
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	27 October 2022
Report By:	Interim Director, Environment & Regeneration	Report No:	CMT/22/09/01/SJ/MM
Contact Officer:	Martin McNab	Contact No:	01475 714246
Subject:	Community Wardens Service Review		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee, options for consideration for the provision of the Community Wardens service as presented to the Policy and Resources Committee under the Delivering Differently process.
- 1.3 The Community Wardens service is subject to a savings proposal to cease the service which will be considered as part of the 2023/25 budget setting process.
- 1.4 Unison has been consulted on the options identified in Section 4 of this report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Committee considers the options identified in Section 4 of this report and, note that the options will be part of the overall budget consideration.

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Interim Director, Environment & Regeneration

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Community Wardens service has been in existence in Inverclyde since 2004. The service was set up initially with two tranches of grant funding from the Scottish Executive. The service initially concentrated on delivering public reassurance, acting as professional witnesses and dealing with public complaints about anti-social behaviour. The service was also focussed initially on particular areas within Inverclyde, namely Greenock East, Greenock South West and Port Glasgow. Over time following the initial impact on anti-social behaviour in these areas the wardens focus widened to tackle particular issues of concern out with those areas. Particular examples would include youth gatherings at Inverkip Beach and Tower Hill. Since inception there have been instances of joint patrols between the community wardens and Police Scotland.
- 3.2 Although the aims of the wardens were quite specific, attendance of wardens at certain incident types and their ability to witness events prior to the arrival of police on the scene is beneficial. Frequently the wardens can be on scene quicker than the police who are not routinely on patrol. The impact of a complete removal of the wardens' service on policing in Inverclyde is likely to be significant.
- 3.3 Over time it is also the case that, largely because the wardens were out and about across Inverclyde in the evenings, other services have come to rely on them to carry out tasks and provide support. Examples of the work that is done regularly are detailed in 4.2. Under both options 2 and 3 below the majority of these tasks could no longer be delivered resulting in varying impacts on the services concerned, with significant prioritisation required

4.0 OPTIONS

- 4.1 The options below cover the continued delivery of the current service, what is considered to be a minimal community wardens' service and the complete cessation of the service. The latter is, of course, the option currently under consideration in the 2023-25 savings exercise.
- 4.2 **Option 1 – Do Nothing**

The Community Wardens service as it stands provides a valuable service both in responding to core anti-social behaviour issues but also in carrying out duties for other Council services e.g. Grounds, FM, Property and the HSCP. The service comprises twenty five staff over two shifts, seven days a week, normally between 1pm and 11:30pm with four vehicles patrolling. The service also provides a surge capacity in responding to events and civil contingencies issues, notably the wardens carried out a broad spectrum of additional duties during the Covid pandemic, some using core resources when anti-social behaviour was obviously minimal during lockdown and later providing an additional overtime capacity when core work resumed.

It is recognised however that the continuation of the service in its current form may obviously be impossible owing to the budgetary pressures the Council is under.

- 4.3 **Option 2 – Minimum Warden Service**

Currently the Community Wardens Service consists of 25 staff (previously 26) made up of 21 wardens and 4 senior wardens. The proposed reduced service would take this down to a total of 13. Taking into account leave and other potential absences this would provide a minimum service of 4 wardens and one senior over the current seven day operation of the service on a four days on four off rota.

This would allow two, two man vehicles deployed on an East/West split together with a vehicle for the senior who could provide additional patrolling cover. Consideration has been given to reducing the service and only operating on a Thursday-Sunday basis however although overall the service is quieter Monday-Wednesday this is not invariably the case particularly during school

holidays when youth gatherings frequently take place earlier in the week. A further draw back to reducing the days of operation would be that it would require staff to work the majority of weekends which, although it can be attractive to some for a time, is not likely to be a popular move with the majority of staff.

It is considered that there is enough baseline work week round and within this option it would be the intention to increase the reach of the wardens at weekends by the use of joint patrols with Police Scotland thus putting more teams on the ground at peak times. This has been found to be an effective measure in the past, particularly when wardens are paired with community police with whom they have close working relationships. Police Scotland have suggested that they would be amenable to more joint patrols going forward.

