



# **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

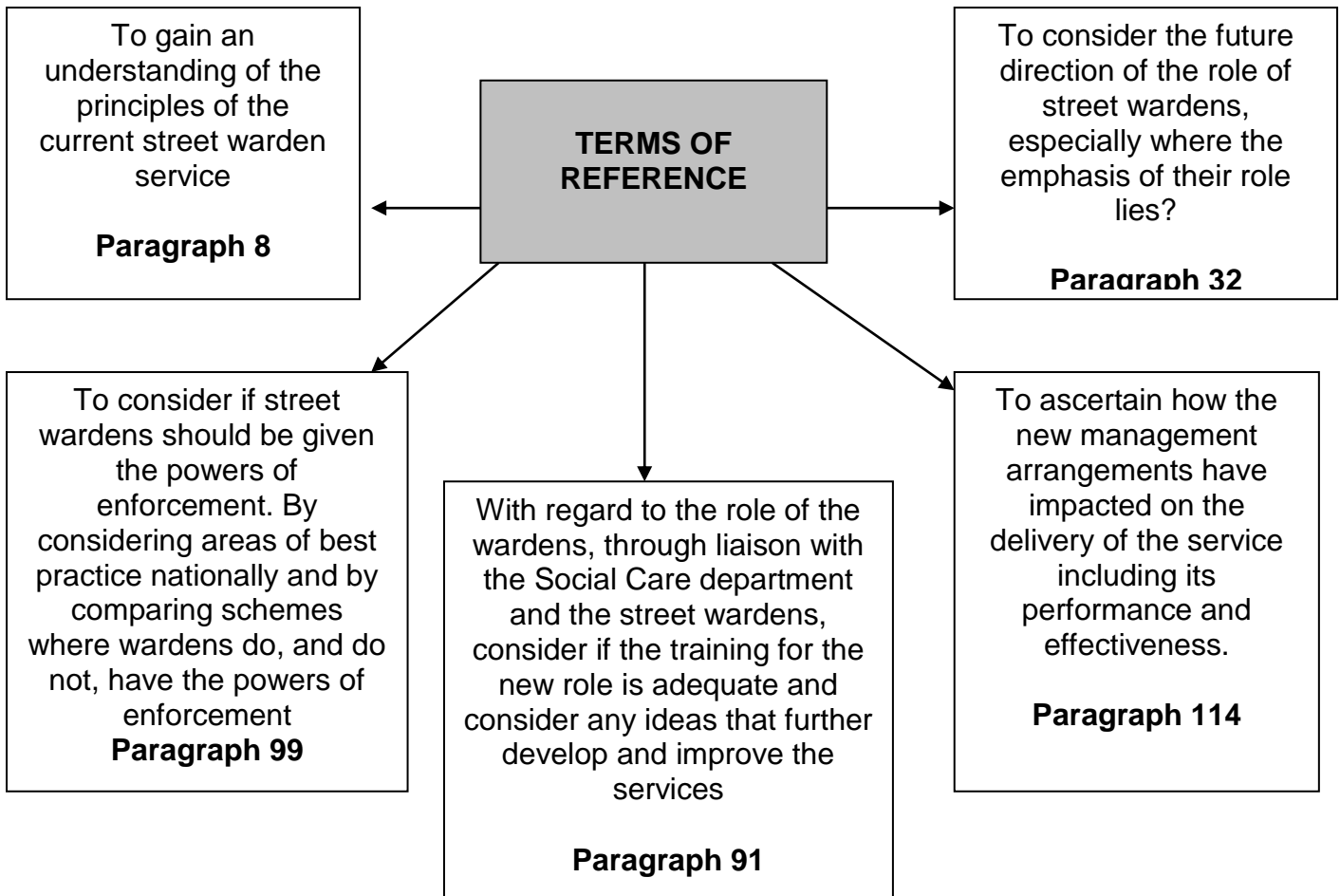
**4 February 2008**

**FINAL REPORT**  
**January 2008**

**A REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPING ROLE  
OF THE STREET WARDEN SERVICE**

## AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to undertake a review of the developing role of the street warden service following the recent change in management arrangements.

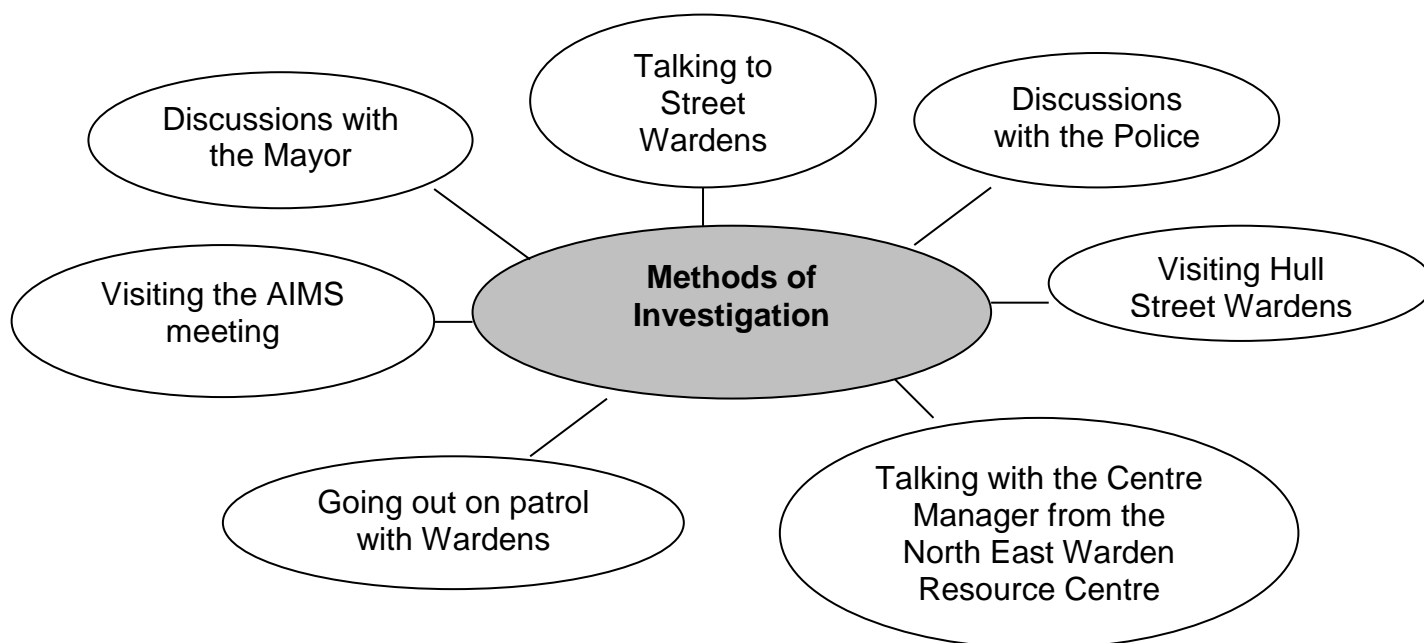


## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the findings of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel's review of Street Wardens.
2. Members of the Panel met formally between 8 August 2007 and 27 November 2007 to discuss/receive evidence relating to this investigation and a detailed record of the topics discussed at those meetings are available from the Committee Management System (COMMIS), accessible via the Council's website.

## METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

3. The panel completed this review through the following methods of investigation



4. The report has been compiled on the basis of their evidence and other background information listed at the end of the report.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

5. The membership of the Panel was as detailed below:

Councillors C Rooney (Chair), Councillor P Porley (Vice-Chair), Councillors Dunne, Dryden, Jones, Purvis, Rostron and Whatley Co-opted Member – Elizabeth Briggs

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

6. Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel undertook a review of the street warden service in 2006. That review focused on the scheme's operational arrangements, its funding and financial sustainability. This review does not go into the detail about the history of the service but focuses more on where the service is now and its future direction. Although it is important for a complete picture to set out briefly the details of the origins of the service.
7. Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) was secured for the warden service in 2001. The basis of the scheme at that time was that the introduction of the wardens would help to release some of the police's time because the wardens would be able to deal with some of the 'minor' issues. Alongside this aim was the desire to help the town's regeneration by preventing incidents of anti social behaviour such as vandalism and graffiti. Initial funding provided a manager and 16 wardens covering five wards. Subsequent funding in 2003 increased the service to 40 wardens and additional funding meant that the warden service would be extended to provide the scheme across the entire town.

## **THE PANEL'S FINDINGS**

### **THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CURRENT STREET WARDEN SERVICE**

8. In order to begin the review the panel received a 'setting the scene' presentation from the Head of Modernisation and Performance in the Social Care Department, the Council's department that took over the responsibility for the management of the street warden service.
9. The current role of the street warden was described as one by which the wardens undertook visible patrols of areas within Middlesbrough, with the following main purposes:
  - Reduce crime and the fear of crime
  - Reduce and resolving environmental disturbance (such as fly-tipping, graffiti, littering)
  - Engage young people in diversionary activities
  - Engage with the wider community
10. The introduction of the engagement element to the wardens' role represented a major shift in the operation of the street warden service. This was introduced when the management of the service was transferred to the social care department. In order to engage with the wider community, wardens developed a number of initiatives including linking with a number of local groups including for example luncheon clubs, schools and residents groups.
11. The panel learnt that on a day to day basis the wardens got involved with a number of issues which included the following:
  - Deal with episodes of anti-social behaviour
  - Gather evidence (in relation to crime and passing on the information to the relevant agencies)
  - Report environmental disturbance

- Report to relevant agencies such as trading standards and the fire brigade for example
- Act as an expert witness by giving evidence in court
- Divert and educating perpetrators of anti-social behaviour
- Act as an information point to help members of the public

On average a street warden walks 8 miles per day

### Engagement Work

12. The panel learnt how wardens had become involved in a number of initiatives with young people across the town. Wardens had begun to interact with young people and work with them in order to develop activities which would not only provide them with something to do but in some cases detract some young people away from anti social behaviour. Street wardens were also involved in awareness raising and went into schools to talk to young people about the work of the wardens. Although it was noted that because this element of the scheme was in its infancy that the long-term benefits could not yet be seen. It was hoped that early interaction with the street wardens would have an impact on young people's behaviour in the future.
13. Members were given an example of where engagement with young people had a positive outcome

One area in Middlesbrough had a problem with young people that wanted to play loud music on an evening. The street wardens came up with an idea and used money from their budget to hire some music decks. They then got the young people together and enabled them to get involved in DJ'ing. Although it was a short-term solution it showed young people that there was an alternative.

It is hoped that where some activities had a beneficial effect that work would be carried out to mainstream their costs

14. Members were concerned that there was a risk that some of the initiatives that had taken place could be viewed by some as rewarding bad behaviour. However it was noted that there were also a number of initiatives that had been developed for young people and not just for those young people who had been trouble or were at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour. Working with young people in schools gave the wardens the opportunity to discuss all young people's needs and develop ideas and schemes accordingly.
15. Street wardens are regularly briefed on a range of issues that could help members of the public with general enquiries they may have about the council and as such act as an information point. For example in Gresham, wardens are briefed on the housing issues and could give advice to residents about where they could go for further information.

16. Members were interested in the percentage of time that wardens were involved in their engagement activities, however it was noted that the wardens' primary role was to deal with anti social behaviour and very low-level crime.

**It was emphasised wardens do not deal with**

- **Criminal activity**
- **Removing alcohol**
- **Confiscating motorbikes and other nuisance items**
- **Taking names (although wardens knowledge of the area meant they generally knew who people were)**
- **Issuing any fixed penalty fines**
- **Attending incidents after 10pm (the service stops operating at 10pm)**
- **Detaining people against their will**

17. The wardens have often been described as the "eyes and ears" of the Council. With that in mind the panel were interested in the concept of wardens being able to issue fixed penalty fines. The panel learnt that it was a decision taken by the service area when it took over the management of the wardens to maintain the wardens' role and to not pursue the route of issuing wardens with enforcement powers. It was emphasised that the wardens were not employed to deal with crime and that they had no powers of confiscation. They were able however to complete a Section 59 form which gave the police information and evidence in order for them to be able to confiscate items, for example motorbikes that were being driven on public land and were making a nuisance.

18. When wardens were out on patrol and they came across underage drinkers, they had the ability to move the young people on, although they could not confiscate the alcohol. They were however able to contact the relevant agencies to report the incident or to contact the police and ask them to deal with the issue.

**Links with Other Agencies**

19. As previously noted wardens were tasked with dealing with the very low-level crime/anti social behaviour to enable the police to be able to concentrate on higher-level crime. The wardens had strong links with a number of other agencies that help them to carry out their role.
20. Wardens attend STEM (Stronger Together in East Middlesbrough) meetings. This is a collaborative venture aimed at improving the lives of those people living in East Middlesbrough and the wardens attend the meetings to share information.
21. Wardens work with trading standards in joint operations and information sharing to help identify any shops that might be selling alcohol to underage individuals for example.
22. Wardens assist the work of the fire brigade by keeping an eye on empty property (which can often be targeted by vandals and set alight) and where there are small fires, such as in wheelie bins. The wardens, following a risk assessment of the situation, put the fires out which removes the need for the fire brigade to attend.

23. Members considered that if wardens, as part of their patrol, were keeping an eye on empty properties that may be subject to vandalism that the owners of those properties should make a contribution to the street warden service. It was noted that the Social Care department was in negotiation with a number of organisations on this subject.
24. Wardens also worked with the Council's Area Care teams to report environmental problems, such as graffiti, litter, tipping etc.

### **Street Wardens Links to the AIM meeting**

25. The wardens worked with the police in a number of areas including the AIM (Active Intelligence Mapping) meeting attended by a number of agencies including the police and wardens. The meetings were held in order to identify a range of intelligence on crime and anti social behaviour, the agencies then analyse the information in a collaborative way and target their resources accordingly.
26. A number of panel members attended an AIM meeting as part of the review to see how the meetings were carried out and to see the benefit of a co-ordinated information sharing approach. Members saw first hand how the incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime were identified from evidence collated on a two-weekly basis and, where appropriate, how warden resources were prioritised to ensure warden patrols visited 'hot-spot' areas. Wardens also belonged to problem solving groups, of which there are 4 area groups across Middlesbrough. The groups identify issues that have not been resolved and work together with the relevant agencies to consider a tactical plan to solve those problems.

