

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 31 MARCH 2010

GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11: FUNDING FOR TACKLING ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN EAST AYRSHIRE

Report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the outcome of discussions with Strathclyde Police on the use of funding to tackle antisocial behaviour and put forward options to better manage resources as part of the Councils agreed budget strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A series of Business Reviews were agreed by Cabinet as part of the 2009/10 Revenue Budget on 12 February 2009. The timeline for the review programme was agreed by the Corporate Management Team on 11 March 2009. The objective of the programme of business reviews is to ensure costs are reduced, by improving efficiency, to meet the total savings package approved by Council. Moreover, the business reviews are also expected to contribute to making significant progress towards achieving the savings projection for 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- 2.2 The Business Review of Community Safety led by the Head of Housing Services was conducted during 2009 and the findings were reported to, and agreed by, the Corporate Management Team on 20 January 2010.
- 2.3 Following the public consultation on the Council's General Services Revenue Budget for 2010/11, the Council on 11 February 2010 agreed to proceed with the proposed reduction in community wardens and reconfiguration of the service, subject to discussions being held with Strathclyde Police to explore other options with a report to be presented to the Cabinet by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services before the end of March 2010.

3. EFFICIENCY SAVINGS FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Community Safety Business Review took account of the Concordat agreed between the Scottish Government and local authorities and the Council's updated Single Outcome Agreement, agreed by Cabinet on 25 February 2009. The review was also influenced by the 2008 review of former ring-fenced funding arrangements and the ongoing Shared Services Diagnostic Project.
- 3.2 In November 2009 Audit Scotland published "Scotland's Public Finances – Preparing for the Future". The report highlighted Scotland's public sector is under the greatest financial pressure in the 10 years since devolution. The

Auditor General for Scotland argued that the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and the wider public sector need to make difficult decisions about competing priorities and how best to spend tighter budgets. The report recognised that there were “serious financial challenges” and concluded that budget levels would “present a significant challenge for the Scottish public sector in sustaining and improving services”.

- 3.3 In March 2007 the Scottish Government published a report titled the “Evaluation of the Impact and Implementation of Community Wardens”. This report considered the effectiveness of the £20M investment in community warden schemes through Scottish local authorities as part of the Building Strong, Safe, Attractive Communities initiative from March 2003. The evaluation found that wardens undertook a variety of roles that varied according to the characteristics and pressures in particular areas. Underpinning the analysis of activities was the role the wardens had as the “eyes and ears” of the community.
- 3.4 However, the evaluation concluded that data and information pertaining to levels of crime and antisocial behaviour was incomplete and that there was a lack of comparative information. Nevertheless it reported that evidence from survey information led the evaluation team to conclude that community wardens had made a positive impact.
- 3.5 Between 2007 and February 2009, a Review of the National Antisocial Behaviour Policy was carried out with the aim of taking a fresh look at the national policy, including key elements of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, to identify where it could be improved, and to enable stronger community involvement.
- 3.6 This national review led to the Scottish Government’s current framework for tackling anti-social behaviour in Scotland is about promoting positive outcomes: by preventing anti-social behaviour before it occurs; by resolving anti-social behaviour effectively at an early stage when it does occur; by agencies working together more effectively; by communities being more involved in developing sustainable local solutions; and by communicating positive, evidence-based messages about our people and places. Overall, it is about building on success and spreading good practice across Scotland.
- 3.7 The community warden service is not a statutory service but there is evidence of its popularity amongst the general public in East Ayrshire at least in those areas where warden services are deployed. Stakeholder consultation carried out to support the Business Review has identified a demand from community groups who wish to see warden services delivered more comprehensively throughout East Ayrshire. Consultation has also provided evidence that key partner agencies and other stakeholders are positive about the role and contribution made by the community warden service to improving community safety. This was particularly evident in the responses from Strathclyde Police. However, it is not easy to uncover robust evidence that proves that the existing community warden arrangements provide value for money. There are no reliable benchmarking opportunities across Scotland as local

authorities have developed services to meet local needs resulting in some significant variations in approach, deployment, powers, and resources.

4. BUDGET CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

4.1 On 11 February 2010, the Council agreed the proposal to re-configure the community warden service. The key message from the budget consultation responses appeared to be that, whilst acknowledging the difference in roles, given the choice, people believe that an enhanced police presence would deliver a better contribution to community safety. As highlighted earlier in this report, the Council agreed to proceed with the reduction in wardens and reconfiguration of the service, subject to discussions being held with Strathclyde Police to explore other options.

4.2 Those discussions have now taken place. Two options have been identified which are considered below:

Future Options 1

4.3 Part of the community wardens remit in relation to local environmental problems might reasonably be seen as duplication of existing service provision undertaken by other council services. However, the wardens perform an 'eyes and ears' function which has proved useful to Strathclyde Police in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. Community wardens are well placed, and encouraged, to gather this information and share it with appropriate agencies through the established Problem Solving Group and although this is not unique to the wardens, there is no doubt that the wardens' informal contacts with local residents, particularly young people, outside normal office hours provides greater intelligence gathering opportunities than would otherwise exist.

