issued a memo clarifying that they could only be used for incoming calls. Naturally, this led to some frustration/annoyance by a number of Members due to the original information, which they had been given.

- 1.3 The Guide for Members on the Use of Resources, Facilities and Equipment, which was agreed by the Assembly during 2003, includes reference to the fact that Members should only use the telephone lines for incoming, not outgoing, calls, and for faxes.
- 1.4 The Members' Basic Allowance (currently £8,800 per year) is intended, as per national guidance first issued in 1991, to cover incidental costs such as the use of Members' homes **and** telephones.
- 1.5 Mobile telephones are currently provided to a small number of Members - the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and two Members of the Executive. The allocation of mobile telephones to Members is at the discretion of the Leader of the Council to whom any requests are directed. There is no formal policy about allocation or their usage. All Council line costs and calls are paid for by the Council. Due to Data Protection it is not known if any of these Members subscribe to a private line - line two on their mobile telephone. If they do all related costs are billed directly to the Member's home address and the Council is not involved whatsoever. This private line facility is available to anyone who has a Council mobile telephone. (See para. 2.5 also).
- 1.6 Two Members were provided some while back with 020 8270 numbers. There has been some confusion over these lines and the original authorisations for them. These lines are similar to those installed in schools, social services and leisure establishments, and other similar Council buildings. The lines (on what is known as the Centrex system) cost a fixed amount per month for the rental and enable free internal calls to be made to other numbers on the same system and on the general internal Council system - 020 8227 numbers. External calls incur a charge at a slightly discounted rate to a standard BT telephone line. All costs are being paid for by the two Members concerned.

2. Issues/Questions raised by Members *(Officer responses are inset and in italics)*

- 2.1 Costs - Telephone costs incurred by Members are escalating as a result of changes in technology and the increasing use of mobile telephones by constituents and officers. In certain Wards, constituents use mobile telephones instead of land lines either because they cannot afford land lines or they are bad debtors. "Pay as You Go" type mobile telephone use is quite common. As well as being asked to ring constituents back on their mobile telephones, Members are now frequently being asked to call officers back on mobile telephone numbers too. One Member, as an example, has evidence of 37 calls to constituents or officers on their mobile telephones within a recent three months period.

Also, in some areas, Members are increasingly finding the need to use the telephone for contacting constituents. For literacy or language reasons, some constituents find oral communications easier than written.

It is not felt that the Members' Allowances Scheme has kept up to date with these changing circumstances and the extra costs being borne by Members as a result. Some Members are saying that their bills have increased by at least £50 per quarter over recent years.

These are valid arguments in principle although, as will be seen later in the report, the Member's Basic Allowance in this authority is relatively generous. (See para. 2.4.)

- 2.2 Publicity / Stationery - Posters, stationery, business cards and so on have, where relevant, been printed with the telephone numbers associated with the lines provided with the computer equipment. To take these telephones away would incur additional costs to the Council and cause confusion amongst constituents.

Again a valid argument although only five/six Members are using the computer linked telephone numbers on posters and business cards respectively. No Council issued stationery includes these telephone numbers. The options, which are offered for Members' consideration, include the possibility of retaining the telephone handsets currently provided with the computer equipment. If this happens, it is understood that the same telephone numbers could be retained and therefore the said posters and business cards will not need to be reprinted.

- 2.3 The Centrex System - Some Members originally thought that they were going to be linked to the Centrex system (the "270" line) so that they could make internal calls at no extra cost and, like officers, use the lines for external calls (at no cost to them as individuals) for Council business. Members could pay separately for any personal calls.

The life expectancy of the "270" line has also been queried.

Additionally, some Members understand that some of the voluntary organisations are on the Centrex system.

It was never intended to provide all Members with the "270" line. NTL, the provider, has, in the past, generally been reluctant to provide single lines to individual domestic properties.

Originally the Council acquired two thousand Centrex numbers in the "270" range. This was all that was available at the time that would integrate with our existing system for the purpose of four digit dialling. We have 270 4xxx and 270 6xxx numbers. Since then we have exceeded this capacity and had to take another range - 724 1xxx. So, all "270" numbers have been allocated, as have around 150 from one thousand of the 724 1xxx range. NTL are looking to update their central platform but there should be no financial or service delivery issues, and the future of the service looks stable.

