

CAB1157
FOR DECISION
WARD(S): ST LUKE
ST JOHN AND ALL SAINTS

CABINET – 18TH JANUARY 2006

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM – 18TH JANUARY 2006

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – 23RD January 2006

NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SCHEME - EVALUATION

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

Contact Officer: Lorraine Mansfield Tel No: 01962 848369

RECENT REFERENCES:

WTF58 Neighbourhood Wardens – Progress Report – 9th June 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report presents an evaluation of the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme for the period February – November 2005 and sets out a recommendation for further development and the need to expand the service if it is to meet current levels of demand and expectation and, at the same time comply with health and safety standards and the best practice guidelines laid down in the national quality standard for warden schemes. Under ideal circumstances a comprehensive evaluation would have been carried out following a full 12 months service. Although the Council's warden scheme has been operational for less than a year, the timing of the evaluation has been brought forward so that any financial implications can inform the budget setting process for 2006/07.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That Cabinet considers the proposal for developing the Neighbourhood Warden service and makes its views known to the Winchester Town Forum.
- 2 That, subject to the growth bid of £60,000 being approved as part of the budget process, Personnel Committee approves an increase to the establishment of two scale 4 FTEs as set out in the report.

CABINET – 18th January 2006

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM – 18TH January 2006

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – 23rd January 2006

NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SCHEME – EVALUATION

Report of Director of Communities

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In response to a growing awareness of the many benefits of warden schemes and a developing body of evidence showing how neighbourhood wardens can have a positive effect on quality of life issues for local communities, Members prioritised the development and implementation of a local scheme for Winchester in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2005-2008. Highcliffe and Stanmore were chosen as pilot areas for the scheme where the wardens have been operational since the end of February and June respectively.
- 1.2 Based on experience to date the aim of this report is to provide a preliminary evaluation of the scheme, to draw out key learning points, and to present a proposal for the development and expansion of the scheme in 2006/07 subject to the identification of additional resources and further consultation with key stakeholders.
- 1.3 It has to be stated at the outset that this evaluation would normally have been carried out in 2006 following a full 12 months service. It has been brought forward so that any resource implications can feed into the budget setting debate for 2006/07. For this reason some of the information presented in the report tends to be anecdotal in nature as hard quantitative measures such as percentage reductions in anti-social behaviour and incidents of crime will not be evident yet.
- 1.4 A national survey carried out in 2004 found that the overall level of crime in warden areas declined by 27% compared with a slight increase in comparator areas, and that there was a significant reduction in the fear of crime particularly amongst older people. The results are likely to be less stark in Winchester simply because the crime rate is already relatively low. Nevertheless, it is a useful indicator of the positive impact of neighbourhood warden schemes generally.

2 What Did We Do?

- 2.1 General aims of the scheme - following a series of consultations with a wide range of key stakeholders, visits to other schemes operating in the county, and an assessment of local needs, it was agreed that the Winchester wardens would focus on caring for the environment, deterring anti-social behaviour, reducing crime and the fear of crime, fostering social inclusion and community development. The Council's wardens have no powers of enforcement – they act rather as the eyes and ears of the community and not as a substitute for the police. These overall aims are articulated in the following vision for the service:-

“To work in conjunction with other agencies and residents to reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour, to reduce the fear of crime and to improve and maintain the community environment”.

The service has four key objectives:-

1. To support a safer community.
2. To target anti-social behaviour.
3. To maintain a clean and tidy environment.
4. To help build a stronger, more confident community.

These objectives have clear, explicit links to the Community Strategy, Community Safety Strategy and Corporate Strategy.

2.2 Staffing – The team consists of four full-time members of staff, the Neighbourhood Services co-ordinator (Anti-Social Behaviour) who manages the scheme on a day to day basis and co-ordinates the Council’s approach to the anti-social behaviour agenda, and three dedicated Neighbourhood Wardens.

