

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Notice of Meeting

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

CALL-IN

Wednesday, 17 December 2003 - Civic Centre, Dagenham, 5:00 pm

Members: Councillor Mrs P A Twomey (Chair); Councillor H J Collins (Deputy Chair); Councillor W F L Barns, Councillor L A Collins, Councillor Mrs J Conyard, Councillor J R Denyer and Councillor Mrs M M West.

Also Invited: Councillor M A McCarthy (Lead Call-In Member) and Councillor A G Thomas, and Councillor C J Fairbrass and Councillor L A Smith (representing the Executive)

Education Co-opted Members: Church Representatives: Reverend R Gayler (Church of England) and Mrs G Spencer (Roman Catholic Church); Parent Governor Representatives: Mr P Carter (Primary) and Mr B Phillips (Secondary)

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

9.12.03

Graham Farrant
Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Kal Benning
Tel: 020 8227 2348
Fax: 020 8227 2171
Minicom: 020 8227 2685
e-mail: kalbinder.benning@lbbd.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **The Call-In Process (Pages 1 - 2)**
3. **Call-In - Members' Telephones and Out of Hours I.T. Support (Pages 3 - 31)**
4. **Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent**

5. **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 Scrutiny Management Board, except where business is confidential or certain other sensitive information is to be discussed. There are no such items at the time of preparing this agenda.

6. **Any other confidential or exempt items which the Chair decides are urgent**

THE CALL IN PROCESS

1. Purpose

Call-In is the process by which decisions of the Executive can be challenged before implementation by non-Executive Members and referred to the Scrutiny Management Board for further consideration. The statutory co-opted members of the Scrutiny Management Board are also entitled to Call-In Executive decisions in respect of education related matters.

2. Call-In Procedure

- 2.1 Minutes of meetings of the Executive will be circulated to all Members of the Council and, when relevant, statutory co-opted Members, within three working days of the meeting. (E.g. for an Executive meeting on a Tuesday, the minutes will be circulated not later than the Friday of the same week).
- 2.2 Any two Members of the Council, or statutory co-opted members, individually or collectively, may Call-In a decision by submitting a written request to the Chief Executive by 12 noon on the Wednesday following the circulation of the minutes, with reasons. (Where days are lost due to Bank Holidays the Call-In deadline will be adjusted accordingly.) The Call-In request may be posted, handed in at the Civic Centre or the Town Hall, or sent by e-mail or fax.
- 2.3 Requests received after the deadline can not be considered because of the need to keep delays to decision-making as short as possible.
- 2.4 Requests which, on investigation by the Chief Executive, are found to have been made without the support of sufficient Members or statutory co-opted members will not be considered by the Scrutiny Management Board.
- 2.5 Scrutiny Management Board Members will be notified of the need for a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity. Meetings will be programmed for this purpose and cancelled if necessary.
- 2.6 At least one Member will be required to represent the Executive at the Scrutiny Management Board meeting to explain the reasons for the Executive's decision, and to answer any questions. Similarly the relevant Chief Officer, or his/her representative, will attend to clarify any aspects associated with the issue in question.
- 2.7 The Members or statutory co-opted members Calling-In the decision, or one representing the others, will also be invited to attend to present their case.
- 2.8 The Scrutiny Management Board may also invite any other persons to assist during the Call-In meeting.

- 2.9 The papers to be considered by the Scrutiny Management Board will be those considered by the Executive when the decision was made, the decision itself, and written details of the Call-In.
- 2.10 Having considered the matter raised by the Call-In, the Scrutiny Management Board will have three options available to it:
- (a) Dismiss the Call-In and let the Executive decision stand, or
 - (b) Refer the matter back to the Executive with proposals for an alternative course of action, or
 - (c) Refer the decision to the Assembly for wider debate. This latter option will only apply where there are issues of Council policy involved.
- 2.11 Reasons will be given for the decision taken by the Scrutiny Management Board.
- 2.12 Any disagreements between the Executive and the Scrutiny Management Board will be referred to the Assembly.
- 2.13 In exceptional circumstances, and where delay would be prejudicial to the interests of the Council, it may be necessary to waive the Call-In procedure. In such cases the Chief Executive or the relevant or lead Chief Officer, as appropriate, will take urgent action in accordance with Article 1 - Paragraph 17.1 to waive the Call-In procedure.

