

Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of the Environment and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 19th December 2017

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Subject:

Review of the Council Warden Service

Summary statement:

This report provides information about the Council Warden Service and highlights new areas of work and advances in technology that support and increase the effectiveness of Council Wardens.

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Overview and Scrutiny Area:
Environment and Waste Management

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides information about the Council Warden Service and highlights new areas of work and advances in technology that support and increase the effectiveness of Council Wardens.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At a meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 November 2016, members requested that the Environment and Waste Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider undertaking a review of the role of Council Wardens.
- 2.2 The Council Warden Service was devolved to Area Committees, along with other functions, in 2012. The purpose of this was to increase local accountability and to increase the effectiveness of service delivery through increased synergy between services at the local level.

There are 73 Council Wardens (including 9 Team Leaders). These are allocated to areas as shown below:

Area Team	Number of posts
City Centre Team	22
Bradford East	12
Bradford South	10
Bradford West	12
Keighley	9
Shipley	8

The Council Wardens in the City Centre Team work on a shift system 7 days a week, covering early mornings, evenings and Saturdays and Sundays across the district as well as the city centre. The Council Wardens in the area teams work Monday – Friday, office hours.

- 2.3 Within Neighbourhood and Customer Services, Area Co-ordinators are responsible for a range of officers and devolved services, in addition to Council Wardens, that promote the cleaner, greener, safer and active communities agenda and make contributions to other outcomes.

These include the following:

- Ward Officers
- Street Cleansing Operatives
- Youth Workers
- Environmental Enforcement Officers

These area-based functions allow a more joined up and flexible approach to tackling issues at a ward- and neighbourhood-level. Essentially, ward-based teams are created and staff undertake different work as part of the delivery of a project or a piece of work.

- 2.4 Council Wardens have a proactive and reactive role in respect of a range of functions which can broadly be summarised as follows:
- Parking enforcement;
 - Environmental education, engagement and enforcement;
 - Community engagement, promoting the 'People Can' agenda and
 - Reassurance, including through high visibility patrols.

- 2.5 The key underpinning element of all the work that Council Wardens carry out is the promotion of personal and collective responsibility with everyone they work with, on an individual and group basis. This means that they are responsible for raising awareness with the public of their responsibilities; encouraging, cajoling, supporting and sometimes taking enforcement action so that residents and businesses change their behaviour and take action themselves and this often starts as a result of contact on a very specific issue.

In addition, Council Wardens are key to the delivery of projects in the Ward Plans and most of their proactive work is linked to Ward Plans. They work closely with Ward Officers and a range of internal and external partners to respond to issues identified through the ward planning process, often using innovative and transformational approaches.

As part of their reactive role, Council Wardens receive requests from the Council's Contact Centre and other services to deal with issues such as rubbish in gardens, fly tipping, highway obstructions and fly posting.

- 2.6 A review of the Council Warden Service has been undertaken over the last year and has considered the following issues:
- **Council's Bin Policy** – assessment of the anticipated impact of the Policy in terms of environmental issues, particularly fly tipping and the Council Warden role in ensuring compliance;
 - **Work with the Environmental Enforcement Team** – how effectively do Council Wardens work with the Environmental Enforcement Team and what more can be done to maximise the impact of the area-based approach on tackling environmental issues?;
 - **Littering** – with budget reductions in street cleansing, what more can Council Wardens/the Council do to reduce littering?;
 - **Developments in technology** – exploring new technology that would enable Council Wardens to work in a more effective and efficient manner;
 - **Ward Plans, transformational way of working with other service areas** – with budget reductions elsewhere in the Council how can the Council Wardens work differently to support or create new transformational ways of working with other service areas?;
 - **Work with schools and community organisations** – review of new approaches.

2.7 Council's Bin Policy

Following the introduction of alternate weekly collections, areas have been identified where there has been less adherence to the policy. Council Wardens have worked closely with colleagues in Waste Management and have visited

properties and spoken to residents to explain the new policy and promote recycling. It is anticipated that this role will be required to be undertaken by Council Wardens for a significant length of time to ensure district-wide compliance and to educate new arrivals as they come into the area.

2.8 **Working with the Environmental Enforcement Team (EET)**

Council Wardens issuing Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) - The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 allows the use of CPWs to address environmental problems affecting neighbourhoods. The EET have used this to great effect and a pilot is being developed in one area to authorise Council Wardens to issue CPWs to occupants of properties where environmental problems exist, such as overgrown gardens and rubbish in gardens. The current procedure for dealing with such issues involves the Council Wardens visiting the property up to 3 times to try to work with the tenant and/or owner to get the rubbish removed. If this isn't achieved, the case is passed to the Environmental Enforcement Team to be dealt with and the officer usually issues a CPW. The new approach that is being piloted will require Council Wardens to be trained and authorised to issue the CPW as their first action. This will increase efficiency by cutting out 2 of the 3 visits and not involving the Enforcement Officer. If this new approach is effective it will be adopted and scaled up to cover the district.

