

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: COMMUNITY WARDENS REVIEW
Meeting: COMMUNITY HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE
Date: 28 OCTOBER 2008
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report aims to update Members on the review of the Community Wardens Service with proposals for their remit and funding beyond March 2009.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Community Wardens Service was funded through the Scottish Executive/Scottish Government's Anti-Social Behaviour fund. In 2008, with the introduction of the Concordat between Local Government, the previous antisocial behaviour Scottish Government ring-fenced funding was incorporated into the Council's budget for 2008/2009. Members agreed to continue funding projects until March 2009, and asked for a specific report on how the Community Warden Service could continue and expand.
- 2.2 The Community Wardens Service funding for 2008/2009 is £494,930, which includes an allocation of £103,000 for a priority response service to the reporting of environmental issues by Community Wardens.
- 2.3 In January 2004, a report was approved by Community Health & Safety Committee detailing the remit of the Community Wardens Service highlighting duties, locations, staffing, costs and management arrangements. The Service was designed to offer a reporting and recording resource in relation to ASB for all housing tenures within Falkirk Council whilst forming links with communities to establish greater community cohesion. The main remit of the Community Wardens is split between crime prevention / community reassurance and environmental.
- 2.4 Initially the Community Warden Service consisted of 1 Community Warden Manager, 8 Community Wardens and 1 Clerical Officer covering Hallglen, Camelon, Grangemouth, and Stenhousemuir and their surrounding areas. As mentioned above the funding included an allocation for the provision of a priority service for environmental reports and clear ups.
- 2.5 Where Community Wardens were based was approved by Committee in 2004 using the following:
- Deprivation 'hotspots' – the Deprivation Index 2003, published by the Scottish Executive, was used in conjunction with Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) and regeneration information to determine the most deprived areas;

- Housing ‘hotspots’ – information was collated from our housing teams to identify problematic areas, including complaints regarding other residents and problems with anti-social/nuisance behaviour;
- Environmental ‘hotspots’ – information gathered by Estates Management on incidences of littering, graffiti, dumping etc contributed to the identification of areas; and
- Police ‘hotspots’ – police information was sought on areas with above average reporting of crime and reporting of anti-social or nuisance behaviour.

2.6 The hotspot information was collated, analysed and mapped out to identify areas that would most benefit from the presence of Community Wardens. Other communities had problematic areas but the four communities above had the highest concentration of anti-social behaviour related problems

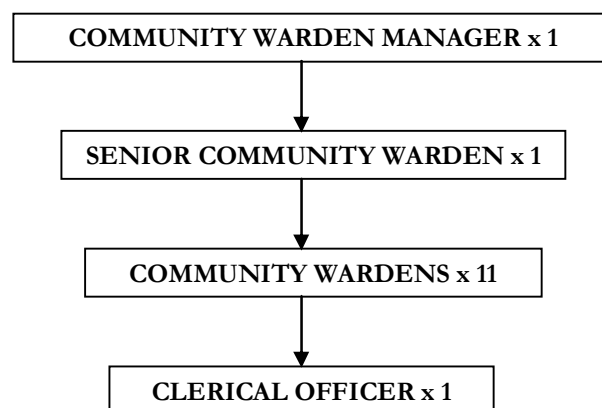
2.7 From the information gathered at that time, it was determined that the Community Wardens would operate in the following areas :

- Camelon and Tamfourhill;
- Hallglen and adjacent area;
- Stenhousemuir and Carronshore; and
- Grangemouth.

2.8 The Community Warden Manager is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the scheme as well as the day-to-day operational management. The scheme was incorporated into the existing management structure of Housing Services.

2.9 In 2006, following analysis of updated information regarding the Council’s hotspots, the Service was expanded to include Bo’ness and Denny, and a further 4 staff were appointed, including 1 Senior Community Warden.

2.10 The current Community Warden Service staffing structure is illustrated below:



2.11 The key functions of the Community Wardens Service are community reassurance and environmental duties which consist of :-

- High visibility within local communities providing re-assurance to residents;
- Engaging positively with local residents, including young people;
- Reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour or crime to the appropriate Council Service or to the Police;
- Acting as a professional witness;
- Directly reporting environmental problems to the Environmental Wardens;
- Reporting incidences of vandalism, graffiti, needles, etc to the relevant services; and
- Point of contact for local communities' concerns about environmental issues and antisocial behaviour.

