

**THE ASSEMBLY**

**4 FEBRUARY 2004**

**REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

<b>REPORT OF MEETINGS – 17 DECEMBER 2003</b>	<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	
<p><i>This regular report on the work of the Scrutiny Management Board is submitted under Article 2, Paragraph 9.2 of the Constitution.</i></p> <p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>This report summarises the work of the Scrutiny Management Board at its meetings on 17 December 2003 (further details are set out in the report):</p> <p><b>Call-In - Members' Telephones</b> – A Call-In following the Executive's decision clarifying issues associated with Members' telephones.</p> <p><b>Performance Indicators (PIs)</b> – The Board is monitoring Best Value (BV) PIs. It received details of BV126(a) – Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households and BV127(e)(i) – Robberies per 1,000 population (cumulative).</p> <p><b>Best Value Reviews (BVRs)</b> – Update on Member involvement in Years 1, 2 and 3 BVRs.</p> <p><b>Transition Arrangements for Disabled School Leavers</b> – Update on the Council's arrangements for effective transition of disabled school leavers moving from Children and Family to Adult Services.</p> <p><b>Routine Items</b> - The Forward Plan, current, ongoing and future Scrutiny Panels and future/outstanding reports.</p>		
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**(i) Call-In –Members’ Telephones**

The Board considered a Call-In following the Executive’s decision of 25 November 2003 clarifying issues associated with Members’ telephones and out of hours information technology support.

The Call-In Members commented on how all Members should be treated in terms of mobile telephone allocations and connections to the Centrex System and they sought clarification as to what percentage of the Members’ allowance can be offset against tax for the telephone element.

After weighing up all the evidence the Board concluded that

- (i) all Members should be treated equally in relation to the provision and related costs of telephones for Council business use, and as such **all** costs should be borne by Members from their Members’ allowances
- (ii) there should be no exception to this rule, either now or in the future, and accordingly (a) those with mobile telephones provided by the Council should be required to discontinue their use and hand them back, and (b) the one remaining Centrex line connection should be disconnected
- (iii) should any Member position require a mobile telephone or other similar means of contact or communication, the Member holding that position should personally purchase the necessary equipment and pay for all costs, again making use of their basic or, where appropriate, special responsibility allowance.

The Board, therefore, asked the Executive to revise their original decision concerning telephones for Members accordingly, that is by reconfirming the original decision number 1 in relation to the telephone handsets provided with the computer equipment, but deleting 2 and 3 and replacing them with (i), (ii) and (iii) above. [The original decision number 4 was unaffected as this relates to IT support for Members, not telephones.] A copy of the original minute is appended.

The Board also asked the Director of Finance to issue general tax guidance to all Members.

**(ii) Performance Indicators – Corporate Strategy Department**

Directors or their representatives, whose departments have any PIs in the lowest quartile are attending Board meetings to discuss the reasons for this and possible solutions.

The Director of Corporate Strategy reported on the following PIs which are not in the national bottom quartile but have slipped from the middle 50% in the last quarter:

- BV126a - Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households
- BV127e (i) - Robberies per 1,000 population (cumulative)

The Board noted the initiatives implemented to reduce domestic burglaries and street robberies.

**(iii) Best Value Reviews**

The Board has a role to ensure Members are effectively involved in BVRs. It received an update on Years 1, 2 and 3 BVRs.

**(iv) Transition Arrangements for Disabled School Leavers**

The Board received an update on the Council's arrangements for effective transition of disabled school leavers moving from Children and Family to Adult Services. It covered progress and developments within the Education, Arts and Libraries and Social Services Departments to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of young people.

The Board expressed best wishes to Bob Kedward, Head of Children and Family Services on his forthcoming retirement and thanked him for his assistance with various scrutiny work

**(v) Routine Items**

**(a) Forward Plan –** The Board noted/commented as follows:

- Disposal Programme - sought clarification of whether this is land or properties (housing) for sale.
- Variation in Local Terms and Conditions of Employment in Relation to Industrial Injury and Sickness Pay - the Chair requested to be kept informed of this.

**(b) Current/Ongoing and Future Scrutiny Panels**

- Health and Social Care Partnership Arrangements Scrutiny Panel – The Board (i) agreed Councillor Barns join this Scrutiny Panel in place of Councillor H Collins, (ii) noted that there will be a delay in the Panel's reporting timetable.

- School Inspection Reports – The Board (i) welcomed the Panel's report on the OFSTED reports of Henry Green, John Perry, Becontree and St. Margaret's Church of England Primary School, (ii) expressed concern about the lack of representation of Henry Green Primary School at the Scrutiny Panel meeting and requested that this be followed up.

**(c) Future and Outstanding Reports – The Board requested as follows:**

- Number of Staff on the Establishment - this report be sent to Councillor Jeyes as soon as it is available.
- Allotments Issues – this be followed up with the Director of Leisure and Environmental Services so that Councillor L Collins can feedback at the next Board meeting.

**Background papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Minutes of the Scrutiny Management Board – 17 December 2003

**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

An 'Out of Hours' IT support for Members not be provided at this time.