2.8.1 **Unadopted back streets** – some fly tipping hotspots are close to residential areas and sometimes the fly tipping is caused by local residents. It is often difficult to identify and prosecute offenders and community-based solutions are the only option. An example of this is rubbish dumped on unadopted back streets. The Council is not responsible for cleaning unadopted back streets and the responsibility for this falls to residents. In such cases occupiers (not owners) of properties adjoining the unadopted streets are legally responsible for the waste and this is difficult to enforce due to the large number of occupiers of some unadopted back streets.

Following an increase in such instances of fly tipping, a procedure has been developed that requires Enforcement Officers to work closely with Council Wardens and Ward Officers to undertake days of action to talk to residents who live on unadopted back streets to educate them about the services that they can use to responsibly dispose of their waste. People are also encouraged to report fly tipping. Back street community clean ups are organised where residents work alongside Wardens to collect the rubbish and Street Clean Teams remove and dispose of the rubbish. In the rare cases where there is poor engagement and participation by residents the Environmental Enforcement Team will follow up with formal action by serving enforcement notices on all occupiers, arranging removal of the rubbish and recovering the costs from all the occupiers.

2.8.2 **Business Waste** – A new approach is being developed to reduce issues associated with business waste by increasing the number of Council officers who can help to tackle this. An Environmental Enforcement Team officer is training Council Wardens in Bradford West on the law regarding the storage of business waste and the responsibility that businesses have with regard to the litter their customers generate. This will enable Council Wardens to visit businesses to undertake duty of care checks and increase compliance with the management of

waste and minimise litter. If the work is successful in the Bradford West area, it will be rolled out to other areas.

2.9 Littering

Littering continues to be a significant district-wide problem, but Council Wardens have such a multi-functional role that they are not always able to focus on littering offences. It was decided therefore, like many local authorities, to procure the services of a company, 3GS, to enforce littering and dog control offences. From 17th July, 8 Enforcement Officers have been issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to people who drop litter, urinate, spit and for Dog Control Order offences. They are working 6 days a week on a shift system, predominantly in Bradford City Centre but they are also covering other urban centres. The Enforcement Officers also spend significant time informing and educating offenders about their behaviour and the impact it has. They provide a total solution from the issue of the FPN to receiving and chasing payment, including the preparation of the prosecution file. The payment for a FPN will be £80 as the early payment option has been removed.

The contract is cost neutral to the Council. The company does not offer incentives for the issuing of FPNs and the Enforcement Officers dedicate 2 hours every month to work on community-based projects and this is paid for by 3GS.

Council Wardens also continue to be authorised to issue FPNs for littering offences. In particular, Council Wardens are working closely with, and pairing up with, Enforcement Officers from 3GS in urban centres outside of the city centre to enforce littering and dog control offences, thus increasing the enforcement footprint.

2.10 Review of technology

- 2.10.1 Council Wardens currently have to return to the office to use computers to update their work. This reduces the amount of time they spend on the streets patrolling and dealing with issues. We are currently working to develop software that can be put onto Smart phones to allow them to update cases whilst on patrol, by entering actions taken and uploading photographs. Longer-term, it is proposed to allow Council Wardens to issue CPWs using wireless printers whilst out in the field. In addition, this software will allow cases, issues raised by the public to the Contact Centre, to be allocated from the Contact Centre to Wardens whilst they are on patrol.
- 2.10.2 Smart phone technology to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) started in July 2017 - the Wardens have an application on their Smart phones to issue PCNs. The new software also provides real time data so that any PCNs issued are immediately recognised on the system so the customer can pay or appeal immediately. The new technology enables the Wardens to issue PCNs more easily and quickly and reduces the amount of equipment they need to carry. The new technology also results in fewer errors, as the Warden scans the car registration rather than manually inputting it.
- 2.10.3 Lone worker app – there is poor radio coverage in a few areas in the district. The use of the lone worker app on Council Wardens' phones is being considered. This tracks where they are going, but can also pinpoint their location in the event of an

emergency.

2.10.4 Body cameras - the Police, other agencies and other Councils are increasingly recognising the deterrent effect of body cameras in relation to issues of violence and aggression. Body cameras also provide reassurance to staff and the public. In addition, evidence of fly tipping captured on body cameras has been used for prosecution. Body cameras have been purchased for all Council Wardens and they are expected to wear these all the time when they are on duty.

2.11 **Ward Plans – transformational ways of working with other services**

2.11.1 **Work with Adult Services** – Wardens are working with Social Workers and undertaking an audit of what's available for older people in neighbourhoods, including less obvious opportunities, such as cafes offering lunches for older people. This is being used to help reshape how social work is delivered with a community approach.

2.11.2 **Dementia friendly work** – This involves raising Wardens' awareness of dementia and what to do if they meet up with anyone who is lost. Wardens will help people with dementia to get home safely. Wardens can pass on information on how communities can be more Dementia Friendly, for example through increasing awareness of making clearer signs in shops.

