

## 1. Executive summary

1.1 Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of the Council's out of hour's response service.

1.2 The terms of reference for the review were:

**To consider the operation of the council's out of hours service operated through Tonbridge and Malling Housing Association;**

**To consider what other advice and support is available out of hours to respond to emergencies that may arise;**

**To advise the Cabinet on any improvements that could be made to the council's out of hours response service.**

1.3 The context in which the review was undertaken was to investigate the service provided by the out hours response service when a large volume of calls is received regarding the same issue.

1.4 Three evidence gathering sessions were held. The first session was held on 1 December 2004 at the Invicta Lifeline offices and the Managing Director and two managers of the service were interviewed along with Mr D Stone, Director of Gravesham Services. Members then had a tour of the Invicta Lifeline call centre whilst calls were being taken. Mr D Stone then gave evidence independently on 2 December 2004 and a further session was held on 13 December with Mr A Rowe, Chairman of Cobham Parish Council and Mr J Wintour, Managing Director, Gravesham Borough Council.

1.5 The recommendations to the Cabinet are: -

1.5.1 Following an influx of calls to the Invicta Lifeline regarding the same incident, a designated Gravesham Borough Council senior officer should be contacted and a response should be given by that officer to the Invicta Lifeline to issue to subsequent callers.

1.5.2 All callers' details should be logged and on the first working day following an incident and a written response from the council should be sent to all callers stating what is / can be done regarding the situation, thus being proactive as opposed to being reactive.

1.5.3 An official cascade system enabling the Invicta Lifeline to get in touch with a senior officer be adopted.

1.5.4 Any future changes in legislation (e.g. the proposed temporary stop notices) or public concern regarding differing issues that may emerge nationally/locally should result in an immediate officer review of the procedure manual to ensure instructions adequately cover the potential incident.

1.5.5. Parish Council Chairman should have and lead/shadow lead members telephone numbers and those members should be supplied with the out of hours numbers for the Managing Director, Executive Directors and Head of Legal Services to be used on an emergency only basis.