There are no voluntary groups on the Centrex system. The voluntary groups based at St George's Day Centre are connected to the internal Council system (020 8227 numbers), which is located in that building. The groups pay for their call costs through appropriate recharging.

- 2.4 Members' Allowance - how much is "allocated" for telephone calls? How much was absorbed into the Members' Allowances when the separate budget for Members' use of home telephones was abolished?

Prior to 1 April 1991 (when it was decided to stop paying Members their home telephone rental and the costs of Council business calls, but instead to provide all Members with (a) a Basic allowance which, amongst other things, was intended to cover telephone costs, and (b) attendance allowances for each meeting attended), Members received an average of £276 per annum for the telephone element. When the system changed in 1991, it was calculated that overall the amount received by a Member in that year would increase by a minimum of £323 through to a maximum of £2,444, depending if a Member had a special responsibility or not. The average increase was £712.

The Basic Members' allowance in 1991 was £800. It is now £8,800 but, of course, it now includes the attendance allowance aspect as well. A recent survey showed that last year the average Basic allowance across London Boroughs was £7,605. At that time, Barking and Dagenham's allowance was understood to be the highest at £8,500.

- 2.5 Officers and Mobile Telephones - what is the allocation policy? Are there plans to provide Members with mobile telephones on parity with a large number of officers? Are officers told that they are expected to pay for most or all of their private calls and that there could be tax implications?

There is no specific allocation policy for staff. Managers give authority for their staff to have mobile telephones according to need and departmental/divisional affordability. 1,500 staff currently have a Council mobile telephone. It is acknowledged that this number is high and the Director of Finance is carrying out a review of allocations. Staff who have a mobile telephone are told at the outset that the facility is strictly for Council business and that there could be tax implications if it is wrongly used for private calls. Clearly, there would also be disciplinary implications should a member of staff be making inappropriate use of their mobile telephone.

All costs for the provision of the mobile telephone and for calls/text messages are paid by the Council. Calls to international and premium lines are barred.

Managers are responsible for budget monitoring including keeping a check on the appropriateness of usage of mobile telephone and associated costs. Where practical, managers are alerted if costs appear to be high.

Staff who have a Council mobile telephone are given the option to have a second line for private use. Until recently they paid £5 plus VAT per month which included some free call time. All further calls were charged to their home address. Now, following recent negotiations, the second line is provided free of any monthly charge but all calls are paid for by the individual (and charged to home addresses as before). Whilst the Council has negotiated this private facility for staff by enabling them to have the second line, the Council does not and cannot be involved with any personal issues regarding billing, other communications or service delivery. This is the full responsibility of the individual.

Under Data Protection, Orange are not even allowed to tell the Council what the line number is. When the officer leaves the Council their mobile telephone is returned and the second line is cancelled.

Note - it is currently cheaper to ring from one mobile telephone on the same network as another, than to ring that mobile number from a land line. The Telecommunications Manager is, however, looking for cheaper land line to mobile telephones options.

2.6 Provision of Telephones Linked to the new Broadband connection - is this feasible?

Yes. (See Appendix B - Option Two).

2.7 Audit Trails / Policing the Use of Computer Equipment - who could check and why? Concerns about the possible misuse of policing.

The 23 September report made the point that one of the benefits of the Broadband connection would be the facility for the I.T. staff to produce audit trails on each Member if required. This meant that Internet sites visited by a Member could be checked if necessary. Generally, and the same applies to staff, e-mail usage and website usage can be monitored. Members have been advised of this in the Guide on the Use of Council Resources, Facilities and Equipment.

The same monitoring can be carried out on calls from Council telephones.

Under Data Protection this is treated as personal data. However, within the Guide, as agreed by the Assembly:

"in an attempt to protect Members, any areas of serious concern that come to the attention of an officer in the course of their duties will be reported to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will consult with the Council's Monitoring Officer, and take whatever action he or she feels is necessary to resolve the matter.

