

Report of the Director of Environment & Sport to the meeting of Bradford South Area Committee to be held on Thursday, 25 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

Ian Bairstow
Strategic Director of Environment & Sport

Report Contact: Louise Williams
Bradford East Area Co-ordinator
Phone: (01274) 431155
E-mail:

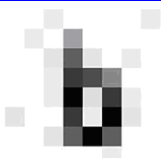
louise.williams@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio:

Safer & Stronger Communities

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Corporate



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 regarding the devolution of the Council Warden Service was presented to Bradford South Area Committee on Thursday, 22 November (Document AF). This report outlined the basis on which Bradford South Area Committee would take responsibility for the Service.

2.2 There are 13 Council Warden posts in Bradford South Area including 2 Council Warden on motorbikes. The 13 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 vacancies have occurred. It was deemed to be more effective for Council Wardens to patrol on foot rather than on a motorbike. The Council Wardens on motorbikes do, however, enable a more flexible and speedy response to issues which need immediate attention.

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 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 Ward Assessments are prioritised and inform the annual Ward Plans which identify Ward priorities for action. Quarterly Ward Work Plans are then produced and are used by Ward Officers and Warden Managers to inform the deployment of Council Wardens. Ward Officers work alongside Councillors in considering Ward Assessments and in developing the Ward Plans. The Ward Plans give Ward Councillors influence and control over how resources are deployed.

2.5 Ward Officers also hold 6 weekly multi-agency Ward Officer Teams and Council Wardens respond to appropriate issues identified at these meetings. This model of service delivery enables an intelligence-led deployment of Council Wardens.

2.6 However, the challenge is to balance the formalised workflow as incorporated in the Ward Plan/Ward Work Plan and the inevitable need for a responsive approach. The Area Co-ordinators' Offices receive many requests for Council Warden support from many different sources including Councillors, residents, businesses, schools and other partners including the Police and the Fire Service. Council Wardens are becoming increasingly recognised as being the eyes and ears of the Council able to respond to many issues which in turn raises expectations.

2.7 **Ensuring Quality of Service Delivery**

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

- 2.8 **Briefing and debriefings** – a structured system of briefing and debriefing is undertaken on a daily basis by Warden Managers across all Warden teams to ensure that information is relayed to and captured from Council 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.
- 2.9 **Test and Inspects** – Warden Managers are required to regularly assess work being undertaken by each Council Warden. As part of the test & inspect procedure an unannounced visit to the Council Wardens area is made to assess the overall quality of the work, and to ensure that the Council 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.
- 2.10 **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 to ensure Council Wardens are deployed to an area based on the risk of violence and aggression. Council Wardens patrol alone in most areas to ensure resources are utilised efficiently unless a risk assessment requires that Council Wardens work in pairs.
- 2.11 **Standard Operating Procedures** - Procedures have been produced to ensure that the Service is operating in accordance with the Council’s policies and practices.
- 2.12 **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 which include details about how to deal with skips, overhanging vegetation and business waste.
- 2.13 **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 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 address the issue of abuse of elderly/vulnerable residents. Emergency Planning Officers will be soon be delivering Council Liaison Officer training to Council Wardens. This will enable Wardens to act as a first point of contact in emergency situations.

2.14 **Performance**

Council 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 addressed in accordance with training and procedures.

2.15 Managers are also able to access information regarding 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 complete reflection of Council Wardens' work as they 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 now resolved by Council Wardens. In the vast majority of cases this work is not measured.

2.16 At the beginning of the year a paper-based system was developed to capture more of the work of Council Wardens. This intention was to test the system prior to the introduction of Smart Phones. The Service is working with the New Ways of Working Team and Corporate IT to develop electronic forms to be loaded onto Smart Phones which will capture the same information as the paper-based system.

2.17 Council Wardens will be able to use drop down menus on Smart Phones to record issues arising whilst on patrol. These include anti-social behaviour, highway problems, rubbish in gardens, business waste, problems associated with empty homes and safeguarding issues. Council Wardens will then record actions undertaken 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 Council Warden to ensure compliance with the request that the Council Warden has made. Revisits are automatically scheduled on the Phone.

2.18 Warden Managers will be able to analyse the data captured to monitor the quantity, type and the quality of the work of Council Wardens. This will identify trends, the range of work of Council Wardens, enable comparisons between Areas and ensure that there is the consistent application of procedures.

