



Report of Chief Officers for Regeneration and Health and Environmental Action Services

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 22nd June 2009

Subject: Neighbourhood Wardens – Restructure Proposals

Electoral Wards Affected:	Specific Implications For:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Wards	Equality and Diversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Community Cohesion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Council Function

Delegated Executive Function available for call in

Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

Executive Summary

This report is provided for information to all the council's area committees for information. The report provides members with information about the restructuring proposals for the Neighbourhood Warden service. These proposals are currently out for consultation with the staff affected and the Trade Unions. Essentially the proposal is to delete the existing Neighbourhood Warden staff structure and to create new Community Environment Officer posts in Environmental Services. It is proposed that the deployment of the Community Environment Officer posts will continue to be agreed with Area Committees with the initial deployment reflecting the reduced number of posts and in the longer term reflecting the Area Committee and HEAS service priorities. Area committees will be asked to consider deployment issues soon after the restructure is implemented in the autumn.

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to propose the deletion of the existing Neighbourhood Wardens staff structure currently located within the Regeneration Service and the creation of new Community Environment Officer posts in Environmental Services, in the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate.
2. The report sets out the above proposals for information to the council's area committees and for the purposes of staff and trade union consultations. Subject to the consultation outcomes, this will form the basis of a report to the Director for a delegated decision on the restructure proposals to enable implementation from the beginning of September 2009.

Background

3. Neighbourhood Warden posts were established incrementally over the last eight years with significant support from external funding streams. The key responsibilities of the wardens are to engage with local communities, provide a visible uniformed presence in communities to offer public reassurance and deal with community safety and environmental issues.
4. A number of changes have taken place since the service was first established. The most significant of these changes have been:-
 - the move by a number of services to locality working and the introduction of neighbourhood management
 - changes in other services with related and aligned functions including the establishment of Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Environmental Action Teams, and
 - the expiry of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding which has contributed to meeting service costs.
5. Key benefits of the service have been the ability to engage effectively with local elected members and communities and provide a responsive service to meet their needs and the support and involvement of wardens in multi-agency tasking teams to deliver improved outcomes in target neighbourhoods.
6. Changes to the operational focus of the service and the staffing structure are required to address the impact of the above changes. This provides the opportunity to more appropriately position the service to make an effective contribution to cross service and partnership working to successfully deliver joined up services at the neighbourhood level. The existing staffing numbers are no longer sustainable in light of significant reductions in external funding and a more flexible staff resource is required that can be effectively deployed across a smaller number of neighbourhoods that experience the highest incidence of deprivation and the poorest environmental conditions.
7. Reductions in external funding have also affected the Environmental Action Teams with a relatively small number (8) of Technical Officer posts in these teams no longer being funded from 2010.

Main issues

Existing Neighbourhood Warden Structure

8. The Neighbourhood Warden Service is managed from within the 3 Area Management teams within the Regeneration Service. There are currently 30 posts shown on the structure. In addition, there are 7.5 posts which supplement the core service funded through Area Committees and ALMOs. Management arrangements vary between areas, being either by Area Community Safety Co-ordinators, Area Management Officers or Senior Wardens. The current structure overview is provided at Appendix A.
9. Each Neighbourhood Warden is assigned to a specific area and carries out uniformed patrols within that area, making contact with local people and identifying issues which need addressing. Wardens' deal with three main areas:-
 - **Environmental**
Reporting fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, vandalism, damage to street lighting and street furniture; arranging and contributing to community clean ups; awareness initiatives with local schools and community groups; contributing to environmental enforcement initiatives.
 - **Crime / Anti Social Behaviour**
Providing a visible uniformed presence within an area; supporting victims of crime and anti-social behaviour; involvement in preventative initiatives such as property marking and security advice; liaising with Police, PCSOs and ASB officers regarding problem areas and individuals.
 - **Community Support**
Acting as a link for the community with service providers; encouraging community and residents groups and assisting with planned activities; facilitating and publicising community events and youth diversionary activities in association with local partners; enabling access to relevant support groups and organisations.

Operational Focus

10. The Neighbourhood Warden posts were established in 2001 prior to the introduction of neighbourhood policing and the increased emphasis on fighting environmental crime. Considerable additional resource is now available to provide a responsive service to address locality specific crime and community safety issues through the Neighbourhood Policing Teams that include both police officers and police community support officers. As the locality focused resource to address these issues has grown the focus of the warden's day to day work has been largely refocused to dealing with environmental issues.
11. Since the establishment of the service, the Council has developed a more proactive approach to environmental enforcement issues. This work is now co-ordinated and delivered through the Health and Environmental Action Service in Environmental Services. It is proposed that the new posts are line managed through this service to provide professional support and line management.

