

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting5th July 2007

1. Title of Item/Report

First Annual Review of Neighbourhood Enforcement Service

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report which provided feedback on the work of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Service in the 2006/07 year. The report detailed the activities undertaken by the Service during the year. The Council's Neighbourhood Enforcement Service (NES) was established in April 2006, replacing the former Community Warden Service across eight of the nine 'patches' covered by Community Wardens up until March 2006 (the exception being Ingleby Barwick, where the Community Warden Service was delivered by the Borough Council but funded by the Parish Council: the Parish Council subsequently decided to change to a Neighbourhood Enforcement Service, from April 2007).

The main changes in the service delivered were:-

(a) a much wider range of enforcement powers, with all officers accredited by the Chief Constable with a range of police powers, new Local Authority powers under the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005, and an agency agreement with the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), among others;

(b) a change from an approach based on 'report it' (i.e. where many issues were reported by Community Wardens for further action by other Council colleagues or partner agencies) to an approach based on 'sort it' (i.e. direct enforcement action taken by Neighbourhood Enforcement staff wherever possible);

(c) discontinuation of the 'patch based' approach in which Community Wardens patrolled a particular Ward or pair of Wards, and which covered about half of the Wards, to a more flexible Boroughwide coverage, while maintaining a focus on the more challenging parts of the Borough; and

a reduction to a smaller number of staff (from 32 to 22 – 16 Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers, four Seniors, and two Enforcement

Support Officers) with higher skill levels.

Part of the context for this decision was the anticipated increase in numbers of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), who would fill the gap in terms of high visibility reassurance patrols. In the event, this increase had taken longer to come through than expected but as it was imminent, there would be a significant increase in uniformed presence across the Borough, as the number of PCSOs increases from 24 to 55 in 2007/08.

The twin aims of the new service were:-

- (a) to tackle and reduce 'environmental crime' (including littering, fly tipping, fly posting, graffiti, dog fouling, etc.); and
- (b) to reduce crime and disorder/improve community safety, with a particular focus on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and deliberate fires

A summary of the funding of the service in 2007/08 was set out within the report.

The report concluded that the first year of the new service had been one of significant achievement and continuing service development. The Service provided the Council with its own capacity to respond to incidents and issues which might not be prioritised for Police response, including environmental crime and problems reported direct by members of the public or via their Ward Councillors.

RESOLVED that:-

- a) the funding position in respect of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Service be referred to Stockton Renaissance.
- b) the funding position in respect of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Service be reviewed as an item within forthcoming reviews of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- c) the intention to issue open-ended contracts to officers within the Neighbourhood Enforcement Service, in place of current fixed-term contracts to March 2008, be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To provide Members with feedback on the work of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Service in the 2006/07 year.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected
None
5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest
None
6. Details of any Dispensations
Not applicable.
7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed
No later than Midnight on Friday 13th July 2007.

Proper Officer
09 October 2007