In the event that resources have been inappropriately used for non-Council business, the Chief Executive will have the right to recover the costs involved from the Member or Members concerned"

The provision allows for the Chief Executive, and, if appropriate, the Monitoring Officer to be provided by relevant officers with personal data about Members relevant to such circumstances.

Generally therefore, only the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer would have the right to ask for details/audit trails of Members' use of their computers, telephone calls and so on. The only exception to this would be if a formal complaint about a Member was made to the Standards Board for England, and their Investigating Officer needed such information, they would have a right to ask for it; alternatively, if the National Board referred a complaint back to the Council for local investigation, the Standards Committee may have the right to ask for such information if it was relevant.

It is important to stress that monitoring is not, and will not be, carried out routinely.

3. Survey of other London Boroughs

- 3.1 Appendix A summarises the outcome of some questions, which were put to all London Boroughs.
- 3.2 From those who responded (roughly half) it will be seen that the majority require Members to pay for Council business telephone calls and that the Members' Basic Allowance is intended to cover costs. There are different arrangements for claiming charges back - some seem administratively cumbersome.
- 3.3 Only one of the Councils, which responded, offers mobile telephones to all its Members - most of the others only provide to small numbers of selected Members.

4. Options

- 4.1 Bearing in mind all of the above background, issues and concerns, there are clearly several options in varying degrees which could be considered.
- 4.2 It is hoped that this report provides clarity and answers to the matters that have been raised by Members, and sufficient information for Members to weigh up all various factors and decide which option to pursue.
- 4.3 The options, together with advantages, disadvantages and cost implications of each, are detailed in a schedule at Appendix B.
- 4.4 In summary, the options include:
 - No change to the current arrangements - Members are required to use their private telephones and bear the costs of all Council business calls and related expenses.
 - Members can keep the telephones provided with the computer equipment and use them for outgoing Council business calls. Either all call costs are paid by the Council, or Members pay, or the Council pays a certain amount towards them.
 - Members are offered a mobile telephone with the above permutations regarding the cost of the calls.
 - Members are connected to the Centrex system ,again with the various permutations.
 - Members can have a telephone and a mobile telephone, again with various permutations.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There is no budgetary provision for any of the additional costs referred to. The point is repeated that the Members' Basic Allowance is intended to cover the costs of Council business telephone calls. The Allowance set in this Authority is amongst the highest, if not still the highest, across London.

- 5.2 The financial implications of the various options have been estimated and are summarised below:

<u>Option</u>	<u>Initial Outlay (£)</u>	<u>Ongoing Revenue Cost (£)</u>
Option One	£300	No change
Option One A	£300	Around £20,400
Option One B	£300	Around £6,120/£14,280
Option One C	£300	Around £6,120
Option Two	£300	No change
Option Two A	£300	£14,000
Option Two B	No change	Not known - minimal
Option Two C	No change	Around £6,120
Option Three	£5,655	Around £54,672
Option Three A	£5,655	Not known - minimal
Option Three B	£5,655	Around £6,120
Option Four	£8,455	Around £25,500
Option Four A	£5,655	No change
Option Four B	£5,655	Around £6,120
Option Five	£3,050	Around £14,484
Option Five A	£3,050	Around £4,284

6. Out of Hours I.T. Support

- 6.1 The Director of Finance has evaluated the introduction of out of hours I.T. support for Members and staff from December 2003 following requests for such a service from some Members and the Leisure and Libraries services. This would provide a help desk facility together with a "mobile" I.T. technician support officer from 7.00 am through to 10.00 pm. This will enable Members or staff to log calls outside normal working hours and receive verbal assistance over the telephone or a visit from a technician if necessary. Currently support is generally only available between 8.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. although some staff have been willing to assist if contacted directly and still in the office later than 5.00 p.m.
- 6.2 It is estimated that the annual cost will be in the region of £18,000. No specific budget provision exists for this.

