

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 12 JUNE 2003

#### BUILDING STRONG, SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES

##### Report by Director of Community Services

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To bring the Scottish Executive consultation document 'Wardens and other Community Based Initiatives to Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour' to the attention of the Committee.
- 1.2 To seek approval for a response to the consultation contained within the document.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In the 2002 Spending Review, the Scottish Executive committed £30m in order to tackle anti – social behaviour, the poor quality of the environment and to help local people build strong, safe communities. £20m has been allocated to extend Community warden schemes more widely across Scotland and £10m for other initiatives to address anti-social behaviour. It is proposed by the Scottish Executive that East Ayrshire Council is allocated £525,000 over 2004/5 and 2005/6. £400,000 is allocated to Community Warden Schemes and £125,000 is for other initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- 2.2 The Executive is committed to putting communities at the heart of the regeneration process and states that local people must be in the driving seat in determining priorities and ways of addressing them. As a starting point a **neighbourhood compact** between the local community planning partnership and the community should be developed which clearly states,
  - The support and services that will be delivered by relevant agencies – the local authority, police, registered social landlords etc;
  - The standards of behaviour that are expected from local residents.

The funding available is intended to support the preparation of the neighbourhood compacts and to provide resources for a specific range of interventions that may be required to make them effective. These will include extending Community Warden Schemes and other community based initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour. On behalf of their Community Planning Partnerships, local authorities will be expected to come forward with proposals, which should be outcome – focussed, for how they will use their allocation.

2.3 **Community wardens** – described as the ‘eyes and ears’ of local communities, it is recognised that there are a range of Community Warden models which exist. Funding will be available to support schemes that focus on crime prevention, tackling anti – social behaviour and improving the environment. It is however stated that initiatives such as ‘Environmental Hit Squads’ would not be funded out of this allocation.

2.4 **Other Community Based Initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour** – It is envisaged by the Executive that resources are likely to be used most effectively for one or more of the following:

- dedicated community based teams with a clear focus on tackling anti-social behaviour ( youth work will not be acceptable unless it has a specific anti social behaviour focus);
- intensive intervention and supervision of anti – social families at the neighbourhood level;
- mediation and arbitration to resolve neighbourhood disputes;
- support for witnesses and victims and ‘hot lines’;
- acceptable behaviour contracts

Many of these initiatives are already being pursued by various departments within the Council.

2.5 The timetable between now and April 2004 is as follows.

- consultation period ends - *Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2003*
- Scottish Executive guidance issued - *June 2003*
- outline proposals to Scottish Executive - *August / September 2003* and comments back
- Full proposals submitted to Scottish Executive - *November 2003*
- Approval by Scottish Ministers - *by end January 2004*
- Initiatives commence operation - *April 2004*

2.6 Full copies of the consultation document are available at [www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/social/wcbi-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/social/wcbi-00.asp)

### 3. **CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 The Scottish Executive have invited views on all aspects of the document and have also highlighted 4 specific questions which they would particularly value comments on. A range of comments to the consultation document have been submitted from all Council Departments and the Community Planning Partners. These comments have been collated and included within proposed response to the Scottish Executive as detailed below.

## 3.2 General Comments

- 3.2.1 East Ayrshire Council and its Community Planning Partners broadly welcome the proposed initiatives however it would be necessary to give careful consideration to the detailed implementation of the scheme.
- 3.2.2 Neighbourhood Compact - Further clarification and detail is required. Is the Neighbourhood Compact another name for a 'Local Outcome Agreement'? If not, what is the difference and how will issues of duplication be addressed. The Neighbourhood Compact has the potential for added bureaucracy at the expense of service delivery. Neighbourhood Compacts may fit well with the concept of Neighbourhood Management and the development of Estate Plans.
- 3.2.3 Strategic Links - The proposals will not address anti-social behaviour alone. There needs to be a very clear approach which brings together prevention and 'treatment'. The proposal which seeks to ensure that anti-social frameworks are set within the context of community planning are endorsed. However, in seeking to complement community plans the logical conclusion is that in practice yet another plan or framework is produced. This runs contrary to the promise of rationalisation of plans.

