



meeting ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

date 1 DECEMBER 2004

agenda item number 11

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF MEMBERS' SERVICES

MEMBERS' ACCESS TO IT AT HOME

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To propose revisions to current arrangements for Members to be able to access the Council's IT facilities from home.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme provides for any councillor who wishes to have a second telephone line on Broadband facility installed in their homes for the sole purposes of using County Council provided IT equipment to access the Council's IT facilities to be able to claim the cost of installation, line rental and call charges from the County Council. The Scheme indicates also that the installation of Broadband can be considered only when secure connections are available to the satisfaction of the Head of IT.
- 2.2 This issue has been considered previously by the Administration Committee on 15 October 2003 when it was agreed that, due to security considerations, councillors should have the option of being able to access IT through an additional telephone line.
- 2.3 Since October 2003, much work has been taking place within the County Council to develop Broadband access to the authority's IT. The Head of IT has indicated that it is now possible to use Broadband from Members' and employees' homes. This is subject to the Member/employee using current, supported versions of Windows 2000 or Windows XP operating system and connect to NT Domains (Members who access their e-mails/internet from home using their County Council password/PC will therefore be able to use Broadband as these are the systems they use.
- 2.4 Any councillor who is provided with equipment in the future will be able to choose whether to have a BT Broadband or BT landline connection (if any) from their homes. Any councillor who already has a County Council provided computer in their home and wishes to change to

Broadband will be able to do so.

- 2.5 As at present, the contract for service, irrespective of whether that is BT Broadband or BT landline, will be between the individual councillor and the service provider. Councillors will, as now, be able to claim installation and rental/call charges through the Members' Allowances Scheme, where the facility is used strictly for County Council business using a laptop or other PC provided by the Council.
- 2.6 The Committee is asked to revise the current arrangements and to agree that Members may use either Broadband or a landline to access the Council's IT. In this regard, the Committee might also consider the effective date to be used. This is because there is a County Council Election in May 2005. The Committee may wish to defer the provision until then.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost associated with the provision of Broadband are currently:-

| | | |
|---------------|---|------|
| Installation | - | £210 |
| Annual rental | - | £156 |

The Landline costs are

| | | |
|---------------|---|--------|
| Installation | - | £63.82 |
| Annual rental | - | £97 |

- 3.2 In its first year of operation, a scheme to provide Broadband is therefore likely to cost up to £24,522 falling to £10,452 p.a. in each of the subsequent years up to the date of a County Council election, when it could increase to the higher figure to take account of new additional installations. These amounts have to be met from the Members' Allowances budget.

RECOMMENDED

1. That it be noted that, in areas where Broadband is available, it is now technically possible for Members to be able to access the County Council's IT services from home using Broadband.
2. That, in view of the forthcoming County Council Elections and the requirement for new PCs/laptops to be provided, the Committee determine appropriate dates for a Broadband facility to be offered to
 - a) Councillors who are existing users
 - b) Councillor users who are new users.

Patricia Holt-Murphy
Head Of Members' Services

Legal Services Comments (KK)

The Administration Committee is responsible for determining the level and nature of support services for Members of the County Council. The proposals of this report are therefore within the remit of this Committee.

Director of Resources Financial Comments (R/MB)

The financial implications are outlined in Section 3 of the report.

Background Papers Available for Inspection

Electoral Divisions Affected

Countywide.