

Report of the Area Coordinator to the meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee to be held on 23rd July 2013.

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Subject:

Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee

Summary statement:

This report provides further information regarding the devolution of the Council Warden Service and includes specific information about:

- Service Delivery Plan
- Performance
- Involving citizens in service delivery
- Opportunities and challenges for the Service
- Finance

Portfolio:

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Overview and Scrutiny Area:



1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides further information regarding the devolution of the Council Warden Service and includes specific information about:

- Service Delivery Plan
- Performance
- Involving citizens in service delivery
- Opportunities and challenges for the Service

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 A report about the devolution of the Council Warden Service was presented to the Bradford East Area Committee on 22nd November. This report outlined the basis on which the Bradford East Area Committee would take responsibility for the Service.

2.2 There are 15 Council Warden posts in the Bradford East Area including 1 mobile post (Council Warden on a motorbike). The 15 Council Wardens are managed by a Warden Manager.

2.3 There were 15 mobile posts (Council Wardens on motorbikes), 3 posts in each of the 5 Area Co-ordinators Offices, when the Council Warden Service started in January 2012. Council Wardens on motorbikes have not been replaced when they have left the Service or taken up other posts within the Service. In some areas, particularly the Bradford areas, it was felt that it is more effective to have Council Wardens on foot than on a motorbike.

2.4 **Service Delivery Plan – Ward Plans**

Ward Assessments are produced every year by Ward Officers. They include statistical and perception information which is supplemented by the information that is collated from Councillors, people who work in the area and feedback from residents and other partners as part of ongoing consultation. The issues identified in the Ward Assessments are prioritised and fed into the annual Ward Plans which list actions that need to be undertaken to respond to the priorities. Quarterly Ward Work Plans are then produced and these are used by Ward Officers and Warden Managers to deploy Wardens. Ward Officers work alongside Councillors in considering Ward Assessments and in developing the Ward Plans. The Ward Plans give Ward Members influence and control over how they deploy resources.

Ward Officers also hold 6 weekly multi-agency Ward Partnership Team meetings and Wardens respond to some of the issues identified at these meetings.

This model of service delivery allows for intelligence-led deployment of Wardens.

However, the challenge is to balance the formalised workflow as incorporated in the Ward Plan/Ward Work Plan and the inevitable need for a more responsive approach. Staff in Area Co-ordinators Offices receive many requests for Warden support from many different sources including councillors, residents, businesses, schools and other partners such as the Police and the Fire Service. The Wardens are becoming increasingly recognised as being the part of the Council

that is able to respond to many issues and this in turn raises expectations.

2.5 **Ensuring Quality of Service Delivery**

The service now uses a number of methods to ensure a high standard of service is delivered consistently to the residents of Bradford.

Briefing and debriefings – a structured system of briefing and debriefing is done on a daily basis by Warden Managers across all Warden teams to ensure that information is relayed to and captured from Wardens in a consistent manner. Operational matters, health and safety and key emerging issues are discussed at these sessions. Debriefings are also used to capture information that may be of use to the Police, using bespoke Police Intelligence forms.

Test and Inspects – Warden Managers are required to regularly assess the work being undertaken by each of their Wardens. As part of the test & inspect procedure an unannounced visit to the Wardens area is made to assess the overall quality of the work, and to ensure that the Warden is working in compliance with procedures and protocols. Any findings are documented and used as learning points at appraisals and staff supervision meetings. This ensures that there is operational consistency across all areas.

Deployment of Staff – Effective and proportionate deployment of staff, without compromising the health and safety of staff, is essential in ensuring that the service is operating as efficiently as possible. A new 'Managing Warden Safety' procedure has been developed that ensures Wardens are deployed to an area based on the risk of violence and aggression. Wardens operate in most areas as lone workers to ensure resources are maximised unless a risk assessment requires that Wardens work in pairs.

Standard Operating Procedures - Procedures have been produced to ensure that the Service is operating in accordance with the Council's policies and practices.

