

4. SECURITY SPECIALISTS TO ASSIST IN CENTRAL CITY

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The purpose of this report is to report on the proposal by Inspector D M Lawry, Area Controller Hagley-Ferrymead of the New Zealand Police for the employment of security persons for the early hours of Saturday and Sunday in the central city.

INTRODUCTION

The matter of providing funding for such a proposal was raised at an Annual Plan Working Party meeting of the Council and it was recommended that a sum of \$30,000 be allocated for the purpose of a 12-month trial of security patrols in the central city.

The proposal of Inspector Lawry is related to a project to address disorder arising in the central city, principally the Colombo Street, Cashel Mall, and the Oxford Terrace "strip" areas. Inspector Lawry saw the resolution of this perceived problem as being three-fold.

First he saw the re-introduction of joint Police, Crown Public Health and City Council Sale of Liquor patrols to target licensed premises not complying with the provisions of the Sale of Liquor Act. He saw this as also raising awareness among patrons of this group. He saw performance measures being developed for this activity.

The second initiative would be the ongoing Police operations, including those such as a booze bus operation that commenced at 5am one morning and found that 1% of drivers of the vehicles stopped committed offences under drink-driving compared to the usual rate of .01%. [That is 1 in 100 in the 5am operation compared with 1 in 1000 generally.] The other operation, which commenced on the 30 March to run for five weeks, consisted of a coordinated foot patrol of Police, members of the Youth Crime Unit, and the Sulufaiga Trust. This is aimed at removing youth at risk using powers under the Children, Young Persons and Families Act as well as targeting more hardened criminals in a range of areas. There will also be an increase in the manning of the existing crime cameras in the Central Station monitoring area.

The third area is the employment of *a roving group of security specialists who could identify, in conjunction with Beat Section staff, risk and pressure points that can be then addressed prior to there being victims.*¹

The proposal is to contract with Event Control Specialists, who provide the majority of door persons being used by various bars in this area, and also have undertaken security work for Christchurch City Council events. This will consist of the employment of a team of four specially trained security persons working from 1am to 5am on two nights of the week. They will move around the central city area and will be under the guidance of the Police Beat Section until 2am and after 2am the Police night shift group field supervisor will provide guidance. Direct supervision will be by Event Control Supervisors who already are working with other doormen employed by various bars in the central city area.

Inspector Lawry has advised that the \$30,000 would give a 50-week coverage on current rates for the staff but Event Control Specialists would carry out the role for a whole year for that price. That is Event Control Specialists would provide the additional two weeks service at no additional cost. The Council would not be responsible for employing any individual person. It would be proposed that the Council would contract with the firm for the service and specific performance goals and guidelines would be developed for the contract.

DISCUSSION

In regard to the first issue, relating to matters to do with the Sale of Liquor Act and this Council's role as the District Licensing Agency, Mr Prusas, Team Leader Environmental Effects, has previously commented on this to the Annual Plan Working Party.²

¹ Letter from D.M. Lawry, Area Controller Hagley/Ferrymead, New Zealand Police, 21 March 2001

² Resources – Sale of Liquor, Report to Annual Plan Working Party, 8 March 2001

In relation to the Sale of Liquor section administration, he advised that it is intended that an additional 0.5 FTE (Administration Support) will be placed in this section in the 2001/02 year. This awaits a computer function upgrade completion which is advised to be about mid 2001. This will free up the Sale of Liquor inspectors to carry out more "field" work rather than be tied to administration. The budget proposed for the 2001/02 year is presently set at a net cost to the ratepayer of \$75,059.

He considered that the security and violence in the central city concerns and the associated matters of youth at risk, youth out at night/early hours of the morning, responsible parenting etc were perhaps the real issue. These were not directly involved with Sale of Liquor Act administration, which is primarily a regulatory function. The object of the Sale of Liquor Act is *to establish a reasonable system of control over the sale and supply of liquor to the public with the aim of contributing to the reduction of liquor abuse so far as that can be achieved by legislative means.*

Alcohol may be a mix in the security/violence equation but this is seen as a wider community issue and should be dealt with as such. ... Inspecting more premises may not overcome the wider community issue.

He advised that the Police at a recent District Licensing Agency meeting stated that the majority of licensed premises were operating in compliance with the law and were satisfactory.

It should be noted that the Council has recently adopted a policy, put forward by the Safer Community Council, to reduce alcohol-related harm at outdoor events whether provided by the Council, or on land controlled by the Council, or funded by the Council. Work is currently being undertaken on means of implementation of this policy.

Councillor Sally Thompson, chairperson of the Christchurch Safer Community Council has advised as follows.³

Safer Christchurch discussed the proposed 12-month trial of security patrols in the central city and has the following comments:

- We are concerned that this is an isolated project with no strategic planning involved. Safer Christchurch had recommended to the CCC, via the Central City Mayoral forum, that there be a Safety Strategy developed for the central city incorporating all the key stakeholders and this is still our recommended course of action.*
- If the CCC goes ahead with these security patrols they will need to be clearly identified as CCC employees rather than Police employees, and there will need to be a clearly defined review process established.*
- Safer Christchurch has been developing, with a number of key agencies including Police and CCC, a proposal for four more youth workers on the streets in the inner city to lessen the incidents of violence amongst young people. We see this as a more positive step towards improving safety in the central city than security patrols.*

Robyn Moore, Youth Advocate, has commented as follows.

I recommend that the committee meet with both Inspector Lawry and with District Commander Superintendent John Reilly to ensure absolute clarity with regard to the role of the proposed security officer position.

As Youth Advocate I have frequently heard of cases where security officers employed at various locations have not acted in the manner expected of professionals dealing with the public. When the issues discussed primarily involve young people, it would seem appropriate to have people well trained in dealing with this age group working to minimise the problems. Security Officers are not always well versed in communicating effectively with young people and may in fact inflame situations. As recently as this month a situation was reported to me whereby a security officer allegedly made a racially inappropriate statement to a group of young people entering a public access building. This has the potential to inflame a group of young people who (according to witnesses) were not causing any problem.

I have spoken to both Inspector Lawry and District Commander Superintendent John Reilly about the proposal and felt that they each perceived the position a little differently. It is therefore my recommendation that both officers meet with the committee.

³ Letter from Sally Thompson, QSM, Chairperson Christchurch Safer Community Council, 27 April 2001

CONCLUSION

The Council must consider whether it wishes to be involved in such behaviour policing activities within the central city, or indeed any other areas of the city. While the particular security firm is well spoken of by the Leisure Unit which employs the firm for facilities security there could be some problems in selecting the firm over others without going through a tendering or other process. It was not considered that the Council should be the employing body of any individual security person and it is clear that the proposal would largely provide support for Police activities in the central city.

The suggestions of both Safer Christchurch Community Council and the Youth Advocate should be seriously considered before agreement is reached on implementing the proposal.

Recommendation: That the proposal be deferred pending discussions between the Police, Christchurch Safer Community Council representatives, the Youth Advocate and the Team Leader Environmental Effects on means of dealing with the perceived behavioural problems.

The Chairman comments:

At a recent meeting of representatives of the metropolitan councils, Mark Blumsky, Mayor of Wellington, described an agreement between his council and the police under which the police carried out certain patrol duties in the city in return for the provision by the council of certain facilities for the police. We have requested more detailed information about the project, which has apparently been successful in reducing problems of disorderly behaviour and offending.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the proposal be deferred, pending receipt of the information from Wellington City and discussions with the Police, Safer Community Council and other relevant groups.