

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: FACILITIES FOR MEMBERS
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 5 January, 1996	Ref: JAF/RM	

(1) BACKGROUND

At a meeting on 19th May, 1995 the Interim Executive Committee agreed (1) that where not already supplied by existing authorities, members of North Lanarkshire Council be supplied with a filing cabinet, a dictaphone and an answer phone, and (2) that Motherwell District Council be advised of the decision that the Civic Centre Complex, Motherwell, be the permanent headquarters of North Lanarkshire Council in order that the District Council might be able to secure early commencement of works to provide the necessary accommodation.

(2) PROGRESS

Following those decisions, the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 12th December, 1995, agreed that contracts be let for alterations to the Civic Centre. Works currently under way involve the provision of a Members car park, of an escape stair from the Council Chambers and substantial remodelling of floors 4 and 5 to provide members accommodation. In addition, to provide new members with a basic level of equipment, home telephone lines were connected as required and a number of filing cabinets, dictating machines and fax machines supplied. The purchase of answer machines was deferred pending the evaluation of trial use of the British Telecom "Call Minder" service. The evaluation of that service suggest that the provision of a combined answerphone/fax machine would better meet the needs of members. The cost of providing all members with a combined answerphone/fax machine is estimated to be £15,000 and it is proposed that, as and when resources become available, a combined answerphone/fax machine be provided to all members who require it. It is proposed, also, that the Head of Central Services be instructed to ascertain the extent to which Members consider that the provision of mobile phones would be of assistance and to submit a further report on the need for and cost implications of the provision of mobile phones.

(3) FURTHER PROPOSALS

The completion of the works for provision of members accommodation is dependent on further finance being identified. As soon as the likely date of completion is known, a further report will be submitted advancing proposals for the provision of members services within that accommodation including equipment, and clerical and administrative services.

(4) CONSTITUENCY CASE WORK SUPPORT

Information is being gathered on the practices of existing authorities with regard to the provision of facilities for Councillors' surgeries. It is proposed that North Lanarkshire Council provide such facilities and a further report on constituency case work support will be submitted to a future meeting.

(5) **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

The Interim Executive Committee agreed to continue consideration of the provision of laptop computers pending a further report. It is, however, suggested that North Lanarkshire Council investigate the possibility of members' home access to the Wide Area Network. Such access would involve the installation of Integrated Service Digital Network points into the homes of all members. A laptop computer can be plugged into those points allowing two-way communication with the Council offices. Through this means members could access Council papers such as agendas, reports and Committee minutes electronically. It is proposed that the Head of Central Services be asked to liaise with the Head of IT Services to investigate the feasibility, potential and likely costs of this development which would be developed as part of a text retrieval system within the Administration Department.

(6) **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee

- (a) note progress made;
- (b) agree that, as resources become available, a combined answerphone/fax machine be provided to all members who require it, and
- (c) agree to the investigation of mobile phones and the feasibility, costs and potential of establishment of a Wide Area Network within North Lanarkshire.


Director of Administration

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