Protocols with other Council services – These have been developed to ensure clarity about what services can expect from each other. For example, the Council Wardens follow protocols when working with Environmental Protection and Highways and these include details about how to deal with skips, overhanging vegetation and business waste.

Training & Development – All Council Wardens undergo a comprehensive training programme to ensure that they are fully equipped to do the job. The ever increasing demands on the service call for ongoing training and development. Recent examples of this include Crime Prevention training delivered by the Police in order to reduce burglary rates in the district, and 'Scams and Fraud' training delivered by West Yorkshire Trading Standards to tackle the abuse of elderly/vulnerable residents. Emergency Planning Officers will be delivering Council Liaison Officer training to Wardens soon. This will enable Wardens to act as a first point of contact in emergency situations.

2.6 Performance

Wardens are currently performance managed through formal supervisions and 'test and inspects'. 'Test and inspects' are carried out on site and include an assessment of the quality of work undertaken by Council Wardens. The Warden Manager visits an area that has been recently patrolled by the Warden to ensure that all the issues that should have been identified in that area have been spotted. The Warden Manager also ensures that any identified issues are being dealt with in accordance with training and procedures.

Managers are also able to access information about the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued, Fixed Penalty Notices served for litter and dog fouling and the number of issues logged with the Contact Centre and referrals to the Environmental Enforcement Team. The number of service requests resolved by Council Wardens is also available. However, these figures are not a true reflection of the Wardens work as the Wardens are trained to resolve issues at source as opposed to recording and reporting issues to other services. A significant number of issues that would normally have been dealt with by other Council services are resolved by Wardens. In the vast majority of cases this work is not being measured and therefore the real value of the Wardens cannot be quantified.

At the beginning of the year a paper-based system was set up to capture the work of the Wardens. This proved to be effective but was labour intensive as it required admin support to input the data. The Service has been working with the New Ways of Working Team and Corporate IT to develop electronic forms that can be loaded onto Smart Phones that capture the same information as the paper-based system.

The Wardens will use drop down menus on their Smart Phones to record an issue they come across whilst out on patrol. These include anti-social behaviour, highway problems, rubbish in gardens, business waste, problems associated with empty homes and safeguarding issues. The Wardens will then record what actions they have taken and will either deal with the job and close it down or refer it to another service. In many cases the further action will require a follow-up visit from the Warden to ensure compliance with the request that the Warden has made. Revisits are automatically scheduled on the Phone.

Warden Managers will be able to analyse the data captured on the Phones to monitor the quantity, type and the quality of the work of the Wardens. This will show us trends, the range of work the Wardens deal with, allow us to compare between areas and to ensure that there is the consistent application of procedures in all areas.

The use of Smart Phones in conjunction with the electronic forms will also allow the Wardens to access, capture and record information in real time. This includes the following:

- Checking for any outstanding service requests against properties
- Creating service requests for other services without having to email the Contact Centre
- Updating existing service requests for Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing

- Updating service requests currently logged onto the Contact Centre database
- Identifying high risk properties
- Reporting defective pay and display machines

There will also be access to council email, calendar and a camera on the Smart Phone.

2 phones are currently being trialled and all Wardens should have a Smart Phone by the end of August 2013.

2.7 Involving Citizens in Service Delivery

Green Dog Walkers – The Service has recently agreed to support and promote a scheme that works in partnership with active citizens to help to tackle the problem of dog fouling. The Green Dog Walkers Scheme is a community-led initiative that encourages people to take a pledge to be a responsible dog owner and clean-up after their dog. Volunteers that are part of this Scheme approach other dog walkers to promote responsible dog ownership with the local authority providing the funding and support for such things as armbands, promotional materials and bags. Its success depends on visibility, and friendly peer pressure to encourage change in attitude. Volunteers sign up to the pledge, wear the armband and commit to carrying extra dog poo bags with them so that they can offer these to anyone that they see who has not got one. The Scheme has proved to be successful in many parts of the country.