### **Structure of the Warden Service**

27. The current structure of the service is as follows

#### **Staff**

1 Manager  
 3 Shift Managers (2 on duty at any given time)  
 1 Engagement and Activities Co-ordinator  
 13 'home based' areas – each with permanent warden presence  
 39 wardens (26 on duty at any given time – ie 13 areas with 2 wardens per area)  
 Dedicated Town Centre wardens – total of 7 of which 5 are on duty at any given time  
 Responsive warden resource – 12 wardens (8 on duty at any given time)

#### **Operational Hours**

Home Based and Responsive Wardens  
 2.00pm – 10.00pm 7 days per week

#### Town Centre Wardens

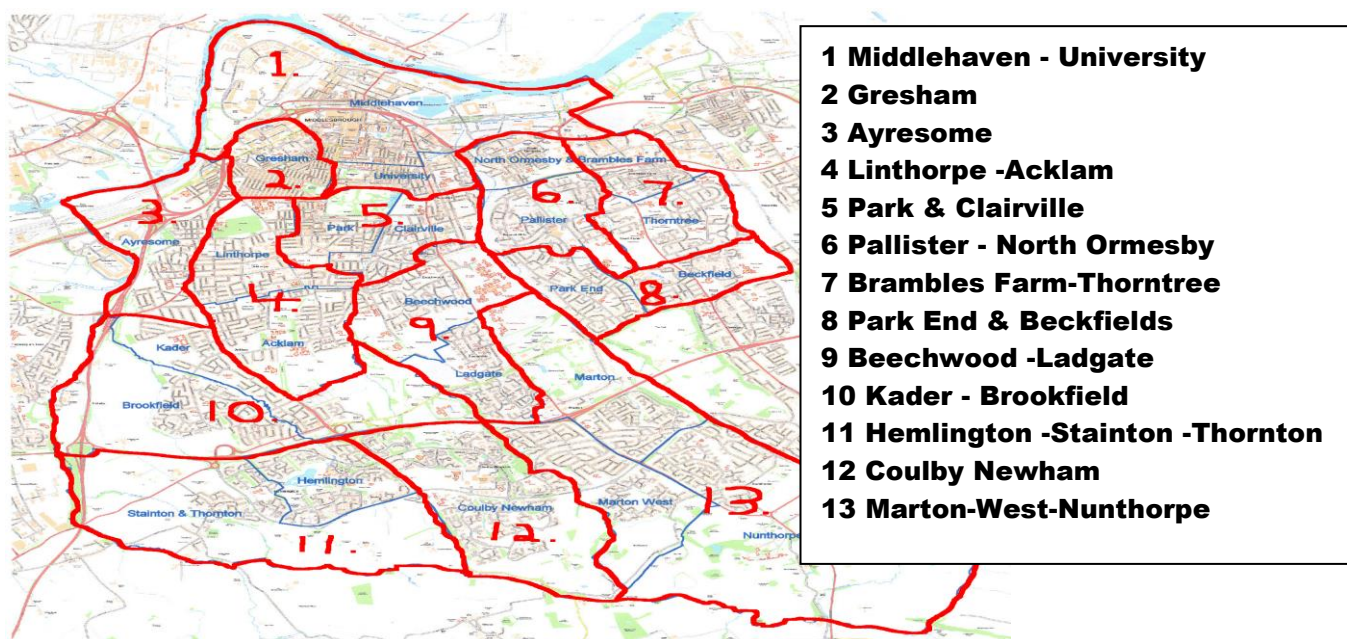
11.00am – 7.00pm 7 days a week

28. 'Home based' wardens begin their shift at 13.30pm in order for them to report to base and receive an intelligence briefing, they finish before 10pm to enable them to return to the base. Each area has 2 wardens on duty per shift; the town centre has

5 operating, including 1 that is dedicated to the centre square area. The rationale behind the town centre wardens was based on the Mayor's analogy of the town centre being the 'engine room' of Middlesbrough and the wardens presence in the town centre ensured that residents and visitors to the town centre felt safe thus encouraging visitors back to the town.

29. The size and location of the areas that the street wardens covered were based on residential/ commercial numbers and the frequency of incidents and not just on the size of the area or ward based boundaries. It was noted that the number of wardens employed and deployed around the town was the optimum level based on the finances currently available.

### Areas of Operation



### Activity Data

30. The panel received information in August 2007 on the number of activities the street wardens had been involved with.

Since July 2006 street wardens had

- undertaken 4,736 patrols
- dealt with 13,200 incidents
- managed 168 engagement/diversionary activities
- involved 7,515 Boro Buzz people in these events
- attended 105 community meetings
- referred 13,200 incidents to other agencies

### Information for Councillors about Street Wardens

31. In response to the number of 'one-stop shop' enquiries from Councillors about the warden service an IT based system was developed that enabled councillors to see statistics on street warden deployment. The wardens in each area also provided a



brief written report for each month which detailed the activities that they have been involved in.

### **CONSIDER THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ROLE OF STREET WARDENS, ESPECIALLY WHERE THE EMPHASIS OF THEIR ROLE LIES**

32. The panel was interested in the current role of the wardens and how it had developed since the warden service was first introduced and more importantly how that role had developed since the change in management arrangements. The panel were concerned about the growing responsibilities that the wardens were being given and they wanted to establish whether or not the role and the remit of the wardens duties was becoming too wide and therefore too onerous for the wardens to be able deliver.
33. The panel invited the Mayor to attend a meeting in order to discuss his aspirations for the street warden service, the services future direction and in particular what he considered to be the impact of the changing and developing role of the wardens.

#### **Discussions with the Mayor**

34. The Mayor outlined that the main aim of the warden service, when it was first introduced was to assist the police with their workload. The wardens would be involved in dealing with minor low-level crime issues such as anti social behaviour, graffiti, fly tipping etc. and thus freeing up time from the police and enabling police officers to be able to tackle more serious crime.
35. The Mayor thought of wardens as public reassurance officers, with citizens' powers of arrest and powers of intervention. He described the focus of the service being about reassurance, providing another presence on the streets and it was not about the wardens issuing fines etc. It was considered that the wardens' powers were sufficient and the powers to issue fixed penalty notices were not considered necessary or appropriate.
36. As the wardens service began to take off the wardens started to experience difficulties mainly due to the increasing number of incidents they were asked to deal with. Members of the public were contacting the police and being advised to contact the wardens instead. The Mayor highlighted that a number of changes were being introduced to address that issue, because the Council did not wish to promote a situation whereby the police no longer considered low level incidents as part of their job.
37. The Mayor considered that the lack of police response to low levels of anti social behaviour was due to the way that the police performance was measured and that anti social behaviour was not the police's top priority.
38. As the warden service had developed the Mayor has introduced his youth agenda. The Mayor recognised that the young people in the town were an important factor in the future success of the town. The work that the wardens undertook in engaging with young people was seen as instrumental in progressing with that youth agenda, and it began with the wardens starting to build a rapport with the young people. That strategy was considered to be more effective than an enforcement role because the young people would begin to trust the wardens and importantly work with them to develop activities to participate in during their free time.

39. The Mayor considered that the wardens had an important role to play in the youth agenda and that they must work with the police, teachers, parents and the public etc. New and innovative ways of tackling anti social behaviour needed to be developed.
40. The Mayor stated that the warden service must stay a council run service with a council culture. It was not part of the police culture and he didn't want the wardens to be a pro-active service. He was of the firm view that wardens shouldn't have enforcement powers, because they are not the police. Wardens however could still have an impact without having enforcement powers, for example they can talk to people to ask them to pick up their litter, ask them to move their cars and discuss the implications with young people of their behaviour when they are hanging around.

