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RESPONSE TO FUTURE OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS – FIRST CONSULTATION

Consultation explanations and statements in Sections 1 to 4.

The existing eleven digit numbers are restricted and needs further expansion to 12 or more digits.

Companies with one identifying number for access, have multiple ‘lines’ depending on call traffic volumes.

Companies with ‘Direct Dial for incoming calls direct to a desk (DDI) within their telephone system have a group of numbers allocated in the exchange numbering plan. The DDI facility should be made available to smaller companies as this can significantly increase the efficiency of their call handling options and procedures. Could the UK Numbering Plan cope with adding more allocation of numbers for this facility?

Digital telephone systems, within a companies premises, have facilities for ‘call forwarding’ to another desk location, to a ‘Voice Mail’ function or another location when not available at own desk. Will these and other telephony facilities be available when migrated to VoIP?

Companies that have introduced national numbers (such as 0334), I find frustrating when you wish to contact a local bank or service centre (Know How). These types of calls introduce delays in forwarding the call resulting in additional call charges to the consumer.

Local companies and organisations have campaigns to “BUY LOCAL”. Could 0345 (Local call charge) numbers have capacity to allow these to be allocated for these local campaigns?

In terms of the areas’ Linlithgow would consider to be ‘local’ are Edinburgh (0131), Falkirk (01324) and the south west part of West Lothian (01501). To call these areas the full 11 digits have to be dialled.

West Lothian Economic Profile states - “West Lothian has one of the fastest growing and youngest populations in Scotland, reflecting the area’s location and attractiveness as a place to invest, live, work and visit”. In 01506 area only XXYYYY digits are dialled.

In my local exchange 0150684 we have a choice of BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media for broadband service. Different number blocks were allocated to these IP Operators for telephony facilities. Any increase in IP Operators would further reduce the availability of 11 digit numbers in the area numbering plan (01506). When would this area’s ‘local call option’ be considered for closure?

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Comments continued.

In paragraph 4.10 it is stated “--- the new tariff for revenue sharing known as ‘unbundled tariff’ “. I must admit that I was unaware of the change in the rules and still consider 0800 as a ‘free’ call and 0345 as a ‘local cost call’ as distinct from a ‘long distance call’ say to Aberdeen and London.

I have no experience on 084 or 087 numbers.

Response to Question 2.1.

I agree that this consultation sets out the key considerations for review decisions.

Refer also to the comments on Page 1.

Responses to Questions 3.1 to 3.7.

Q 3.1 To a certain extent having to dial only six digits can be very useful in contacting direct to the person dealing with an ongoing project / service, especially in large organisations (such as a Local Authority). Email response can be subject to their procedures - “reply within 2 to 3 days”. This is not satisfactory when constructing a building and has an urgent problem to resolve.

However, many companies / organisations do not have DDI facilities or Voice Mail.

Most towns will experience a mixed ‘six / eleven’ digit situation in their ‘local’ area.

Q 3.2 I would opt for the whole of the UK to be “closed to local calls” at the same time and preferably before migration to VoIP services.

Refer also to 3.1 above.

Q 3.3 My view is that this issue must be a consistent rule.

The only circumstance that I can envisage and be of a benefit to the users is where the providers network covers a small geographic area or a number of small communities.

Q 3.4 and 3.5.

Provider comments only required.

Q 3.6 In geographic numbers the important factors are the called identity and the likely cost to be charged. When caller identity is displayed, the called person has a choice of answering immediately OR allowing the caller to leave a message.

Q 3.7 My view is to retain geographic numbers.

When telephony voice calls are fully migrated to VoIP, then experience in that medium, may alter my approach.

Refer also to Page 1 comments for the above questions.

Response to Questions 4.1 to 4.4.

I have no experience of using 084 or 087 numbers.

Response submitted by

None of the responses or other comments are confidential.