

Report of the Scrutiny Review of Neighbourhood Wardens

December 2005

Executive Summary

This Executive Summary outlines the key findings and recommendations contained in the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Review of Neighbourhood Wardens.

The warden schemes that have been in operation have been very successful and are popular with local residents. They are responsible for undertaking a wide range of duties including:

- Combating the fear of crime through providing a reassuring and visible presence
- Playing a key role in enforcement and addressing issues such as litter, fly posting and graffiti
- Providing intelligence to the Police
- Undertaking diversionary work with young people

They have developed an in-depth knowledge of their neighbourhoods and are trusted and respected. Although there is a lack of quantitative evidence to back up their effectiveness, this is due to a great extent to much of their work being qualitative or preventative in nature.

The current funding arrangements for warden schemes are coming to an end and consideration is currently being given to future arrangements. The case has been developed for maintaining funding levels for the service through the use of mainstream resources and such grant funding as might be available. Wardens bring an element to service delivery that is outside the defined agenda of other services and therefore offer an enhancement to provision by providing services that other departments might not easily be able to provide otherwise. The Panel found that the Review was an interesting examination of the Council's work. Particularly informative were the direct discussions and walkabout with the wardens themselves. Whilst the wider issues of enforcement, community safety and community engagement need ongoing work it is hoped that this review is a positive contribution to the specific issue of Haringey's Neighbourhood Warden Service.

The Panel reached a number of key findings and recommendations on the service and its development:

Key Findings and Recommendations

Future Options

Our key findings:

- ▶ The Panel concurs with the overwhelming view that was expressed throughout the review which is that there is a very strong case for maintaining funding levels for the service. Its discontinuation would leave a void that would require filling. There have been tangible improvements to the neighbourhoods in which the wardens had been operating which might be lost in their absence. In particular, it would threaten gains made in making Haringey a cleaner, greener and safer Borough
- ▶ Neighbourhood Wardens have a broad perspective on services and do not only consider their immediate responsibilities and are also very good at bringing services and people together. Wardens have a key role in joining up services. Other services should be encouraged to liaise closely with the warden service and to think proactively through adopting a "wardens mentality"

- ▶ The wider appreciation of their positive role would be increased by greater publicity explaining their role, as well as higher visibility.

Our recommendations:

Recommendation 1

That current action to secure appropriate funding to sustain the Neighbourhood Warden Service at present levels of provision, through the use of mainstream resources and bids for available grant funds, be strongly supported.

Recommendation 2

That appropriate measures be taken to publicise their role and responsibilities in order to raise public awareness of the service.

Recommendation 3

That Neighbourhood Wardens be supplied with appropriate high visibility clothing to ensure that they are visible to local residents.

Recommendation 4

That the positive lessons learnt from the experience of the warden service be incorporated into staff development and training for all front line staff and, in particular, the development of a holistic approach to service provision and effective liaison with other services.

The Future Role of Wardens

Our key findings:

- ▶ Wardens will complement and not overlap with the responsibilities and the new Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Where both wardens and Police teams are present, a degree of separation in roles can be developed whilst the two teams work closely together. Though there are similar roles on some issues, the teams will work at different levels.
- ▶ Wardens have developed a key and effective role in addressing environmental issues, such as rubbish and fly tipping, and this contributes to achieving the Council's objectives in this area and, in particular, making Haringey cleaner, greener and safer. Wardens have been able to take on a key role in enforcement and there is scope and powers available to further develop their enforcement duties.
- ▶ Community engagement is a vital and special part of the service and a specific area where they add value. It should therefore remain be an essential part of their overall role.

Our recommendations:

Recommendation 5

That, looking forward, the strategic priorities of the Neighbourhood Warden Service should be promoting community safety, enforcement and community engagement.

Recommendation 6

That all Neighbourhood Wardens be provided with suitable training and developmental opportunities to enable them to be delegated appropriate enforcement powers, subject to the identification of appropriate funding and demonstration of competence.