7. Timescales for I.T. Connections

- 7.1 It is hoped that the ADSL Broadband connection will begin to be installed in Members' homes from early 2004. A significant amount of core infrastructure has to be installed before the project can start. The project is estimated to take up to seven months from start to finish therefore "all" Members should be connected by August 2004. ("All" - all those currently on line although it is hoped that remaining Members will have been encouraged to use the equipment by then too).

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Executive Minute 23 September 2003
- Extract from Guidance on Members' Allowances
- Guide for Members on the use of Resources, Facilities and Equipment
- Emails from several London Boroughs

Consultation:

The following officers have been consulted on the report:

- Chief Executive
- Directors of Corporate Strategy and Finance
- Head of Business Services; Head of Information Systems and Technology; Head of Audit; Head of Finance (Regeneration and Policy); I.T. Manager, Support Services; Telecommunications Manager; Project Accountant, Regeneration and Policy Finance (Finance Department)
- Solicitor to the Council; Members' Secretary and Leader's PA (Corporate Strategy Department)

**MEMBERS AND TELEPHONES
SURVEY OF OTHER LONDON BOROUGHS
REPORT TO EXECUTIVE - 25 NOVEMBER 2003**

	1. Do your Members get a special allowance or costs paid for the use of their personal phones for Council business?	2. If the answer to question 1 is no, is it assumed that their Members Allowance is intended to cover the costs?	3. Do any of your Members have a Council mobile phone? If yes is this all Members or only certain ones?	4. Are restrictions placed on their use of mobile phones?	5. Do your Members have special line installed by the Council for business which is fully funded by the Council. If they do can they use it for external calls and, if so are there any restrictions put on such usage? E.g. can they make international calls or call mobiles?
London Boroughs					
1	Yes	N/a	Yes - certain ones only	Yes	Not as a rule, but changes are afoot.
2	No	Yes but see 5	Yes, Cabinet Members are offered mobiles. We only pay the rental and claim back for all calls.	It is supposed to be used for Council business only.	All Councillors are offered a telephone line for council business. We will pay for rental, calls to the dial up line so they can access the e-mail system. We will also

					pay for calls to council offices. All other calls are claimed back. There are no restrictions. We do not pay for internet access although that may change.
3	No	Yes	No	Not applicable.	Special lines have been installed for home computers and these can also be used to make phone calls. There are no restrictions other than that Members should act responsibly. We are in discussion with the Whips about the question of charging for private use of their computers, including for phone calls.
4	No	Yes	The Leader only.	She pays a proportion of the bill from her allowance.	No although we are beginning to roll out ADSL connections for Members along with the provision of a laptop.

5	No	Members Allowances have just been reviewed and the allowances for dependent carers, travelling and subsistence have been absorbed into the basic allowance.	Cabinet Members are provided with a mobile phone.	Those Cabinet Members with a mobile phone are given a copy of the bill so they can identify private calls and reimburse the Council.	No
6	We provide a Broadband line, installed by BT, at their home address. It is for phone, fax, PC access etc. They pay for all calls, therefore no restrictions. The Council pays for installation of line, line rental and access to the Internet/Intranet partly from their "Notional Allowance" and partly from the IT Department's budget.	The Members' Notional Allowance is £1,000 per annum, per Member - to allow them to set up an "office at home" as we do not provide secretarial support for Members. This £1,000 (£4,000 over 4 year term) is in addition to the Members' Allowances Scheme, which includes SRAs etc. It covers items such as IT equipment, rental for phone lines, mobile phones, pagers, stationery, office furniture, printing etc.	All Members can also have a mobile phone if they want one, provided by the Council, and, many do. Again, the Council pays for rental (from their Notional Allowance) and they pay for all calls. They can also have a pager (rental paid by the Council).	There are no restrictions on the mobile phones as they pay their own call charges.	See point 1 above. No restrictions because they pay for their own call charges.

