

Agenda item 5

For Information

Interaction Partnership; Community Warden Scheme – Three month Review, May 2007

(report prepared by John Milligan)

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1. Purpose of paper

This paper provides an overview of the operation and performance of the Community Warden Scheme since its inception on 1 March 2007.

2. Background

The Community Warden Scheme forms an integral part of the Interaction Partnership's objectives for improving community safety in Pier and Golf Green wards. It is funded for the duration of the partnership (up until 31 March 2010) and has the overarching objective of "improving the quality of life for residents and reducing the incidence and fear of crime and disorder".

The key outcomes are to;

- **Reduce incidents of crime and disorder** through working with key enforcement agencies, such as the police, to report and ultimately tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.
- **Improve resident perceptions of personal safety and promote greater civic pride and responsibility** through providing a receptive, responsive and highly visible uniformed presence in the scheme's catchment areas. The scheme will also seek to raise local awareness on the importance of civic pride and responsibility and contribute to the partnership's mandatory outcome of improving resident satisfaction with their quality of life.
- **Maintain the quality of local environments** through working with key council departments, such as Environmental Services, to quickly and effectively respond to key concerns, such as fly tipping, graffiti and abandoned vehicles. This will play a key part in raising resident satisfaction with the warden scheme and the provision of council services as a whole.
- **Actively promote community development** through working with residents and other stakeholders in the generation of community projects and activities.

The present composition of the Community Warden Team is comprised of a Scheme Supervisor and 2 members of staff with the supervisor reporting directly to the Interaction Partnership Manager. However, events over the initial 3 months of the scheme has prompted a rethink about the structure of the team (see below)

3. Key aspects of the scheme to date

o Publicity

The Scheme was officially launched on 28 February at a ceremony at Clacton Police Station. It has continued to attract significant local media interest and has featured in the press and radio on a number of occasions.

o Staff matters

At the end of the March, the Warden Supervisor was released from her post. Consequently, the scheme has been delivered by the 2 wardens, who are currently reporting directly to the Neighbourhood Manager. However, the capacity of the team has recently been further reduced through the likely long term absence of one of the wardens through sickness. The staff structure is now being reviewed (see below)

o Operational matters

i) Patrolling remit

The current patrolling schedule is comprised of;

Golf Green ward –approximately 3 days a week

Pier ward – approximately 2 days a week

The scheme has an 85% patrolling target (time spent out walking the streets out of the hours of operation) which has been undermined by the present staffing situation.

ii) Day to day issues

Whilst the wardens have certain legal powers of enforcement, the experience to date has shown that this has generally not been necessary. Similarly, it had been agreed with the police at the outset not to use enforcement (through issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for offences such as littering, dog fouling and cycling on footpaths) in the early stages of the scheme in order for it to be accepted by the general public. Therefore, the approach has been focused on trying to change peoples' behaviour through advice and guidance rather than legal action. The experience to date has shown that the most prevalent day to day issues are;

- Helping vulnerable residents
- Fly-tipping
- Liaising with residents over local concerns, such as the alleged perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, and relaying such intelligence onto the police
- Stray dogs
- Abandoned caravans

A 3 month scheme performance monitoring table is detailed in Appendix A.

iii) Relationship with the Police

The scheme's operational standards and codes of conduct are shaped by a protocol established with Essex Police. To date, there has been a good working relationship with the Police, though there is a clear preference by both parties that the two services are very distinct in the views and perceptions of the general public. However, there are a number of areas where communication needs to be improved and this will be addressed in a review meeting to be held with the Police on the 11 June.

iv) Relationship with Environmental Services

Environmental Services are an integral partner in helping to create a positive local perception of the scheme by responding quickly to environmental problems. The wardens have developed a good working relationship with the Planning and Environmental Health Officer in starting to tackle blighted and problematic properties. Environmental problems present considerable challenges to the scheme and there have been instances where the team have had to try and resolve complex issues, such as fly tipping on private land and abandoned caravans. The key difficulty is managing local expectations, whereby the public demand swift and decisive action and do not necessarily recognise the constraints around the scope and capacity to deal with such problems in the immediacy.

v) Community development/relations

The scheme has been well received in the two areas and is generally regarded as a welcome and re-assuring presence. It is also beginning to gain the trust and confidence of local people in providing useful intelligence on the causes of local problems. It is felt that they feel more comfortable relaying such information to the wardens rather than the police.