2.3 Core Duties – The core duties for Neighbourhood Wardens include:-

- Environmental maintenance – e.g. fly tip removal, graffiti removal, removal of discarded needles, shrubbery/hedge cutting/reporting overhanging branches.
- Street maintenance issues – e.g. reporting abandoned vehicles, reporting untaxed vehicles, reporting misuse of highways issues, responding to damaged public property.
- Street furniture – e.g. reporting faulty street lights, repairing and reporting faulty signage.
- Anti-social behaviour/Nuisance – e.g. reporting anti-social behaviour to relevant authority, deterring anti-social behaviour, evidence gathering, responding to residents concerns, working with the community to raise awareness, providing a visible presence in hot-spot areas, development of diversionary projects for young people.
- Crime – e.g. provision of intelligence reports to police, close liaison with police particularly beat officers.
- Fire – e.g. provision of intelligence in relation to arson/accidental fire setting, initiation of Home Fire Safety Check referrals, Implementation of joint working arrangement with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS).
- Signposting – e.g. providing residents with information on other agencies/services.
- Community development – e.g. working with community groups to develop and support recreational activity, supporting local schools and other relevant agencies to implement community projects.

- 2.4 Coverage - As stated in paragraph 1.1 above, the scheme was piloted in Highcliffe at the end of February 2005 and extended to cover Stanmore in June.
- 2.5 Training – all wardens have undertaken a detailed training programme and carry out their duties in accordance with a comprehensive set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS).
- 2.6 Visibility – wardens have been provided with uniforms (red) so they are easily identifiable and visible. When not patrolling on foot, wardens can be seen out and about in one of two vehicles, both clearly marked with the neighbourhood warden logo.

3 How Much Did We Do?

- 3.1 Quantitative incident data is provided at Appendix A. It is important to realise that these figures only tell part of the story. They take no account of time attributed to project development and implementation, court appearances, attendance and participation in community group meetings, multi-agency forums and local school liaison. Nevertheless, it can be seen that wardens have dealt with over 300 everyday issues from initiating the removal of abandoned vehicles to responding to complaints of anti-social behaviour.
- 3.2 The wardens contribute to the delivery on a number of targets in the Community Safety Action Plan. Performance data on their anti-social behaviour work is included in the regular quarterly monitoring reports to Government Office South-East (GOSE) – the scheme currently receives £25,000 from GOSE to support this work.
- 3.3 In terms of the four key objectives for the scheme, the following information provides an indication of the range of work covered by the scheme.

3.3.1 Supporting a safer community

Providing valuable information to the Police/Fire Service

The wardens have developed a strong close working relationship with both the Fire Service and the Police. Wardens currently attend weekly Police briefings with the local Crime data analyst at North Walls and continue to share valuable information with local Beat Officers. As well as reporting untaxed vehicles to the Council's Licensing Officers, the wardens have reported numerous untaxed vehicles to the Police where it is known that the owners are continuing to drive them. The wardens also inform the fire service immediately where there is any evidence of fire setting within Highcliffe and Stanmore.

Crime Reduction and Environment Week (CREW)

During 19 to 23 September 2005 the Neighbourhood Wardens worked closely with other agencies such as the Police, Fire Service, Youth Service and Trading Standards to address crime reduction and environmental concerns within Stanmore. During the week, the wardens removed graffiti from road name plates, NTL boxes, dustbins and lampposts throughout Stanmore and supervised one youth removing graffiti outside the One Stop shop after he was reprimanded by the Police. During CREW, the Neighbourhood Wardens also worked with Community Service unpaid work orders to remove large quantities of fly tip, litter and overgrown vegetation from the Valley and around the Carroll Youth Centre.

To support a safer community, the wardens distributed free Fire Safety Check and Home Security leaflets throughout Wavell Way, Chatham Road and Montgomery Close. To raise awareness about CREW the Police and wardens spoke with young people and shoppers outside the One Stop shop and provided numerous information cards and leaflets signposting to other services.

Halloween

Wardens worked with the Fire Service and the Police during Halloween evening to ensure there was a permanent high visibility presence. Wardens spoke with various young people about safe trick or treating and distributed free wristbands displaying the RESPECT message.

Alcohol Week

During Alcohol Week, wardens will be working with the youth service, Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Trading Standards to raise awareness about the dangers of alcohol misuse. Wardens will be holding a 'drunk and dangerous' awareness evening in conjunction with the Carroll youth centre, will produce 'stay safe during the party season' cards for young people and will be liaising with Trading Standards to remind licensees in the local area of their responsibilities when selling alcohol.

Cycle Proficiency

One of the wardens is a qualified Cycle Proficiency Trainer and is currently working with All Saints School on drawing up a programme of delivery for Cycle proficiency lessons.

Multi Agency Drop In Clinic

The wardens have worked with one of the Area Housing Managers to set up a joint drop-in surgery for residents in Stanmore to discuss a range of issues from tenancy concerns to anti social behaviour. The sessions will be held at the Common Room in the Valley sheltered scheme. The first drop in afternoon will be publicised before Christmas.