7	No	Yes	No - but we have several they can borrow.	UK calls only.	There are phones in the Members' Room, Scrutiny Chairmen's Room, Minority Party Room, Cabinet Office etc. for general use. UK calls only.
8	No	No - see 5	Both Leaders get their business mobile calls paid. They provide the phone.	Should be for business use only.	We provide a separate line and handset for Council use fully funded. This includes calls to mobiles.
9	Yes, see answer 5 for more detail.	N/A	Three of our Members have a Council mobile phone, the Leader of the Council, the Mayor and the Deputy Leader of the Council.	Not at present.	We have a BT line installed in the homes of our Members which is for data communication between their computer and the Council server. The Council pays for the quarterly rental plus an allowance of £10 for all calls made to the Council server. Anything above that amount is claimed back from their Members' Allowances. They are

					not allowed to make international or mobile phone calls. Most Members have their own BT line for personal calls.
10	No	Yes	Yes - only some, not all.	No restrictions are placed on their use. Members are expected to pay for non Council calls.	No
11	Some of the Members have telephone lines paid for by us on the proviso that it is used for Council business only and that this number is handed out to members of the public.	-	The only Members who have mobile phones are the Members with Special Responsibilities such as Chairs and Executive Members.	These are only to be used for Council business and if any private calls are made these must be paid for and we send them their bills on a regular basis.	They can call mobiles and call externally.
12	No	Yes	Yes - all Councillors can apply for a mobile as part of the Council's corporate contract. If they sign up to this they get a standard handset and must pay for all charges and call costs, with VAT added, which is	No see 3.	We would pay for the installation of a line but rental and all call charges would have to be paid for by the Member concerned.

			deducted on a monthly basis from their basic allowance payment.		
13	No	We do more than assume this. On a review of our Allowances Scheme a couple of years or so ago, the Scheme was approved on the basis that it covered all incidental home expenses, such as phone costs and travel/subsistence within the Borough.	Supplied to Cabinet Members and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen on request.	Members pay for any private calls made on a mobile. The phone remains Council property and must be returned when they cease to be a Member.	Has only been done, as an exception, for the Leader. Would be expected to pay for any private usage.
14	No	Yes	The Leader (although in fact he hasn't taken up the offer as he's already got one paid for by another body, the two Deputy Leaders and the Leader of the Opposition.	Not explicitly or any more so than using any other Council provided facility, but they'd be expected to reimburse the authority for personal use.	No, but we've paid for them all to have broadband connections and we pay the rental on that.

We do pay an extra telephone allowance as follows:

"6. Telephone Expenses
6.1 Land lines

Members are entitled to claim telephone expenses provided that their telephone numbers are published in the standard telephone directories and in any other publications reasonably determined by the Council.

A Member may:

EITHER: Seek reimbursement for the installation, rental and call costs for a single telephone line, provided that he/she undertakes to use the line exclusively for council business. (Maximum line rental claimed may not exceed £45.00 which is equivalent to the BT Together rate which has some free calls facilities (this is an increase following a trial period)).
Calls made on mobile phones will not be reimbursed.

OR: Seek reimbursement (inclusive of VAT) for the rental on one telephone line, together with a contribution including VAT towards call charges of such a sum as the Member certifies does not exceed the actual proportion of the total call charges incurred on matters of Council business. ** A maximum of the BT Together rental rate may be claimed, ceiling of £45.00 per quarter. Income tax is payable on the line rental under this arrangement and will be deducted by officers from the expenses paid. In seeking reimbursements, the original itemised phone bills will be required as evidence of business calls made during the period and must be retained by the Business Unit in support of the claim.

6.2 Mobile Phones

There will be no provision for mobile telephones to the party groups."

Any mobile phone or pager costs are separate from the Member Allowance Scheme and are met from the party group budgets - these are few in number.

On question 5, we review bills before payment.