### **Street Warden User Survey**

41. The panel thought it was useful to consider the results to establish information about the role of the wardens and the public's perception of the scheme.
42. The Street Warden User Survey was undertaken in June 2007 by the Social Care department. The survey was developed after input on the content of the questions was given by the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel in 2006.
43. The survey incorporated 28 questions that the department stated covered all aspects of the services and the environment in which it operated. The survey sample size was 350 individuals from all ward areas of Middlesbrough. A total of 71 questionnaires were completed and returned, which was a response rate of approximately 20%.
44. The service area highlighted the following number of positive indicators which were as follows:
  - Approximately one-third of respondents felt the service had improved over the last 12 months
  - Operational times for the service reflected the community's requirements
  - Street wardens were seen regularly in their operational areas

### **Survey Action Plan**

45. The survey also highlighted a number of areas of improvement. An action plan had been designed in order to address these issues. These actions were:
  - To clarify public understanding of the role and remit of the service in respect to dealing with crime, under-age drinking, motor bike nuisance and environmental issues
  - To develop customer care in the form of feedback for anticipated response times
46. The survey highlighted the need to ensure that the service was branded correctly and that the wardens' uniforms needed to be made more recognisable. A new uniform was to be rolled out to all street wardens by March 2008.

47. The wardens were also going to attend more community events and Community Councils in order to ensure that the public had a greater understanding of the wardens' role and the type of incidents the street wardens dealt with.
48. The action plan also noted that wardens would be given a greater clarity to their role and be trained to be ambassadors of the Council and the street warden service. The aim was to give street wardens a greater understanding of their role.
49. The survey recognised that the public would find feedback from the service useful and the social care department wanted to embed a customer care ethos throughout the warden service. It was proposed that everybody who used the service would be given a call or a visit to give them the opportunity to report their feedback.
50. It was also noted that the street wardens currently took a turn to answer calls to the service, which was not an ideal use of the wardens' time. The department was looking into employing trained call-centre staff to deal with telephone calls so wardens could be released from that duty.
51. In the debate that followed the presentation, Members were concerned about the validity of the survey. The survey had been sent to 350 people of whom only 71 replied. The panel didn't think that this was representative of the people of Middlesbrough and the survey did not break down responses by people's ages, which the panel thought would be useful, especially in ascertaining the views of young people.
52. There was a debate about the survey being distributed to people who have contacted the wardens' service, the panel considered this but then concluded that the survey should be given to a wide range of people. The panel thought that if the survey was just given to people who had been in contact with the wardens that it might just present a one-sided view. There are residents who are aware of the wardens and see the wardens out and about in their area but have no reason to contact them.
53. The survey asked a number of questions regarding the types of issues that the wardens should be involved in. Questions 1 to 11 asked the following:

How appropriate is it for street wardens to deal with

- Anti Social Behaviour
- Move gangs of youths
- Deal with noise complaints
- Report litter and fly tipping problems
- Report vandalism and graffiti
- Provide public information
- Divert young people to different activities
- Deal with under age drinking
- Deal with motorbike nuisance
- Deal with crime
- Gather evidence against criminals and people who cause anti social behaviour

54. In all cases the survey's respondents all thought that it was very appropriate that wardens should deal with the above issues. The panel thought that by listing the options that it gave the public a high expectation of the role of the wardens and that when asked, people were unlikely to say that they didn't want the above issues dealt with by wardens. A more appropriate method of questioning might have asked respondents to rank in order of priority the issues that they thought the wardens should be dealing with. This might then have given a direction to the priority for wardens' duties.
55. The panel recognised the difficulties of analysing the results of any survey into this area. For example: an area that has a higher number of incidents of anti-social behaviour doesn't necessarily mean that the wardens are any less effective. Similarly it was difficult to say that areas that had no examples of people contacting the wardens meant that there were no incidents or that the wardens were more effective.
56. The panel wanted to know if there had been any tangible results of the benefits of a warden service, although unfortunately little national or local research exists on this subject at present.

### **Public Perception**

57. The Social Care department was aware that there was a need to educate the public and external agencies about the exact role of the street wardens. The evidence suggested that there was quite a gap between what people thought the wardens did and what they were actually employed to do. The public could, quite rightly, get frustrated when they called the wardens out for what was clearly a police matter and in the absence of a police response and if the incident was outside the wardens' remit they could feel that their issue was not being dealt with. Many people assumed that if the police couldn't attend then the wardens were the natural back up which should not be the case in criminal matters. Wardens at the control centre spent a lot of time discussing the wardens' role with callers in order to explain why they are unable to dispatch wardens to certain incidents that were outside of the wardens' remit.
58. Some of the ways that the social care department planned to tackle the issue included a plan to analyse calls to the wardens. It would involve the examination of how many of the calls that wardens had received that have been handed to the police because they are of a criminal nature that only the police are charged to deal with.
59. It has also been noted through anecdotal evidence to Councillors and in discussions with wardens that the public have commented that they don't see enough of their wardens. Measures to tackle this have been implemented, wardens have a number of areas that they must check during their shift and which they make a note of when they visited them and this information is collected at the warden control centre.

### **Role of Wardens**

60. The social care department planned to simplify the job description given to wardens. The panel had the perception that wardens' job descriptions seemed to be ever expanding and the panel welcomed this simplification of the role in order to help wardens establish what they do and where the boundaries of their duties lay.

61. Although it was pointed out that, that the wardens' role was probably one of the widest roles of any job in the Council. Wardens also don't know what they will encounter on a daily basis and that they would always try to help out with an incident in the first instance, calling for police back up where necessary. Discussions had been held with wardens about their standard operating procedures so that they knew the boundaries they are working within. There was always a supervisor present for each shift who acted as a point of contact for the wardens on the street if they had any queries about their involvement in certain issues.
62. It was noted that there was also the issue of historical perceptions about the role of wardens not only from the public but from the police as well. To some degree the wardens were victims of their own success, whatever the situation they were faced with they would always try to help. An example was given of a time when it was not appropriate for wardens to attend. There had been an issue where there was a person who had been high on drugs and who making a nuisance outside a property, the police were called but the street wardens were then deployed in their place. The wardens then had to call the police for them to come out and deal with the problem because the situation had escalated.
63. The panel were concerned that there was no strategic information on the type of issues that the wardens deal with, for example their work could range from dealing with a young person making a nuisance kicking a ball to more serious anti social behaviour. The panel felt that information of this nature should be recorded.
64. The Social Care department is also trying to gather evidence on the number of incidents that are being referred to wardens by the police and how often the police respond. The panel were keen to pursue this and invited a representative from Cleveland Police to the panel meeting in order to hear their views on the subject (see paragraph 85).
65. The panel was also interested to learn about how the wardens interacted with people from 'hard to reach' groups. The panel learnt that initially there was no strategy, however a post had been specifically developed to employ someone who would take forward the issue to help, not only the vulnerable people who are not aware of the wardens but the perpetrators of crime and anti social behaviour also.
66. The new enhanced role of the wardens involved them working with the community and developing 'diversionary' activities for people who may otherwise be involved in crime and anti social behaviour. The panel was concerned that the new role was stretching the work of the wardens and that they might not be adequately equipped and trained for that role. Although the panel were encouraged by the joined up working with the youth service, for example, Members were concerned about this element of wardens' work, they wanted to see that services were working together and the new role of wardens wasn't just 'replacing good youth work.'
67. The panel was told that that if, in an ideal world, crime levels fell to zero that there would still be a role for the wardens in community development, such as identifying abandoned cars, helping asylum seekers settle and developing activities for young people for example. This was because their role had developed to more than just being a presence on the streets.

## **DISCUSSIONS WITH WARDENS**

68. The panel considered that for any review of the warden service that it was imperative to talk to wardens to get their perspective. Members had the opportunity to consult wardens in two ways, firstly members went out with wardens whilst they were out on patrol to gain an understanding of the nature of the job and to discuss their duties and their views whilst experiencing the role of the wardens first hand. Secondly wardens were invited to talk to Members at a panel meeting. The wardens' views from both the patrols and the meetings have been collated and are summarised in the following paragraphs.