Locality Focus

12. The link to a specific locality has resulted in a number of benefits. Post-holders have developed a detailed knowledge and understanding of the local area and the network of relationships within communities and with service providers and elected members. This has enabled a positive contribution to be made to tasking operations and neighbourhood management.
13. It is proposed to maintain this locality focus and target this to the most deprived neighbourhoods which have the greatest incidence of environmental issues. The posts would provide a visible presence in the community, identifying and addressing priority issues and helping to deliver on environmental issues within Neighbourhood Improvement Plans.
14. Deployment of the Community Environment Officer posts will continue to be agreed with Area Committees with the initial deployment reflecting the reduced number of posts and in the longer term reflecting the Area Committee and HEAS service priorities. Area committees will be asked to consider deployment issues soon after the restructure is implemented.

Job Description

15. The job description for the new Community Environment Officer posts reflects the above change in focus. It specifies the locality focus but also expects the role to progress from a reporting role to one which can also resolve issues using legal powers and other tools. The scale of the post is considered appropriate to the level of responsibility and has been assessed by the Job Evaluation Team. The revised job description is attached at Appendix C. It not only complements the job descriptions currently existing within the Environmental Action Teams but also includes many elements of similarity to the Technical Officers as well as to that created for Neighbourhood Wardens.

Number of posts

16. The existing 30 core posts are currently funded through 3 streams, LCC base budget, NRF Transitional Grant and LPSA Reward Grant. There is a fall in funding from £594k in 2008/9 to £397k in 2009/10 to no grant in 2110/11 reflecting the expiry of NRF Transitional Grant and LPSA Reward Grant.
17. The proposed changes are to delete the existing posts from the structure and create 23 Community Environment Officer posts. This will have the effect of reducing the total number of core staff to 23. All Community Environment Officer appointments will be made to the City rather than to a single specific area.
18. The net effect of the proposal is the loss of 7 posts from the structure. This would enable costs to be reduced by £186k from £763k to £577k per annum.
19. The 7.5 temporary posts are funded from Area Committee Well-being grant and contributions from ALMOs. The total cost of these posts is £231k. The above structure may be supplemented by Area Committees through the use of well-being funding.

Trade union consultation

20. A formal consultation programme is to be undertaken with staff and trade unions from the beginning of June. This allows for consultation on the proposals and the new job descriptions. The outcome of the consultation process will be summarised and reflected in the final report seeking approval to the proposed structure.

Financial Implications

21. External income of £397k in relation to the funding of posts will expire on 31 March 2010. In subsequent years, the inflationary pressures on the service will need to be managed through vacancies or through savings and efficiencies in the service, across the Environment and Neighbourhoods directorate and the Council.
22. The new structure is proposed to position the service so that reliance on external grant funding is significantly reduced and provides a flexible staffing resource to deliver an increasingly responsive programme of environmental services in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Recruitment

23. The proposed recruitment process will be in accordance with Appendix 12 of the Council's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice. This will be fully detailed once approval has been secured to the restructure proposals.
24. As there is considerable overlap between the job descriptions for the new Community Environment Officer post and the existing Technical Officer post, it is proposed that the initial ring fencing proposals include the existing Neighbourhood Warden post-holders and 8 Technical Officers who have recently been placed into managing workforce change redeployment procedures as their posts will not be funded from March 2010.

Accommodation issues

25. Existing accommodation will need to be reviewed in light of the proposed new staffing. Any additional costs will need to be met from existing budgets.

