

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## REPORT TO: Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee

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**Date of Meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011  
**Report of:** Tony Potts  
**Subject/Title:** Community Wardens

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out fundamental changes to the operational capacity, of the community warden service, identifying cost savings and seeking new opportunities, for improvement of the service.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 To comment on the report and make recommendations

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 Inform members of the changes to the service to allow sufficient opportunity to make comments, and recommendations to take the service forward

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All

### **6.0 Policy Implications including**

- 6.1 N/A

### **7.0 Financial Implications for Transition**

- 7.1 None

### **8.0 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 As Appendix A

### **9.0 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 None, subject to the comments of the scrutiny committee.

## **10.0 Risk Management**

- 10.1 The reduction in service, re prioritisation and focus of the role will mean some functions will not be able to be delivered.

## **11.0 Background and Options**

- 11.1 At the Sustainable Scrutiny Committee of the 6<sup>th</sup> of January a report was considered by members in relation to work carried out by a task and finish group regarding the Community Warden service.
- 11.2 Following the presentation of this report, some key areas were identified that required further clarification and I was tasked to look at these and provide a verbal update to this committee at its meeting, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2011
- 11.3 The key areas identified being:
- Undertake a review of and provide further details to members of the costs for the service
  - Review the role and deployment, following recommendations contained within the report of possible duplication of roles
  - Show how performance is measured, and provide value for money.
  - A deployment proposal outlining the vision for the service, including a revised management structure
  - A written report would be completed for its next meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2011.
- 11.4 Cost of Service
- Following the announcement of the cuts in funding to local authorities, it was agreed as part of cost saving efficiencies to reduce the number of wardens from the original structure of twelve to eight. By doing this, it has realised a saving of 157K from the original budgetary provision.
- Appendix A Shows a breakdown of costs and the agreed budgetary savings for this financial year.
- 11.5 The service has been operating with a team of 8 for some time now, due to other corporate financial constraints the authority was facing and by revising the role, and prioritising functions, it is felt that rather than reducing the service, the proposals contained within the report will demonstrate improved efficiency and enhance the role that is currently being delivered.

In relation to transport costs, these will be further reduced as vehicle leases expire, as the new structure requires fewer vehicles.

#### 11.6 Structure

In order to deliver an effective service throughout Cheshire East, the wardens will be split into teams of 4, a north and south team. One team will be based at Macclesfield, and will cover down to Congleton; the other will be based at Crewe and will cover up to Macclesfield. However there will be flexibility to use all 8 in an area if required if it is felt necessary to deliver a specific outcome, or tackle a particularly challenging issue. Contained within each team, will be a team leader; however they will undertake an operational role, as well as providing supervision.

11.7 It is intended to locate the Macclesfield wardens at the police station. This will allow for further integration of the service, make provision for more “Joined up Working” and reduce duplication of effort. It will also realise further savings on accommodation, and on costs.

11.8 One concern raised by members was that they felt that due to the diverse nature of Cheshire East, two dog wardens were not sufficient to cover the area. To ensure capacity to address this, as well as the two current dog wardens, other members of the team can also undertake this function, ensuring that stray dogs can be dealt with.

#### 11.9 Functions and Role

A review is currently being undertaken in relation to the duties of the warden service and the expectations of our partners to ensure that we can focus upon our key objectives and priorities. The service can be split into 2 main areas of work, these being Statutory and Non Statutory duties.

Statutory duties are;

- Environmental Protection Act
- Clean Safer Neighbourhoods
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Fly Tipping and Litter Enforcement
- Gypsy/ Traveller Enforcement and Welfare
- Parking Enforcement
- A Board Enforcement
- Dog Control
- ASB, particularly around public open space and council owned premises.

The warden service also provides the enforcement arm to our colleagues in Streetscape, and Environmental Health, dealing with incidents of fly tipping and litter issues.

