

Report of the Area Co-ordinator to the meeting of the Bradford South Area Committee to be held on 28^h November 2013

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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 on 25 July 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 previous reports regarding devolution of the Council Warden Service.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A report "Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee" (Document V) regarding the devolution of the Council Warden Service was presented to the Bradford South Area Committee at the meeting on 25 July 2013. This report outlined how the Service was addressing key issues around quality of service delivery, performance, involving citizens in service delivery, opportunities and challenges for the service and finance. This report is to provide a further update where developments have occurred but will focus mainly on finance.

3.0 Ensuring Quality of Service Delivery

3.1 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. Over the next several weeks Council Wardens will be given training in Conflict Management, Dog Control Order Enforcement and Dog Behaviour training.

3.2 Performance

The previous report mentioned that the Service had 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.

Following the success of a trial of the phones in August 2013 approval has now been given to roll out the Smart Phones to all the Council Wardens with full deployment of the phones in early December 2013.

4.0 Involving Citizens in Service Delivery

4.1 Green Dog Walkers Campaign

The Councils' Marketing Team has been working to develop promotional materials including armbands, leaflets and "dog poo" bags. A training and awareness session for Ward Officers was held on 5 November 2013, with a view to officially launching the scheme in mid November/ early December 2013. The Green Dog Walkers Campaign has already been the subject of an article in the Telegraph and Argus which has resulted in some public interest in the campaign particularly, within Bradford South, in Queensbury. It is anticipated that this scheme will be successful and will empower local communities to promote responsible dog ownership and improve local environmental quality by reducing dog fouling offences in neighbourhoods.

5.0 Opportunities and challenges for the Service

5.1 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. Nearly all of the Council Wardens have now been trained to enforce these Orders with the exception of the Dogs on Leads by Direction Order. The latter Order will be subject to further training to ensure there is consistency in the application of enforcement in relation to this Order.

Dog Control Orders cannot be enforced until relevant signs have been placed at appropriate locations. Whilst signs have been placed at most of the designated locations, Council Wardens have been asked to check if signs are in place whilst they are on patrol. Where signs are not in place Council Wardens are requested to inform the relevant Council land-owning Department.

5.2 New Handheld Devices

The new handheld devices and these are now being used by all Council Wardens to ensure they are issuing Penalty Charge Notices as efficiently and accurately as possible with significantly less errors that were associated with paper Penalty Charge Notices

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 95.5 Council Wardens (including Warden Managers) is £2,250,500. The salary costs of the 70.5 Council Wardens (including Warden Managers) in the 5 Area Offices are £1,647,000 and transport, supplies and services amount to £87,200.

Area Team	Number of posts	Budget (£)
City Centre Team	25	603,500
Bradford East (including 1 Warden Manager)	16	360,600
Bradford South (including 1 Warden Manager)	14.5	341,700
Bradford West (including 1 Warden Manager)	16	371,100
Keighley (including 1 Warden Manager)	13	311,000
Shipley (including 1 Warden Manager)	11	262,600
TOTAL	95.5	2,250,500

The table below shows the centrally-held budgets that have been devolved to Areas. The £87,200 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 South has been worked out by multiplying the cost per Warden by the 14.5 Wardens in South (including the Warden Manager).

	Budget for all 6 Areas	Unit Cost per Warden	Allocation to Bradford South
Equipment	£ 8,200	£86	£ 1,247
Uniform	£18,200	£192	£ 2,784
Transport	£52,300	£551	£ 7,990
Training	£ 8,500	£89	£ 1,291
Total	£87,200	£918	£13,312

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 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.

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 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.

In terms of the deployment of Council Wardens, the Area Committee will have to consider the range of functions the Council Warden has to undertake 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 to the Area Committee Members 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 2014/2015 will be in line with the proportional allocations made across Areas by services in 2013/14. 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 2011 – 2014

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

22.0 APPENDICES

- 22.1 None

23.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 23.1 '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.
- 23.2 'Devolution to Area Committees' (Document AG), Report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Sport to the Council Executive, 9 October 2012.
- 23.3 'Council Warden Service devolution to Area Committee' (Document AF), Report to Bradford South Area Committee, 22 November 2012.
- 23.4 'Devolution to Area Committees' (Document V) Report to Bradford South Area Committee, 25 July 2013.