

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOUTHERN LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUM

OPERATION OF THE COMMUNITY WARDEN SERVICE

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Community Warden Service as requested by a community representative at the meeting of the Southern Local Community Planning Forum on 6 September 2007.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The East Ayrshire Council Community Warden Service commenced on 1 August 2004, following the establishment by the then Scottish Executive of the 'Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities (BSSAC)' programme.

- 2.2 Following joint research by the Council and other community planning partners, the following areas were identified as being most in need of BSSAC funding:

- Auchinleck
- Barshare, Cumnock
- Kilmarnock - North West
- Kilmarnock - New Farm Loch
- Kilmarnock - Shortlees

- 2.3 Neighbourhoods were identified using the following criteria:

- Levels of deprivation
- Crime and incident statistics
- Incidents of anti social behaviour and environmental issues

- 2.4 Community Wardens operate out of 2 bases -Western Road, Kilmarnock, and Council Offices, Ayr Road, Cumnock. Wardens operate every day of the year, except 25 and 26 December and 1 and 2 January, and are on duty from 1.30 p.m. to 11.15 p.m.

- 2.5 Two Wardens patrol the Auchinleck and Barshare areas.

2.6 The aim of the wardens is to improve quality of life for residents in the designated areas through:

- regularly patrolling local areas to provide a high profile public deterrence to anti-social behaviour, vandalism and environmental damage
- acting as a link between local people and service agencies in relation to anti-social behaviour, vandalism and environmental damage
- assisting, where appropriate, in the speedy resolution of incidents of anti-social behaviour, vandalism or environmental damage through reporting, gathering information and providing evidence (including attending court)
- developing a pro-active approach to engaging with young people by providing information on social and leisure activities, and enabling them to raise issues of concern
- engaging positively with local people, especially young people providing community safety advice, and assisting in reassuring and supporting vulnerable people and victims of crime
- making appropriate referrals to the Anti-social Behaviour Team and developing an awareness of community based initiatives designed to tackle anti-social behaviour
- developing the role of Community Wardens in their areas by organising initiatives and projects, as well as identifying areas of need within their communities.

2.7 Community Wardens are empowered to issue fixed penalty tickets in respect of dog fouling and litter. They have no other special powers and are not a substitute for the police.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Community Wardens are part of the wider Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Service. They tie in with the ASB Investigators in respect of unacceptable behaviour within communities.

3.2 In general, Community Wardens remain within their respective 'BSSAC' areas, although a degree of discretion is applied in respect of their deployment. As an example, Auchinleck/Barshare Wardens were deployed to assist with a situation at a local food outlet in the Netherthird area.

3.3 In recognition of the fact that anti social behaviour is not restricted to 'BSSAC' areas, a Flexible Warden Patrol was introduced on 17 September 2007. This Patrol can be deployed anywhere across East Ayrshire.

- 3.4 The principal medium by which such deployment is determined is the Problem Solving Group which meets fortnightly. This group, consisting of representatives from Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue and East Ayrshire Council departmental representatives, discusses emerging and ongoing issues and decides on appropriate action plans to address the situations presented.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 'BSSAC' funding extends to 31 March 2008.
- 4.2 East Ayrshire Council presently awaits the financial determination of the Scottish Government.

5 LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

Nil

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. Community Wardens duties are as outlined at paragraph 2.6.
- 7.2: The introduction of the Flexible Warden patrol enables non BSSAC areas to be patrolled.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1. The Southern Local community Planning Forum is invited to consider the contents of this report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services
11 October 2007

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

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