

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

15 July 2004

NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SCHEME – ESTABLISHMENT OF POSTS

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB859 Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme – Operational Arrangements 20 April 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out details of the staffing requirements for the proposed Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme and asks the Committee to approve the establishment of four full-time posts, a Neighbourhood Services Co-ordinator (Anti-Social Behaviour) and three Neighbourhood Wardens.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the posts of Neighbourhood Services Co-ordinator (Anti-Social Behaviour) and Neighbourhood Warden (3 posts) be added to the permanent staffing establishment of the Community Services Department as set out in the report.

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#### Report of Director of Community Services

#### DETAIL:

##### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that budgetary provision has been made for the development and implementation of a neighbourhood warden scheme in the current financial year. Funding is coming from a variety of sources including the HRA, Town Forum and central government.
- 1.2 A report was presented to Cabinet on 20 April 2004 setting out, in broad terms, the proposed operational arrangements for the scheme – report CAB859 refers. Members endorsed the approach set out in the report subject to further consultations taking place with TACT, the Town Forum, Community Safety Partnership and residents groups, and a further report being submitted to Personnel Committee in order to agree staffing arrangements and the formal establishment of the posts. At the time of writing this report, the results of the consultation process indicates a broad level of support for the approach set out in CAB 859 and a desire to see the scheme implemented as soon as possible.
- 1.3 In general terms the aim of any wardening scheme is to improve the quality of life for people living in an area. Wardens provide a regular visible presence in designated areas in an effort to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime. A considerable amount of the work and emphasis is about engaging in the community with disaffected young people and others in order to forge a supportive relationship with them. Other more practical tasks include arranging the prompt clearance of abandoned cars, removing graffiti and keeping an eye on empty properties and schools over the holiday periods.
- 1.4 It is very important that the scheme is tailored to the needs of the area in which it is going to function. The nature of the funding means that wardens must be deployed first and foremost in the areas of Winchester with the larger concentrations of property rented from the Council - this means Highcliffe, Stanmore and Winnall. However, the opportunity to build and develop the scheme in other areas of the district remains an option for the future subject to the identification of appropriate resources.
- 1.5 It has been agreed that the emphasis of the warden scheme in Winchester should be placed on practical environmental work and problem solving in the public realm. Dealing with the outcomes of anti-social behaviour such as littering, fly-tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, problem parking and occasional noise nuisance, which are related more to carelessness and discourtesy than crime, are just a few examples of the type of work wardens will be expected to undertake. In such cases, swift intervention is required to prevent a problem escalating and to make residents feel that the Council is concerned about their problems. At present the Council is rather remote and the response to these problems somewhat unpredictable.

- 1.6 The other key strand of work is organising and galvanising community involvement in issues and projects. This can be achieved in a number of ways such as speaking to schoolchildren or running a 'community clear-up'.
- 1.7 The purpose of this report is to set out the staffing requirements for the neighbourhood warden scheme in Winchester and to seek approval for the establishment of the posts subject to final confirmation of the grades following the job evaluation process.

## 2 Staffing Proposals

- 2.1 Neighbourhood Wardens represent a major extension to the Community Services team. The issues that will be raised by having wardens in the field will range from the mundane to the complex and serious. The warden service will be highly visible, representative of the Council and must therefore be of very high quality. It will require significant management and some administrative support to ensure that the inevitable paperwork that will be generated is kept efficiently.
- 2.2 The majority of the working week will be occupied by pre-arranged activities, events and visits, around which reactive work will be fitted in. The wardens and their management will allocate tasks between the team subject to availability and expertise. Some tasks will require two wardens working together, others may be undertaken by one on their own. Pre-arranged tasks would include visits to hot spots and unstructured contact time with local residents, businesses and community groups.
- 2.3 Most warden schemes expect staff to cover more than simply standard hours, working a rota that includes evenings and weekends. As the Winchester scheme emphasises the environmental and community improvement role rather than the 'policing' role it will not necessary or desirable for the wardens to work extensively in the evening – little can be done in the dark. It is therefore proposed that the wardens work on a rota with some late starts/late finishes rather than day/evening shifts, and including Saturday but not Sunday working.
- 2.4 Initially three wardens will be employed all on scale 3. They will be managed by a new scale 5 post to be known as the Neighbourhood Services Co-ordinator (NSC). All proposed grades are subject to formal assessment through the job evaluation process which is currently underway.
- 2.5 The NSC will manage the wardens and ensure that their work is properly directed towards achieving key objectives, as well as liaising with officers in other departments at a management level to ensure a 'joined-up' approach and co-ordination of effort. Due to the level of focus on addressing issues of anti-social behaviour, the NSC post is eligible for Home Office funding of £25,000 per year for the next two years at least. This additional funding will ensure that the scheme is established on a professional and sustainable footing.
- 2.6 It is proposed that the wardens are not managed by the existing Community Safety Officer (CSO) as this would involve dealing with day to day issues and would detract from the strategic role in developing community safety generally.

### 3 Organisational Structure and Location

- 3.1 The proposed management structure for the scheme is shown at Appendix A to this report. The posts will be an addition to the community and arts team of the Community Services Department.
- 3.2 The NSC will be located at Athelstan House from where he or she will support the warden's day to day operation and contribute to other community safety initiatives as appropriate. It is proposed that the wardens will have an operational base within the neighbourhood which would provide an office and resource base but not a public access point – discussions are currently taking place with colleagues in Health and Housing to identify the options available to the achievement of this end.

### 4 Implementation Timetable

- 4.1 Following approval for the establishment of the posts and final confirmation of grades, the target is to have the scheme up and running by the end of the calendar year. The NSC post will be advertised first in order to enable the successful applicant to be actively involved in setting up the scheme.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

#### 5 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 5.1 The introduction of a pilot scheme for better management of local environments through neighbourhood wardens is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2004-2007.

#### 6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 Base budget provision of £75,000 has been set aside in the current year, rising to £105,000 in 2005/06. This will be partly offset in 2004/05 and 2005/06 by funding of £25,000 received from the Government which is ring-fenced for work to combat anti-social behaviour.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Completed job evaluation forms held by the Personnel Department. Draft job descriptions held by Personnel and Community Services.

### APPENDICES:

Appendix A                      Structure Chart for Neighbourhood Wardens