

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting1st February 2007

1. Title of Item/Report

Review of Concierge Security Service

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet was reminded that, at its meeting on 2 November 2006, it had endorsed, in principle, a proposed change to the Concierge Security Service, i.e. 'single crewing' at selected sites between 1 am and 7 am, and agreed to receive a further report on the outcome of consultation with residents and with workforce and trade unions.

The results of the consultation process for residents were provided to Members. The five main headings ('Strongly Support' to 'Strongly Oppose') showed responses to the key question about how residents felt about the 'Single Crewing' proposal and the three sub-headings 'Yes', 'No', and 'N/A' showed responses (or lack of response) to the supplementary question about willingness to pay an increase in the service charge of approximately £4 per week as an alternative to single crewing. Responses were received from 269 households of the 754 consulted, a response rate of 36%. Members noted that a clear majority of respondents supported the 'single crewing' proposal, with:

153 respondents (56%) expressing support
50 respondents (19%) expressing a neutral position
66 respondents (25%) expressing opposition

When analysed by type of residents, there was a majority in favour of the proposal among each of the three groups, i.e. tenants in receipt of full Housing Benefit, rent-paying tenants, and leaseholders. When analysed by block, a majority of respondents in seven of the eight blocks included in the consultation process (Anson House, Hudson House, Hume House, Nolan House, Kennedy Gardens 1, Kennedy Gardens 3 and Dawson House) were in favour of the proposal. Respondents in the remaining block (Kennedy Gardens 2) were equally divided between supporters and opponents of the proposal (14 of each).

In relation to the consultation with the workforce, all employees within the Service (including the four supervisors) were individually surveyed about

their preferences. In addition, letters were sent to UNISON (representing 22 of the 43 individuals concerned) and GMB (representing five individuals), and two briefing sessions were held, which all employees were invited to attend.

No formal responses were received from the two trade unions. A meeting had been held with the Unison Branch Secretary, who indicated that he was likely to leave the issue in the hands of the UNISON Steward within the Service. At the time of writing, responses had been received from all but four of the individuals concerned, and, of those, seven had indicated a provisional interest in voluntary redundancy (on a 'no commitment' basis, subject to detailed figures) and a further two had expressed an interest in reducing their working hours.

The position in respect of voluntary redundancy was complicated, given that the Council's redundancy policy was under review, and was the subject of a report to this meeting. Until a new policy was approved, no further action could be taken in relation to discussing figures and options with individual employees.

If all seven expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy were to develop and be approved, the direct workforce would then reduce to 36 (including four supervisors). It was proposed to process any such applications under the current scheme of delegation, once a new redundancy policy had been approved.

In order to improve the resilience of security systems covering the blocks of flats concerned, it was also proposed to draw up and implement a programme of linking the CCTV, door entry and intercom systems for each block to the Council's Security Centre. Detailed proposals would be included in a full report covering the housing element of the Capital Programme.

RESOLVED that

1. the proposal to move to 'single crewing' at selected sites (Thornaby, Queen's Park and Kennedy Gardens/Dawson House) between 1 am and 7 am be approved.
2. the applications for voluntary redundancy be processed in accordance with the Council's redundancy policy, and subject to the usual checks and balances, including approval by the Cabinet Member responsible for Resources.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To achieve the necessary savings on the Housing Revenue Account, and to reflect the results of consultation with residents.

To ensure equitable treatment of applications.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday 9th February 2007

Proper Officer
06 July 2007