### **Wardens views of their Role**

69. The panel began by finding out what the wardens considered to be the main focus of their role. The wardens explained that they dealt with small scale, low level anti social behaviour (ASB), to reassure and help people and act as a bridge between them and other organisations that could help residents. The wardens considered that they were not enforcement officers but that they were a presence on the streets that provided reassurance to the public, acted as a deterrent and as a source of information to assist the Council's enforcement officers. The wardens also outlined that they were involved in community engagement and they thought that it was an important role that could have an impact on improving the community and people's lives.
70. Wardens were becoming more involved in engaging with the community they patrolled. For example wardens said they attended Community Council meetings in order to hear issues from residents, they visited schools and were involved in organising community activities.
71. The wardens highlighted that they have been charged with working with young people in the community. Wardens had become increasingly more involved in organising a number of activities for young people in order to divert them away from anti social behaviour and to also provide something for young people to do.

### **Changes in Management Arrangements**

72. The issue of single person patrols was highlighted as an area of concern for some of the wardens who spoke to Members. Street wardens had been briefed about the issue of the possible introduction of single warden patrols. Members thought that whilst this might be acceptable in some parts of Middlesbrough there was a general feeling that this should be avoided. There was also reluctance to this idea amongst the wardens. The method of working whereby wardens do a 4 days on and 4 days off shift pattern had been suggested to wardens if the single person patrols were to be introduced. Currently wardens work 4 days on and 2 off however some of the wardens that were employed before the management change said the change had a detrimental difference to their work life balance and that they preferred the 4 days on and 4 days off shift pattern.
73. Wardens agreed that they had the feeling that generally things had improved since the management changes. One of the ways was that the wardens felt that their views were taken into account more.
74. Wardens had enjoyed engaging with the community and attending Community Councils and meeting children in schools. However they did feel torn in some cases

because they were aware that time spent in schools or meetings or even training, meant that they were not out on the streets patrolling and they recognised that getting this balance right was key to their success.

75. Another issue that was highlighted was that different managers could give different instructions that could lead to an inconsistent and confusing approach. It was noted that one manager concentrated on anti social behaviour, another on community engagement and another was somewhere in between.

### **Powers of Enforcement**

76. The panel wanted to find out what the street wardens thought about the introduction of any powers of enforcement for wardens. Opinion was mixed on this issue, some wardens thought that it would be useful for them to have the power to take people's names and to be able to confiscate alcohol. Other wardens were satisfied about not having enforcement powers and that they are happy to work closely with the officers in the Council who do have enforcement powers by providing them with intelligence and evidence.
77. For some wardens they thought that if they were given enforcement powers that it would jeopardise the rapport that they have been able to build up with the public. There was a concern that trying to issue fines would lead to confrontation, rather than the current practice of trying to negotiate a solution. They considered that the introduction of enforcement powers would present a very different image of wardens than the one they wanted to portray.

### **Support and Training**

78. Wardens have received training in a number of areas. They mentioned that they had requested training on diversity and language issues. The issue for wardens was one of timing, training had been condensed into 30-minute slots to accommodate wardens shift patterns, and wardens were concerned that when they were training they were not on patrol. The panel considered that it was unfair to ask wardens to undertake training in their own time. Wardens confirmed that they were able to bring up any training needs in their appraisals.
79. Members questioned the wardens about their feeling of safety and whether or not they thought that stab vests would be appropriate. The wardens told the panel that they did not want to see the introduction of stab vests. Wardens saw their role as very much one of working with people in the community and developing a rapport with people was very important to them. The issuing of stab vest would portray a very different image and they thought it would be viewed as a barrier to those good relations and an opportunity for people to think that they can 'have a go' at wardens. Currently wardens are trained in 'conflict avoidance' and saw their best weapon and their best defence as their mouths and the power of negotiation.

### **Public Perception**

80. The wardens said they got a lot of calls from people wanting them to deal with issues that are clearly a police matter, when the role of the wardens is explained many people were frustrated and expected wardens to have more power. Shift managers and wardens spend time explaining to people about the role; also the wardens and the team were carrying out their own publicity work in order to reinforce their role. Wardens went to community councils and organised events to

publicise their role. Wardens told the panel members that all too often many people were not clear about the exact nature of the wardens' role.

81. The wardens felt that the public expected a lot from them, in that their image had developed into one where the public thinks that they are the first line of response. Where criminal activity is taking place the first contact should be with the police, however people think that if they contact the wardens that they will respond quicker than the police, again reinforcing the over expectation that the wardens will deal with everything.

### **Improving and Developing the Service**

82. When the wardens were asked about this, their main comments were that they wanted to ensure that they got more police support. Wardens worked closely with the police however what can be considered as a minor issue to the police can be a major issue for affected residents and a police response can often be needed but police priorities mean that they can't attend straight away.
83. The wardens felt that if there was an area where the service could fail it would be at the point where the warden had no powers of arrest and the police were unable to attend. It was highlighted that in some situations the perpetrators of ASB were very aware that when backup from the police was called for, that the police were unlikely to attend and that the wardens had no power to detain them
84. The wardens felt that the right message about what they were able to deal with should be relayed to the public. The wardens agreed that there needed to be more publicity that clarified their role to avoid confusion.

### **Discussions with the Police**

85. A representative from the police was invited to the panel following the concerns the panel members had following their discussions with the wardens regarding the response to their requests for police assistance. In response to the panel's question regarding the prioritisation of calls, the panel learnt that all emergency calls to the police were prioritised depending on the nature of the incident. For example a higher priority was assigned if the suspect was still at the scene. Wardens calls were treated the same as a member of the public's calls in that all calls were given a priority code based on the information received and the nature of the incident.

### **Joint Working**

86. The panel learnt that generally, from the police's point of view, that the police and the street wardens worked very well together. There were a few 'niggles' in that the Neighbourhood Policing boundaries and the street warden boundaries were not identical and that Neighbourhood Policing and Street Warden initiatives weren't established at the same time. However the wardens did exist before the Neighbourhood Policing initiative and discussions about the boundaries were held with the police. It was important to remember that the warden service, whilst working closely with the police, wasn't a mechanism for helping the police deliver their strategy. The police suggested that a way of dealing with this could be the introduction of more joint briefings between the police and the wardens that could bridge the gap between the two organisations.
87. The panel considered that there may be a danger of the police directing the wardens and that they would not have any influence in joint meetings, however the



panel were told that the meetings would be held to enable the police to gain a different perspective and to gather important intelligence from the wardens which might otherwise be lost.

88. The panel also learnt that the police considered that the use of joint patrols might also be helpful to both the police and wardens. Whilst not advocating regular joint patrols, the police thought that the idea would be helpful in order that the wardens and the police could learn about how each other operates. The police said that they would also find it useful if they could work with wardens on their school visits to ensure that they manage the process and ensure the right people are going at the right time and conveying the same message.
89. The panel considered the idea of joint patrols, however they would want to ensure that any joint patrols were not a regular feature and that they didn't give the public the perception the wardens were there to support the police.
90. The police had also collected some data about the number of calls they received from wardens. There was on average 30-40 calls per month where wardens had been required to contact the police. There was no data put forward on the number of calls that the police had responded to. There were on average 50 events per month that had been passed on to wardens. The police did note that wardens had been turning up to incidents that were not within their remit and should be dealt with by the police. However it was noted that wardens could often be at an incident that escalates and a police presence was then needed. It was not the norm where wardens were attending incidents that should be for the police to deal with. The police were keen to review this area to ensure that they and the wardens were attending the jobs that were appropriate to them.

