

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.