3.3.2 Targeting Anti Social Behaviour

General

Since March 2005, the wardens have dealt with numerous incidents of anti social behaviour, ranging from the low level to more serious incidents. As a result of their close liaison with Police, Housing, Youth service and various other agencies, the wardens have been able to identify 'hotspot' anti social behaviour areas and provide a high visibility presence in places where this is a problem. They have responded to resident complaints about problem areas, or areas where low level anti social behaviour has been reported with many positive results. The wardens work closely with the Police Anti Social Behaviour Officer and Area Housing Managers to provide details of complaints made by residents and the identity of persistent trouble makers within Stanmore and Highcliffe. The wardens have already conducted joint visits with Housing and the Police and have helped circulate warning letters to those involved in anti social behaviour. As a result of their input, one Acceptable Behaviour Contract

(ABC) has already been signed up with a young person in Highcliffe and another is being considered. The wardens have had some positive feedback from residents, community groups and Neighbourhood Watch, about the impact their presence has had on anti social behaviour.

The Circle Multi Agency Initiative

The wardens are currently involved in a multi agency initiative with the Police, Housing and Youth Service to address various complaints of anti social behaviour around The Circle in Highcliffe. As a result of their input, Council officers and the Police have recently conducted joint visits to discuss implications of anti social behaviour with youths known to be hanging round the Circle.

The wardens are working with the Youth Service, the Highcliffe Community Action Group and the Highcliffe Tenants Association to progress their suggestion of a youth shelter for young people near the Circle. This has progressed to the stage where wardens have arranged an official consultation evening for young people to display youth shelter designs and allow them to choose which one they would like to see installed. This was held on **6th December 19.30 to 21.00**. An oral report will be available for your meeting.

Mini Motos

The wardens have been working closely with the Police to raise awareness around the use of mini motos, miniature motor cycles, within Highcliffe and Stanmore. The Police have recently put out a press release highlighting the dangers of mini motos and clarifying the legal position on their use. In support of this, the wardens are distributing 'fact sheets' about mini motos and the law to young 'drivers' they encounter.

Basketball

In the May half term during 2005, the wardens organised a basketball skills week for young people in Highcliffe and Stanmore. The event held at the open basketball court next to the Carroll Youth Centre was led by one of the wardens, a qualified sports tutor. Young people learnt useful basketball techniques such as shooting, dribbling, and team playing. Those who participated gave some very positive feedback and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to utilise new skills and have something constructive to do during the holidays. For participating in the event, young people were given free 'Connect to Sport' T-shirts and certificates. During the basketball week, young people explained that they had been seeking replacement nets for the basketball hoop in Stanmore and the one in Highcliffe for some time. A week later, the wardens acquired nets and personally fixed them to the hoops.

Summer Football

During August 2005, the wardens organised, publicised and supported the delivery of Summer Football Coaching Sessions for young people in Highcliffe. One of the wardens had completed a Hampshire Football Association Level 1 football coaching qualification, so was able to support the delivery of the sessions in conjunction with a Football Association coach. The Coaching was delivered over four weeks throughout the summer with an average attendance of 15 young people per session

3.3.3 Helping to maintain a clean and tidy environment

Abandoned vehicles / untaxed vehicles

Since the commencement of the scheme, Wardens have dealt with a total of 26 abandoned vehicles, and 25 untaxed vehicles.

Fly tip / graffiti

The wardens have dealt with numerous quantities of fly tipped material, removed vast amounts of graffiti on request, responded to numerous incidents of vandalism, and have liaised with the local Tesco's store on the collection and removal of over 40 dumped trolleys.

Discarded Needles

Neighbourhood Wardens have collected numerous discarded needles and disposed of them immediately. The wardens attend both the Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Reference Group and the Adults Drug and Alcohol Reference Group for Winchester to provide regular updates on needle finds within the Highcliffe and Stanmore areas. Where they identify what appear to be 'drug dens' wardens will inform the Police immediately.

Street Sweep for Highcliffe

The wardens have worked with the Highcliffe Community Action Group (HCAG) and SERCO to arrange specific dates for the mechanical street sweep schedule in Highcliffe. Previously, this had been a problem and residents were concerned that roads were not being cleared properly as they were given no notice of the sweeps. With the support of SERCO, the Wardens now produce and display posters every 8 weeks detailing specific dates for the street sweep, the side of the road to be swept on that particular day with accompanying map, and a request for residents to park on the opposite side of the road on that particular day. The HCAG has thanked the wardens for their support and believe it has made a real difference to the cleanliness of their roads.

3.3.4 Helping to build a stronger, more confident community

Neighbourhood Wardens and the Neighbourhood Services Co-ordinator regularly attend community group meetings within Highcliffe and Stanmore. To date the wardens have been more pro-active with groups within Highcliffe than Stanmore. However, this is largely due to the fact that the scheme is much better established in Highcliffe and the balance will be redressed in time. It is also important to realise that only one warden was in post for the period 9th August – 5th September 2005.

The Neighbourhood Wardens currently feature within the Action Plan for HCAG, and are supporting the group in the implementation of a number of key priorities. In addition, the Neighbourhood Wardens continue to support the HCAG and Tenants Association with publicising events, and supporting any general projects they wish to initiate.

Work within Schools

The wardens have developed a proactive relationship with All Saints Primary School and are regular attendees at school assemblies. Apart from giving talks to the children they also hand out stickers to reward good behaviour or work worthy of merit. The wardens are now liaising with Stanmore Primary School and will be delivering an assembly to pupils just before Christmas. It is hoped that the wardens will also be able to support the delivery of cycle proficiency classes at Stanmore Primary School.

During the summer, the Neighbourhood Wardens took part in year nine's Citizenship Programme where they gave a talk to pupils about anti social behaviour and the negative consequences upon the community. This was very well received.

Visible presence

By providing a visible presence in the community, the wardens help residents resolve any problems they may have more quickly and prevent some from getting out of hand. Wardens regularly pass on requests for support to other council services such as Housing, Licensing and Highways or to other agencies, and are also able to track progress. Through general foot patrols, the wardens have built a positive rapport with the local community, particularly within Highcliffe.

4 How Well Did We Do It?

4.1 Apart from taking advice and learning from other warden schemes in the county and beyond, support has also been sourced from an Advisor from the South East Neighbourhood Warden Regional Resource Centre which is based in Portsmouth. The Regional Resource Centre (RRC) is essentially a regional 'champion' of the warden movement which has been established and funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Its responsibilities include identifying and promoting best practice throughout the region, providing technical support services and operating the warden quality standard.

4.2 An Advisor from the RRC has made two support visits to Winchester to evaluate progress to date and to make recommendations for the future development of the scheme in line with the best practice requirements of the Quality Standard. The Quality Standard is a kite mark for warden schemes. In achieving the quality standard, a warden scheme has demonstrated that it meets all the requirements of a successful scheme as recommended by the ODPM. An Action Plan to address issues raised has been developed. The areas scrutinised includes sustainability, robustness of the scheme, outcomes, management and planning, financial and people management, working with the community to address diversity and fair access, working with other organisations or key agencies, and learning and improvement. It is worthy of note that the Advisor highlighted two examples of good practice and innovation from the Council's scheme:-

1. The development of a partnership working agreement between the warden scheme and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service which involves the wardens collecting information and completing environmental audits – shown at Appendix 2.
2. The free phone number for residents to contact the wardens.

In terms of issues to be addressed, some of the key findings are:-

Issue	Action
Need to address the issue of 'pair working' as a matter of urgency. At the very least Winchester needs a fourth warden if it is to try to provide two teams.	As a general rule, wardens are no longer permitted to work alone – the odd meeting or school assembly being the exceptions. The recruitment of at least one further warden is necessary to address this issue in the short-term unless the service reduces to one team with one warden providing cover etc. and the consequent reduction in service provision. However, two more wardens (5 in total) would allow greater flexibility in terms of covering leave, sickness, training etc.
No baseline in place to assess community satisfaction.	Community consultation to be carried out by March 2006 (end of the first year of operation).
Insufficient administrative support for the scheme.	Will partly be addressed by filling of Administration Officer post for the Division – due to start January 3 rd 2006.
The dual role of the scheme manager is not ideal and will be problematic if the scheme expands. The Neighbourhood Services Co-ordinator also serves the function of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator. Unlike other local authorities, Winchester City Council has appointed one person to deliver the requirements of two separate roles.	To be addressed.
Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) lacking in one or two areas – complaints procedure, contingency planning, and uniform standards.	All addressed in new SOPs.
Flyers do not carry corporate strapline for non English speakers, or visually impaired.	In hand.
No overall Steering Group for the scheme.	Further internal discussions required to agree approach.

The Advisor is due to make a further support visit in February/March to review progress.