3. REVIEW

3.1 The review looked at the following areas to ascertain the best value to be gained from the Community Wardens Service and the associated funding by:-

- Comparing current provision with original remit;
- Comparing original and current hotspot information to determine locations that they require to be operating in post March 2009;
- Reviewing their roles & responsibilities post March 2009; and
- Identifying funding post March 2009.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 As previously reported to the Community Health & Safety Committee in May 2008, the Community Wardens are providing a high level of reporting of incidents, problems and issues to various Council Services, Central Scotland Police and the Fire & Rescue Service. The Community Wardens Service is meeting its original remit and have enhanced the service provision through the development of successful partnership arrangements and increasing resources. In particular, there have been significant partnership developments with Central Scotland Police, The Council's Estates Management Service, Conflict Resolution Service, Detached Youth Work team, Fire Service, Community Traffic Wardens, Education's ILC's .

4.2 On reviewing the original list of hotspot locations identified in 2004 and subsequently in 2006, additional areas in Braes, Maddiston and Dawson areas, have been identified as hotspot locations.

4.3 As part of the review a consultation process was carried out with all stakeholders. This involved a staff workshop, a workshop with all relevant partners and focus groups with service users. There was consistent feedback from each of these consultation sessions which indicated that the Community Warden Service was a good service that had built up effective joint working and communication arrangements with other agencies. In addition the feedback suggested that the service be expanded to cover more areas and the Community Wardens role should be re-defined and to include additional enforcement responsibilities.

- 4.4 During the 6 - 20 October, a satisfaction survey was carried out and the findings of this survey will be benchmarked with a similar survey carried out in 2006 in order to identify further proposals for service improvements.

Enforcement Team: Litter and Dog Fouling

- 4.5 The Environmental Enforcement team consists of a Co-ordinator and 8 Enforcement Officers. The majority of funding for this service comes from the Council's mainstream budget, with the ASB budget funding two Environmental Enforcement Officers plus the Co-ordinator's post. Operationally between 4/5 of the 8 officers concentrate on enforcement duties and the remaining 3/4 deal with pest control issues. However, the job descriptions are generic in order to provide flexibility within the management of the various activities undertaken by the teams.
- 4.6 The Enforcement team are responsible for issuing for warning letters and fixed penalty notices for :-
- Dog Fouling;
 - Litter; and
 - Flytipping.
- 4.7 The teams cover similar geographical areas as the Community Wardens and there is the potential for duplication of routes and duties and a perceived lack of clarity from the public over the various team's roles.
- 4.8 When considering the review in May, Members expressed their support of the value of the Community Warden Service and asked if it would be possible to expand the service to cover more areas. By combining the complementary services of Community Warden and Environmental Enforcement, there is an opportunity within current budgets, to expand the geographical spread of the service and increase the role of wardens to cover enforcement duties.

Community Traffic Wardens

- 4.9 The Community Traffic Wardens are funded by Central Scotland Police. Their main focus is on traffic problems (e.g. abandoned cars, out of date tax discs, unlawful parking) but they are also involved in local Police Initiatives and Public Re-assurance. They cover the Falkirk policing sub-area on a programmed basis. Community traffic wardens currently cover central Falkirk and the retail park, as well as other areas of the Council. It is proposed that discussions take place with Central Scotland Police to ascertain if there is an alignment between the duties of the Community Traffic Wardens and Community Wardens. This would allow the Community Warden / Enforcement Services to be focused areas other than the Town Centre.

Way Forward

- 4.10 If approved by Members, the above proposals would be developed in consultation with employees, human resources and the trade unions. Further work is required to develop the remit, geographical locations, routes, roles & responsibilities, training requirements, post development, gradings and management structure.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members

- 5.1 Note the contents of this report**
- 5.2 Agree the proposal to combine the Environmental Enforcement Team and Community Warden Service;**
- 5.3 Authorise officers to take forward this proposal in consultation with employees, HR and trade unions; and**
- 5.4 Require Officers to report back to Committee as this proposal develops.**

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