**WITH REGARD TO THE ROLE OF STREET WARDENS, CONSIDER IF THE TRAINING FOR THE NEW ROLE IS ADEQUATE AND CONSIDER ANY IDEAS THAT COULD FURTHER DEVELOP AND IMPROVE THE SERVICE**

91. The panel learnt that all new wardens undertake a two-week training programme that prepares them to deal with the issues they will face and includes dealing with people in aggressive situations.
92. The Executive Member for Social Care noted that the training for wardens had to be correct in order to equip them for their role. They are a preventative service and the 'eyes and ears' of the Council, and that episodes of anti social behaviour should be dealt with by the police.

**North East Wardens Resource Centre**

93. In order to find out more about the training that is available to wardens, the panel invited the Centre Manager from the North East Warden Resource Centre (NEWRC) to attend a panel meeting.
94. She began by outlining the 3 main strands of warden activity as defined by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.
  1. Crime deterrent and reassurance – providing a uniformed presence on the streets, providing intelligence to the police and dealing with minor anti-social behaviour

2. Environmental watchdog – checking for graffiti, abandoned cars and fly-tipping
3. Community development catalyst – providing diversionary activities and sign-posting to agencies

95. The resource centres were established in each Government Office region to provide support to wardens, and their remit had been extended recently to include support to other neighbourhood initiatives. Their services included the provision of a wide range of training opportunities, providing seminars, conferences, study visits and evaluation and they acted as a conduit for information and support networks.
96. The NEWRC had developed a core training package that they delivered and which was accredited at level 2 by NCFE (a national awarding body). Training was heavily subsidised and included topics such as working with young people, boundaries and roles, partnership working, conflict management, child protection and customer care.
97. There were further training opportunities for experienced wardens such as refresher training courses, manager training, NVQ level 2 in Community Warden Service and City & Guilds in Conflict Management. The organisation also offered different opportunities to enhance service development, such as the warden quality standard, good practice awards, sponsored wardens (eg through Help the Aged), a regional network and the opportunity to visit other schemes to find best practice.

**Middlesbrough’s Wardens involvement in the Training Centre**

98. Middlesbrough’s Street Warden service received the quality standard however this expired in June 2006 and was not renewed. In 2006 the wardens won a Diversity Award in the Regional Award Scheme, for their work with asylum seekers. Shift managers had trained as trainers, 13 wardens had undertaken core training in the last year and 23 wardens had undertaken first aid training.

**TO CONSIDER IF STREET WARDENS SHOULD BE GIVEN THE POWERS OF ENFORCEMENT? BY CONSIDERING AREAS OF BEST PRACTICE NATIONALLY AND BY COMPARING SCHEMES WHERE WARDENS DO, AND DO NOT, HAVE THE POWERS OF ENFORCEMENT.**

99. Information on the number of schemes across the country was difficult to locate. The NEWRC confirmed that unfortunately there had been no data gathered which listed the schemes across the country and the number of wardens contained within each scheme.
100. Across the north east there were about 18 schemes, the smallest of which has only 2 wardens and all but are hosted by the local authority. Nearly all of the schemes within the north east had enforcement powers however this is not reflected across the country.
101. When discussing the issue of enforcement powers with the North East Warden Resource Centre a number of advantages and disadvantages were outlined.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Reduce anti social behaviour	Increased bureaucracy

Enhanced credibility and respect	Through training and updating necessary
Law-abiding citizens are pleased to see action taken	Maintaining the community's trust
Related educational opportunities	'Fine' income is insignificant

102. The National Evaluation of the Street Wardens Programme published by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in August 2006 noted that the lack of prescription for the street warden programme across the country had resulted in different schemes adopting a different range of interventions. This had included different combinations and types of patrolling, reporting, diversionary activities, direct action, enforcing and community facilitation. It concluded that the effectiveness of the activities depended on the problems of the area where the wardens were located and the resources available to the scheme.
103. The panel, in considering best practice in other schemes, sought advice on which schemes to visit from the North East Warden Resource Centre. The panel then visited a scheme without enforcement powers in Hull.

### **Visit to Hull**

104. Community Wardens in Hull have never had enforcement powers and from the managers' perspective there was no desire to change this. The visit highlighted how the wardens in Hull worked very closely with the Council's enforcement officers on issues regarding fly posting, noise, litter etc. and both the management and the wardens said that the close working relationship with the enforcement officers meant that enforcement powers for wardens was not necessary. For further details of the visit to Hull please refer to appendix 1.
105. Members were keen to visit the scheme in Redcar & Cleveland where wardens have some enforcement powers, unfortunately a meeting could not be arranged within the timescale of the review.

### **Enforcement Arrangements Currently Undertaken by the Council**

106. In order to consider whether or not wardens should be given enforcement powers the panel considered that it was important to receive information on the current enforcement activities that were being undertaken by the Council. There was a perception that wardens should have the power to deal with a number of enforcement issues but the Council already undertakes a wide variety of enforcement functions contained within the criminal law. They range from parking, parenting and truancy to building and planning controls. The bulk of the criminal legislation enforced by the Council fell within the remit of environmental health and trading standards.
107. Fixed penalty notices (FPN) were permitted under legislation and provided for 21 different offences ranging from dog control, litter, fly tipping and distribution of free printed matter. FPN required the same level of proof as a criminal prosecution and failure to comply with paying the fine meant that the case proceeded to court. It was rarely the case that an enforcement officer saw a person committing an offence and it was more often the case that a significant degree of investigation was needed and wardens could help in providing evidence in those cases.

108. It was reported that there were about 20 environmental prosecutions each year, 45 fixed penalty notices were issued, of which 37 were paid, a repayment rate of 82%, beating the Government's target of 75%.

