

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE 10 NOVEMBER 2009

REVIEW OF CONTROL ROOM RESOURCES

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To notify Members of a forthcoming review of the Control Room resources and the likely impact that potential options may have on service delivery and to seek views from Members.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's Control Room service started from a relatively modest foundation, but has grown since the Home Office provided major funding for CCTV operations. The current Control Room was opened in 2003, and now houses 52 screens, serving 127 CCTV cameras. The current operation has a compliment of 13.4 full time equivalent (FTE) Controllers, together with a Senior Controller and Control Room Manager. The Home Call alarm service is also provided by the Controllers, linking with the service's Retained Wardens in the field, with over 2000 vulnerable clients. In addition the out of hours telephone call centre for the Council is operated by staff at the Control Room. For these reasons the Control Room operates on 24 hours a day, for 365 days a year.
- 2.2 The Council's CCTV system is deployed in the following ways:
- **Monitoring public areas** to detect incidents and to coordinate police responses. CCTV is also used as an aid for enforcing exclusion orders (where an offender is barred from an area)
 - **Recording events** for use as evidence and to inform investigations. For instance, police on patrol or members of the Exeter businesses against crime (EBAC) may alert Controllers of incidents via radio links, who then record incidents as they unfold.
 - **Directed surveillance** of suspected offenders.
 - **Deterrence** of criminal activity, for example in the Council's car parks and Civic Centre campus, or by use of mobile temporary cameras to help alter anti-social behaviour within a residential area.
- 2.3 To combat and deter crime and disorder, as well as providing reassurance to the public and businesses, the operation of Exeter's CCTV system by skilled Controllers is an effective tool, and strongly supported by the Police.
- 2.4 The revenue costs of operating the Control Room are substantial, but efficiency gains have been made by amalgamating the three services of CCTV operation, Home Call, and out of hours contact centre together, rather than operating three distinct services. In essence, resources for each part of the service support the other parts.
- 2.5 The Control Room operation earns income from Land Securities of approximately £30,000 per annum for coverage of Princesshay shopping centre and internally earns £15,000 per annum for operating the EBAC contact centre and Princesshay/Cathedral Green access bollard. Income is also derived from the Home Call service operation of approximately £221,000 per annum. The net cost of the services are however

substantial at £641,840 per annum, which includes £96,000 of central corporate support and capital charges.

- 2.6 In the previous 12 months the Control Room has responded to 44,260 Home Call requests, 69,760 telephone calls, 4,650 CCTV incidents resulting in 930 evidence discs being supplied to the Police, averaging 326 work transactions per day. However, the work flow is not steady, but comes in peaks and troughs, placing high pressure on the Controllers at certain busy times.
- 2.7 The growth of the Control Room operations over the years has led to an organic development of the roster pattern with a mixture of staff on full-time and part-time hours, and reliance on a pool of temporary staff at times. Some Controllers work permanent night shifts and some day shifts, with flexibility and inter-changing between the two shifts being minimal. This lack of flexibility causes problems for managers when filling vacancies or absences, and when staff seek a change in their shift pattern.
- 2.8 In order to review the deployment of resources, the whole service has been examined in the context of satisfying existing demands, including those from clients funding parts of the service. We have sought to formulate a roster that places greater resources at peak times and delivers greater flexibility and more efficient management.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 A proposed roster has been developed which is based upon 10 FTE's carrying out a rotating 8 day shift pattern, with a minimum of 2 part-time posts covering a smaller block of shift hours. This roster can be operated by 2.2 FTE fewer posts, potentially generating a revenue saving of £51,000 per annum.
- 3.2 The proposed roster would represent a significant change to existing working arrangements, and for some Controllers the rotating shift will present an unpalatable alternative to a fixed shift pattern. The changes would require a restructuring of the service, with fewer staff; for this reason consultation with Trades Union representatives and staff has been initiated, with a view to managing any change process and bringing a report to Executive.
- 3.3 Because the change in working patterns will be significant, some staff may be unable or unwilling to work the new roster. It is therefore possible that some will seek redundancy.
- 3.4 The proposals will ensure that the Home Call service and out of hours contact centre is given priority, together with Princesshay CCTV surveillance, remote bollard operation and EBAC contact centre. However, it is likely that the capacity to carry out proactive CCTV surveillance will be reduced to some extent. This is likely to result in fewer criminal incidents being identified and reported. This will be subject to discussion with the Police to explore better co-ordination and synergy between the services in order to use CCTV to best effect.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The current proposal would see a reduction in Control Room compliment of 2.2 FTE over the medium term, generating an on-going revenue saving of £51,000. Although set against this there may be some redundancy payments. Full details will be incorporated into the final report to Executive.

5. RECOMMENDED

- (1) That Scrutiny Committee – Community supports the proposed review of Control Room resources and the prioritisation of work tasks set out in paragraph 3.4 of this report.

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:PALP/ Committee/1109SCC6 v2
14.10.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report: