

Item 9

**REPORT TO CABINET
15th SEPT 05**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

Community Safety Portfolio

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SERVICE

SUMMARY

In support of Sedgefield Borough Councils Corporate Ambition to promote a Borough with Strong Communities, Corporate Plan Aim number 36 cites as a key action the expansion of the Neighbourhood Warden Service. Consequently, the Borough Council Medium Term Financial Plan includes provision to resource such an extension of service. Within resources to be made available as from 1st. August, 2005 it is proposed to establish a dedicated Neighbourhood Warden Streetsafe Unit with the same core duties and training as the existing Neighbourhood Warden Service but with a particular focus on Signal Crimes, Joint Initiatives with Partner Agencies and Mobile CCTV Operations.

Anti social behaviour, fear of crime and associated environmental issues such as littering, graffiti etc have been consistently highlighted by our communities, both in the Council housing and private housing sectors. The report proposes that in accordance with provision within the current Medium Term Financial Plan and as an initial stage the establishment of the Streetsafe Unit within the Neighbourhood Warden Section. This will require the creation of a post of Neighbourhood Warden Co-ordinator and four new Neighbourhood Warden posts and include the Transfer of a Service Function and post from Environmental Services Division.

Additionally, a pilot scheme for Neighbourhood Wardens working with Sedgefield Borough Council Housing Department under a Service Level Agreement, with financial contribution from the Housing Revenue Account is proposed which will inform any proposed further development of such arrangements. Any plans to further develop a HRA linked service would be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2006/7 – 2008/9 and in addition to expanding the number of Neighbourhood wardens would also consider how management arrangements could be strengthened.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a Neighbourhood Warden Streetsafe Unit be established with a particular focus on Signal Crimes, Joint Initiatives with Partner Agencies and Mobile CCTV Operations.
2. That a pilot be introduced for the remainder of 2005/6 providing Neighbourhood Warden Services to York Hill and Tudhoe Moor, Spennymoor on behalf of the Housing Department and that any subsequent planned expansion of this service be considered within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2006/7 – 2008/9

NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SERVICE

In support of Sedgefield Borough Councils Corporate Ambition to promote a Borough with Strong Communities, Corporate Plan Aim number 36 cites as a key action the expansion of the Neighbourhood Warden Service. Consequently, the Borough Council Medium Term Financial Plan includes provision to resource such an extension of service.

The last 18 months has seen the re-engineering of the Community Force into a Neighbourhood Warden service with a particular focus on addressing Quality of Life issues.

Staff training programmes have been developed linked to NVQ qualifications, communication systems have been revised, the service has received formal Accreditation from Durham Constabulary, work is in hand to achieve the National Warden Quality Standard for the service and income generating partnership working has been extended.

Anti social behaviour, fear of crime and associated environmental issues such as littering, graffiti etc have been consistently highlighted by our communities, both in the Council housing and private housing sectors. The Borough Council Medium Term Financial Plan includes provision for an initial expansion of the Neighbourhood Warden Service. The purpose of this report is to outline an approach to service extension and development and highlight a pilot opportunity to inform any further service development.

It is proposed to develop a dedicated Neighbourhood Wardens Streetsafe Unit which will have the same core duties and training as the main Neighbourhood Warden Service but will focus on response to

- Signal Crimes
- Joint Initiatives with Partner Agencies
- Mobile CCTV Operations

Establishment of the Streetsafe Unit would include the Transfer of Service Function and the post of Environmental Protection Assistant – Environmental Enforcement from the Environmental Services Division to the Community

Services Division within the Neighbourhood Services Department. Additionally, as part of the exit strategy relating to the NRF funded service for the removal of abandoned vehicles responsibility for this function would also transfer to the Community Services Division. In developing these proposals consideration has been given to functional responsibility for Enforcement, Education and Removal between Community Services and Environmental Services Divisions in the Neighbourhood Services Department in the following areas.

Function	Enforcement	Education	Removal
Dog Fouling	Wardens	Shared	Street Scene
Litter	Wardens	Shared	Street Scene
Fly Tipping (Domestic) Fly Tipping (Commercial / Large Scale)	Wardens / Env. Services / Env. Agency	Shared Shared	Street Scene / Env. Agency
Graffiti / Fly Posting	Wardens	Shared	Street Scene / Private Contractor
Vandalism	Police (<i>criminal damage</i>)	Shared	Street Scene - <i>if SBC</i> –
Abandoned Vehicles	Wardens	Shared	Private Contractor
Stray Dogs	Env. Services	Env. Services	Env. Services

Consideration was also given to emerging requirements relating to:-

- The Clean Neighbourhood & Environment Bill relating to fly tipping and stopping of vehicles not on the highway. This was seen as part of the Fly Tipping function.
- The Licensing Act 2002 – Neighbourhood Warden involvement in development of ‘Pub Watch’ would complement licensing & enforcement function undertaken by Environmental Services.

Funding has been released as from 1st. August in accordance with the Medium Term Financial Plan proposals which will support the establishment of the Neighbourhood Wardens Streetsafe Unit.

Additionally, a pilot scheme for Neighbourhood Wardens working with Sedgefield Borough Housing Department, with funding support from the Housing Revenue Account is proposed which will inform any proposed further development of such arrangements. A Service Level Agreement will be entered into with Housing department which will include a formula to determine HRA support, service targets, outcomes, hours of working etc. Any plans to further develop a HRA linked service would be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2006/7 – 2008/9 and in addition to expanding the number of Neighbourhood wardens would also consider how management arrangements could be strengthened.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal is consistent with provision within the Medium Term Financial Plan and current budgets.

CONSULTATIONS

Community consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Sedgefield Community Safety Partnership Audit & Strategy 2005/08 highlighted that issues of crime and anti social behaviour and the fear associated with such behaviour are a key priority for the public of Sedgefield Borough. Such consultation informed the development of the Strategy and the strategic response included within SBC Community Strategy.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Tackling issues of crime, anti social behaviour and the fear such issues engender is key to fulfilling the Council's Corporate Ambition to create a Borough with Strong Communities. The role of Neighbourhood Wardens is an integral part of the Councils operational response to our statutory responsibilities under the Crime & Disorder Act and our stated Corporate Ambitions.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

None.

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Ward(s)

All

Key Decision Validation

Background Papers

1. SBC Community Strategy and Corporate Plan
2. SBC Medium Term Financial Plan
3. Sedgefield Community Safety Partnership Audit & Strategy 2005/08.

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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