Changes to the above are possible as we review our Member Allowance scheme

**MEMBER AND TELEPHONES - OPTIONS
REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE - 25 NOVEMBER 2003**

OPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	COST IMPLICATIONS	OTHER COMMENTS
<p>Option One</p> <p>Remove the telephone handsets provided with the original ISDN line and do not replace with any new telephone provision of any sort. Members are expected to use their private telephones for Council business (or those available in the Members' Rooms) as per current guidance</p>	<p>Any confusion by Members over the use of these telephone lines is removed.</p> <p>Members can use the socket/line provided with the computer equipment solely for their Council provided fax machines.</p> <p>(With the telephone handsets it is necessary to unplug one to use the other).</p>	<p>Members have to rely on the use of their own private telephones for Council business calls (including internal numbers). Any printed posters or business cards which refer to the computer linked telephone numbers will no longer be appropriate and will need to be reprinted.</p> <p>The issues raised by Members about changing technology and increased use of mobile telephones by constituents and officers is not acknowledged.</p> <p>The facility to use the telephone handsets for incoming calls is removed.</p>	<p>No cost to the Council other than the cost of reprinting some posters and business cards. Estimate £300.</p>	<p>The Members Basic allowance continues to be the means by which Members are expected to fund their Council business telephone expenses.</p>

<p>Option One A</p> <p>As above except Members can reclaim the cost of Council business calls and telephone rental (for their private telephone).</p>	<p>As Option One. Members are reimbursed for Council business use.</p>	<p>Goes against the grain of the Member's Allowance being intended to take account of telephone expenses. Reverts back to the situation pre 1991.</p> <p>Difficult to distinguish between private and Council business use - administratively complicated.</p>	<p>Reprinting of some posters and business cards. Estimate £300.</p> <p>Telephone line rental and business call costs. Based on a bill of say £100 per quarter, per Member = Estimate £20,400 per annum.</p>	
<p>Option One B</p> <p>As Option One A except Members can claim for (a) telephone rental only; or (b) business calls only.</p>	<p>As Option One. Members are part reimbursed for Council business use</p>	<p>Goes against the grain of the Member's Allowance being intended to take account of telephone expenses.</p> <p>Difficult to distinguish between private and Council business use if (b) is chosen.</p>	<p>Telephone line rental. Based on say £30 per quarter, per Member = Estimate £6,120 per annum</p> <p>Business call costs. Based on say £70 per quarter, per Member = Estimate £14,280 per annum.</p>	
<p>Option One C</p> <p>As Option One A except Members receive a fixed monthly amount towards business use - added to the monthly allowance.</p>	<p>As Option One B</p>	<p>Goes against the grain of the Member's Allowance being intended to cover telephone expenses.</p>	<p>The cost to the Council will depend on the monthly allowance.</p> <p>For every £10 per month per Member = £6,120 per annum.</p>	<p>The fixed amount would need to be determined.</p>

<p>Option Two</p> <p>When the ADSL Broadband connection is installed and the ISDN line is removed, Members be allowed to keep and use the telephone handset already provided for incoming calls only (i.e. same provision as now)</p>	<p>No change necessary to current instructions.</p> <p>Simple to provide as the handset is already provided and will readily link into the ADSL connection once installed.</p>	<p>Same as Option One except that Members can continue to receive incoming calls on their computer associated telephones.</p> <p>Members not on line do not have the extra facility for incoming calls.</p>	<p>Same as Option One</p> <p>There is no extra charge for the handset as the original one provided would be kept, and no extra installation costs. Also the line rental is included within the cost of the computer connection.</p>	<p>Same as Option One</p> <p>It is possible that outgoing calls could physically be barred.</p>
<p>Option Two A</p> <p>As Option Two but Members are allowed to use the telephone for incoming and outgoing calls related to Council business, at no cost to them. The telephones should not, however, be used for outgoing private calls.</p>	<p>Members can use the telephones for Council business at no cost to them and so this helps address the points made about increasing bills due to changes in technology and use of mobile telephones by constituents and officers.</p> <p>Bills are handled directly through the Council</p> <p>No changes necessary to any pre printed posters and business cards as Members will be able to keep the same telephone number as currently allocated.</p>	<p>Goes against the grain of the Member's Allowance being intended to take account of telephone expenses.</p>	<p>Extra cost to the Council for the payment of the business calls. Estimate £14,000 per annum.</p> <p>(Standard BT Call Charges apply less a small discount).</p>	<p>A decision would need to be made as to whether a restriction should be placed on calls. For example, staff using the internal Council telephones may make calls within the UK and ring mobile telephone numbers without restriction.</p> <p>Premium rate calls are barred and international calls can only be made through the switchboard operator.</p> <p>Members not on line need to be encouraged to be connected to enjoy this facility.</p>