SCRUTINY CALL-IN

Names of Members:
(minimum of 2)
 (indicate Lead Member)

Councillor M A McCarthy (Lead Member)
 Councillor A.G. Thomas

Date of Executive: 25 November 2003

Item for Call-in:

Members' Telephones and out of Hours I.T. Support

Decision of Executive:

Further to Minute 121 (23 September 2003), received a report on Members' telephones and the possible introduction of an 'Out of Hours' IT support facility.

The report addressed a number of concerns previously expressed by Members in relation to telephones and set out the possible advantages / disadvantages and cost implications of several options.

It also outlined a proposal for the provision of 'Out of Hours' IT support for Members, including a help desk facility together with a 'mobile technician'.

Agreed, in order to clarify the issues associated with Members' telephones, that:

1. If they wish, when the new ADSL computer connections are made, Members be allowed to keep and use the telephone handset, already provided, for incoming calls only at no extra charge to the Council (Option Two);
2. Members are generally expected to continue to use their own private telephones for Council business calls and to meet all related costs from their Basic Allowance;
3. Notwithstanding 1 and 2 above, no change be made to the current allocations of mobile telephones and connections to the Centrex system, as set out in the report; and
4. An 'Out of Hours' IT support for Members not be provided at this time.

Reason for Call-in:

- "3. Notwithstanding 1 and 2 above, no change be made to the current allocations of mobile telephones and connections to the Centrex system, as set out in the report. "

We believe that this agreed point should be deleted as all Members should be treated equally in terms of mobile telephones and connections to the Centrex system. We believe that the Members basic allowance should cover ALL telephone calls.

In addition to the above reason for Call-In:

- "2 Members are generally expected to continue to use their own private telephones for Council business calls and to meet all related costs from their Basic Allowance."

We would like clarification as to what percentage of the Basic Allowance can be offset against tax for the telephone element. Members need to be informed and given tax guidance. Allied to this Members need guidance regarding taxation in that many of us have set aside rooms as an office for Council business.

EXTRACT FROM

THE EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 25 November 2003
(7:00 - 7:30 pm)

Present: 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 and Councillor T G W Wade.

Also Present: Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor Mrs V M Rush, Councillor Mrs P A Twomey and Councillor Mrs M M West.

206. Members Telephones and Out of Hours IT Support

Further to Minute 121 (23 September 2003), received a report on Members' telephones and the possible introduction of an 'Out of Hours' IT support facility.

The report addressed a number of concerns previously expressed by Members in relation to telephones and set out the possible advantages / disadvantages and cost implications of several options.

It also outlined a proposal for the provision of 'Out of Hours' IT support for Members, including a help desk facility together with a 'mobile technician'.

Agreed, in order to clarify the issues associated with Members' telephones, that:

1. If they wish, when the new ADSL computer connections are made, Members be allowed to keep and use the telephone handset, already provided, for incoming calls only at no extra charge to the Council (Option Two);
2. Members are generally expected to continue to use their own private telephones for Council business calls and to meet all related costs from their Basic Allowance;
3. Notwithstanding 1 and 2 above, no change be made to the current allocations of mobile telephones and connections to the Centrex system, as set out in the report; and
4. An 'Out of Hours' IT support for Members not be provided at this time.

This page is intentionally left blank

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

This report is submitted to the Executive at their request further to a previous report on 23 September 2003 concerning I.T. for Members.

Wards - This is not a Ward related issue but it does affect **ALL** Members.

Summary

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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. 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>
---	---	--	--	---

<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>
--	---	---	---	--

<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>	

This page is intentionally left blank