- 11.10 Non statutory duties include the promotion of community safety issues in schools, to which members felt that this should be carried out by our colleagues from the Police and Fire service to prevent a duplication of effects.
- 11.11 The wardens have also have the same powers as a PCSO having recently received these from Cheshire police, and have played an integral part in managing road closures at special events, such as parades, and also providing security at elections.
- 11.12 By revising the role of the service, it is felt that priorities around the cleaner safer neighbourhood's agenda including those I have mentioned above can be tackled more effectively. However in doing this it must be understood that some functions that have been undertaken, and are an expectation from the public, and members will not be able to continue. As most of the environmental crimes take place during the day time and early evenings, then clearly this will need to be reflected in working patterns, and priorities. It is envisaged that a warden would attend the Local LAP meetings, and be able to take away actions, working in partnership to deliver outcomes

#### 11.13 Performance Management

In order to effectively monitor performance and measure outcomes, the service logs all calls on a computer data base. An officer is then assigned to deal with this and takes ownership through to completion. To ensure an effective audit trail each incident is assigned its own incident number.

- 11.14 At the last Scrutiny meeting I gave a verbal update on performance in relation to abandoned vehicles stray dogs etc.

Below are some statistics over the last eight months

○ Abandoned Vehicles	137
○ Vehicles Removed	20
○ Untaxed Vehicles	48
○ ASB Incidents	134
○ Stray Dogs	500
○ Collected	287
○ Re homed	230
○ Fixed Penalty Notices	60
○ Prosecutions	8

- 11.15 Since presenting a verbal update on performance at the last scrutiny, I have established that a further 20 penalty notices have been issued and a further 4 cases are being referred for prosecution.
- 11.16 In relation to providing both a reactive and pro active approach to incidents of anti social behaviour, these will be directed to the Police to deal with. This will allow the service to then concentrate on a more task driven focus, towards tackling the environmental issues, members have requested.
- 11.17 One area that could be an issue is that of public owned space and amenities, such as parks and play areas, traditionally issues in these areas have been addressed by the wardens, and I have some concerns by adopting this approach, considering the reduction in police, resources, that areas such as these to which the public regularly complain about will be overlooked or not responded to.
- 11.18 Future Working
- Once the new structures and working practises are in place and have had time to bed in. It is the intention for the council to explore the possibility to adopt powers from the DVLA to deal with untaxed vehicles; this will allow the council to recoup all the costs themselves. From a community safety perspective, if a vehicle is untaxed, then the likelihood is that it will also have no insurance, or MOT and is likely to be/or has been involved in crime.
- 11.19 Currently the wardens issue a form called a CLE26 to an untaxed vehicle, which is then sent to the DVLA, and they then take the appropriate action to obtain the amounts owed. The PCSO is not authorised to do this, they can only issue a Warning notice to a vehicle. We will work with the Police to address this, to ensure time is not wasted.
- 11.20 It is also the intention to work more closely with the Civil Enforcement Officers, and once the legal issues are resolve look towards “Shared Powers” of enforcement

## **12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues**

12.1 N/A

## **13.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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# Appendix A

	<b>2010-11 Budget</b>	<b>2011-12 Proposed Structure</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	Community Safety Wardens	Community Safety Wardens
FTE	12	8
Direct Employee Expenses	449,618	292,749
Indirect expenses	0	0
Premises	23,200	23,200
Transport	30,850	30,850
Supplies and Services	71,785	71,785
Third Party Payments	5,044	5,044
Customer and Client Receipts	-29,918	-29,918
Grants, Reimb & Contributions	-4,570	-4,570
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>546,009</b>	<b>389,140</b>

The potential saving achieved from the proposed structure is £157K

Note:

(1) The 2010-11 Budget reflects 12 full time Community Safety Warden posts:  
however there are currently 4 vacant posts.

(2) The 2011-12 proposed structure reflects 8 full time Community Safety Wardens.  
This also includes 1.5 FTE Manager.