Equality Impact Assessment

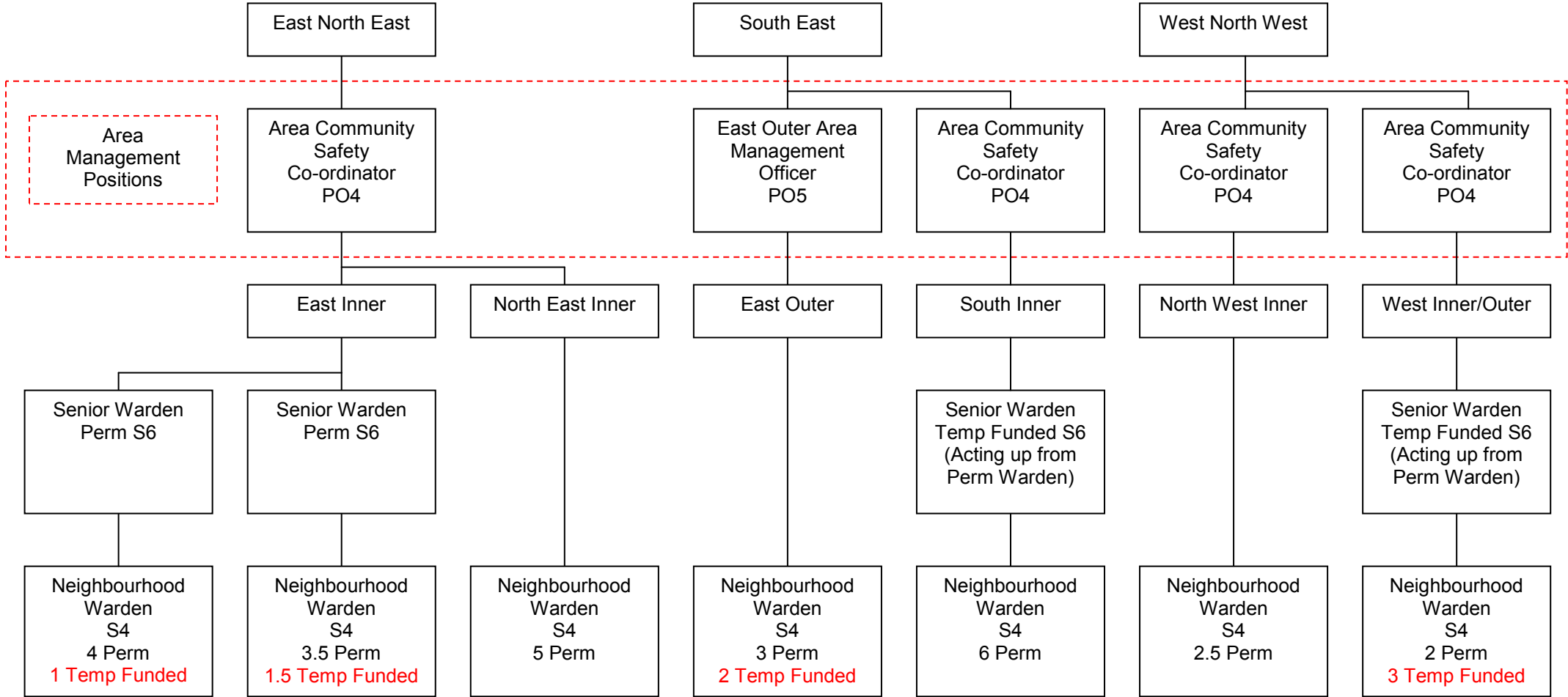
26. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken during this process in line with the Council guidance.

Recommendations

27. Members of the area committee are asked to note the content of this report for their information.

Appendix A

Neighbourhood Warden Line Management Structure – April 2000



**JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSONAL DETAILS
(ALL POSTS ARE OPEN TO JOB SHARE)
Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate**

DIVISION: Environmental Services	SECTION: HEAS
POST TITLE: Community Environment Officer	SCALE: B3/C3 (S4/6)
	POST REF NO:
POST (S) TO WHICH DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE:	
EAT Manager/Neighbourhood Manager	GOQ: N
POST (S) FOR WHICH DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE: None	
CUSTOMER CARE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	
To support and abide by the policies and practices of both the Council and the Directorate with regard to Customer Care and Equal Opportunities strategies and their respective Action Plans.	
PURPOSE OF JOB:	
To assist the Environmental Action Teams (EAT) and Neighbourhood Managers to improve the quality of the environment in locally agreed priority areas. The post will be highly visible in the community and will address cleaner and greener issues. The post will be working intensively within relatively small well defined area/s. They will work with, and for, the community to improve the area, using a range of techniques including enforcement processes. A proactive approach to solving environmental problems in a sustainable way is important, based upon local information, established needs and the environmental aspects of Neighbourhood Improvement Plans.	
RESPONSIBILITIES:	
A. <u>At B3</u>	
1	Carry out regular high visibility uniformed patrols, undertaking checks of hot spot areas and void properties, and using legislation and communication to improve the local environment for members of the public and businesses at all times.
2	Communicate with residents, businesses and members of the public about environmental issues in a well defined locality. Contribute to environmental aspects of Neighbourhood Improvement Plans and other local initiatives. Signpost facilities and relevant service providers. Conduct presentations at resident meetings, schools, sheltered housing complexes, clubs and groups etc. on a range of environmental and local issues.
3	Attend locality meetings, such as local tasking and multi-agency groups, providing information on service provision and contributing to solutions to local problems.