Unadopted back streets – These backstreets have historically been a problem to keep clean as the Council does not have a legal duty to clean them. This responsibility falls upon the residents of these streets. Wardens actively identify unadopted back streets where there are concerns about litter, fly-tipping and other environmental problems. They carry out door knocking to engage with occupants to encourage them to take part in helping to clean up their street and organise community tidy up days. The Wardens provide residents with tools to carry out the cleaning and also use this as an opportunity to talk to them about responsibly disposing of their waste.

Litter from businesses – Wardens target areas where fast-food litter problems have been identified. They speak to staff to explain their legal responsibilities to keep their premises and frontages clean and free of litter. Business owners are offered litter pickers to help them keep their premises and surroundings tidy. They enter into an informal agreement with Wardens about the times they will litter pick around their premises and Wardens monitor this. This work is resulting in making businesses take more responsibility for waste produced by their customers and in reducing the amount of time Clean Teams spend in these areas. This is a sustainable and cost effective approach to deal with the litter problems.

Work with schools – Wardens are delivering environmental, road safety and safer communities projects across the district in primary, secondary schools and colleges. A structured programme is delivered over an agreed period of time. This includes a range of initiatives such as visual audits to identify problems,

action plans developed by young people to address some of the problems identified and young people taking part in community involvement days, action days and community tidy-up events. In some instances this has also included poster competitions and the winning poster being printed and distributed in the local area with messages promoting responsible behaviour. Projects sometimes culminate in special school events, and presentations delivered by the children at assemblies where parents and/or other children from different year groups have been invited.

Recycling – Wardens are increasing the take-up of kerbside recycling by carrying out home visits on streets identified with low uptake. They talk to residents about the benefits of recycling and how to dispose of waste responsibly. This has resulted in a large number of people signing up for recycling. Wardens monitor these areas and where people struggle they provide advice.

Community involvement activities – Wardens are involved in a wide range of activities to promote active citizenship and increase civic pride. They help residents to organise community fun days, and they deliver presentations at Community Centres, Children’s Centres and through faith communities and other networks. They help to organise community litter picking events and support Friends of Groups and other environmental action groups. Wardens make a significant contribution to helping to make communities safer, stronger and more cohesive. Projects such as Junior Warden Schemes, Community Champions and Street to be Proud of have helped create networks of residents who are working closely with the Council Wardens to try and improve the areas where they live. Council Wardens also provide ongoing support to a broad range of resident-led and /or voluntary groups to organise events and other activities to help improve their neighbourhood.

2.8 **Opportunities and challenges for the Service**

Wide remit of the Warden’s role – The remit ranges from parking and environmental enforcement to dealing with environmental and community safety issues and engaging with residents, businesses and partners. Whilst the work of the Wardens is steered by the Ward Plans/Ward Work Plans as outlined above, there are constant challenges facing Warden Managers in terms of allocating the Warden resource.

Dog Control Orders – This year saw the introduction of an additional 3 Dog Control Orders in Bradford to add to the existing Dog Fouling Order. The new orders cover a) Exclusion of dogs from designated areas, b) Dogs on leads in designated areas and c) Dogs on lead by direction. The new Orders will be enforced by Council Wardens and this will pose a considerable challenge in terms of training and workload management as well as enforcement of the Orders.

Tackling Dog Fouling – There will be some changes in the Service’s responsibility for dealing with complaints about dog fouling with effect from 8th July. Currently, the Council’s response to complaints about dog fouling is coordinated through the Environmental Enforcement Team. This role will now be

carried out by the Area Co-ordinator's Offices. Warden Managers will assess the complaint and determine what action is required. This could range from a letter to the customer to the Warden undertaking increased patrols in the area and trying to obtain information. They door knock properties in the affected streets, deliver letters and leaflets and do work with local school children and community groups.

It must be noted that whilst these changes should improve the Council's performance in tackling dog fouling, these offences are extremely difficult to witness, particularly in the presence of uniformed staff, and therefore a large increase in the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued is not expected.

