

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE - 6 SEPTEMBER 2006

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY WARDENS HOURS OF DUTY

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To provide Committee with information to consider the suitability of the current hours of duty for Community Wardens following the issue being raised at a recent meeting of the Council on 22 June 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** In August 2004 East Ayrshire Council, having successfully bid for funding under the Scottish Executive's proposals for Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities (BSSAC) and Second Round Funding to Tackle Antisocial Behaviour, created a Community Warden Service and deployed them in the neighbourhoods of:

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

- 2.2** The East Ayrshire Community Warden Service was designed in co-operation with the Council's Community Planning Partners to reflect the aspirations of the local community and to be able to respond to the problems and challenges specific to the neighbourhoods where they were deployed. In keeping with the Executive's commitment to Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities, the service was expected to contribute to the following broad outcomes:

- Reducing crime (including youth crime) or the fear of crime
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- Improving environmental quality

- 2.3** The East Ayrshire Warden Service includes "crime prevention" and "tackling antisocial behaviour" schemes, which require the wardens to patrol areas so that their visible presence acts as a deterrent and provides reassurance to residents. As a result the schemes were carefully aligned, in accordance with the Scottish Executive's guidelines, to the work of the police to ensure a properly joined-up approach to policing and patrolling at a local level.

- 2.4** The Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities Consultation Document issued by the Scottish Executive made it clear that Community Wardens were not to be regarded as an alternative to the Police. Instead

Community Wardens were to act as the "eyes and ears" of the community and as a liaison between residents and relevant agencies. Their effectiveness was not based on the powers or resources they have at their disposal, but their ability to get other responsible agencies, which have the powers and resources to respond quickly and effectively to concerns and complaints.

- 2.5** During the consultation stages of creating the Community Warden Service for East Ayrshire the Council and its partners (in particular the police) considered various options regarding the hours of duty for the service in order to derive maximum benefit from the wardens' visible presence on the streets. After an analysis of the types of incidents wardens were most likely to encounter and deal with effectively, it was considered that the BSSAC communities would benefit most if the wardens were deployed on a daily basis from the early afternoon to the late evening.
- 2.6** In addition, given that the wardens would have no enforcement powers, protective or defensive equipment it was agreed on the grounds of Health and Safety that it was inadvisable for the wardens to work beyond 11.15 p.m., unless an ongoing incident required them to remain on duty beyond that time.
- 2.7** As a result it was agreed that the East Ayrshire Community Wardens would provide daily coverage in their neighbourhoods between 1.30 p.m. and 11-15 p.m., which is later than the shifts worked by Wardens in neighbouring authorities and in Scotland, as a whole.

3. COMMUNITY WARDENS EFFECTIVENESS

- 3.1** Scottish Executive research has proved Community Warden Services are in general most effective when wardens have acquired a good knowledge of their local neighbourhoods and maintain regular personal contact with members of the communities they serve. This has proved to be the case with the East Ayrshire Community Warden Service and has been borne out by the independent evaluation of the service by Holden McAllister Limited.
- 3.2** The BSSAC Household Survey carried out in October/November 2005 also provided clear evidence that the consistent visible and familiar patrolling presence of the wardens within the BSSAC Neighbourhoods was fundamental in providing reassurance to the communities.
- 3.3** Statistical information reveals that between the beginning of August 2004 and the end of June 2006 the wardens have dealt with a total of 7409 incidents across all the BSSAC Neighbourhoods during their current hours of duty. In the first six months of operations (August 2004 to January 2005) the number of incidents amounted to 2958, (an average of 493 incidents per month). In the six months between 1 January and 30 June 2006 the number of incidents amounted to 1338, (an average of 223 incidents per month).

- 3.4** The impact the wardens have had in helping to reduce the levels of Antisocial Behaviour, Fly-Tipping and Youth Disorder in each BSSAC Neighbourhood is set out in Table 1 of Appendix 1 which compares statistics for August 2004 to January 2005 with those of January to June 2006.
- 3.5** It is suggested that these figures clearly indicate that the Community Warden Service has built, and is continuing to build, strong meaningful relationships with their communities, thereby achieving the broad outcomes set by the BSSAC Programme.

4. INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

- 4.1** No direct comparison can be made between the number of incidents reported to the police from the BSSAC Neighbourhoods and the number of incidents dealt with by the wardens. The police provide 24 hour coverage per day whereas the Warden Service only provides coverage for 9 hours 45 minutes per day.
- 4.2** In addition the police provide the public with an emergency and non-emergency reporting service, where details of every (from the very minor to the most serious) report received are logged. Although the wardens also record every incident reported or discovered by them, the police incident log, by its very nature, provides a more comprehensive account of when occurrences take place within the BSSAC areas.
- 4.3** An analysis of the police incident log for the BSSAC Neighbourhoods between 1 April and 30 June 2006 reveals that the number of reported incidents begins to increase on a daily basis between 1600 and 1659 hours and peaks between 2200 and 2259 hours before gradually reducing to its lowest period of demand between 0500 and 0559 hours. See Table 2 of Appendix 1.
- 4.4** While it is true that the demand for police resources remains high between 2300 and 0259 hours the police records indicate that the majority of incidents are alcohol related, which require police attention rather than that of the community wardens.
- 4.5** The police analysis of the incidents reported between 2300 and 0259 hours for the period under review provides no evidence that youths in any of the BSSAC Neighbourhoods were altering the timings of their antisocial behaviour patterns so that these occurred after 2315 hours. Indeed the police incident log provides evidence that only 2% of the 510 incidents logged between 2300 and 0259 hours appeared to involve young persons.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The Council's Community Warden Service is funded from a Scottish Executive grant (BSSAC) under the programme to tackle antisocial behaviour. Any increase in warden hours would impact on the budget estimates provided to the Scottish Executive for the provision of this service.

6. LEGAL AUTHORITY / IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Any change in the Community Wardens current hours of duty would necessitate the Council re-negotiating the Wardens' Conditions of Service with Trade Unions and staff.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The Community Warden Service in East Ayrshire was established after lengthy consultation with Community Planning Partners. It would be appropriate to carry out further consultation with those partners prior to making any fundamental changes to the wardens operational procedures.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** As indicated above, the main cause of disturbance after 11.00pm tends to be related to alcohol consumption, rather than youth disorder. The police are trained to deal with this type of disturbance and are issued with the appropriate protective equipment. Any increase in warden hours beyond the existing would require a further Risk Assessment to be carried out.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1** The Community Wardens in East Ayrshire already work later than wardens in other parts of the country. There would not appear to be any evidence available to suggest that there is an increase in antisocial behaviour after the Community Wardens finish duty at 11.15pm.
- 9.2** Disorder after 11.00pm tends to be associated with alcohol consumption and the police currently deal with these issues, having been suitably trained.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1** It is recommended that members:
- (i) agree the continuation of the existing hours of duty for the provision of the warden service as outlined in Paragraph 2.7 above; and
 - (ii) otherwise note the terms of the report

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services
CMCA/JP/LA
18 August 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

East Ayrshire Council's submission to the Scottish Executive for Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities' Funding – Submitted August 2003.

For further information, please contact John Pilkington, Antisocial Behaviour Development Officer on 01563 576616.

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Appendix 1

Table 1 – Comparison of Warden Incidents in relation to Antisocial Behaviour, Fly-tipping and Youth Disorder for periods August 2004 to January 2005 and January 2006 to June 2006.

	Number of incidents – Aug 04 to Jan 05	Number of incidents – Jan 06 to June 06	Actual reduction achieved	% reduction achieved
Kilmarnock Shortlees				
Antisocial Behaviour	44	20	- 24	54.5%
Fly-tipping	42	15	- 27	64.3%
Youth Disorder	82	53	- 29	35.4%
Kilmarnock North West				
Antisocial Behaviour	37	12	- 25	67.5%
Fly-tipping	125	42	- 83	66.4%
Youth Disorder	131	84	- 47	35.8%
New Farm Loch				
Antisocial Behaviour	36	12	- 24	66.6%
Fly-tipping	136	29	- 107	78.6%
Youth Disorder	107	93	-14	13%
Auchinleck/Barshare				
Antisocial Behaviour	49	15	- 34	69.3%
Fly-tipping	77	11	- 66	85.7%
Youth Disorder	116	45	- 71	61.2%

Table 2 – Analysis of Police Incident Log between April and June 2006 showing times and volume of calls received.

24 Hour Clock	Shortlees	Kilmarnock North West	New Farm Loch	Auchinleck/ Barshare
0100 -0159	18	66	18	26
0200-0259	15	57	17	28
0300-0359	11	42	18	11
0400-0459	10	30	9	11
0500-0559	7	13	4	3
0600-0659	6	14	8	5
0700-0759	10	16	5	7
0800-0859	16	28	8	18
0900-0959	25	41	15	23
1000-1059	18	44	11	21
1100-1159	28	60	18	12
1200-1259	25	37	22	18
1300-1359	21	45	22	20
1400-1459	31	43	32	28
1500-1559	22	60	27	20
1600-1659	38	78	25	25
1700-1759	43	88	29	35
1800-1859	41	88	41	47
1900-1959	42	74	46	39
2000-2059	45	111	54	54
2100-2159	47	98	44	48
2200-2259	48	113	44	36
2300-2359	42	91	24	44
2400-0059	33	79	37	43
Totals	642	1416	578	622