Implementing the savings reduction would mean that a number of tasks the wardens carry out on behalf of other services have been prioritised from the following tasks list:-

Task	Current Frequency	Future	Impact on other services	Directorate prioritisation
Locking Toilets (7 from Inverkip to Port Glasgow)	Every evening	Will not be possible particularly at specific times	May require a resource to be identified. FM clean but public conveniences are under Environmental Services	High
Supporting Social work with personal checks on vulnerable clients in relation to preventing financial harm.	Ad hoc but when they do occur they require regular checks.	Will still endeavour to assist but checks may not be so regular.	N/A	
Deploying at all Inverclyde events for public reassurance such as fireworks displays, CLD Summer of Fun events (outdoor cinema etc.).	Infrequent.	Team will not be large enough to assist at larger events.	May be increased stewarding costs.	High
Attend with Cleansing while dismantling bonfires to prevent breach of the peace to Council staff.	Usually a few a year around Nov 5 th .	Will try to assist but will not necessarily be able to be at all.	Cleansing staff may not want to carry out these duties	
Clune Park Estate checks	Both weekly estate walk	Former will not be carried out,	Other officers from public	

	round and regular visits by patrolling wardens	latter greatly reduced.	protection will have to carry out checks.	
Alarm activations for Council Buildings and Inverclyde Leisure Buildings often left to Wardens to stand by building until key holder arrives.	Ad hoc. Currently made easier by the presence of senior wardens in William Street	Not practical under future manning and operational arrangements.	Increased urgency for key holders to attend. Nb this is obviously the case outwith wardens' operational hours in any case.	High
Vandalism prevention for Inverclyde Leisure in checking all sports facilities and MUGA's (due to damage to 3G pitches).	Checks can be daily but focus will depend on recent activity.	Unlikely to be practical given numbers.	Will fall on IL/letting staff	
Traffic control for Police Scotland when required in inclement weather and Road Traffic Accidents.	Infrequent	Will endeavour to assist.	May impact on Police if we cannot support.	
Covering for school crossing patrol when short staffed.	Varies depending on staff absences.	Unlikely to support.	May impact on CLD staff.	High
Attending Public Health calls to prevent staff harassment and to witness noise/fires etc. when out of hours.	Infrequent. A lot of the emphasis here historically has mostly been around Clune Park.	Will still try to carry out witnessing role, limited otherwise.	May require police support in extreme circumstances.	
Cemetery patrols at night.	Dependent on pattern of incidents but can be nightly where issues are occurring.	Unlikely to be able to do this.	Greater risk of cemeteries being used for gatherings and potential vandalism.	

Cycling proficiency with Community Safety for schools.	Infrequent	Unlikely to be able to do this.	Limited impact on CLD	
Lock play parks (Sir Michael Street/Tower Drive for example).	Daily.	Unlikely to be able to do this.	Resource needed from Environmental Services.	

In addition to these regular tasks more ad hoc support would also be significantly curtailed actions such as, for example, supporting the Covid response and more recently providing mutual aid to Edinburgh over the Queen’s funeral cortege.

The reduced team would however still be able to provide out of hours responses to anti-social behaviour in support of both the Council’s Anti-social behaviour and Community Safety Strategies. Should the CCTV saving be taken the remaining wardens service would also be able to provide support in this area with the mobile CCTV cameras albeit how the data is transferred and recorded would have to be reviewed.

The saving would be 12 FTEs equivalent to £354K. Of the 12 posts 3 are currently vacant as of September 2022, 2 are temporary with under 2 years’ service, and 1 is temporary with 2 years’ service. Of the remaining wardens complement it is likely that some will be interested in VR/VER however there may still be a need for some redeployment which may prove difficult.

4.4 Option 3 – Cessation of Service

This is currently the option which will be consulted on publicly. The proposed saving removes all 25 wardens posts.

In addition to the impacts covered in 4.3 above there would be a impact on Community Safety in Inverclyde. Much of the Community Safety Strategy would be significantly impacted upon.. The Community Partnership Hub and real time responses to incidents of anti-social behaviour would be very limited with no response after 5 pm although planned investigations into longstanding issues could be progressed by the remaining ASIST team.

Police Scotland would be unable to use the service for responses to lower level complaints or to act as expert witnesses when police resources are unavailable. Preliminary discussions with Police Scotland indicate that this would have a significant impact on the response available to lower level crime and anti-social behaviour. Partnership work on youth gatherings would virtually cease with this now falling entirely on Police Scotland including joint work on trains etc. Police Scotland have been written to asking for funding for community wardens.

The complete cessation of the Community Wardens Service would generate a saving of £812K. This is mostly made up of the Community Wardens budget but does include some smaller supplies and services savings from the overall Public Protection budget.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	X		
Legal/Risk	X		
Human Resources	X		
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	X		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	X		
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
Community Wardens	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Saving- Option 1
	Employee costs	1 July 2023	(354)		Option 2- All from employment costs
	Various	1 July 2023	(813)		Option 3 total wardens budget plus minor amounts (£6K from other budget lines)

5.3 Legal/Risk

Risks have been identified through the final savings sheets and will vary depending on the option taken forward.

5.4 Human Resources

Consideration of the human resources impact of option 3 is already underway as part of the savings process.

5.5 Strategic

Option 3 will impact on the delivery of both the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy and the Community Safety Strategy. There are also impacts on the Council's overall resilience.

5.6 Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

X

YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.

NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Unison has been consulted on the proposals.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.