Litter enforcement – All Council Wardens have been authorised to enforce litter offences. The number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued by Wardens is not as high as was anticipated. However, it should be noted that people tend not to drop litter in the presence of uniformed officers – it is not often therefore that Council Wardens witness people dropping litter.

There have also been other reasons for the low number of Fixed Penalty Notices served, ranging from high workloads due to the wide remit of the Warden's role to a lack of staff confidence.

The Service recognises that there are opportunities to improve our performance. Further training/mentoring of Wardens is being organised. Targeted litter enforcement campaigns at town and City centre locations and hotspots are planned in the near future to raise awareness and to reduce the incidents of littering.

Civil enforcement mobile enforcement car – a CCTV parking enforcement car was launched in June 2013. This car is fitted with a camera and uses automated number plate recognition (ANPR) technology to identify cars believed to be parked in contravention in pre-defined locations. This is being used particularly around schools to target drivers who stop on the yellow zig zag lines and at pedestrian crossings, bus stops, bus lanes where there is no fixed camera and no loading areas. The footage is recorded and reviewed by a Council Warden who confirms that he/she believes that an offence has taken place.

52 new handheld devices – Wardens will start using these to issue Penalty Charge Notices in July 2013. There will be 58 handheld devices in total that have inbuilt cameras and greater functionality. There will also be improved software connectivity which will reduce the need for manual intervention between the front and back offices and will improve the customer interface by allowing the customer to view pictures and log appeals on line.

2.9 **Finance**

The budget is based on a budget set when civil enforcement became a Council function in 2009. The total annual Warden budget for the 70 Council Wardens (including Warden Managers) is £1,610,033. This does not include the City Centre Team. The salary costs of the 70 Council Wardens (including Warden Managers) in the 5 Area Offices is £1,538,033 and transport, supplies and services amount to £72,000. These figures exclude inflationary increases.

The Wardens budget combined with the Parking Services budgets is forecast to generate £944,000 annually when income from car parking and Penalty Charge Notices is taken into account.

Area Team	Number of posts	Budget (£)
Bradford East (including 1 Warden Manager)	16	338,983
Bradford South (including 1 Warden Manager)	14	309,672
Bradford West (including 1 Warden Manager)	16	344,357
Keighley (including 1 Warden Manager)	13	294,617
Shipley (including 1 Warden Manager)	11	250,404
TOTAL	70	1,538,033

The table below shows the centrally-held budgets that have been devolved to Areas. The £72,000 available for all six Areas (East, South, West, Shipley, Keighley and the City Centre) for equipment, uniform, transport and training has been divided by the total number of 95 staff in the Council Warden Service to produce a unit cost per Warden. The allocation for Bradford East has been worked out by multiplying the cost per Warden by the 15 Wardens in East (including the Warden Manager).

	Budget for all 6 Areas	Unit Cost per Warden	Allocation to Bradford East
Equipment	£ 6,000	£63	£ 1,008
Uniform	£15,000	£158	£ 2,528
Transport	£43,000	£453	£ 7,248
Training	£ 8,000	£84	£ 1,344
Total	£72,000	£758	£12,128

Whilst these budgets are devolved to Areas, there is a central co-ordination role to ensure that the Service complies with legislative and operational requirements. This responsibility sits with the Parking Services and Environmental Services Co-ordinators. This can be seen by reference to training in particular. However, they also have to ensure that clothing and footwear complies with health and safety legislation, and that equipment is fit for purpose.

The Council Warden's role is extremely diverse with new demands regularly being placed on the Service. In addition, Council Wardens need to be kept abreast of both current and new legislation. The Parking Services and Environmental Services Co-ordinators have responsibility for ensuring that appropriate training is identified and delivered so that Wardens are able to fulfil their roles effectively. It is particularly important that Wardens receive regular

training that helps to ensure their safety at work.

It should also be noted that all of the equipment, uniform, transport and training have to be sourced and procured in accordance with the Council's procurement rules. The services will therefore continue to be procured centrally.