4.4 The multi-agency Problem Solving Group is an excellent example of partnership working between Strathclyde Police and East Ayrshire Council which has played a significant part in the delivery of positive outcomes which were detailed in the Community Planning Partnership: Improving Community Safety Mid-term Review 2009. That mid-term review reported a reduction in crimes of violence and vandalism, and increased drug and antisocial behaviour detection rate and positive actions put in place to effectively tackle antisocial behaviour.

4.5 The Community Safety Business Review considered those achievements and identified scope for reconfiguring the community warden arrangements in East Ayrshire while offering a degree of service continuity and delivering cost savings as a result of revised operational arrangements.

4.6 The service delivery model recommended by the Review was an 'intelligence led' approach, with warden deployment directed by the multi-agency Problem Solving Group on a flexible basis to areas of need where warden intervention would potentially produce the most effective results in reducing or preventing antisocial behaviour. This would provide a more directed and targeted service

but would still allow the Council to maintain an approach to tackling antisocial behaviour in East Ayrshire in tune with national guidelines. Having considered various options the Review considered that the 'intelligence led' approach offered the greatest potential to deliver measurable outcomes which support the Council's Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan objectives at a time of growing financial pressures and competing priorities for tighter budgets.

- 4.7 The adoption of this new model would necessarily lead to a reconfiguration in the service, remit and role of the Community Wardens service. This would include establishing new working arrangements including shift patterns and terms and conditions for those employed in the new team to ensure most effective use of resources to meet the needs identified by Community Planning partners and key stakeholders. The Review considered that the new model could be delivered by a new team comprising of 10 posts. This would represent a reduction in the present establishment by 11 posts - 10 Community Wardens and 1 Senior Community Warden – which would deliver the budget saving agreed by Council on 11 February 2010.

Future Options 2

- 4.8 During 2008/09 the police service in Scotland received £7.3M of additional funding from the Scottish Government to provide an additional 1,000 police officers. In addition, specific funding of £2.9M was provided by local authorities through Fairer Scotland Funds to support additional policing.
- 4.9 In September 2008, a new model of community policing was introduced by Strathclyde Police. This new model saw each of Strathclyde Police 8 divisions served by a number of community policing teams. These teams are built around the needs of local people and they are responsible for responding to calls in the local area, as well as looking for long term solutions to key local issues. The new model aims to ensure that all officers are focused on the key principles and requirements of successful policing in local communities.
- 4.10 During 2008/09, the number of community policing officers in Ayrshire increased by around 80%. Support from each of Ayrshire's local authorities and community planning partnerships, allowed Strathclyde Police to increase the number of campus officers in Ayrshire to 14. Campus officers have become an integral part of the school communities, delivering effective policing that reflects the needs and demands of pupils, staff and parents.
- 4.11 For the period 2008/09 to 2010/11, East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board has allocated the following resources from the Fairer Scotland Fund to Strathclyde Police:

- 2008/09 £0.33M
- 2009/10 £0.33M
- 2010/11 £0.2M

The core budget of £0.2M will be mainstreamed from 2010/11. The transitional funding for the additional community police officers in Northwest Kilmarnock comes to an end on 31 March 2010. All Fairer Scotland Fund projects are due for review during 2010/11.

- 4.12 Strathclyde Police East Ayrshire sub division has 9 community policing teams that are coterminous with the local government electoral wards. In East Ayrshire, Strathclyde Police have used Fairer Scotland Funds to allocate additional police resources within priority areas, enhancing police visibility and accessibility in the community and proactively addressing local crime and community safety issues. In addition, Fairer Scotland Fund resources have been allocated to establish “Campus Cops” and the North West Kilmarnock Community Policing Initiative. As part of the required financial and performance monitoring arrangements, Strathclyde Police submit regular reports confirming details of their activities directly related to the provision of funding for additional police resources including information on the number of pro-active and re-active action plans carried out and the returns arising from these in terms of, for example, persons reported for suspected crimes, alcohol and weapons seizures, stop/searches carried out and licensed premises visited.
- 4.13 The current and predicted financial pressures facing the Council require serious consideration to be given to cessation of all non-statutory services where this can be achieved without undue risk to the Council’s strategic objectives as set out in the Single Outcome Agreement agreed with Scottish ministers in July 2009. Although a number of present warden activities relate to the requirements of the Antisocial Behaviour, etc (Scotland) Act 2004, the means of delivering those services is not determined by legislation. Cessation of the existing community wardens’ service, comprising 21 posts, would release a significant financial saving in excess of the current budget requirements.
- 4.14 This option would also provide the Council with an opportunity to consider releasing part of the overall saving obtained to Strathclyde Police for further additional police resources targeted towards areas of concern within East Ayrshire’s communities and building on the present Fairer Scotland Funding arrangements which support delivery of the Council’s community safety objectives as set out in the Single Outcome Agreement and agreed with community planning partners.
- 4.15 The Scottish Government commissioned independent research into the role and effectiveness of ‘Campus Cops’ across the country, the results of which were published in March 2010. Key findings include:
- The role of campus police officers is highly valued by both educational staff and pupils
 - Forging relationships and regular interaction between the police officers and pupils was regarded as having a positive impact on young people and may help reduce serious indiscipline in school

