

MEMBERS/TRADES UNIONS JOINT CONSULTATION AND SAFETY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 19 October 2005 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Employers' side: Councillors Copping, Holland and Short.

Trades Unions' side: Mr A Crump, Mr A Foster, Mr A Rybicki and Mrs J Webb

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hammon.

546. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

547. SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR RIVERSIDE HOUSE RECEPTION AND THE TOWN HALL

The Panel considered a report from the Joint Chairs regarding the security arrangements at Riverside House reception and the Town Hall.

At the meeting on 5 October 2005, the Council's Safety Advisor had informed the Panel that, in his opinion, the current arrangements and procedures relating to cash handling by members of the Riverside House reception staff required reconsideration.

The report also referred to an incident where a member of the public, who was known to have convictions for violent offences, was able to enter the Town Hall unchallenged and undetected.

As a result, the Panel had expressed concerns for the safety of the staff in Riverside House and the Town Hall and felt that action should be taken to resolve these matters.

With regard to the Town Hall, the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) had discussed the situation with the Entertainments Manager who had responsibility for the management of the premises. As a result, a feasibility exercise was being carried out into the provision of outer and inner security doors at the main entrance but, if this option was pursued, Listed Building Consent would be required. An electronic entry system, similar to that in use at Riverside House, could be provided on the rear door for use by members of staff and Councillors.

MEMBERS/TRADES UNIONS CONSULTATION AND SAFETY PANEL MINUTES
(Continued)

Similarly, the use of visitor's badges should be considered as part of the overall arrangements and there was a need to assess the risk. It was acknowledged, however, that the issuing of visitor's passes to those attending private functions at the Town Hall would be impractical.

The Safety Advisor reported that consideration should be given to installing personal attack alarms around the Town Hall, and that there should be a means of the Porters and Superintendent being able to communicate with others in the event of an emergency. For example, the use of the town centre radio link system might be possible at a relatively low cost.

The Panel then discussed the arrangements in the reception area in Riverside House particularly in view of the new arrangements for handling cash.

The Head of Revenues and Customer Services informed the meeting that in June 2005, when the new arrangements had been introduced, the Council Safety Advisor and the Insurance Officer had been requested to review the arrangements following the closure of the cashier service, and a new written procedure had been produced and assessed by the Audit Services Manager. An independent assessment had been carried out by the Internal Auditors of Warwickshire County Council and their report was awaited.

The Head of Revenues and Customer Services reported that, on average, the amount of cash being received at Riverside House was now relatively small and the current working practices had been developed by the staff involved.

The Panel then discussed the more detailed arrangements for handling cash at Riverside House, and the Safety Advisor commented on improvements to procedures which he considered to be necessary.

The Panel also considered the suitability of the CCTV system at Riverside House and felt that there would be advantages in the system being linked to the Town Hall CCTV Control Room.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) a Security Guard be employed in the reception area in Riverside House during office hours;
- (2) a report be requested from Property Services and Leisure and Amenities assessing the viability of introducing appropriate security measures at the Town Hall, after taking advice from the Safety Advisor;
- (3) if practicable, the CCTV system at Riverside House be linked to the Town Hall CCTV Control Room; and

MEMBERS/TRADES UNIONS CONSULTATION AND SAFETY PANEL MINUTES
(Continued)

- (4) the Safety Advisor and the Head of Revenues and Customer Services be requested to review the previous procedures introduced for cash handling at Riverside House.

(The meeting ended at 5.30 pm)