

Report to: Executive Board - 27th September 2002

Report on Implications of the Withdrawal of the Social Services Night Care Service on the Mobile Warden Service - Elderly Services

		WARDS AFFECTED
Report of:	<i>Housing Management Business Manager</i>	ALL
Report Author:	<i>Karen Turner Business Manager – Ext 252447 Jenny Robinson Elderly Services Manager Tel. No. 769638</i>	
Lead Member Responsible:	<i>Housing Portfolio Holder Val Smith</i>	
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	<i>Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</i>	
Key Decision:	<i>Yes</i>	
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
<p>This report advises Executive Board of the increased hours of night time working for the mobile warden staff.</p> <p>The Executive Board is RECOMMENDED to:</p> <p>a) Note the report.</p> <p>b) To approve the change of the present day time vacant mobile warden post to that of 2 part time night mobile warden/control centre operator posts.</p> <p>c) To instruct officers to monitor the night time call rate and report back to executive Board in March 2003.</p>		
1. Background Information		
<p>1.1 The Social Services Nightcare service has been in operation since 1992 and has worked in partnership with the mobile warden service.</p>		

1.2 The aim of the service was to provide planned personal care to social services clients in their homes during the night by social services staff. The nightcare service was also designed to respond to any of our emergency alarm calls when they had the resources and time to do this. This has resulted in less night time calls for our staff. If the Nightcare service had not been in operation in the City our staff would have needed to attend the night time calls from our clients. All calls are monitored by the control centre at Beckley View House.

1.3 The service has been very successful and has been a good example of interagency working.

1.4 Social Services agreed on 23 July 2002 to withdraw the Nightcare service. We have received notification from Social Services that the Nightcare service will end on 23 October 2002. Social Services are in the process of assessing the needs of some of their clients and may make alternative provision for them. It is possible that the nightcare service may provide a limited service to their regular clients after this date, but we have been advised that we cannot pass on any calls directly to the Nightcare service at any time after 23 October 2002. A meeting with Social Services is being arranged in September to discuss this further.

1.5 Whatever provisions are made by social services the effect of the closure of the nightcare service will increase the number of night time calls our mobile wardens will need to attend. Emergency calls are on the increase day and night due to demographic trends and because more people now remain in their own homes for longer. The additional calls may also be higher in the winter months and we may need to adjust the staff working arrangements at certain times in the year.

1.6 In providing a warden service in sheltered housing we have a duty to provide a 24 hour service, and to provide an emergency response to alarm calls. Individuals who have an alarm service have an agreement with the Council for a 24 hour service. The duty to provide personal care remains the duty of Social Services. We do not intend to take on this role. A warden's duty is to assess situations and to obtain the appropriate help from whichever agency is responsible. The warden is often the first person to detect when additional help or support is required, and is able to prevent suffering and improve the quality of life for the more vulnerable sections of the community.

1.7 In practice there are issues day and night when elderly or disabled people need personal care. Some clients do not receive regular home care and may need help in an emergency situation. Others may need help but the social services or private care agencies cannot respond in a reasonable time. On these occasions our wardens do provide the care as it is often quicker for them, and less embarrassing for the clients. Our staff will face the same problem at night when the Nightcare service ends. Our staff will contact Social Services to ask for help, but as our wardens are very caring they will not be able to walk away and leave the elderly and disabled in a distressed state.

1.8 The Supporting People programme may change the wardens role. This should be known after April 2003 when a proposed review of the housing related support services is due to start. The review of older people in sheltered housing is proposed to commence in year one, and the review for other older people is proposed to commence in year two.

2. Current Services

2.1 The team of 16 mobile wardens attend all emergency calls 24 hours a day to approximately 2000 elderly and vulnerable residents in Oxford City. They provide a warden service to 14 of the 17 Oxford City Council Sheltered Housing Schemes, and also provide relief cover for other Housing Association Sheltered Schemes. The number of Individual alarms in the council and private sectors of the community is increasing due to a high demand for the service. This brings in additional revenue for the Council.

2.2 The mobile wardens work a set shift pattern covering the hours between 6am and 10pm each day. In addition to this there is one mobile warden on standby duty from home each night to cover the night time calls. The elderly services managers are also on call to deal with any emergencies and to attend the calls where two members of staff are needed. Appendix 1 shows the level and times of night calls taken by the mobile wardens on standby duty, and the number of calls taken by the social services nightcare staff. The present number of emergency calls our staff attend during the day is higher than the night time calls.

2.3 Human Resources have confirmed that arrangements under the working time directive are due to be re-negotiated by the Council in the near future, but we do not know exactly when this will be. This may have an effect on the mobile warden standby duties, and it may be wise not to rely totally on standby cover to provide for future night working. At present the mobile wardens receive overtime payments at a minimum of two hours per call and also take time back for any time they are out at night after 11pm at an agreed time with the managers.

2.4 Arrangements are taking place to consider the Control Centre at Beckley View taking the out of hours calls for the Homelessness service. These calls are at present being taken by the Social Services Emergency Duty Team. Notification has been given to us that Social Services plan to charge Oxford City Council £4,800 per year for the service. If our option for the alternative working arrangements were to go ahead we would have the additional operator staff needed in the control centre to manage this increase in work.

