

COMMUNITY AND SAFER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FEEDBACK FROM VISIT TO CONTROL AND INCIDENT SUITE, CIVIC CENTRE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

CORPORATE PRIORITIES:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To receive feedback following the visit to the Control and Incident Room at the Civic Centre.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 11th December 2011 Committee received a report on Emergency Planning and felt that it would be useful to view the facilities at first hand.

- 2.2 The purpose of the visit was to view the facilities at first hand and have a chance to ask questions about its function

- 2.3 The programme of the visit was designed to provide:-

- an overview of the running and function of the control and CCTV room
- an overview of the running and function of the Incident room and its Emergency Planning Team
- a chance for Committee Members to ask questions about the facilities visited

- 2.4 The visit took place on 21st February 2012. Members of the Committee in attendance included Councillor Curran, Councillor Emerson, Councillor Forbes, Councillor T Martin, Councillor Scaplehorn, Councillor Thompson, Councillor D Trueman, and Councillor Wiper. Members were accompanied by: Barry Frost (Security & Emergency Planning Manager) Kevin Liddle (Emergency Planning & Response Co-ordinator) Jeanette Williamson (Business Continuity Officer) Steve Eagling (Assistant Security Officer) and Neil Hogarth (Control Centre Facilities & Marketing Manager)

3 Current Position

- 3.1 Members were provided with a tour of the Control Room & Incident Suite at the Civic Centre and an opportunity to ask questions.

3.2 Control Room

Members were provided with an overview of the running and function of the control and CCTV room and were given the chance to ask questions about the facilities. Neil Hogarth, the Control Centre Manager explained in detail how the CCTV cameras worked, what areas they covered and who was responsible for the monitoring of the cameras around the City. He also explained that they are responsible for the Council's out of hours services which include lone working arrangements, tracking of Council Vehicles, and sending council cleaning services out to road traffic accidents to clear debris from the road, to arranging for premises to be secured i.e. schools or council buildings if a break in has occurred.

- 3.3 The Control Room is also partnered with another City control room and in the event of our control room being shut down in an emergency or incident, they would take over the running of our centre and vice versa.
- 3.4 The team have developed an excellent working relationship with other partner agencies which include Northumbria Police and Nexus and how they share information on a daily basis. The control room also has direct communication links to both the Police and Nexus control rooms so they can advise them of any incidents that they see on the CCTV
- 3.5 The Control Room can be made functional at very short notice. It is self contained and capable of being occupied for a longer stay if required. It has stand alone computer equipment and back up communications systems and also its own back up generator. Staff could be drawn in depending on the nature of the emergency. This could include a member of the finance team for the authorisation of emergency payments and a member of the communications team. The severity and nature of any incident would also be the main determinant of who took command in an emergency situation.
- 3.6 The Emergency plans are regularly tested to ensure that they are adequate

3.7 **Incident Room**

Barry Frost and Kevin Liddle explained the role of the Incident Room and the Emergency Planning Team and advised members of the process if an incident or emergency was confirmed.

- 3.8 The suite itself has its own entrance and car parking and houses a kitchen, rest area, TV and various other communication tools. Members were advised of the importance of having a TV within the centre so the reporting of incidents could be monitored and the team can be alerted to how quickly a situation could be changing.
- 3.9 Barry Frost informed members that an incident is broken down into two categories, silver and gold and it is the decision of the Police to call an incident. A silver incident is local controlled at Gillbridge along and the Civic Centre, but a gold incident which is more serious would be controlled by the Chief Constable from Northumbria Police Headquarters at Ponteland. After any incident the Council has the responsibility for any clean up's such as cleaning debris from a highway etc in the case of a fire or serious road traffic accident.

3.10 Members discussed what was classed as an incident. Barry Frost explained that incidents varied nationally to locally. A national incident could be a possible terror threat, where as planning for an incident at a local level could include an accident at the International Air Show which is hosted annually in Sunderland, localised flooding as we are a coastal area, to a business or house fire where residents need to be evacuated from their homes due to the possibility of gas cylinders exploding. If this occurs the Council's Emergency Planning Team along with the emergency services would be responsible for evacuating local residents from their homes and finding alternative accommodation and catering etc for them until the incident is over.

3.11 **Business Continuity Team**

Members were also given an over view of the function and role of the Business Continuity Team which falls within the remit of Emergency Planning Team. Their role is to plan and put continuity plans in place for any disruption or stoppage to any of the services provided by the council in the event of an incident or emergency.

Tour of Control and Incident Room

3.12 In conclusion, Barry Frost and his team, provided members with a tour of the Control and Incident Suite at the Civic Centre.

4. Recommendation

4.1 Committee as asked to note the information

5. Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: **Jim Diamond (0191 561 1396)**
Jim.diamond@sunderland.gov.uk