Our Key Findings

- ▶ The whole of the Borough would benefit from the presence of wardens but it is recognised that this would require additional resources that may not be easily forthcoming at the moment. A quantitative approach which entails resources being spread evenly throughout the Borough would have a negative effect both on quality and continuity. The service should therefore remain area based, as currently organised.
- ▶ The close links between Wardens and the geographical areas that they currently work within are important and should be maintained. The fact that wardens are area based means that they can build up a rapport with local residents, particularly the elderly and younger people. The wardens also develop extensive knowledge on local issues and are able to follow matters through to their conclusion. The links with neighbourhoods are especially important in the light of the Councils intention to improve area based working.
- ▶ Communities are possessive of their wardens and they are felt to have made a large contribution to improving some areas where they have worked. Some areas have benefited from wardens for a long time and a significant reduction in the service that they receive locally would be very noticeable to residents.
- ▶ There is a need for focussed work in other areas of the Borough. It was noted that it had been possible to stretch resources temporarily to other areas of the Borough in order to cover specific issues and felt this should continue so that the expertise of wardens could be used most effectively.
- ▶ Permanent expansion should be looked at as a long-term objective, if and when the necessary resources became available. In the meantime, decisions on their placement should be based on clear and transparent criteria.

Our recommendations:

Recommendation 7

That Council considers the extension of the wardens' service to cover all areas of the Borough as a long-term objective.

Recommendation 8

That, in the absence of sufficient additional resources to provide a service for all areas of the Borough, the mainstreamed service should continue to concentrate their work where currently based. However, the service should be flexible to allow for deployment in other parts of the borough in accordance with strategic priorities. Decisions on the areas where wardens are deployed must be based on specific and transparent criteria including:

- ⇒ Indices of social deprivation
- ⇒ Specific environmental and cleanliness concerns
- ⇒ Priorities within the Safer Communities Strategy

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 There are currently a total of 18 neighbourhood wardens in post within Haringey operating as part of several different schemes covering particular locations. The schemes appear to have been popular with local residents, although there is a lack of robust data to confirm this, and have generally felt to be successful. Funding for them has come from a variety of external sources but virtually all of these have either already expired or are due to by March 2006. Due to this, any continuation of the work undertaken by wardens will have to be resourced from new sources and a large proportion of this will probably have to come from mainstream Council resources.
- 1.2 In addition, there are some important policy developments that are likely to have some impact on the service and how it works. For example, Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) are being introduced throughout the capital and the government has placed particular emphasis on local authorities addressing environmental issues. The future options for the warden service and how they operate are therefore currently being considered.

Scrutiny Review Scope and Terms of Reference

- 1.3 It was against this background that the proposal to undertake a scrutiny review on the issue came. In particular, it was noted that options for the future of the service were to be considered in the budget process for 2006-7. The scope and timetable for the review reflected this and the intention is that the conclusions and recommendations of the Panel will be considered as part of this exercise.
- 1.4 The scrutiny review looked in detail at the options prepared by the Environment Service and, in particular, addressed the following questions:
 - Is further investment in the service likely to represent value for money for the Council?
 - What strategic role would be the most appropriate for the service?
 - How will wardens work most effectively with the Police Safer Neighbourhood teams?
 - What contribution can wardens make to fulfilling the Council's environmental obligations?
- 1.5 The terms of reference were as follows:

"To consider and comment on possible future options, as developed by the Environment Service, for the Borough's neighbourhood warden schemes following the expiry of current funding arrangements and to make recommendations thereon to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee"

Membership of Panel

- 1.6 The membership of the Panel was as follows:

Councillors Dawson (Chair), Aitken, Dobbie and Q. Prescott.

2. Developing the Warden Service

Introduction

- 2.1 There are two general categories of neighbourhood warden - "neighbourhood wardens" and "street crime wardens". They both provide a uniformed, semi-official presence in residential areas, with the overall aim of improving the quality of life. There are some differences in their respective roles:
- Neighbourhood wardens have a role in promoting community safety, assisting with environmental improvements and housing management and also contribute to community development.
 - Street crime wardens have more of an emphasis on caring for the physical appearance of the area and, in particular, environmental problems such as litter, graffiti and dog fouling.
- 2.2 Various different warden schemes have been operating in Haringey since funding first became available in 2002. The funding has come from various different sources including Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the New Deal for Communities. The bidding criteria attached to the various funding streams has meant that there have been some differences in their overarching objectives. The schemes have had to operate within strict geographical boundaries according to the scheme under which they are funded.
- 2.3 At its peak, the warden service covered 5 areas of the Borough and employed 27 staff. Neighbourhood Management were responsible for co-ordinating and leading bids for funding as well as managing the service. The management of the service was transferred to Environmental Services in 2004 as a part of the wider policy objective to strengthen and streamline the Council's enforcement functions.
- 2.4 Since 2004, the funding streams paying for wardens have gradually expired and by March 2006 only £154k from New Deal for Communities will remain. The post of Warden Co-ordinator is funded separately through the general revenue account and reports to the Group Managers, Environmental Crime, within the Enforcement Business Unit. The total current cost of the service is circa £600k.