The two proposals must complement many of the services, policies and initiatives that currently in place within local authorities.

- 3.2.4 Community Wardens - Community wardens must not be seen as a substitute for the Police.

There requires to be clarity in respect of implementing the warden scheme, particularly in relation to which agencies assume responsibility for selection, training and supervision of the wardens.

The overall remit of the community wardens requires to be clearly defined as does their level of responsibility, and discussions with Strathclyde Police are ongoing in this regard.

- 3.2.5 Concern is expressed regarding how the Initiative can be sustained after 2005/6.

## 3.3 Specific Consultation Questions

- 3.3.1 *Are the mandatory indicators we propose for measuring the impact of warden schemes and other anti-social behaviour initiatives the right ones?*

The proposed compulsory measures cannot stand in isolation to other measures and outcomes which are being monitored. There are currently a number of Scottish Executive initiatives which already have measures to reduce crime e.g. Youth Justice monies. The measures identified cannot be directly contributable to the current proposed initiative – it is a much more complex issue.

It should be noted that that “feeling safe” or “satisfaction with an area” can be affected by one serious incident or negative publicity.

### 3.3.2 *Are our proposals for the allocation of these resources appropriate?*

Whilst a more detailed explanation of how the resources are allocated would be welcomed, the proposals would appear acceptable. Concern is expressed however that the £125,000 over two years for other anti – social behaviour initiatives is insufficient to make any significant impact.

### 3.3.3 *Is it appropriate and feasible to use community warden schemes as part of community disposals and restorative justice approaches?*

Community Warden Schemes are a relatively new concept within Scotland. A view is that for the first two years of the project, it would be to early include community disposals and restorative justice as part of the warden initiative.

There is concern that proposals include reparation schemes similar to existing Community Services by Offender Schemes. What needs to be borne in mind is that community service is legislatively an “alternative to custody” disposal only available to Sheriff / High Courts. Introducing such schemes for anti-social behaviour / minor offending raised the tariff for individuals and / or dilutes the alternative to custody requirement. It may be better to consider how the proposal sits alongside existing Reparation / Mediation Schemes provided to young first time / minor offenders by SACRO.

### 3.3.4 *We propose that managers of warden schemes funded by the Executive should either be local authorities, the police, Registered Social Landlords or voluntary / community organisations, depending on the nature of the scheme. What are your views on the range and appropriateness of possible management agents?*

The range of possible management agents is appropriate although it should be noted that in other pilot areas, supervision of wardens is an issue unless they are linked into the existing management structures. It is, however, considered that the wardens are not regarded as non-uniform police personnel. Their remit should be much wider.

As stated earlier, the two proposals must complement many of the services, policies and initiatives that currently in place and are being delivered by local authorities.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 A proposed sum of £525,000 has been allocated to East Ayrshire Council over two financial years (2004/5 and 2005/6). £400,000 is for Community Warden Schemes and £125,000 for is for other initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour.

4.2 Whilst the Executive does not intend to insist on matched funding for warden schemes, local authorities and their Community Planning Partners will be encouraged to think innovatively about ways to maximise Executive funding.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Nil.

## **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Proposals must complement the Community Plan and related strategies. The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill approved by parliament in February 2003 also places a new duty on police and local authorities to jointly prepare an anti – social behaviour strategy.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

7.1 In view of the interest from Departments, the fact that the proposals are linked to existing initiatives, and the many ways which this initiative could be implemented, a corporate overview needs to be taken. It is suggested that if this is agreed, the same processes that were used to distribute the Quality of Life allocation from the Scottish Executive. This would involve bids being made to the Chief Executive initially and subsequent approval by the Policy and Resources Committee.

7.2 Finalised guidance will be issued in June 2003.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 It is recommended that:-

- i) the Committee approves the response to the consultation document and remits the Director of Community Services to forward this response to the Scottish Executive; and
- ii) the content of this report is noted.

William Stafford  
Director of Community Services

WS/AH

21<sup>st</sup> May 2003

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

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