- Undertaking group work targeted at challenging or at risk pupils and information sharing with other support workers and agencies are considered major benefits of the role
- Campus police have the biggest impact in deprived areas where communities may lack positive role models and perceptions of the police may be negative

4.16 The findings from this national research mirror the views expressed both by Head Teachers and pupils on the value provided by the 'Campus Cops' currently employed in Auchinleck, Grange and Loudoun Academies. Some comments by local youngsters of their personal experience of the 'Campus Cops' initiative include:

"I feel safer around the campus knowing that PC *** is there. We can approach him to ask advice about things like "Stranger Danger". I think it is really good that we have PC *** in our campus."

"The thing I like most about PC *** is that he doesn't talk down to us but treats us like young adults. He treats us almost like an equal but we still know that he is a cop and has a job to do. It is good to know that PC*** is available to us and I know that a couple of years ago he helped when a fourth year girl was approached by a man in Irvine Road. A lot of different people see him in many places around the school and we also see him talking to the pupils from Annanhill and Park School. PC *** is really good when he talks to us at PSE, for example, he has given us a lot of information about the danger of drug abuse."

"PC *** is always talking to pupils and he is easy to approach. We know him quite well and can ask his advice about a range of things, for example the boys asked him about protecting their bikes from theft and he brought some ultra violet markers for them to use to mark their bikes. I know that he has also asked some of the older pupils to help with the test purchasing of alcohol and I think that it is really important that we help the police with things like that. People used to be less likely to help the police but the PC *** is helping to build good relationships between us and the police."

"PC *** is a better policeman than I have come across before. He sorts things out for us. He is always there for us in his office or in the playground. A boy in third year kept bullying me and I went to PC ***. After I spoke to him he sorted it out for me. He is a good policeman and we feel confident with him in the school."

"PC *** has done a lot to bring kids from different communities together. He makes us feel safe and makes sure that we obey the rules! When we deal with him we always know that awkward matters do not go any further."

"He comes around our classes and gives talks about gangs and drugs. It makes me feel safe."

“I have learned about the police - I realise that they do a lot more than arrest people, like working with children and helping people.”

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The findings of the national research, and local experience, of campus police officers suggest that this initiative can prove effective in supporting delivery of the East Ayrshire Community Planning Partners objectives relating to improving community safety. The future of the existing Campus Cops, and the potential for extending the deployment of Campus Cops in appropriate schools within East Ayrshire, will be considered as part of the review of Fairer Scotland Funded projects which is scheduled for 2010/11.
- 5.2 In the meantime however it is considered that there remains a need for the Council to continue providing community warden services, working closely with Strathclyde Police and the Problem Solving Group and with a greater focus on enforcement, to tackle antisocial behaviour in East Ayrshire.

6. FINANCIAL / HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The potential efficiency savings identified in this Business Review are outlined in the table below. Any funding provided to Strathclyde Police for additional police resources would reduce the overall savings achieved.

Option for review	Projected saving
Option1	£246,939
Option 2	£495,000

- 6.2 If Option 1 is approved, then requests for voluntary severance from wardens would be considered in the first instance followed by restricted interviews for revised posts. Unsuccessful candidates would then be subject to the Councils' Redeployment and Redundancy Policy.
- 6.3 In the event of Option 2 being approved, then all wardens would be subject to the Councils' Redeployment and Redundancy Policy.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The options set out in this report are designed to support the Council's Single Outcome Agreement objectives with particular reference to National Outcome 9: "We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger".

9. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The options set out in the report are designed to support community planning objectives in relation to improving community safety in East Ayrshire.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 No significant risks arising directly from this report.

11. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None arising directly from this report.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i)** Consider the options set out in Section 4 for funding activities to tackle anti-social behaviour in East Ayrshire;
- (ii)** Agree to proceed with the re-configuration of the existing Community Warden service, as set out in Option 1.
- (iii)** Otherwise, note the content of this report.

WS/CMCA/LA

23 March 2010

BACKGROUND PAPER

- Community Safety Business Review, Department of Neighbourhood Services January 2010
- Evaluation of Campus Police Officers in Scottish Schools – Scottish Government 2010

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