

Scrutiny Review of Community Safety & Security

Summary

This report provides some background information which may be helpful to the Committee in carrying out this review.

Detail

1. Following the completion of the Year 3 EIT Review of Community Safety & Security by the Housing & Community Safety Select Committee feedback was received from Cabinet to the effect that they wished to see further work done on the improvement and transformation potential, with particular reference to issues of customer satisfaction.
2. At Executive Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2012 this review was allocated to Environment Select Committee.
3. As part of the work on draft scoping for the first review a list of 20 performance monitoring mechanisms was compiled, which included several direct measures of customer satisfaction. The more directly a service is exposed to customer feedback, the more likely it is to adapt and innovate continually and the less potential there is likely to be for major periodic transformation
4. Furthermore, the services with the greatest potential for transformation are often those which have been delivered in much the same way for many years whereas the services in Community Safety & Security have been relatively volatile and dynamic, as shown in the brief history below.

5. Community Safety (including multi-agency ASB Team)

5.1 This section was started from scratch in 1998, in response to the new statutory responsibilities laid upon the Council by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. The initial establishment consisted of two posts (one principal officer plus admin support). The section has been expanded to its current establishment, shown at Appendix A, largely by internal re-direction of resource allocation from Security Services, and also by exploitation of funding opportunities (most recently the 'Troubled Families' programme and the additional Government grant available to the Council as a result of taking on the responsibility of lead authority for the Cleveland Police & Crime Panel).

5.2 In particular, the ASB Team was first established in May 2002 with a complement of three officers, and has been expanded in response to demand for services and the increasing priority given to ASB by residents of the Borough in the three-yearly consultation programme undertaken by the Safer Stockton Partnership. In 2002/05 ASB was

highlighted as the fourth priority, in 2005/08 it was highlighted as the second priority, and in the last two plans in 2008/11 and 2011/14 it has remained the top priority for the residents of the Borough. There are two officers seconded into the Team from Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade, plus (since the transfer of the Council's Housing Stock in December 2011) a Service Level Agreement in place with Tristar Homes, which funds one ASB officer post and contributes towards the cost of the Victim & Witness Support Officer post and the Community Safety Partnership Analyst. In addition to this the Agreement also provides for a contribution to the Safe at Home Scheme, which provides crime prevention and target hardening measures for victims and potential victims of crime ASB and domestic abuse.

5.3 The section has been developed over the last 14 years, in a period when resources have never been plentiful and re-direction of funding has generally been at the expense of other services and has needed to be carefully justified. The service lost two posts (one full-time and one part-time) as a result of the EIT Review in 2011.

5.4 In 2011 the multi-agency Community Safety team added mediation to its range of interventions, and following the development of existing staff within the team is now currently developing a counselling service. This service is being offered to adults and young people and it is hoped that the service will continue to develop over the next 12 months.

6. Security Services

6.1 Community Security Service – CCTV etc.

This service was initially established in 1994 on the basis of the City Challenge funding programme. The service initially had two dedicated management posts and an operational workforce of four supervisors and 32 Community Security Officers. At the time it was taken into the newly formed Community Safety & Security Service in 1998 income generated was less than £150k, but was developed by 2002 to a level of about £1 million, where it has been relatively stable, in overall terms, although with considerable 'churn', i.e. loss of some contracts balanced by winning new work. The core current staffing level is 8 supervisors and 8 security staff supported by a number of casual posts / sub-contractual labour. The service now operates with a core/peripheral workforce model to take account of fluctuating workloads with the non-core staffing provided by a range of casual contracts and third party employees

Since April 2008 the service has played a key role in terms of supporting Environmental Health in delivering the 24/7 responsibility for recovering stray dogs (a responsibility transferred from police colleagues)

The number of cameras maintained have steadily increased and these now include a number of wireless units that can be deployed anywhere within the Borough.

6.2 Care Call/Telecare

Care Call is the longest established service in the scope of the review, and is about to celebrate its 30th anniversary. The service was taken into Community Safety & Security in 2000, at which time it had a workforce of 4 Supervisors and 24 Care Call Officers, plus two dedicated managers. The service was 'flat staffed' (i.e. it had the same staffing levels for both day and night shifts) and sleeping on night duty was institutional. It now has a share of the eight Supervisors who also cover Community Security and the Concierge Security Service, and no dedicated managers.