- 4.3 There is no doubt that problems with staff retention has thrown up a number of challenges. For the period 9th August – 5th September there was only one warden in post, and from 5th September – 31st October there were two wardens in post. It can be seen that at a fairly crucial period in the summer the scheme lost two wardens in fairly quick succession. The limited staff coverage during the key summer period

may have had a detrimental impact on public awareness of the scheme simply due to the lack of visibility. The positive news is that three wardens have been in post since 31st October.

5 Is Anyone Better Off?

- 5.1 At this stage it is difficult to present evidence to prove conclusively that people have benefited from the scheme. However, the weight of anecdotal evidence suggests that residents value the scheme enormously and wish to see it grow and develop. It is interesting to note that almost without exception press coverage for the scheme has been both extensive and extremely positive.
- 5.2 Local Members in Highcliffe and Stanmore have recently praised the scheme at the Town Forum meeting and the meeting indicated that it would support the further investment of Town Account funds in support of intensification and broadening of the scheme.
- 5.3 A consultation questionnaire has recently been circulated to partner agencies to gather views and feedback on the warden service to date. The results may be available by the time Cabinet meets in which case an oral update will be provided. Further consultations will be taking place over the next few months to gather feedback from residents in Highcliffe and Stanmore.
- 5.4 Although it is not possible to make a direct link with the warden scheme, it is interesting to note that there have been no reported incidents of robberies in Highcliffe since the scheme started.

6 Moving Forward

- 6.1 As highlighted in paragraph 4.2 above the scheme needs further resources if it is to grow and develop. With a team of five wardens, i.e. an additional two, the scheme could expand to cover Winnall in addition to Highcliffe and Stanmore, and have the flexibility to cope with periods of annual leave, sick leave, training and other absences.
- 6.2 This would place an additional burden on the Neighbourhood Services Co-ordinator and it may be necessary in due course to review the dual remit for the role. Provision of 0.5 FTE growth in co-ordinator time may be required in the future so that the roles of the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and Neighbourhood Wardens Manager can be separated.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

7 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 7.1 Helping communities manage anti-social behaviour supported by neighbourhood wardens is a stated medium term improvement in the Community Strategy.
- 7.2 The provision of a Neighbourhood Warden Scheme in Stanmore and Highcliffe and to consider extending this as resources allow is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2005-2008.
- 7.3 The scheme helps deliver on a number of priorities in the Community Safety Strategy, particularly 'Creating Communities that feel Safe', 'Reducing Crime through better Partnership Working' and 'Being Tough on Anti-Social Behaviour'.

7.4 The Council has a duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to do all it reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder across the district.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Cabinet and Town Forum are being asked to consider proposals for the future development of the neighbourhood warden service. Given the requirements of the Quality Standard as well as the more general standards set by the Health and Safety at Work Act, it will be impossible in future to operate two teams of wardens with the current resources. If the service is to expand across the City wards in any meaningful way, at least two teams will be needed and that will require a minimum of five wardens, i.e. two more. This will require budgetary growth of £60,000 to cover the appointment of two additional FTEs at scale 4.

8.2 In view of the pressure on the General Fund, it is not considered appropriate to submit a bid for further growth from the Fund at this stage. However, at the last meeting of the Winchester Town Forum on 23rd November, Members asked for the detailed Town Account Budget to include options for increasing the contribution towards the Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme to £60,000 per year. It was agreed that a discussion on an increase in the services provided by the scheme should be held at the next meeting and be informed by the evaluation report.

8.3 The Town Account currently contributes £20,000 per annum towards the cost of the neighbourhood warden service and this proposal would increase that contribution to £80,000 per annum. Any increase in the contribution would have to be reflected in a rise in the Town tax. With a tax base of 13,637 band D properties an increase of £60,000 in the contribution towards the warden service would result in an increase of £4.40 in the band D tax (an increase of 9.4% on the current tax level of £46.75, although this could be lower in Year 1 if Members draw from reserves). The Town Forum report WTF63 gives more detail on the financial options being considered by the Forum in the budget process as there are other calls on the budget for 2006/07.

8.4 Subject to Cabinet and Town Forum satisfaction with the scheme and its affordability, approval for budgetary provision of a further £60,000 from the Town Account is recommended to support further development and expansion of the warden service as set out in this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Performance monitoring data, incident reports, and general correspondence held in Community Development Divisional files.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Incident Data February – October 2005

Appendix 2 Partnership Agreement with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service