Current Deployment

- 2.5 The warden service now comprises of 18 operational staff. It is area based and covers the following wards;
- Northumberland Park
 - Bruce Grove
 - Tottenham Green
 - Noel and Bowes Park – these were originally two schemes but had now been combined.
 - Seven Sisters
 - West Green
- 2.6 In addition, there are currently two wardens working in the "Ladder" area on a temporary basis.

Roles

2.7 Whilst their overarching objectives are to improve community safety and reduce fear of crime, each team has the flexibility to respond to key local concerns and issues. Their work includes:

- Patrolling – providing a highly visible, uniformed street presence to deter anti social behaviour and reduce fear of crime;
- “Eyes and ears” – providing intelligence to other key enforcement agencies to tackle crime and community safety;
- Enforcement – a number of wardens have been trained to take enforcement action against offences such as littering, fly-posting and graffiti and abandoned vehicles;
- Community engagement – they are involved in local schemes, initiatives and projects to support vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups in the community and provide diversionary activities for young people; and
- Education – working in schools and in the community to educate people to protect their local environment such as the junior wardens scheme

2.8 There are a number of policy issues that are of particular relevance to the future development of the service.

Neighbourhoods

2.9 The government has emphasised the important role of neighbourhoods in increasing community engagement and improving the effectiveness and responsiveness of local services. The Council plans to roll out a universal approach to neighbourhood management based on improved area based working and underpinned by strong community engagement. This approach reflects both the government’s emphasis on neighbourhood management and the Council’s Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. The approach is based on three propositions:

- That neighbourhood management should be universal
- That the Council should promote area based working; and
- That community engagement and involvement are central to the way the Council does business

2.10 Wardens are already linked closely to neighbourhoods and have an important function in engaging with local communities. They would therefore appear to be well placed to play an important part in this approach.

Safer Stronger Communities Fund

2.11 By April 2007, the Government expects all local strategic partnerships to have developed a Local Area Agreement (LAA) to deliver targets in the following four areas:

- Children and young people
- Safer and stronger communities
- Healthier communities and older people; and
- Economic development and enterprise.

2.12 These agreements will be funded through a single funding stream that brings together a number of grants and funding regimes. In July, the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Unit announced that Haringey is one of 84 authorities that will receive £1,559,600 over four years from the Safer Stronger Communities Fund commencing from April 2006. The fund is in effect a mini LAA as it brings together funding streams in one of the four areas that will be covered by LAAs (Safer Stronger Communities). These resources are not ring-fenced and authorities are free to decide their own approach and structures to delivering outcomes. The objective of the SSCF and LAAs is:

“to improve the quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and ensure service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs and improve their delivery”.

2.13 The implementation guidance that accompanies the funding announcement clearly sets out the government's focus on neighbourhoods as the focus for change and identifies crime, anti social behaviour, the quality of the local environment and leisure provision for young people as key issues in deprived neighbourhoods. A bid of £150k for NRF / SSCF monies is being made to part fund the warden service.

Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs)

2.14 Although there has been a large aggregate drop in crime during the last decade, many people still believe that it is going up. We heard that there was a category of crime referred to as “signal crimes” such as petty vandalism which give people the perception that crime is higher than it actually is. SNTs aim to address these negative perceptions through dealing with such low level crimes and they are now being introduced throughout the Borough.

2.15 SNTs are small neighbourhood based teams, each with one sergeant, two PCs and three Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). They use a range of methods to engage with communities. The priorities of each area are set in consultation with the local community and therefore vary. A problem solving approach is used with solutions including engagement, enforcement and education. The teams are intended to be visible, familiar and accessible. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner had decided that the teams will be extended to cover the whole of London during 2006-7, with the last ones in place by April 2007. There are now eight teams in place in Haringey and a further three to five promised by April 2006. Their role has similarities to that of wardens as they also aim to provide a visible street presence aimed at deterring and preventing anti social behaviour and crime and reduce fear of crime in neighbourhoods.

