LOLA

LONDON ON-LINE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Haringey

Hackney

Tower Hamlets

Hillingdon

Tower Point North
Sydney Road
ENFIELD Middlesex EN2 6UE
telephone 01-366 6611

What is LOLA?

LOLA is an information technology services organisation. It is owned by a consortium of four London Boroughs: Hackney, Haringey, Hillingdon and Tower Hamlets. LOLA was formed in 1971.

LOLA operates a large mainframe installation, and a range of smaller computers. It provides consultancy, development, implementation and management of business and technical systems, telecommunications, user-driven facilities, personal computing, and office automation.

The four Authorities benefit from economies of scale and access to a larger and wider range of professional and technical services than they could provide and support individually. LOLA has a structure appropriate to an information technology service organisation rather than to conventional local government.

Local Authorities have a major requirement for a wide variety of information technology services. The four Boroughs provide services to over 750,000 people and employ over 50,000 staff. The services include housing, finance, roads, refuse collection, social services, education, environmental health and libraries. They require the handling, storage and access to huge volumes of data. Individual managers require personal access to information and their own computing facilities to enable them to carry out their duties to maximum effect.

All volumes and statistics quoted in this booklet are as at March 1986.

The Facilities

A major feature of the LOLA service is on-line access to users' files from terminals sited in their offices. The direct use and operation of the computer is not confined to the computer centre, but is part of everyday work in the local authority departments using Visual Display Units (VDUs) connected to the computer by British Telecom land lines.

These terminals in council offices permit on-line "conversation" with the data stored in the computer and allow the user to create, examine, alter and delete records practically instantaneously. The computer programs incorporate security measures against the unauthorised use of records.

Information can be produced in varying forms and combinations, analysed, abstracted and re-arranged, The computer can indicate where data is abnormal.

During a typical day the terminals are available from 08.00 to 18.00 hours and the computer will receive and answer about 100,000 messages from the terminals.

The Administration

Chair	Nominated by boroughs biennially on a rotating basis – 1984/6 Hackney – 1986/8 Hillingdon
Vice-Chairs	Nominated from 3 remaining boroughs
Honorary Clerk	J W Beha BA Hons, IPFA
Honorary Treasurer	D Eacott IPFA, FRVA
Honorary Personnel Officer	D F Ward
Director of Computer Services	A M Lepper BSc Hons, PhD
Deputy Director	A J O'Brien MBCS
Computer Manager	J C Sheldrick ACIS, MBCS
Applications Manager	A Renshaw Dip Arch, MBCS
Finance & Admin. Officer	Mrs M E Harris BA Hons, MBA, IPFA, FCCA, FCIS

The Computer 1986

Some technical information:-

Hardware	• IBM 3081-K 32 megabyte dyadic processor capable of executing 15 million instructions per second
	• 3380 disk drives with a total storage capacity of almost 60 gigabytes (60,000,000,000 characters)
	• Other peripherals, magnetic tape drives, printers etc
	• almost 700 terminals and personal computers
Software	• Operating system – MVS/SP
	• Main tp and database system – IMS/VS
	• Programming languages – PL/1, Assembler, APL
	• Time sharing system – to support program development and personal computing
	• Report generator, inquiry language – FOCUS
	• Application generator – Mark IV/V
	• AS

Statistics

The following illustrates the 1985 computer workload:-

Paying over 57,500 staff involving the production of 2,700,000 payslips.

Accounting for over £396 million of rate income, involving the printing of 169,000 rate demand notes, over 240,000 reminders, finals, summonses and warrants.

Maintaining 140,000 rent accounts, involving the posting of some 4,000,000 payments.

Producing over 340,000 cheques in payment for goods and services.

Producing 610,000 Giro cheques in payment of housing benefit.

Maintaining detailed costing of accounting records over 225,000 heads to facilitate the monitoring of income and expenditure for budgetary control.
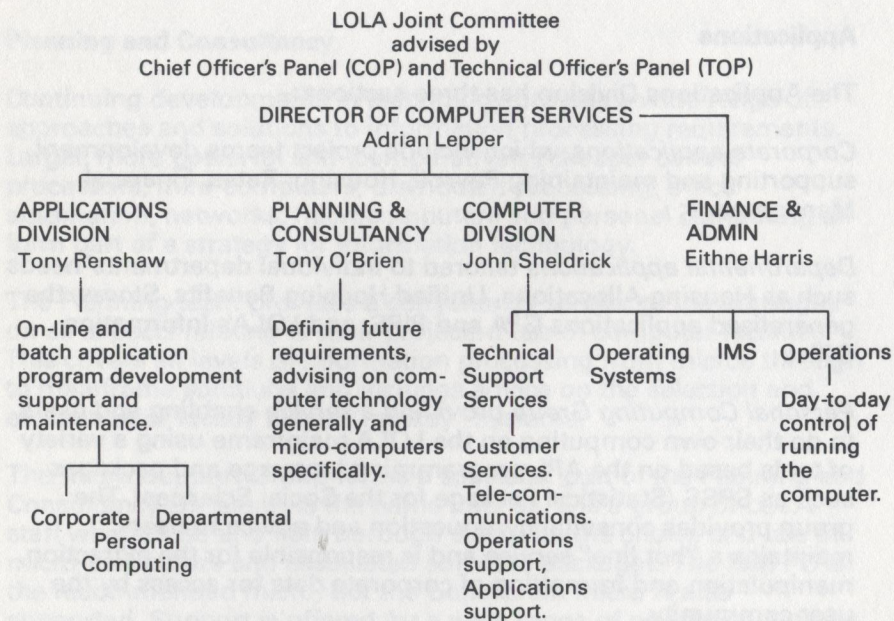
Maintaining electoral registers for some 600,000 electors.