### **Should wardens have enforcement powers?**

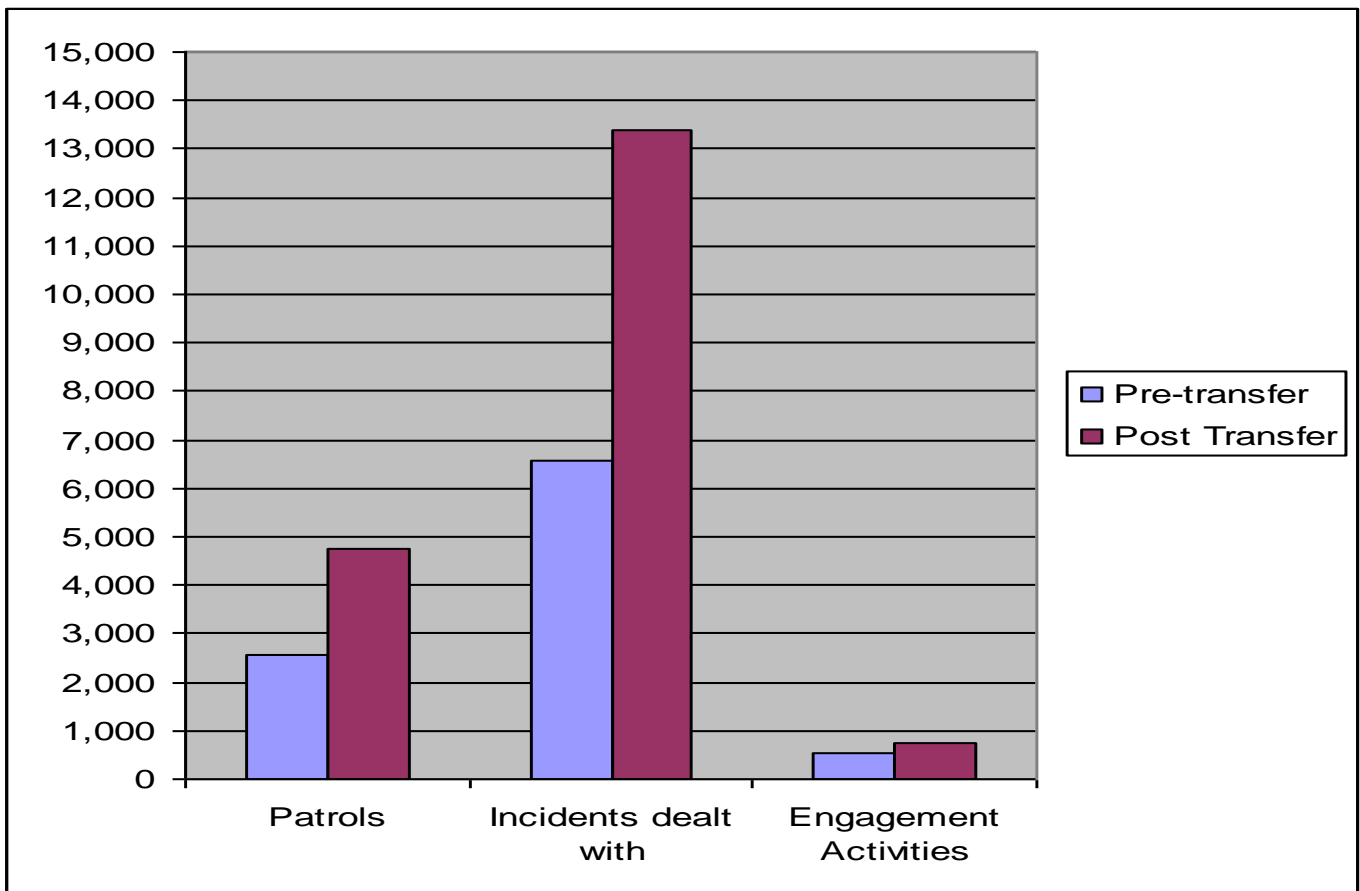
109. The panel felt that as a general rule the more chance that people had of being caught, the less likely they would be to offend. Enforcement must fit within a strategy to include education and embarrassment. Ways of improving the Council's enforcement levels would be to engage more people in enforcement and make the existing staff more efficient.
110. The panel was told that giving wardens enforcement powers in the early days would have jeopardised their establishment within communities. The panel learnt that wardens had been trained in evidence collection and intelligence and evidence gathering and that the evidence from wardens had been crucial to the early 'crack house' closures in Middlesbrough. Wardens were often called as witnesses in high profile cases. Their unique benefit was that the public felt more comfortable passing information to the wardens than the police, but at the same time it was important that the wardens did not provide a function that was properly that of the police.
111. The panel were asked to consider a number of issues if wardens were to be given enforcement powers including
- warden skill base and training needs
  - the range of enforcement functions to be included within the wardens powers
  - the effect on their current 'core function' which would be a shift in emphasis away from their role as a presence on the streets
  - whether or not enforcement powers would be a 'bolt-on' function or should it be part of the overall ethos of a service, with support from within that service
  - the ability of a non regulatory service to manage adequately the complexities of the enforcement process
  - the capacity of other services to cope with an increase in throughput
112. A solution that was proposed was a renewed liaison between 'full time' enforcement and the street warden service, supported by additional training, which could provide a significant additional amount of intelligence and evidence gathering capability. In that way wardens could be encouraged to report issues to enforcement staff, they would be the first line responders for many issues and encourage the public to act in a similar way.
113. The issue could be one of more joint working between the wardens and the enforcement officers, including a better flow of information which was more detailed in order for existing enforcement officers to be able to issue penalties to the public.

### **TO ASCERTAIN HOW THE NEW MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS HAVE IMPACTED ON THE DELIVERY OF THE SERVICE INCLUDING ITS PERFORMANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS**

114. The panel asked the Head of Modernisation and Performance to provide details on how the new management arrangements had impacted on the delivery of the service and in particular what local indicators and commitments had been made in the departmental and street warden business plans.

115. The panel received the following information

Activity	Pre-transfer (12 months)	Post-transfer	Variation
Patrols	2,555	4,768	+86%
Incidents dealt with	6,588	13,398	+103%
Engagement Activities	544	760	+40%



116. The number of wardens is the same now as it was pre transfer but the new shift pattern has resulted in wardens now working 37 hours per week instead of 30 hours per week. Leading to more patrols and more incidents that have been dealt with. The level of engagement activities had also risen since the transfer.
117. The social services department wanted to increase the time that the street wardens operated. Currently they operate from 2pm until 10pm and it would help in some areas if this was later, however it was thought that an earlier start would also be useful in order to assist with wardens' visits to schools and the community which could take place on a morning. Neighbourhood police start earlier and finish earlier and it was considered that it might be a good idea to link those timings.
118. The panel also learnt that there had been a change in ethos in the management of the wardens. An appraisal system has been introduced for the wardens. More notice is taken about where incidents are occurring and there are 5 high visible locations that wardens must visit in each shift. The social care department were working to get the correct balance for the wardens' role.
119. The social care department also wanted to work with the police on the idea of developing a police patrol car whose responsibility would be to respond to warden calls. The department recognised the problems regarding the grey area of low-level incidents and who should attend. In response to this the department were undertaking some analysis on the number of incidents that the police have been asked to deal with.

## **THE PANEL'S CONCLUSIONS**

120. Based on evidence given throughout the investigation the Panel concluded that:
  - a) Members had a clearer picture about the role of wardens and how that role had developed. It was recognised that the role was split between providing a presence on the streets to reassure the public, to look out for and report incidents of anti social behaviour/environmental issues and to act as a resource to the community.
  - b) Members recognised that the wardens were a victim of their own success and that it would always be difficult to meet the public's expectations. The message that is portrayed to the public must be one that reinforces their community role and that wardens are not a back up service to the police.
  - c) The panel acknowledged the importance of the joint working relationships that wardens were involved in with partner agencies and how this benefited the service.
  - d) The panel recognised the wardens concerns that the police sometimes could not respond to the warden's calls quickly enough and the police's concerns that the wardens sometimes got caught up in incidents that are outside of their remit.
  - e) The panel considered that the warden service was developing in the right direction but noted the concerns that were raised about Managers getting the

balance right and conveying the same messages to wardens about the nature of their role.

- f) The panel was also concerned about the health and safety implications of the possible introduction of single warden patrols.
- g) The panel welcomed the survey that had been undertaken to gauge public opinion as an important part of evaluating the street warden service. However the panel had concerns about its validity due to the low response rate.
- h) The panel supported the wardens role as instigators and catalysts for developing community activities, although the panel had a concern that where a need was identified efforts should be made to try and mainstream successful projects. The panel was also keen to ensure that the projects that were developed by wardens were not viewed as rewarding bad behaviour and that the schemes did not duplicate youth work being provided elsewhere.
- i) The panel considered that the training needs of the wardens were being met through the appraisal system although they had concerns about wardens having to undergo training during their shifts. The panel were also concerned about the provision of the future training needs of wardens should the funding for the North East Warden Resource Centre end.
- j) When all the evidence was considered, Members felt that it was not necessary for wardens to have enforcement powers mainly because this would change the public's perceptions of the service and because the council has a successful enforcement team which already issued penalty notices.
- k) The panel noted with interest the increase in the number of patrols, incidents dealt with and engagement activity following the change in management arrangements. Whilst that could be seen as a positive change, the panel thought that an evaluation of the service would be a useful exercise. Although the panel also noted that there was little national information or evaluation about the different warden schemes across the Country.
- l) The panel was also concerned that the quality standard that had been received through the North East Warden Resource Centre had expired in 2006 and had not been renewed.