The scheme has been well represented at the range of community safety fora across the two wards. These include, the newly formed Neighbourhood Action Panels set up by the Police to facilitate community and agency discussion on crime and safety issues across the Tendring district, and Neighbourhood Watch meetings.

It is anticipated that once the scheme becomes more established and the staffing capacity gets back to its original level, the wardens will play a prominent part in the development of community improvement projects, particularly focused on supporting the elderly and youth engagement initiatives.

4. Conclusion and way forward

Whilst the scheme has got off to a relatively sound but low key start, there are 3 principal areas for improvement over the next 3 months;

i) Re-structuring the warden team

The recent staffing issues have given cause to review the current dynamics in the whole of the Interaction Partnership management team (which the

wardens are part of). It is felt that the present warden team structure, whereby one manager supervises two members of staff, is too intensive and undermines the level of active patrolling. Consequently, a new structure has been devised which will maximise the number of personnel patrolling the streets. It is proposed that;

- The role of the partnership co-ordinator be developed to include a management responsibility for the wardens. This post would be office based but would involve attendance at appropriate community safety/environmental management meetings.
- A third warden be recruited (who would increase the staffing presence out on patrol)

The proposed re-structure is currently being assessed by Human Resources.

ii) Strengthening the working relationship with the Police

The scheme will also be formally reviewed with the police to assess its operation against the guidelines set out in the Joint Protocol document. The experience to date has shown that the principal area for improvement is the systems for communication over local intelligence matters.

In addition, as the scheme has become more established and public expectation has been raised, there is a need to re-examine the overall approach in delivery with particular regard to the possible introduction of fixed penalty notices to counter recalcitrant issues in known problem areas, such as dog fouling and littering.

iii) Strengthening the working relationship with key TDC service providers

Similarly, there is also a need to improve the synergy between the scheme and a number of council departments, such as Environmental Services and Social Services. This will be focused on three areas;

- Improving the knowledge among the wardens of the duties, obligations and methods of operation of the two services
- Assessing the scope for shaping certain services so they best respond to local conditions and priorities (in keeping with the whole ethos of neighbourhood management)

Appendix A

COMMUNITY WARDEN SCHEME PERFORMANCE TO DATE

INCIDENTS	2007					
	March	April	May	June	July	August
Patrol time %	81%	82%	89%	93%	97%	
Training Hours	2%	0	0	0	0	
Meeting Time	17%	7%	5%	6%	3%	
No. of Unlicensed Vehicles	0	0	0	2	2	
No. of Unlicensed Vehicles reported within 24hrs	0	0	0	2	2	
No. of Unlicensed Vehicles removed within 5days	0	0	0	2	1	
No. of Abandoned Vehicles	1	0	1	1		
No. of Abandoned Vehicles reported within 24hrs	1	0	1	0	1	
No. of Abandoned Vehicles removed within 5days	0	0	1	1	1	
Fly Tipping	1	2	1	1		
Fly Tipping Reported within 24 Hrs	1	2	1	1		
Fly Tipping Removed within 5 days	0	0	no	1		
Graffiti Standard	3	0	5	3		
Reported with in 12 hrs	3	0	0	3		
Graffiti Standard Removed	0	0	5	NO		
Obscene Graffiti	0	0	0	0		
Reported with in 4 hrs	0	0	0	0		
Obscene Graffiti removed	0	0	0	0		
Dog Fouling enforcement	0	0	0	0		
Dog Fouling Education	0	0	1	7	1	
Stray / dead animals	0	0	6	8	4	
Littering Enforcement	0	0	0	0		
Littering Education	588*	1	27	25	1	
Cycling Enforcement	0	0	0	0		
Cycling Education	4	1	4	43	7	
Alcohol/tobacco Confiscations	1	0	1	1	1	
Alcohol/tobacco Education	0	0	6	7		
CID61/Police Intelligence / assisting police	2	7	6	12	13	
Distribution of Crime Prevention materials/advice	0	1	4	14	2	
Vulnerable Visits	2	8	15	32	6	
Community Improvements Identified	0	0	4	4	2	
Community Improvements implemented	0	0	4	1	1	
Assistance to visitors	0	0	10	67	36	
Stakeholder Meetings attended	3	1	2	5	3	
Community Events attended	1	1	1	5	1	
Reporting residents concerns to relevant agencies	7	16	10	19	11	

* in schools