6.3 In 2004 the Care Call Service diversified from its basic community alarm role into providing planned domiciliary care to a small number of clients with higher levels of need, particularly those who required service around the clock, which some other domiciliary care providers found more challenging, and from 2005 this required the service to be formally registered with and subject to periodic inspection by the Care Quality Commission (formerly Commission for Social Care Inspections), which has awarded Care Call a 'good' rating (the second best of four categories). In September 2003 the service first started delivering Telecare packages, as part of a 3 year Government ringfenced funding programme, and at October 2012 we now have 1060 Telecare customers. The growth in this area is offsetting the decline in community alarm connections in Tristar stock. Care Call also provided services to a range of Registered Providers of social housing, and in May 2011 secured a contract providing monitoring and response to 67 properties based in Greatham. A recent decision (November 2012) was made to disengage from the provision of planned domiciliary care.

6.4 Neighbourhood Enforcement Service (NES)

The NES was established in April 2006, replacing the former Community Warden Service, as a result of feedback that the Community Warden model was becoming less effective due to the dearth of formal powers, and the need for a Boroughwide service, as opposed to one which was solely targeted on specific Wards. From its inception officers within NES were accredited with a range of Police powers under the Accreditation scheme. From 2008 NES officers were equipped with body mounted cameras, and from August 2010 the range of Police powers were increased, with the addition of specific powers in respect of traffic management and the power to deal with begging. In October 2010 the staff times were changed to allow for the services to operate through until 03.00 hours, rather than finishing at midnight. As part of the EIT Review in 2011 the establishment was reduced from 4 Seniors plus 16 Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers (NEOs) to 2 Seniors plus 16 NEOs. From 2010 the Service took on a key role in supporting Environmental Health with the delivery of the Out of Hours Noise Service.

6.5 Concierge Security Service

This service was established in Thornaby in 1992, rolled out to Stockton in 1994 and then to Billingham in 1997. At its high point the service included 8 Supervisors and 52 Concierge Security Officers, covering five locations on a 24/7 basis. The service was subject to major reviews in 2006 and 2009 and currently has a staff complement of 3 Supervisors and 22 Concierge Security Officers, with on-site presence from 18.30 hours to 06.30 hours and remote monitoring supplemented by mobile patrols from 06.30 hours to 18.30 hours. The service is now fully funded under a SLA with Tristar Homes, who have been carrying out a further review, and this is likely to lead to a major downsizing of the service.

6.6 Parking Enforcement Team

This team was transferred to Community Protection in 2006 and at that time had an establishment of a Co-ordinator and 10 Civil Enforcement Officers (including 2 senior posts). As a result of a recent review (concluded September 2012) the staffing levels have been reduced to 6 Civil Enforcement Officers (the Co-ordinator post was disestablished in 2006). All Officers were equipped with body mounted cameras in 2008.

6.7 Caretakers

The Admin buildings caretaking team, then consisting of 3 front-line posts, was transferred to Community Protection in 2002, since when it was reduced to 2 front line posts in 2006 and is has recently been one of the components of a review of Facilities Management

ranging across caretaking services for a number of different building types, culminating in a decision to transfer all caretaking services to Direct Services with effect from 1 December 2012.

6.8 Town Hall Housekeeping

This service consists of two part-time posts. This team won the Customer Service Team of the Year award in 2011.

7. Organograms and Medium Term Financial Plan

Attached to this report are the current organograms for Community Safety (Appendix A) and Security Services (Appendix B) respectively. Members will be aware that all Heads of Service are currently considering options for further budget reductions in the context of the latest Government decisions to affect the Council's budget, notably the reduction in the 'referendum threshold' for Council Tax income from 3.5% to 2% and further reductions in Early Intervention Grant. Given that no decisions have yet been made the organograms have not yet been revised, but Members should note that we are in effect 'shooting at a moving target'. In particular, the post of Community Protection Co-ordinator, at fourth tier on the Security Services organogram, is vacant as at January 2013 and will not be filled, pending decisions on budgets and formal consultation is taking place with the workforce on the Concierge Review (see paragraph 6.5 above).

8. Index of Multiple Deprivation

Also attached, as Appendix C, is a report which was submitted to the Safer Stockton Partnership on 8 November 2011, on 'Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Movements between 2004 and 2010), which shows that there was a substantial improvement, by 63 ranking places, in Stockton's position in respect of crime and disorder. This may help reassure Members that a transformational approach is being taken to the management of these services.

9. Potential changes

There is a widely held view that the position in which each of the Tees Valley local authorities has its own infrastructure for CCTV and for community alarm services (in some cases, these are separate) is unsustainable. Discussion is taking place with a range of possible partners about collaboration options, but at present it is too early to predict how this may turn out.

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