

COLD CALLING CONTROL ZONES - THE RBWM APPROACH

1. Cold Calling Control Zones are areas in which uninvited sales people – i.e. ‘cold callers’ - are discouraged from calling at houses.
2. A national survey from 2002 showed that nationally 96% of people do not want doorstep cold-callers and that virtually nobody actually welcomes them.
3. Cold Calling Control Zones have as their main aim the prevention of doorstep crime, whether via distraction burglary or rogue doorstep selling.
4. They are designed to assist in areas considered to be vulnerable – areas with an elderly population or prone to distraction burglary, for instance – by discouraging rogue traders and those who plan to use doorstep selling as a front for distraction burglaries.
5. Currently across the UK there are over 400 such zones.
6. There are none in RBWM, however, and - until recently - no procedure existed to decide whether a zone is appropriate should a request to set one up be received.
7. Nor was there a process in place to follow if the creation of a zone was held to be appropriate.
8. This gap was highlighted by a Motion for Council made in December 2007 by Cllr Proctor which proposed that the Council resolve to “actively pursue the introduction of No Cold Calling Zones for the protection of the Borough’s residents”.
9. No Cold Calling Zones in theory prohibit all callers.
10. RBWM’s Trading Standards Service did not consider such zones to be appropriate, given the danger of them being detrimental to reputable businesses.
11. Instead, after some months of background research, the Service drafted a report to RBWM’s November 2008 Cabinet recommending a policy (based on best practice models used successfully elsewhere) that can lead, in appropriate circumstances, to the setting up of Cold Calling Control Zones.
12. The difference between No Cold Calling Zones and Cold Calling Control Zones is that the latter continue to allow the presence of regular callers, utility and delivery services, political and religious canvassers and other known callers. Cold Calling Control Zones only prohibit unwanted callers.
13. Cold Calling Control Zones have no legal foundation and there is no legal power per se to stop cold calling itself. They do however act as a deterrent. Experience elsewhere in the country is that cold calling and associated

doorstep crime drop dramatically in areas where a zone is established.

14. The zones are identified by signage – both on lampposts around the zone and on stickers displayed, if they wish, on residents' doors. Requests by residents to deal with any unwanted callers who ignore the signage are made to the Trading Standards Service, who already have in place a 'rapid response' procedure for dealing with complaints about doorstep sales and who are well-versed in how to deal efficiently with such complaints.
15. The policy, which was approved by RBWM's Cabinet, sets out the steps to be followed to establish whether a zone is necessary and the process for creating such a zone when appropriate.
16. The policy itself is attached.
17. It should be noted that a request for a Cold Calling Control Zone, however received, does not guarantee that such a zone will be created.
18. Justification of the need for a zone, together with evidence that it is proportionate, has to exist. The process by which it is decided if a zone is necessary – and the management of the creation of a zone if one is appropriate – is undertaken by a partnership consisting of trading standards, community safety, community wardens, local police, appropriate residents' groups, the parish council and so on.
19. Approval has to be formally granted by RBWM's 'Alley Gating/Cold Calling Control Zones Panel', whose terms of reference were extended by RBWM Council in December 2008 to cover such requests.

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February 2009