

Report of the Area Co-ordinator to the meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee to be held on Thursday, 26th June 2014

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Subject:

Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee

Summary statement:

This report provides an update to the report presented to the meeting of Bradford East Area Committee on 21st November 2013, regarding the devolution of the Council Warden Service.

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Overview and Scrutiny Area:
Corporate



1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the report, presented to the meeting of Bradford East Area Committee on 21st November 2013, regarding the devolution of the Council Warden Service.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A report "Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee" regarding the devolution of the Council Warden Service was presented to the Bradford East Area Committee at its meeting on 21st November 2013. This report outlined how the Service was addressing key issues relating to quality of service delivery, performance, involving citizens in service delivery, opportunities and challenges for the Service and finance. This report provides a further update highlighting where developments have occurred.

3.0 Ensuring Quality of Service Delivery

3.1 Training & Development

Council Wardens are now almost entirely responsible for the enforcement of Dog Control Orders with training delivered to support staff in this new area of work. In addition in the last 6 months Council Wardens have received conflict management training and dog behaviour training. Initial indications suggest that this training has been effective as Council Wardens have issued Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to Dog Control Order offences.

The Service is working with the Council's Workforce Development Team and other services to identify a programme of training and development opportunities to ensure staff are fully supported in working to the highest possible standards.

3.2 Performance

The previous report mentioned that the Service has been working with the New Ways of Working Team and Corporate ICT to develop electronic forms that can be loaded onto Smart phones that capture Wardens' performance.

Smart phones

Smart phones are now used by all Council Wardens. Whilst on patrol Wardens are able to access email, use Google Maps for navigation, use Google Translate to improve communication with non-English speakers, email photographs of issues, and log faults with pay & display machines. This has enabled Council Wardens to spend more time on patrol.

The Smart phones also have eforms installed which allow staff to record the issues, schedule revisits to ensure that actions agreed with property owners and businesses have been complied with. This is particularly useful for the City Centre Team working shifts. Duplication of work can be avoided and jobs can re-allocated to other staff when on rest days to ensure deadlines are not missed.

Management reports can now be prepared which enable Warden Managers to more closely monitor the work of Council Wardens in their team. This is key in managing the performance of staff and it also provides useful data to captures the issues at a Ward level.

Other benefits associated with the use of Smart phones include less double handling of data, fewer errors in the input or transfer of data, greater consistency and more information saved for greater analysis.

We are currently working to develop a new form which allows Wardens to refer problems directly to other Services. The first of these will enable Council Wardens to refer problems; such as rubbish in gardens, directly to the Environmental Enforcement Team should the Wardens' requests to clear the rubbish not have been complied with.

Changes to the Dog Fouling Procedure

3.3

Council Wardens now have primary responsibility for dealing with dog fouling complaints. All dog fouling complaints made to the Council Contact Centre, which includes information about the alleged offender, will be routed to the Council Warden Service. Council Wardens will write to and/or visit alleged offenders asking them to change their behaviour or risk being issued with a £80 Fixed Penalty Notice should they allow their dogs to foul and not pick up the faeces. All dog fouling complaints will be recorded, including requests routed directly to street cleansing, and this data will be used to identify hot spot areas where Council Wardens will patrol.

Complaints where the offender has been witnessed and the complainant is prepared to provide a statement and attend Court will be passed to the Environmental Enforcement Team who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if appropriate.

4.0 Involving Citizens in Service Delivery

Green Dog Walkers Scheme

Tackling dog fouling is a priority for Council Wardens but witnessing these types of offences is proving difficult. However, support from the public is helping address this longstanding problem. It is anticipated that the Green Dog Walkers Scheme will empower local communities to promote responsible dog ownership and improve local environmental quality by reducing dog fouling offences in neighbourhoods.

The Council's Marketing Team has been working to develop promotional materials such as armbands, leaflets and "dog poo" bags. A training and awareness session for Ward Officers took place in early November 2013, and the Scheme was launched in mid November/ early December 2013.

The Scheme is developing momentum with some areas showing great public interest and residents actively participating. A recent positive article in the Telegraph and Argus and radio interview has helped promote the Scheme and increased public interest in tackling dog fouling.

5.0 Opportunities and challenges for the Service

5.1 Staff Reductions

The Council Warden Service budget reduction of £400,000 over 2 years (£200,000 in 2014/15 and £200,000 in 2015/16) will result in staff reductions across all teams. The number of Council Wardens in each of the six teams (including the City Centre Team) is based on a formula previously agreed by the Council's Executive. It is proposed to reduce posts in each of the areas by reducing proportionately in most of each of the areas. There will be a reduction of 16 Wardens posts (the Council Warden Service will reduce from 95 to 79 posts): 3 posts will be lost from each of the 5 areas teams (apart from Shipley which will be reduced by 2) and the Team Leader posts in the City Centre Team will decrease from 6 to 4 (the cost savings from this equate to 3 Council Warden posts).

This will result in the City Centre Team moving onto a 4 X 4 shift system. The mobile Warden posts will be reduced and will be managed by Keighley and Shipley, but will still work across the District when necessary.

The challenge is to maintain existing levels of parking enforcement and sustain environmental and quality of life improvements within neighbourhoods through education, enforcement and community engagement.

