



Belfast City Council

Report to: Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

Subject: **REVIEW OF SECURITY UNIT**

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Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Property & Projects Department was created in April 2010, and that it involved the merging of a number of existing services including Estates Management, Procurement, Project Management and Facilities Management. The Facilities Management Section is the largest of these sections, spending approx. £15m per annum and employing nearly 260 staff across 6 distinct business units.

Since the creation of the new Department, as well as delivering ongoing business to satisfactory levels, most of the business units within the Department have been the subject of efficiency reviews of one sort or another, as illustrated by the table below.

Business Unit	Current situation
Property Maintenance	an internal review has been carried out by the Efficiency Unit of the Finance & Resources Section, and the agreed recommendations are currently being implemented;
Fleet Management	an external review has been commissioned and is approaching completion; a report will shortly be tabled to the Committee setting out the main findings and recommendations;
Business Support	a new structure has been agreed which will introduce a new, more streamlined directorate business support function and the various posts are being categorized at present by HR/OD;
City Hall Management	a report has been tabled to the Committee in respect of changes in the use and management of the City Hall which will potentially have operational and staffing implications for most of the sub-units within the Facilities Unit, namely Civic HQ management, Cleaning & Portering and Catering Services.
Project Management Unit	Further adjustments are being made to the shape and direction of this Unit to ensure delivery of the physical projects within the Investment Programme.
Procurement	An external review of the procurement activity of the Council and the role of the Procurement Unit in providing strategic direction in this area was completed and reported to Committee. A new post of Head of Contracts was created to drive procurement forward in

terms of funding efficiency savings, directing expenditure more to local businesses and ensuring greater regulatory compliance.

All of this illustrates that one of the few sections in the Department which has not undergone any form of review since the creation of the new Department is the Security Unit.

However, as some members may be aware, the Security Unit underwent an internal review several years ago. A new structure was approved in October 2006 however the full implementation of this was deferred in light of the closure of the City hall for refurbishment from 2007-2009, and interim arrangements were agreed with the trades unions.

Immediately prior to the re-opening of the City Hall in 2009 a package of changes was developed in consultation with the trades unions, approved by the Committee and subsequently put to staff in workplace ballots. This package was eventually accepted by both groups of staff (i.e. the Security Officers and the Control Room Operatives) and was implemented in late 2009. This package of changes achieved the following outputs:-

- staff numbers needed to carry out all current activities were confirmed as being 30 Security Officers, 8 Control Room Operatives, 4 Duty Officers and 1 Security Manager;
- shift rotas were brought in line with the Single Status Agreement by reducing working hours from 40 per week to 37 per week and by 'buying out' staff rights to the associated 3hrs per person per week contractual overtime on the agreed basis of 3 times the annual detriment;
- the new rotas also negated the need for what had previously been referred to as 'compulsory overtime' in that the old shift patterns were seemingly compiled in a way which required overtime cover on 8 Saturdays/Sundays (12 in the Control Room) all paid at enhanced rates;
- staff were required for the first time to rotate around all 5 principal buildings (i.e. City Hall, Duncrue, CWB, ISB and Adelaide Exchange);
- staff were required for the first time to participate in a system of 'pool' cover whereby each officer takes a regular turn in the pool and can be deployed as needed in order to cover gaps in shifts left by holidays and sickness etc;
- new job descriptions and an enhanced role were agreed and a re-grading took place in order to offset most of the losses staff would otherwise have suffered on foot of the above;
- an element of lone-working was introduced in the Control Room where it was safe and appropriate to do so, thereby reducing unnecessary overtime costs;
- an overtime ladder was introduced following consultation with the trades unions in order to have a more equitable, consistent and controllable method of managing overtime.

These changes secured tangible reductions in overtime costs, although it should be noted that overtime costs are beginning to increase again within the unit and that this is only partially due to an increase in function work and also increased sickness levels.

Key Issues

Given that the Security unit is the only main facet of the Facilities Management Section which has not been subject to a review since being incorporated into the Property & Projects Department and that rising costs to some extent remain a problem for the unit, the key issue is whether or not to subject the unit to a further review at this time.

Given the emphasis on efficiency and value for money, it is felt that there is potentially significant benefit to be gained by such a review at this time. The suggested terms of reference for the review would be as follows:-

"to consider the costs, cost-drivers, operations, structures and methods of the current approach

to manned guarding and CCTV/alarm monitoring within the council, with a view to making recommendations which will secure an enhanced level of service at no additional cost or secure current levels of service at a lower cost or otherwise identify an optimal cost-effective position”.

Such a review could be delivered either by suitably qualified external consultants or internally, by the council’s Efficiency Unit. Given the specialized nature of the service it may be more cost-effective to use a tightly-controlled external process.

Resource Implications

The overall estimated annual cost of the in-house Security Unit at present in terms of providing manned guarding at the 5 premises covered (i.e. City Hall, CWB, ISB, Duncrue and Adelaide Exchange) plus CCTV & alarm monitoring at City Hall is as follows:-

Manned guarding (30 x Security Officers)	£958,766
CCTV & alarm monitoring (8 x Control Room operatives)	£275,897
Management/supervision (4 x Duty Officers & 1 Manager)	£248,384
Other overheads	<u>£ 68,484</u>
	TOTAL £1,551,531

Members may also be aware that the Security Unit has recently let a contract with an estimated annual value of **£719,050** in respect of the provision of manned guarding at a number of other prestige council sites (including Belfast Castle, Malone House, Waterfront Hall, Belfast Zoo, Gasworks etc) to G4S Ltd.

Overall, then, the council spends nearly **£2.3m** per annum on security services of the type referred to herein (this doesn’t include expenditure on event security and out-of-hours first responder services etc) and consequently it is felt that this function should be subject to the same scrutiny as other services in the search for corporate efficiencies. This is all the more important in the context of the Investment Programme, which requires ongoing efficiencies to be realised if the organization is to have the capacity to deliver on the its stated obligations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agree to commission an immediate, externally-delivered review of the Security Unit on the basis of the suggested terms of reference set out herein. The conclusions and recommendations of the review will subsequently be presented to the Committee for consideration and approval as appropriate.

Decision Tracking

It is anticipated that - if approval to conduct the review on the basis recommended is given - the final report will be available by September 2012 for Committee consideration and approval. Implementation thereafter will take place subject to the council’s standard policies and procedures.

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents Attached

None.