

Report of West Yorkshire Police and Community Safety

Report to Outer West Area Committee

Date: 15th February 2012

Subject: West Leeds Dog Watch Scheme

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Armley, Bramley, Farnley & Wortley, Pudsey, Calverley & Farsley wards	Yes	
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. Dogwatch is similar to a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Dog Walkers can get involved with community concerns and provide useful information that helps make their local area cleaner and Safer. The launched of the Dog Watch Scheme took place on Saturday 29th October with 64 people attended the event to sign up to Dog Watch Scheme.
2. The initial intention of Dog Watch is to encourage local dog walkers to report any suspicious, anti-social behaviour (ASB) or criminal activities to the police. The objective is to provide extra 'eyes and ears' in the West Leeds Neighbourhood Police Team area to help reduce crime, the fear of crime and to improve the quality of life for the benefit of everyone who lives in their community.
3. By working in partnership with Leeds City Council, local business and dog walkers it will enable resources to be effectively and efficiently deployed. By promoting more vigilance from members of the public and encourage them to report what they witness to the police it is believed this in will result in greater productivity and increased confidence and satisfaction.

Recommendations

1. To note the content of the report .

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report is to provide an overview of the Dogwatch scheme which was launched on 29th October 2011.
- 1.2 The report provides an overview and update on the West Leeds Dog Watch Scheme to which the Inner West Area Committee ward members have supported through the Improvement in the Community and Environment Funding (MICE) .

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Dog walkers are often the first people out and about in the morning and the last out in the evening and because of this tend to be the first to notice anything amiss or hear and see things relating to crime, Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and other suspicious activity that the police may not know about.
- 2.2 Leeds City Council already undertakes work to deal with complaints from members of the public about dog fouling, stray dogs and dangerous dogs. They investigate all complaints taking legal action where possible and carry out patrols of parks, open spaces and specific areas known to be used by walkers. This is in addition to advising dog owners regarding responsible dog ownership. Dog Watch intends to extend what the Council already has in place but further develop this to encourage dog walkers to report incidents of ASB, crime and suspicion to the police.
- 2.3 Overall the scheme is simply asking Dog Walkers to be more vigilant and aware of their surroundings whilst out walking their dogs.
- 2.4 Officers will liaise with marketing, members of the scheme who will receive a quarterly newsletter compiled in partnership with the council and businesses advertising good news stories and incorporating useful information. The newsletter will be designed similar to that of the Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter utilised currently in division.
- 2.5 All members will be advised that the police will either investigate information disclosed or notify our partner agencies, depending on the nature of the problem for their investigation and handling. They will also be specifically advised that they are not expected to walk in areas that they are unfamiliar with, or to walk their dog late at night. In addition they are not expected to get involved in any confrontational situations, which put their safety at risk.
- 2.6 Monitoring systems will be put into place to record all aspects of the project including:
 - Database to record details of members.
 - Database to record details of Partner Agencies and businesses involved.
 - Database to record details of all reports made to scheme
 - Designation of specific Neighbourhood Police Team folder or email address to record all Email contact made

2.7 Since the launch, all members have received the first Dog Watch news letter. The Dog Watch scheme has also gained a mascot, a 15 week old police puppy named Titus, whose training will be followed closely by the NPT Dog Watch project.

3. Main issues

3.1 Dog Watch has already described as similar to a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Dog Walkers will be encouraged to become members of the scheme, which will be jointly led in partnership with Leeds City Council and local businesses. Leeds City Council and the Dog Warden department have already offered support to the scheme as have the Dogs Trust.

The project encourages community involvement and interaction allowing their own involvement in the scheme and empowering the community to tackle/report local issues to the relevant organisation.

3.2 Dog Walkers will specifically be asked to report:

- Crimes being committed
- Suspicious incidents
- Graffiti and Vandalism
- Regular incidents of poor driving, speeding and disobeying traffic signs
- Anti-social behaviour
- Dog related incidents
- Fly Tipping

3.3 Membership will be free. Dog Walkers will be asked to complete an application form, which will be sent to them on request. Each member will be provided with a free membership pack, which will contain details of the scheme and free gifts. The packs will include:

- Information Sheet
- Contact Cards including details of all agencies and businesses involved and what each organisation deals with.
- Notepad
- Pen
- Dog poop a scoop bags

3.4 Members of Dog Watch also receive text message from the NPT with updates/information.

3.5 The Aims of North West Leeds Dog Watch are:-

- Provide local residents with the means to convey information or suspicions regarding ASB and crime to the Police in a manner they find comfortable and convenient.
- Enhance local intelligence in relation to anti social behaviour, crime and issues relating to dangerous dogs

- Provide advice to dog owners about matters concerning welfare, legislation and bylaws, dog security and medical care
- Provide support and training for dog owners to help promote responsible ownership
- Help promote reassurance in the local community
- To enhance relations between the police and the community
- To gather and act upon any intelligence disclosed as part of Dog Watch.
- To make arrests for any offences disclosed and carry out detailed searches of the addresses to secure and preserve further evidence.
- To use a positive media message to endorse our commitment to tackling criminality and ASB at all levels
- Provide public reassurance by high visible patrols during times places identified by members of the scheme thereby reducing crime and the fear of crime.
- To carry out crime prevention activities
- To improve public confidence and satisfaction

3.6 Results To Date

3.7 Since the launch of the Dog Watch Scheme there has been some positive results

- Three people have been arrested for burglary and two men were arrested for metal thefts.
- One person was arrested on suspicion of theft from a car and information on two suspected drunken drivers was also received.
- Numerous calls regarding anti-social behaviour.

4. Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

West Yorkshire Police Neighbourhood Police Team work Closely with Leeds City Council Community Safety Partnerships and attend local community Forums and Police and Communities Together Meetings (PACT) to engage and consult with local communities.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

The project is open to all residents of West Leeds.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

Effectively tackling crime and anti social behaviour is a strategic priority in the Safer Leeds Plan 2011-2015. It also contributes to the delivery of the following Council policies and City Priority Plans:

- Council Business Plan 2011-2015
- Safer and Stronger City Priority Plan
- Area Committee Business Plans
- Safer Leeds Plan
- Safer Leeds Service Plan

5. Resources and value for money

The project has been jointly funded by the Inner and Outer West ward members from the Improvement in the Community and Environment Funding (MICE). Donations of leaflets have been received from Dogs Trust for the goodie packs and Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire police have given their time and support to develop the project.

6. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

This report is for information only and is therefore not subject to call In.

7. Risk Management

Risk implications and mitigation are considered for each project by West Yorkshire Police.

8. Conclusions

By working in partnership with Leeds City Council, local business and dog walkers it will enable resources to be effectively and efficiently deployed. By promoting more vigilance from members of the public and encourage them to report what they witness to the police it is believed this in will result in greater productivity and increased confidence and satisfaction.

9. Recommendations

For members to note the content of the report

10. Background documents

None