3. Option for Alternative Working Arrangements

3.1 Option 1

3.1.1 To use the current vacant mobile warden post to recruit two part time night mobile warden posts. The new post holders would work in the control centre at Beckley View from 10pm to 6am as operating staff and go out to attend the emergency calls as they come in. They would rotate their nights of work to cover the 7 days each week. This would be a safer option as staff would already be awake. It would also improve the response times for attending calls, and thus give tenants a higher quality of service.

3.1.2 To keep one mobile warden and managers on standby from home. This would provide the back up needed for the calls where two people are needed, and for when several calls come in at the same times.

3.1.3 To use the current mobile warden team to provide the cover for the 2 part time posts for annual leave and sick leave.

3.1.4 To give notice to the private service users, including the housing associations that we will be increasing our charges from April 2003 to meet any shortfall in the staff salary budgets.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 At this stage we cannot predict accurately the additional costs to the service as we do not know the increased number of calls we will need to attend. We have a contract with Oxford Citizens Housing Association and some other smaller Housing Associations to provide emergency mobile warden response. We re-charge these Housing Associations for each emergency call. This will increase our income, but at this stage we cannot give an estimate on this. It should also be noted that the Housing Associations could make alternative provisions for emergency calls by changing their wardens contracts.


4.2 Option one would increase the staff salary budget by £16,026.00 per year. This would not significantly increase the overall budget costs as we could make additional savings by a slight increase in alarm charges to the private sector. This would also give members time to review the level of service provided and to assess the additional pressures on the staff. There may be additional savings as the mobile warden on standby may not be called out as frequently as at present thus avoiding the overtime call out payments. Current staff savings for this financial year will offset the increase in the staff salary budget.

4.3 A breakdown of costs and savings for this financial year and 2003/4 is attached in appendix 2.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY: The Portfolio Member for Housing, Financial Management Business Manager, Legal Services Business Manager & The Strategic Director for Housing, Health & Community

Background papers:

Social Services Budget Proposal – Withdrawal of Night Care Service
Social Services Executive Committee 23 July 2002

Number of calls per night between timed intervals	Combined calls	MW calls	NC calls	Combined calls	MW calls	NC calls	Combined calls	MW calls	NC calls	Combined calls	MW calls	NC calls	Combined calls	MW calls	NC calls	Combined calls	MW calls	NC calls
Before 11pm																		
Nights with 0 calls	19	25	22	14	16	22	21	25	24	17	19	23	20	23	28	15	22	20
Nights with 1 call	6	4	6	9	11	6	7	6	7	7	10	4	7	4	3	10	7	7
Nights with 2 calls	3	1	3	5	2		3			4	1	2	4	4		3	1	3
Nights with 3 calls	3	1								1		1				2		
Nights with 4 calls										0								
Nights with 5 calls										1								
11pm - 2am																		
Nights with 0 calls	11	26	11	12	22	16	16	29	17	10	26	11	16	23	20	10	23	12
Nights with 1 call	8	5	11	11	6	9	8	2	7	6	2	6	7	7	5	14	6	14
Nights with 2 calls	6		5	4		2	4		5	9	2	9	4	1	3	4	1	4
Nights with 3 calls	6		4	0		3	2		1	3		4	2		3	1		
Nights with 4 calls				1		1	1		1	1						1		
Nights with 5 calls										1								
 2am - 5am																		
Nights with 0 calls	14	25	14	22	26	23	22	29	24	19	26	19	16	27	19	18	28	19
Nights with 1 call	8	5	10	5	2	4	4	2	2	6	4	9	9	4	7	7	2	7
Nights with 2 calls	6	1	4	0		0	5		5	4		1	5		4	4		4
Nights with 3 calls	0		2	0		1				0		1	1		1	1		
Nights with 4 calls	2		1	1						1								
Nights with 5 calls	0																	
Nights with 6 calls	1																	
5am - 8am																		
Nights with 0 calls	27	30	27	18	25	18	23	26	28	28	29	29	27	31	27	23	25	26
Nights with 1 call	2	1	2	7	3	10	7	5	2	2	1	1	4		4	4	5	3
Nights with 2 calls	1		2	3			1		1							3		1

Nights with 3 calls

1

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

The present vacant mobile warden post has total salary cost of £23,074.

The total costs including night and weekend enhancement rates for two part time posts would be £39,100 per year. We would need to find annual savings of £16,026 per year to fund these posts.

Estimated Costs and Savings 2002/03 - Mobile Warden Budget MD46

Estimated staff under spend in budget	- £13,330.75
Costs of additional salaries from 01/11/02 - 31/03/03	£16,291.66
Total estimated staff over spend in budget (This includes staff turnover savings of £8,256.00)	£2,960.91

Estimated Costs and Savings 2003/04 - Mobile Warden Budget MD46

Increase in private monitoring costs 290 x 25p per week	£3,770.00
Increase in private full mobile warden cover costs 350 x 40p per week	£7,280.00
Saving to OCC in providing Out of Hours Homelessness Monitoring per year.	£4,800.00
Total increase in income and savings	£15,850