2.11.3 **Information for new migrant communities** – Council Wardens are involved in working with new migrant communities in many different ways. On a day to day basis they use the Google translate app to communicate messages about responsibilities and some basic messages are included in recently-developed leaflets on waste management and they undertake doorstep work and work with groups. Wardens are also involved in delivering a drop in session in Great Horton where they are able to help some of the new migrant communities to solve issues they face. These can range from not knowing how to make a Council Tax payment to informing people what to do to avoid the threat of eviction.

2.11.4 **Neighbourhood Watch** – Council Wardens work with colleagues in the police to sustain Neighbourhood Watches and will also promote the setting up of new Watches with residents they meet through other work.

2.11.5 **Business Watch** – As with Neighbourhood Watch, Wardens can help sustain Business Watches by keeping in touch with businesses and encouraging them to keep a record of incidents.

2.11.6 **Walking Group** – People are offered the opportunity to go for a walk with Warden whilst patrolling the Ward. This is useful for people who want to take exercise but lack confidence. This helps support the health agendas promoted by Public Health.

2.11.7 **Litter picking** – There are many litter picking groups supported by Council Wardens, particularly involving young people. Some of these groups litter pick on a regular basis and others seek advice and/or assistance as a result of a specific issue. Where these groups don't exist we work with residents on a street by street or neighbourhood basis to facilitate litter picks and other clean ups through days of action and weeks of action.

2.12 **Ward Plans, work with schools:**

2.12.1 **School parking projects involving school children** – Council Wardens involve children in raising awareness of the risks children face as a result of inconsiderate parking outside schools. This has included providing school children with police outfits to carry out work with parents outside schools.

Eco Schools – Following recent training, it has been decided to focus environmental work with schools on Eco Schools Awards as this is a nationally-recognised scheme run through Keep Britain Tidy. The scheme has developed a range of materials to support learning in and out of the classroom that links to the curriculum. Council Wardens are promoting this Award with schools and agreeing what initiatives and projects they will help pupils to deliver to work towards the Bronze, Silver and Green Flag Awards. Some schools in the district are already working on the Eco Schools Awards. The work the Council Wardens facilitate is extremely wide ranging and includes visual audits, litter picks, recycling arts activities, poster competitions and much more.

Work with parents and carers – Council Wardens continue to seek out opportunities to work with parents and carers through schools by attending parents' evenings and other events to promote Council Services and to encourage people to become involved in other activities and initiatives.

2.12.2 **Work with community organisations** – Following recent Council Wardens' training there was an interest in supporting more neighbourhood- and ward-based garden competitions as a way of developing residents' pride in their neighbourhoods. As part of the Beautiful BD5 garden competition, Council Wardens work with community development workers and community groups to promote this and to encourage people to enter the competition. Events and activities are held with local groups to give them ideas for planting even in small areas such as yards. The competition culminates in an awards ceremony at Cedar Court, sponsored by the hotel and Trident Community Council.

3.0 **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 **Considerations when deploying Council Wardens**

There are a number of factors to take into account when considering how to deploy Council Wardens. 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. 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 range of functions the Warden has to carry out has to be considered 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 it will affect the visual amenity and increase the likelihood of complaints and anti-social behaviour.

4.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 Council Wardens are funded from the Council's base budget and the different ways of working and new areas of work highlighted in this report will not impact on this budget.

5.0 RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 No specific issues.

6.0 LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 No specific issues.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

7.1.1 Council Wardens work across the district with people from a diverse range of communities and vulnerable people. They take an active role in setting up and supporting neighbourhood-based services for new arrivals, they help residents to run groups and activities for people with dementia and they undertake work which brings people from different faiths together.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

7.2.1 The focus of the Council Wardens' roles is to create more sustainable and cohesive neighbourhoods through education, engagement and enforcement, by encouraging residents, businesses and groups to adopt the 'People Can' approach and changing their behaviour to take more individual and collective responsibility.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

7.3.1 No specific issues.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.4.1 The Council Wardens play a key role in helping to create safer neighbourhoods by providing a visible and reassuring presence, dealing with low level anti-social behaviour and supporting residents and businesses to become involved in initiatives and projects that help to create cleaner and greener neighbourhoods thus reducing the fear of crime.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

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

7.6 TRADE UNION IMPLICATIONS

7.6.1 No specific issues.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

7.7.1 The information in this report is relevant to all Wards in the Bradford District.

8.0 NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 There are no not for publication documents.

9.0 OPTIONS

9.1 The Council Warden Service is a 'devolved' service and annual reports are presented to each Area Committee on the work of the Wardens within that constituency.

9.2 Should Scrutiny wish to make any recommendations of change in focus or approach these could be referred to the Area Committees for further consideration.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Environment & Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the work of the Council Warden Service and makes any suggestions for change to be considered by relevant Area Committees.

11.0 APPENDICES

11.1 None

12.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 None