Warden Managers also have responsibility for identifying training, development and equipment needs of staff through staff appraisal and day to day management of Wardens. Any issues that are identified are fed to the central team to ensure individual needs are balanced with the need to provide a consistent service and to ensure budgets are spent appropriately across all areas.

3.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 There are a number of factors to take into account when considering how to deploy resources at an Area level. For example, the Council policy on parking enforcement (as set out in Bradford Council's application to Central Government when taking on responsibility for the function) is based on national statutory guidance. The policy expects a consistent, fair and transparent approach within the district to parking enforcement. With effect from 23rd January 2012 the civil enforcement function passed from Civil Enforcement Officers employed by Parking Services to Council Wardens. Council Wardens are now the Council's designated Civil Enforcement Officers. As such, Council Wardens are expected to deal with all cars parked in contravention in accordance with the district policy. This means that Council Wardens need to have a regular presence in parking hotspots and deal with any cars they find parked in contravention whilst on patrol. Statutory guidance clearly states that discretion is a back-office function and it is therefore not the decision of a Council Warden as to whether they deal with a car parked in contravention. The Council Warden has to issue a PCN and this can be appealed by the customer.

Wardens are currently allocated and tasked using the processes outlined earlier in this report. The Area Committee may continue to use this process or choose an alternative method of deployment. The Committee will have to balance the risks associated with other deployment strategies. For example, if Council Wardens are not deployed to parking hotspot areas there is a likelihood of increased contraventions, safety and congestion implications, complaints and reduced income. Similarly, if Council Wardens do not deal with environmental issues there will be an affect on the visual amenity and the likelihood of an increase in complaints and anti-social behaviour. There are no other considerations

4.0 OPTIONS

4.1 As this Service has now been devolved to the Area Committee Members can decide how to shape the Service within the previously-mentioned parameters.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE APPRAISAL

5.1 The level of resource delegated to Area Committees will be within existing

budgets for 2013/14. Initial allocations to Areas for 2013/14 will be in line with the proportional allocations made across Areas by services in 2012/13. The level of budget is shown in 2.5.

6.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

The financial risks posed are limited by the nature of the expenditure delegated. Nevertheless a financial governance regime will need to be devised to ensure sound stewardship. This is work in progress and must be in place to support effective devolution.

7.0 LEGAL APPRAISAL

7.1 Legal implications of the devolution of budgets to Area Committees have been reviewed by the City Solicitor and any issues and constitutional amendments were made at the Council's Annual General Meeting.

7.2 Area Committees now have the opportunity to consider how to implement the constitutional changes related to devolution. Legal services will continue to advise and support Committees regarding the legal implications of any proposed changes they seek to make.

8.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 LINKS TO BRADFORD EAST AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN 2011 – 2014

8.1.1 An increased level devolution of the services will allow the Area Committee to further address local priorities for those services.

8.2 EQUAL RIGHTS

Area Committee decisions will need to be made in line with Equal Rights legislation. This will require Area Committees to assess the potential equality impact of any decisions they make.

8.3 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 Increased local decision making has the potential to create more sustainable solutions to local issues.

8.4 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

8.4.1 No specific issues.

8.5 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.5.1 Increased local decision making has the potential to improve community safety through more closely addressing local priorities.

8.6 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

8.7 TRADE UNION IMPLICATIONS

There are no Trade Union implications.

8.8 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The information in this report is relevant to all Wards in Bradford East.

9.0 NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

9.1 There are no not for publication documents.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Bradford East Area Committee notes and welcomes the proposed devolution of Council Warden decision-making to the Area Committee outlined in this report.

11.0 APPENDICES

None

12.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 'Devolution to Area Committees' (Document AG), Report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Sport to the Council Executive, 9th October 2012.

12.2 'Devolution of Council Service budgets and responsibilities to Area Committees from 2012-13 onwards' (Document U), Report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Sport to the meeting of the Council Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on 5th October 2012, Devolution to Area Committees.

12.3 'Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee', Report of the Area Co-ordinator to the meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee on 22nd November 2012.