## **THE PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

121. That the Social Care and Adult Services Panel recommends to the Executive:

- a) That the warden service should be re-launched to reinforce the responsibilities of their new role to the public, the re-launch should also include adding the information to the wardens' section on the Council's website.
- b) That the police and the Council continue to work closely together and consider the options of:
  - i) The introduction of joint briefing meetings

- ii) Wardens joining police on patrols and vice versa (not as a regular event but for each organisation to gain an insight into the respective roles).
- c) That a process is developed to clearly identify street wardens' roles and to ensure that there is a consistency of approach in management styles. A record of wardens' activities should be introduced in order to monitor wardens' workload to ensure that their role is balanced accordingly.
- d) That the introduction of single person patrols should not be implemented.
- e) That the production of a yearly public survey should continue but should be developed to enable the results to provide a more thorough evaluation of the service. That Officers report back to the panel on how they are going to undertake the survey and how it will join up with the Place Survey due to be undertaken.
- f) That the wardens continue to work with the youth service to ensure that there is no duplication of services.
- g) Wardens should be given the opportunity to attend training sessions that are outside of their shift so as not to impact on service provision. Consideration should also be given to the future training needs of wardens to ensure that their developing needs can be provided for.
- h) Consideration should be given to establishing improved ways of working between wardens and enforcement officers to ensure effective liaison between the two so that as many incidents as possible are reported and dealt with.
- i) The panel endorses the current management arrangements and does not want to advocate the introduction of enforcement powers for wardens.
- j) That Officers investigate the possibility of seeking an external audit of the Street Warden Service in order to assess the standard of the service.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

122. The Panel is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

- The Mayor, Ray Mallon
- Jan Brunton, Executive Member for Social Care, Middlesbrough Council
- Tony Parkinson, Head of Modernisation and Performance, Middlesbrough Council
- Dave Brierley, Warden Manager, Middlesbrough Council Middlesbrough Council Street Wardens
- Sian Bunn, Centre Manager – North East Warden Resource Centre
- Barbara Onley, Centre Manager, Neighbourhood Training and Resource Centre, Hull Community Warden Service



- Paul Henderson, Operations Manager, Hull Community Warden Service
- Terry Quinn, Area Warden Manager (Older People Lead)
- Geoff Rollin Area Warden Manager (Environment Lead)
- The wardens at the Hull Community Warden Service
- Dave Smith, Neighbourhood Safety Inspector, Cleveland Police
- Ed Chicken, Head of Community Protection, Middlesbrough Council

**COUNCILLOR CHARLES ROONEY  
CHAIR OF THE SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

December 2007

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

In addition to the evidence presented to the panel at their meetings, the following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:

- (a) Minutes of the Social Care and Adult Services Panel, 8 August, 5 September, 25 September, 30 October and 27 November
- (b) Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel – Final Report, Once Step at a Time – A Scrutiny Investigation into the Street Warden Service, April 2006
- (c) National Evaluation of the Street Wardens Programme, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Department for Communities and Local Government, August 2006

**NOTES FROM THE VISIT TO HULL COMMUNITY WARDEN SERVICE****INTRODUCTION**

1. The scheme in Hull is very different to the one in Middlesbrough in that it is run by a Trust. The visit was designed, not to compare the Council's scheme with that in Hull, but as a fact finding exercise. The visit was to consider areas of good practice by looking at a scheme that had a lot of community involvement and also to find out some of the lessons that they had learnt in developing the scheme.

**DETAILS OF THE VISIT**

2. Councillors Rooney and Purvis attended the visit to the Hull Community Warden Service on 25 October 2007. Members spent the day with Barbara Onley, Centre Manager, Neighbourhood Training and Resource Centre, Paul Henderson, Operations Manager, Hull Community Warden Service, Terry Quinn, Area Warden Manager (Older People Lead) and Geoff Rollin Area Warden Manager (Environment Lead)
3. Hull is a city of about 300,000 people and the Labour controlled council has 7 areas and 27 wards. The Hull Community Warden Service started in 2001 and was the first service of its type in the country and as such there was no template for its operation. The service has developed through consultation with the residents who, when consulted, said they were concerned about environmental issues, social inclusion and the fear of crime.
4. Briefly, the scheme is operated by the Goodwin Development Trust, with funding from the Neighbourhood Development Fund, the Council, Hull City Council, the Government and the European Union. There are 150 wardens based in the community and who operate in small teams in various locations across the city. Each team has 6 wardens who are based from a local warden 'shop' in 10 out of the 13 areas.
5. Community Wardens in Hull have no enforcement powers and there was no desire to change this. Wardens work very closely with the Council's enforcement officers on issues regarding fly posting, noise, litter etc. and both the management and the wardens said that the close working relationship with the enforcement officers meant that enforcement powers for wardens was not necessary.
6. Members had the opportunity to visit 3 of the scheme's shops and speak with the wardens about a number of their key projects. The shops are run much like drop in centres; residents from the estates that they serve can come in and speak to the warden on duty about any issues for example debt advice and housing issues. In addition to this resource, wardens still patrol the areas, dealing with similar incidents to Middlesbrough's street wardens. They also report incidents of fly tipping, graffiti etc to the Council.
7. Panel members were interested in whether or not any work had been undertaken in Hull to evaluate the success of their scheme. It was outlined that it could be difficult to measure the value of intervention. One example of evaluation in Hull included

work with Community Centres. Targets were set for getting young people involved. The young people developed their own behaviour strategy. Other ways are independent evaluation of the schemes, asking residents to evaluate the scheme or undertaking a cost benefit analysis.

8. There had also been an exercise to establish the added value of wardens collecting discarded needles. Which they thought had saved the council's environment department money.
9. There was a concern that the wardens were simply duplicating or even replacing the work of outreach workers. However in Hull there were no outreach workers so they were not replacing any existing Council services.
10. In Hull the scheme was described as one which provides a complimentary service to work alongside the Council is currently delivering. It was described by those running the scheme as 'the eyes and ears of the Council' and the first line of help for a lot of people. It was not the intention of the service to take over any exiting Council services, in fact it was suggested that the wardens were making the Council busier by signposting people to Council Services. Although Members did not speak to any Council officers on this issue.

#### **Ideas and Examples of Good Practice**

11. In their signposting role, wardens developed welcome packs available to new residents in a number of different languages.
12. The service recognised the need for a diverse work force and had a Kurdish, an African and a Gambian warden.
13. There is a junior warden scheme for 8 to 13 year olds which teaches them about being a good citizen and environmental issues.
14. The service would like to develop an apprenticeship scheme for NEETS (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training).
15. Informing Residents – residents meetings were held, in the area based team boundaries, with the wardens, the police, the ASBO teams and they are asked to discuss their three priorities for their area. A structured way forward is agreed with all the parties and the results are then fed back to the residents. There was a feeling that the residents appreciated that all the various organisations working together.
16. Wardens have been trained to locate and safely remove discarded needles as part of their patrols. This saves officers from the Council having to respond to ad hoc calls.
17. In Hull Councillors have small area budgets, if a warden manager has any funding issues they could go to their local Councillor and put together a case for additional funding.