<p>Option Two B</p> <p>As Option Two A except the cost of the telephone calls will be paid for by Members by deducting the call costs from the Members' Allowance.</p>	<p>Members can use the telephones for Council business therefore no changes necessary to any posters and business cards.</p> <p>A slight saving to Members as the tariff for the use of these telephones compared to their private telephone is slightly discounted.</p>	<p>The issues raised by Members about changing technology and increased use of mobile telephones by constituents and officers is not acknowledged.</p> <p>Administrative "burden" in having to deduct different costs from each Member's Allowance.</p>	<p>Administrative Costs - unquantified.</p>	
<p>Option Two C</p> <p>As Option Two A except a fixed monthly amount will be paid for by the Council and the balance will be deducted from the Members' Allowance.</p>	<p>Members can use the telephones for Council business and receive an allowance towards the costs.</p> <p>No changes necessary to any posters and business cards.</p>	<p>Members may have to pay for some calls depending on the extent of usage.</p> <p>Goes against the grain of the Members' Allowance being intended to take account of telephone expenses.</p> <p>Administrative "burden" in having to deduct a sum from the Member's Allowance but less burdensome than Option Two B as it would be a fixed amount each month and, presumably, the same for each Member.</p>	<p>The cost to the Council will depend on the monthly allowance.</p> <p>On the basis of £10 per month per Member = £6,120 per annum.</p>	<p>The fixed amount would need to be determined.</p> <p>Members not on line need to be encouraged to be connected to enjoy this facility; otherwise consider offering them the fixed sum anyway.</p>

<p>Option Three</p> <p>Members receive a mobile telephone which they can use for Council business at no cost to the Member. The telephone associated with the computer equipment is removed.</p>	<p>Members can use the mobile telephone wherever they are located (within the network range).</p> <p>Mobile telephone calls can be diverted to a land line at no extra cost. Members could therefore divert it to their home telephones when convenient to do so.</p> <p>Members not on line are not disadvantaged.</p>	<p>Telephone numbers on certain posters and business cards no longer accurate and would need reprinting.</p> <p>Training may be required - e.g. text messaging</p> <p>Goes against the grain of the Member's Allowance being intended to take account of telephone expenses.</p>	<p>Initial cost of mobile telephone - £155 for each Member - but a credit of £50 per handset is given for calls = £5,355 overall net cost based on the handset provided to officers. This handset is a standard issue business telephone - middle of the range.</p> <p>Line rental £6 per month = £3,672 per annum for 51 Members.</p> <p>Estimated cost of calls - (very much a guess) £51,000 per annum (£1,000 per Member).</p> <p>Text costs are 3p per text (irrespective of length but up to a limit of 160 characters per text).</p> <p>Reprinting of posters and cards - estimate £300.</p> <p>Possible training costs to be quantified.</p>	<p>There are a range of handsets available and cheaper ones could be as low as £15 but would have very basic functions.</p> <p>A decision will need to be made about any restrictions to be placed on the use of telephones.</p> <p>Calls from Orange to Orange are cheaper than land line to mobile. Orange to another network is 20 pence a minute.</p> <p>Calls from constituents on non-Orange mobile telephones or Pay as You Go types could cost the caller up to 50p a minute.</p>
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<p>Option Three A</p> <p>As Option Three, except Members pay for the cost of all calls/text messages - to be deducted from the Member's Allowance.</p>	<p>As Option Three</p>	<p>Posters and business cards reprinting and Training as Option Three.</p> <p>The issues raised by Members about changing technology and increased use of mobile telephones by constituents and officers is not acknowledged.</p> <p>Administrative "burden" in having to deduct different costs from each Member's Allowance.</p>	<p>Initial outlay cost to the Council for the provision of the telephones and the line rental as Option Three.</p> <p>Posters, business cards reprinting and training costs - as Option Three.</p>	<p>As Option Three.</p>
<p>Option Three B</p> <p>As option Three except a fixed monthly amount for calls will be paid by the Council and the balance will be deducted from the Member's Allowance.</p>	<p>As Option Three</p>	<p>Goes against the grain of the Member's Allowance being intended to take account of telephone expenses.</p> <p>Members may have to pay for some calls depending on extent of usage.</p> <p>Administrative "burden" in having to deduct a sum from the Member's Allowance but less</p>	<p>Initial outlay for mobile telephone, line rental and posters/business cards reprinting plus training costs as Option Three.</p> <p>Cost of monthly allowance = £6,120 per annum for every £10 per Member per month.</p>	<p>As Option Three</p>

