



Report to Cabinet

Subject Single National Non Emergency Number

Date 15th June 2006

Author Chief Executive

1. Purpose of the Report

- i) To advise Members of the Government's proposal to establish a single national non emergency telephone number,
- ii) To advise Members of the Support Given for the County's involvement in this to date and to seek Member approval for continuation of the Council's involvement.

2. Background

The Emergency Services have for some time been concerned about the number of non emergency calls which are made to the 999 service, which severely hampers their ability to manage that service and to provide rapid and effective responses for genuine emergencies. The government has accordingly developed a proposal to establish a new service based on a 101 telephone number which will provide the public with direct access to advice, information and action for community safety issues, including non emergency crime, policing and anti social behaviour.

The intention is that this number will put callers directly in touch with a call centre staffed by specially trained operators who will, with regard to the type of issue coming in the scope of the service, answer enquiries, give advice and information and arrange for further action to be taken when appropriate. At present, it is intended that the core services covered by the 101 service should be:

- Vandalism,
- Graffiti and other deliberate damage to property,
- Noisy neighbours or loud parties,

- Intimidation and harassment,
- Abandoned vehicles,
- Rubbish and litter, including fly tipping,
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places,
- Drug related anti social behaviour,
- Street lighting.

Additional services may be added to this list over time.

The government has made a commitment to introduce such a service throughout the country by 2008 and is intending to do this in 3 stages, with 'pilot' schemes being put in place to test the matter out in the first 2 stages leading up to final implementation. The first pilot schemes are being established in various parts of the country, including Leicester and Rutland, and expressions of interest have been sought for partnerships of agencies to participate in the second phase of pilots to commence in 2007.

Following initial discussions, Nottinghamshire County Council has submitted a bid for a partnership based on Nottinghamshire. The bid criteria required that every Council in the relevant area submit a letter of commitment in the form attached. Unfortunately the very short time frame between the bid being prepared and the closing date for submission of the bid meant it was not possible to seek Cabinet approval to the Council's involvement in advance, so, following discussion with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, I have submitted a letter of commitment on behalf of the Council as required in the form attached. I understand that all other Districts and the Nottinghamshire Police have likewise indicated their commitment.

If the County Council is successful in this bid then it will receive £100,000 'pump priming' from the government to assist in the development of the call centre. I attach at appendix 1, a copy of the letter of commitment which was submitted. I also attach at appendix 2 a copy of the prospectus issued by the government which describes the 101 proposal and its objectives. Members will appreciate that there will be a number of significant issues to be addressed in establishing a service such as this, including working out how this service will fit with existing Council contact arrangements. It will also be important to agree exactly what level of service and response will be provided, particularly bearing in mind that different Councils will almost certainly have different policies on these matters at present, and to avoid overlap and confusion with existing services.

There may well also be capacity issues if this were to give rise to any significant increase in demand for services. It is also the case that the bid was submitted without any discussion having taken place with regard to the partnership arrangements which would be put in place in order to manage the service. I have, accordingly, made the point that the

Council's future commitment to the scheme must be dependent upon the outcome of detailed negotiations on these and other matters.

3. Recommendations

The Cabinet is asked to note the action taken so far and to agree to the Council's continuing involvement in developing the single national non emergency number service in Nottinghamshire.