2.19 The use of Smart Phones in conjunction with electronic forms will also enable Council Wardens to access, capture and record information in real time. This will include:

- 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

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

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

2.22 **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, who are part of this Scheme, approach other dog walkers to promote responsible dog ownership with the Local Authority providing funding and support for such items as armbands, promotional materials and bags. Its success depends on visibility, and friendly peer pressure to encourage a 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 other parts of the country.

2.23 **Unadopted back streets** – These back streets 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. Council 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.

2.24 **Litter from businesses** – Council 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. Business owners enter into an informal agreement with Council Wardens about the times they will litter pick around their premises and Council Wardens monitor this. This work is helping to ensure that 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 address these litter problems.

2.25 **Work with schools** – Council Wardens deliver 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 including 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.

2.26 **Recycling** – Council Wardens are helping to increase 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. Council Wardens monitor these areas and where people struggle they continue to provide advice.

2.27 **Community involvement activities** – Council 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. Council 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.

2.28 **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 Council Wardens is informed by the Ward Plans/Ward Work Plans as outlined above, there are constant challenges facing Warden Managers in terms of deploying the Council Warden resource.

2.29 **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.

2.30 **Tackling Dog Fouling** – With effect from 8 July there are changes in the Service responsibility for dealing with complaints regarding dog fouling. Previously, the Council’s response to complaints about dog fouling has been co-ordinated through the Environmental Enforcement Team. This role will now be carried out by the Area Co-ordinator’s Office. Warden Managers will assess the complaint and determine action required. This could include a letter to the customer and the Council Warden undertaking increased patrols in the area to obtain further information and evidence. They door knock properties in the affected streets to

deliver letters and leaflets and work with local schools and community groups.

- 2.31 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. A significant increase in the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued is therefore not expected.
- 2.32 **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 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.
- 2.33 The Service recognises that there are opportunities to improve performance. Further training/mentoring of Council 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.
- 2.34 **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 an offence has taken place.
- 2.35 **New handheld devices** – Council Wardens will start using these to issue Penalty Charge Notices in July 2013. There will be 58 handheld devices in total, including 7 in Bradford South, 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.
- 2.36 **Finance**
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 70 Council Wardens (including Warden Managers) is £1,610,033. This does not include the City Centre Team. The salary cost of the 70 Council Wardens (including Warden Managers) in the 5 Area Offices is £1,538,033 with transport, supplies and services amount to £72,000. These figures exclude inflationary increases.
- The Council 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

2.38 The table below shows the centrally-held budgets that have been devolved to Areas. The £72,000 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 95 staff in the Council Warden Service to produce a unit cost per Warden. The allocation for Bradford South has been worked out by multiplying the cost per Warden by the 14 Wardens in Bradford South (including the Warden Manager).

	Budget for all 6 Areas	Unit Cost per Warden	Allocation to Bradford South
Equipment	£ 6,000.00	£63.00	£ 882.00
Uniform	£15,000.00	£158.00	£ 2,212.00
Transport	£43,000.00	£453.00	£ 6,342.00
Training	£ 8,000.00	£84.00	£ 1,176.00
Total	£72,000.00	£758.00	£10,612.00

2.39 Whilst these budgets are devolved to Area Committees, 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.

2.40 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. Parking Services and Environmental Services Co-ordinators have responsibility for ensuring that appropriate training is identified and delivered in order that Council Wardens are able to fulfil their roles effectively. It is particularly important that Council Wardens receive regular training that helps to ensure their safety at work.

2.41 It should also be noted that all 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.

2.42 Warden Managers also have responsibility for identifying training, development and equipment needs of staff through staff appraisal and day to day management of Council Wardens. Issues identified are conveyed to the central team ensuring 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 23 January 2012 the civil enforcement function passed from Civil Enforcement Officers employed through 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 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.

3.2 Council 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.

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 is 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 SOUTH AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN 2011 – 2014

8.1.1 An increased level devolution of the services will enable 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 South.

9.0 NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

9.1 There are no not for publication documents.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Bradford South Area Committee notes and welcomes the detailed information on Council Wardens which will assist in decision making with regard to this devolved budget.

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, 9 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 5 October 2012, Devolution to Area Committees.

12.3 'Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee' (Document AF), Report of the Area Co-ordinator to the meeting of Bradford South Area Committee, 22 November 2012.

12.4 'Development of Council Wardens – Bradford South' (Document BJ), Report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Sport to the meeting of Bradford South Area Committee, 28 March 2013