In addition the computer is used for stock control and stores accounting, vehicle and plant utilisation, miscellaneous debtors accounts, housing mortgage accounts, highways maintenance, land use register and census analysis.

Without a computer it would have been impossible to react to the rapidly changing requirements of successive governments in many areas but especially on rates, payroll and rents, where the complexity and volume of transactions are constantly increasing.

More detailed information about the individual applications can be obtained from the LOLA Information Office.

The Organisation

LOLA Joint Committee
advised by
Chief Officer's Panel (COP) and Technical Officer's Panel (TOP)

DIRECTOR OF COMPUTER SERVICES
Adrian Lepper

APPLICATIONS DIVISION	PLANNING & CONSULTANCY	COMPUTER DIVISION	FINANCE & ADMIN
Tony Renshaw	Tony O'Brien	John Sheldrick	Eithne Harris

On-line and batch application program development support and maintenance.

Defining future requirements, advising on computer technology generally and micro-computers specifically.

Technical Support Services

Operating Systems

IMS

Operations

Customer Services. Tele-communications. Operations support, Applications support.

Day-to-day control of running the computer.

Corporate Personal Computing | Departmental Personal Computing

Total Staff (1985/6) – 210

Revenue Expenditure—£5.5 million

Applications

The Applications Division has three sections:-

Corporate applications, which include project teams development, supporting and maintaining Payroll, Housing, Rates, Financial Management;

Departmental applications tailored to individual departments' needs such as Housing Allocations, Unified Housing Benefits, Stores, the generalised applications GPA and PIPS, and LOLA's Information Office;

Personal Computing Group providing a service enabling end users to do their own computing on the LOLA mainframe using a variety of tools based on the APL programming language and packages such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The group provides consultancy, education and advice to users, maintains a "hot line" service and is responsible for the extraction, manipulation and formatting of corporate data for access by the user community.

Planning and Consultancy

Continuing developments in technology provide a wide range of approaches and solutions to information processing requirements. Larger, more powerful and (comparatively) cheaper central processors, mini-computers, distributed processing, office automation, networks, microcomputers and personal computing all form part of a strategy for information technology.

The Planning team provides a consultancy service to the boroughs on all aspects relating to their projected use of computer facilities. This covers all levels of information processing from micros through to mainframe solutions and includes advice on the selection and evaluation of locally based "turnkey" systems.

The Micro Support Group forms a specialist part of the Planning and Consultancy Division. As the name implies, it is a group of LOLA staff who advise and help borough staff with the choice and use of micro-computers and associated software packages. The IBM PC is the recommended micro, but the Superbrain micro is also supported. Support is offered for a wide range of peripheral devices such as printers, and a large number of software packages.

Computer Divison

The computer division consists of four groups. They are:-

Technical Support Services, which includes the Customer Services Group, Teleprocessing Support Group, Operation Support Group and the Applications Support Group;

Operating Systems Support
generates, installs and supports the operating systems and related software;

IMS Support
are responsible for the support of the IMS (Information Management System) software.

Operations
deals with all aspects of data preparation, job receipt, preparation, scheduling, running and result processing, including ancillary processing for both regular scheduled work and ad-hoc submissions.

Staff

In a fast changing environment considerable attention is given to training and career development. A variety of flexible career paths is possible within the organisation.

LOLA has its own branch of NALGO (National Association of Local Government Officers) which negotiates matters affecting staff directly with the employers' side.

LOLA staff participate in a wide range of leisure activities outside working hours under the able direction of the Sports and Social Club committee. The sports section is very active and caters for a variety of intersts including squash, table tennis, golf, football, swimming and darts. Social events are organised frequently and include cheese and wine parties, car rallies, visits to the theatre etc.

A staff magazine, LOLA News, is published regularly and covers matters of general interest to LOLA employees, such as news and reports of sporting and social activities.

WINDMILL HILL A110

ENFIELD CHASE STATION

Trains to Moorgate

A105

MARKET SQUARE

CHURCH STREET → THE TOWN → A110 SOUTHBURY ROAD

ENFIELD TOWN STATION

CECIL ROAD

Buses
W2
W8
W9
29
107
121
135
191
217
231
310
313
316
734
735

LOLA

RALEIGH ROAD

SYDNEY ROAD

ESSEX ROAD

LONDON ROAD

A105

Trains to Liverpool Street and Seven Sisters (for Victoria Line)

Car parks

A105

B&S 28785