- 4 Provide assistance to ward members on local environmental issues and activities. Provide proactive solutions to issues identified at a local level, acting as a point of liaison for the EAT.
- 5 Investigate and resolve service requests relating to Environmental issues. Use all available statutory and non-statutory measures to resolve issues, which may include the use of; Notices (including fixed penalty notices); prosecutions; warnings; informal advice; education; and imaginative solutions to solve problems
- 6 Follow up cases to ensure that required actions are properly complied with in the relevant timescales and the preparation of cases for prosecution when appropriate, with support
- 7 Under the guidance of more senior officers, ensure that accurate interpretation of legislation, guidance and relevant technical information occurs in order to maintain consistency of decision making and action
- 8 Act as a professional witness and attend court when requested.
- 9 Obtain local knowledge and an understanding of the issues which affect the community in the specified working areas by developing and maintaining a close relationship with local residents, community groups, the police, ward members and representatives of the local community.
- 10 Liaison with partnership organisations and involvement in coordinated activities with partners. Become involved in individual and co-ordinated activities, alongside partnership agencies, designed to reduce environmental problems.
- 11 Report environmental problems such as vandalism to street lighting and street furniture, fly tipping etc to relevant service providers. Report incidents of graffiti, particularly offensive and / or racist graffiti and arrange for its removal. To initiate and support investigations aimed at identifying and prosecuting perpetrators of these crimes.
- 12 Facilitate litter collection and removal of dumped rubbish, vermin, abandoned cars etc. Report or remove drug paraphernalia e.g. syringes and needles. Facilitate community clean ups and environmental initiatives, involving local people and other organisations as appropriate.
- 13 To accurately record information using databases and other systems and provide accurate information, including technical reports.
- 14 To undertake all work in compliance with the Council's health and safety policy
- 15 Adhering to established procedures in relation to financial and Council rules.
- 16 Any other similar duties commensurate with the responsibilities and grade of the post.

At C1: as above plus

- To occasionally contribute to the development and improvement of processes and procedures, such as quality assurance, customer care, service delivery etc

- To interpret legislation, procedural and policy guidance and relevant technical information accurately and consistently
- Have direct involvement in developing individual team members as appropriate
- Independently liaise with partnership organisations

At C3: as above plus

- To investigate and work on more complicated cases through to resolution
- To provide detailed technical reports about individual or area issues.
- To assist with the development and improvement of processes and procedures, such as quality assurance, customer care, educational programmes, briefing materials, service delivery etc.
- To assist other staff in preparation of their cases.

BEHAVIOURAL

1 The postholder must:

- seek the trust of others and be trusted by them
- be honest about their activities
- be respectful of others and to colleagues
- Cooperate with colleagues
- Be transparent in their actions
- Show confidence in their role
- Demonstrate a positive approach to their duties and colleagues
- Be prepared to support colleagues achieve the strategic outcomes

SOCIAL CONDITIONS:

The postholder will communicate with all levels of staff, members of the public and external agencies.

The postholder will work as part of a team and will be expected to work with team members. You will also be required to work alone whilst fulfilling field or office based tasks.

Officers will need to show a passion and commitment to work with the public, businesses and partners, in both supporting and enforcement roles, in order to improve the quality of life for citizens of Leeds

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS:

The salary of the post is B3/C3. Progression through the scales will lead to higher level duties and responsibilities and will be determined by the principles of the HEAS Technical Officer progression scheme subject to a satisfactory record of experience and performance at the previous grade.

20 days (plus 3 in lieu of “bank holiday Tuesday” agreement) annual leave (rising to 21 at C1 and above) and 5 additional days after 5 years Local Government service plus statutory Bank Holidays.

37 hour working week, Monday to Friday. The postholder should be willing to work flexible hours to meet service requirements. There may be an occasional requirement for additional hours to be worked (compensated).

Car Use Allowances - if this postholder or post meets the criteria for essential car user status the corresponding allowance plus mileage will be paid whilst the postholder provides and maintains a vehicle for business use. Casual car user mileage is payable in accordance with local conditions of service.

There is a voluntary contributory Superannuation Scheme which is deducted at a rate dependent upon your salary and is currently in the range of 5.9% to 6.5% of the salary.

Period of notice - 4 weeks.

Other conditions in accordance with the provisions of the scheme of Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council for the Local Government Services as adopted or amended by the Council.

PROSPECTS:

Opportunities for advancement may occur when posts become vacant and are advertised in the Council's Vacancies Bulletin.

LOCATION:

The appointment is to the Council; therefore an employee can be required to work at any relevant office and area to fulfil the duties. The majority of our buildings have wheelchair access.