<p>Option Four</p> <p>Members receive a mobile telephone and have use of the telephone handset associated with the computer connection. All costs, including calls, paid for by the Council.</p>	<p>Members receive a "Rolls Royce" facility.</p> <p>No changes necessary to any posters/business cards unless Members want to advertise their mobile numbers.</p>	<p>burdensome than Option Three B as it would be a fixed amount each month and, presumably, the same for each Member.</p>	<p>Initial outlay for mobile telephone and line rentals as Option Three.</p> <p>Estimated costs of all calls (very much a guess) £25,500 per annum (£500 per Member)</p> <p>To keep costs down it is suggested that posters and so on are not reprinted to include the mobile telephone numbers as well. Await next full reprint. If Members want to reprint now the cost will be approx. £2,800.</p>	<p>A decision will need to be made on the restrictions to be placed on the use of both telephones.</p>
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<p>Option Four A</p> <p>As Option Four, except Members pay for the costs of all calls/text messages - to be deducted from the Members' Allowance.</p>	<p>Members receive the telephones and line rentals free of charge.</p> <p>No charges necessary to any posters/business cards unless Members want to advertise their mobile numbers.</p>	<p>The issues raised by Members about changing technology and increased use of mobile telephones by constituents and officers is not acknowledged.</p> <p>Administrative "burden" in having to deduct the costs from the Members' Allowance.</p>	<p>Initial outlay for mobile telephone and line rental as Option Three.</p>	
<p>Option Four B</p> <p>As Option Four except a fixed monthly amount for calls will be paid for by the Council and the balance deducted from the Member's Allowance.</p>	<p>Members receive the telephones and line rentals free of charge and an element towards call costs.</p>	<p>Members may have to pay for some calls depending on the extent of usage.</p> <p>Administrative "burden" in having to deduct a sum from the Member's Allowance but less burdensome than Option Four A as it would be a fixed amount each month and, presumably, the same amount per Member.</p>	<p>Initial outlay for mobile telephone and line rentals as Option Three.</p> <p>Cost of monthly allowance = £6,120 per annum for every £10 per month per Member.</p>	

<p>Option Five</p> <p>Provide all Members with the Centrex line "270"/"724" - all Council business calls paid for by the Council.</p>	<p>Free calls to other Centrex and Council lines, and all other calls costs reimbursed by the Council.</p>	<p>Additional cost compared to the computer associated line as line rental is £7 per month (whereas the other is included as part of the package).</p> <p>Does not disadvantage those Members not on line.</p> <p>Posters/business cards would need to be reprinted where necessary.</p> <p>Goes against the grain of the Member's Allowance being intended to take account of telephone expenses.</p>	<p>Installation Costs - £55 per line subject to survey = £2,750.</p> <p>Line rental = £4, 284 per annum.</p> <p>Cost of Calls - £10,200 per annum (£50 per quarter, per Member).</p> <p>Reprinting of posters and business cards - estimate £300.</p>	<p>Whilst NTL, the provider, has generally been reluctant to provide single lines into individual domestic properties, they have confirmed that, subject to survey to check proximity to the network/ductwork and so on, a package involving all Members would be possible.</p>
<p>Option Five A</p> <p>As Option Five except Members pay for calls.</p>	<p>Free calls to other Centrex and Council lines.</p>	<p>This line attracts a monthly rental fee whereas the computer associated lines are included at no extra charge as part of that package (costs of calls only to be paid for).</p>	<p>Installation costs plus line rental as Option Five.</p> <p>Reprinting of posters/business cards - estimate £300.</p>	

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