

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

PERFORMANCE & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HOUSING OPERATIONS

11 AUGUST 2009

WEEKEND WORKING ESTATE & CARETAKER SERVICES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give a position statement on the weekend working arrangements for the caretaking service and the level of service provided.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Performance and Regulatory Committee

- 2.1 note the report.
- 2.2 agree to the commencement of consultation with our tenants and leaseholders for the future delivery of the weekend caretaking service.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The audit commission identified that "caretaking weekend work is expensive.....and value for money is not assured" This was highlighted as part of the review of the estates and caretaker service which was reported to Board in November 2008
- 3.2 Block caretakers are contracted to work one weekend in five, comprising four hours on a Saturday and four hours on a Sunday. A service is also provided on Bank Holidays and other statutory holidays. Payment for Saturday work is at time and a half and double time for Sundays.
- 3.3 Employees that work on public holidays receive payment at double time and a full day as time off in lieu.
- 3.4 Following consultation with a group of block caretakers, the number of employees required to cover at weekends was reduced from fifteen to ten from April 2009. This has been possible by amalgamating a number of sites and by clearly defining the minimum duties that caretakers should be completing at a weekend, as follows:
- Check all floors and stairs and mop any spillages
 - Check all chute rooms and remove bulky rubbish
 - Rotate bins

4 OPTIONS TO AMEND THE WEEKEND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 It is proposed to commence consultation with our tenants and leaseholders, caretakers and unions on the options for future weekend working arrangements. These options include but are not limited to:
- I. Further reduction in the number of employees required to work at weekends whilst maintaining an acceptable level of service to the existing sites which are covered by weekend working; or
 - II. Withdrawal of the service from some sites if tenants and leaseholders at those sites choose to take this option; or
 - III. Withdrawal of the existing service citywide to be replaced with an “emergency cover” only service similar to that provided by three star organisations, identified following a benchmarking exercise undertaken in 2007
- 4.2 In addition to the above, a service is available to deal with extreme emergencies such as floods which may occur outside normal working hours. Monitoring officers are on 24 hour call out and co-ordinate responses to this type of emergency.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of weekend overtime provided by the caretaking service for 2008/09 (excluding on-costs) was £69,434 against an original budget provision of £72,050.
- 5.2 The reduction in the number of employees working at weekends has resulted in an immediate saving of £20,050 in the 2009/10 budget provision compared with the previous year. This is shown in the table below:

	2008/09 Budget	2009/10 Budget	2009/10 Budget Reduction
	£	£	£
Caretaker Overtime (excluding on-costs)	72,050	52,000	20,050 (28%)

- 5.3 The existing arrangements does not impact on the contractual arrangements for the caretakers, however any future changes to the weekend service may impact on their terms and conditions. Consultation with employees and the trade unions will be required if further changes are to be made.
- 5.4 Monitoring officers receive a premium on their salaries to be available out of hours. This is covered within the salary budget and does not impact on the overtime costs.
- 5.5 Caretakers do encounter instances during the weekend which prevents

them undertaking their duties across the remainder of the blocks. For example, blocked chutes or removal of bulk waste. These instances are recorded to assess the impact on the weekend working arrangements.

- 5.6 The distance travelled during a weekend has increased at only two of the sites with this change in working arrangements, although initial feedback from the caretakers is that this is manageable.
- 5.7 Vision management surveys conducted in Radford and the four sheltered high rise blocks this financial year have not highlighted any concerns by tenants and leaseholders following the change in weekend arrangements.
- 5.9 A full analysis of service charges will be conducted to reflect any changes which are made in service provision. This could result in reduced income however this will need to be balanced against savings in staffing costs.

6 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The review of the weekend overtime working arrangements will ensure that a seamless service is provided that meets the needs of our tenants and leaseholders and delivers value for money. The introduction of a clear work schedule for weekend work will continue to improve the service through the delivery of consistent practices across the high and medium rise blocks.

7 VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCY ISSUES

- 7.1 All Caretakers were consulted and balloted by the Unions on the recent change in Bank Holiday arrangements for Nottingham City Homes. The majority voting in favour of bank holidays being added to annual leave. As a result of this decision the number of days to be covered through overtime has reduced by 40.
- 7.2 The 2009/10 overtime budget has been reduced by £20,050 It is envisaged that service provision in 2009/10 can be delivered in line with that provided in 2008/09 without any negative impact to the overall satisfaction of our tenants and leaseholders. This demonstrates both a significant economic saving and evidence of the caretaking and estates services team ongoing commitment to embedding value for money.

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Historically tenants and leaseholders have not been consulted on the provision of a weekend service. The weekend rota will be discussed at area panels and other forums over the coming months to ensure that the service provided meets the needs of our customers.
- 8.2 After the block caretakers have been allocated their contractual weekend hours, all caretakers are then given the opportunity to volunteer to provide cover at weekends. This work is allocated according to the number of employees expressing an interest in covering individual sites.

9 BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

9.1 Caretaker review report to Board Nov 2008

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