

REVIEW FUNCTION OF THE 24 HOUR COUNCIL CONTROL ROOM

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Members' with information about the Cabinet savings proposal to reduce the operating hours within the Council's Control Room

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Currently the Control Room operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. It deals with a variety of activities which include :-

- a) Alarm monitoring from all public buildings and schools.
- b) Receiving fire and panic alarms from schools and other public buildings and the tasking of Police and Fire Authority as required.
- c) Receiving radio contact calls from Council staff engaged in the transport of some goods to schools and leisure centres across Wirral.
- d) Deployment and tasking of the Community Patrol Service.
- e) Monitoring of CCTV with links to Merseyside Police Command and Control and tasking the Police as required to incidents that occur.
- f) Recording of keyholder information for all schools and public buildings.
- g) Emergency Planning – Council Control Room initiates start of process.
- h) Emergency Out of Hours Response for plumbing, heating and storm damage.
- i) Merseyside Police collect evidential tapes on a daily basis from the Council Control Room.

- 2.2. The current Control Room staffing levels are 11 full time staff and 4 part time staff, and a Control Room Manager. A three shift system is worked and the number of staff employed on each shift is:-

	Staff Nos.
9am - 5pm;	2
4pm - 11pm	3-4
11pm - 9am	2

- 2.3 During the hours of 9am – 5pm the Control Room receives 6 to 8 calls a day from Merseyside Police requesting that cameras be moved and focussed on various incidents, such as road traffic accidents, criminal incidents or stolen vehicles.
- 2.4 Over the last 12 months a similar number of alarm calls have also been received in the control room between these hours.
- 2.5. The remainder of this duty period is taken up with routine monitoring of the 101 CCTV cameras on Wirral.

3.0 Proposed Changes to service delivery

- 3.1 There is already a need to consider staffing arrangements in the Council's Control Room, arising from the termination of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Wirral Partnership Homes and the Control Room; affecting the funding equivalent of four posts. This substantially affects the viability of the shift rota and consequently is now proposed that the rotas are fundamentally reviewed and the day shift covered elsewhere. This allows for a further reduction of two FTE posts taking the Control Room Establishment to nine FTE and 1 Control Room Manager. This will then allow the release of an additional saving of £51,000.
- 3.2 This fundamental review of staff rotas will require a new shift pattern and a revision of existing duties allowing the Control Room to be closed between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday – Friday. However the Control Room will remain operational between 5pm and 9am Monday - Friday and full 24-hour operation at weekends.
- 3.3 Consideration has been given to retaining a day shift in spite of the reduced staff numbers. To achieve this would require changes to existing staffing levels, by reducing the number of staff on night duty to one. This would allow a day shift to be retained but would leave no capacity within the system to cover staff absence due to sickness. Gaps in staffing levels during times of greatest demand; evening and nights would require a variation in the rostered day shift onto evening duty. Such changes would occur at short notice, would negatively impact upon the quality of life of our staff and may result in an increased risk of incurring overtime costs.
- 3.4 The proposed reduction in operating hours will bring a number of changes to the way in which some services are delivered.
- i) Alarm monitoring and response outside normal office hours would remain unchanged. During normal office hours, calls of this nature would be re-routed through the Call Centre, which is fully operational during the period of Control Room closure. It should be noted at this point that a very high percentage of the 430 alarm calls received in the last year during normal office hours are test signals from alarm engineers testing alarm systems during the course of servicing and inspections. Only 2 genuine alarm calls and a small number of fire alarm activation's have also been received during this same period.
 - ii) Monitoring contact calls from vehicles delivering goods to locations throughout Wirral would be completed by officers at the Transport Depot. Such deliveries are not currently monitored by CCTV cameras therefore there would be no reduction in the standard of delivery.
 - iii) The tasking of the Community Patrol staff would be undertaken by staff within the Community Safety Team.
 - iv) There would be a diminution in service levels regarding the movement of CCTV cameras whilst the office remains closed. However, it is possible to programme movement of the cameras without the need for an operator to be present which is current practice for some of the 101 cameras linked to the Control Room system. Therefore cameras would not remain in a fixed position during the 40 hours per week the Control Room is not staffed. Additionally all cameras transmitting images to the Control Room have those images recorded on a computer disc drive 24 hours per day 7 days per week. Those images are stored and retained

on the computer for a period of 28 days and can be retrieved a copied at any time during that 28 day period.

- v) Keyholders would be unable to ring the Control Room to update records and would be required to request changes to keyholder information by emailing the Control Room.
- vi) Initiation of the Emergency Plan, currently undertaken by the Control Room would become the responsibility of the Health Safety and Emergency Plan Officers between the hours of 9am and 5pm during the week.
- vii) Merseyside Police would not be denied evidential material by this change to operating hours. They would be advised of the changes to operating hours and would need to manage their requests for evidential material accordingly.

4.0 FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Review of the shift rota system will create a saving of £51,000.00. The reduction of two members of staff will be through the Council's Redeployment Policy.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are none arising from this report.

6.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none arising from this report.

7.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

8.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 These efficiency savings can be made without a significant loss in quality of service or risk to community safety.

10.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That members support these proposals for the fundamental review of the Council's Control Room which deliver consequent savings of £51,000 pa.

This report was prepared by Steve McGilvray who can be contacted on 606 5485

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