5.2 Safety Around Schools - CCTV Vehicle

After resolving some initial technical problems, the CCTV vehicle is now fully operational and being used on a daily basis by all Areas. The vehicle is primarily used to enforce school parking contraventions but also enforces parking contraventions at bus stops and around pedestrian crossings.

The CCTV vehicle has received recent positive publicity and it is helping to reinforce the safety message to parents thus making schools safer for children. The Telegraph and Argus reported that there has been a 5 fold increase over the last 2 years in the number of parking tickets issued for people parking around schools. In 2011, 32 tickets were issued for parking contraventions around schools and this increased to 209 in 2013, equating to an increase of 553 percent.

5.3 New Legislation to tackle Anti-social Behaviour

In October 2014 the new Anti-social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014 will come into force. This new law will enable Councils to address a wide range of issues affecting the quality of life of residents.

The law will allow the Council to issue a Community Protection Notice (CPN) on anyone who is behaving in a manner that is detrimental to the community's quality of life. The scope of the Act is wide but can include takeaways and shops that produce a lot of litter; people having anti-social bonfires and landlords who allow rubbish to accumulate in gardens. Failure to comply with a CPN may result in a

£100 Fixed Penalty Notice or if found guilty upon prosecution, a fine up to a maximum of £2,500.

Council Wardens will have an important role to play in the implementation of this new legislation. Council Wardens will work in close partnership with the Council's Environmental Enforcement Team to address these neighbourhood problems and will undertake most of the initial interventions. Council Wardens will initially attempt to resolve problems on an informal basis. This will then move to a formal process if the identified anti-social behaviour is not modified. Serious cases will then be escalated to the Environmental Enforcement Team for a higher level enforcement action such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecution.

Written procedures and guidance are currently being developed for this process and the training of Council Wardens is planned for early August 2014.

6.0

Finance

6.1

The Council Warden Service budget

The budget is based on a budget set when Civil Enforcement became a Council function in 2009. The total annual Council Warden budget for the 95 Council Wardens (including Warden Managers) was £2,250,500 for 2013/14. The staffing budget has been reduced by almost £200,000 which will be achieved through the reduction of 16 Council Warden posts outlined in 5.1 above. The budget has been reduced to £2,054,300 for this financial year. The Service is in the process of assisting Council Wardens to access other job opportunities to achieve this reduction. Transport, supplies and services amount to £85,700.

6.2

The number of posts and the budget for these posts in 2014/2015 is shown in the table below.

Area Team	Number of posts	Budget (£) 2014/15 (including £200,00 saving)
City Centre Team	23	600,900
Bradford East (including 1 Warden Manager)	13	318,200
Bradford South (including 1 Warden Manager)	11	287,400
Bradford West (including 1 Warden Manager)	13	339,300
Keighley (including 1 Warden Manager)	10	271,300
Shipley (including 1 Warden Manager)	9	237,200

TOTAL	79	2,054,300

- 6.3 The table below shows the centrally-held budgets that have been devolved to Areas. The £85,700 available for all six Areas (Bradford East, Bradford South, Bradford West, Shipley, Keighley and the City Centre) for equipment, uniform, transport and training has been divided by the total number of 79 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 13 Wardens in Bradford East (including the Warden Manager).

	Budget for all 6 Areas	Unit Cost per Warden	Allocation to Bradford East
Equipment	£ 8,200	£103.79	£ 1,349.27
Uniform	£18,200	£230.37	£ 2,994.81
Transport	£50,800	£643.03	£ 8,359.39
Training	£ 8,500	£107.59	£ 1,398.67
Total	£85,700	£1084.78	£14, 102.14

- 6.4 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.

It should also be noted that all of the equipment, uniform, transport and training is 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. Issues 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.

7.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Proposals for Area Committee decision-making

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. 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.

In terms of the deployment of Council Wardens, the Area Committee will have to consider the range of functions the Warden has to carry out and the risks associated with not balancing these. 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.

8.0 OPTIONS

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

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 9.1 Initial allocations to Areas for 2014/15 will be in line with the proportional allocations made across Areas by services in 2013/14, taking into account the budget reductions referred to above. The level of budget is shown in 6.1.

10.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 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.

11.0 LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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.

12.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

12.1 LINKS TO BRADFORD SOUTH AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN 2014 – 2017

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

13.0 EQUAL RIGHTS

- 13.1 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.

14.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

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

15.0 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

- 15.1 No specific issues.

16.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

17.0 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

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

18.0 TRADE UNION IMPLICATIONS

- 18.1 There are no Trade Union implications.

19.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 19.1 The information in this report is relevant to all Wards in Bradford South.

20.0 NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

- 20.1 There are no not for publication documents.

21.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 21.1 Bradford East Area Committee notes and welcomes the information in this report which is intended to inform decisions on this Devolved Service in Bradford East.

22.0 APPENDICES

- 22.1 None

23.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- 23.2 '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.
- 23.3 'Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee', Report of the Area Co-ordinator to the meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee on 22 November 2012.
- 23.4 'Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee', Report of the Area Co-ordinator to the meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee on 23rd July 2013.
- 23.5 'Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee', Report of the Area Co-ordinator to the meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee on 21st November 2013.