Environmental Issues

2.16 A significant percentage of the work of wardens involves addressing environmental problems such as fly tipping. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill is giving local authorities new powers including ones to:

- Immediately seize vehicles caught fly tipping (currently the subject of a separate scrutiny review)
- Issue fixed penalty notices for fly posting, waste and graffiti offences with Councils being able to retain the receipts
- Immediately remove nuisance vehicles

- 2.17 One particular option would be for a reconfigured role for wardens that focuses on such issues, with a specific emphasis on enforcement.
- 2.18 The current changes to the funding for the wardens service and recent policy developments provide an opportunity to re-evaluate and re-focus its work as well as a need to identify alternative sources of funding if the service is to be sustained at current levels.

3. Future Options

Introduction

- 3.1 The sustainability of the service is dependent on it successfully obtaining alternative sources of funding. In order for this to be achieved, it will be necessary to demonstrate effectiveness and value for money.

Key Strengths and Achievements

- 3.2 The warden service is felt to have a number of key strengths including:

- An in-depth understanding and knowledge of neighbourhoods
- Trust and respect from in local communities
- Good links to other enforcement agencies and front line services

- 3.3 The service is valued and appreciated by residents and has undertaken some very effective individual pieces of work. Examples of this are:

- Information provided by wardens to the Police has assisted with the closure of 8 crack house closures in Northumberland Park since April 2005.
- Providing information and intelligence which has enabled several successful applications for ASBOs to be made.
- A successful joint operation with the Police to remove illegal street traders from Wood Green as part of the “Christmas Cracker” operation
- Summer basketball and football projects in Noel Park and Bowes Park involving over 500 young people.
- Art projects in Seven Sisters and West Green in which over 200 young people participated.
- Arranging a “health walk” in Northumberland Park which brought together socially isolated older people.
- Setting up the Junior Wardens scheme which will be of long term benefit to the community
- Helping to identify rough sleepers
- Working with schools in the Northumberland Park area at lunchtimes and, in particular, acting as reading partners and teaching kerb craft.

Measuring Performance

- 3.4 Although a certain amount of data on the performance of wardens was made available to the Panel, there is an overall lack of data to support the effectiveness of the service This is partially due to the nature of the service where much of the work is preventative, stopping problems from arising, or

concerned with the quality of life and therefore difficult to quantify. There have been reductions in recorded crime and environmental crime in recent years but it is not possible to separate the contribution that wardens have made. However, it is the view of the ODPM that:

“there is strong evidence that wardens are particularly effective in tackling specific environmental problems and anti social behaviour....that encourage crime’

Effectiveness

3.5 We received convincing evidence from several key stakeholders to support the view that the service is very effective:

- Councillor Canver, the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety stated that she considered the service to be extremely valuable. The wardens engaged closely with local communities and helped the Police to catch criminals. There was strong evidence that they were very popular with the community.
- The Head of Neighbourhood Management felt that the service had been very effective in its work. In particular, she cited the excellent work undertaken with young people in the Noel Park area, the junior wardens scheme and high profile enforcement activities such as Operation Tailgate. They provided a visible and reassuring presence for residents and had been very well received by local communities. The teams were multi ethnic, which helped to convey a good image with the community. She felt that the community had a very positive perception of the service particularly older people.
- The Safer Communities Strategic Manager also felt that the wardens had been very effective since their introduction. They were recognised and appreciated by the public and had developed an excellent rapport with local communities. Whilst there was no specific research or survey data to back up this perception, there was a correlation between warden activity and action against fly tipping and other similar offences such as graffiti.
- Inspector Craig Middleton from the Police Service felt that the Borough would lose a valuable uniformed and visible presence if the warden service was discontinued.

3.6 The Chair of the Scrutiny Review Panel went on a walkabout with one of the wardens operating in the Noel Park area. The following was noted:

- The wardens were very knowledgeable about their neighbourhood and have built up strong links with residents such as sheltered housing schemes, playgroups, community groups and people with special needs.
- They are able to follow up on issues and see them through e.g. graffiti removal, hedge trimming, lighting.
- They have provided invaluable evidence that has helped shut crack houses and had assisted with enforcement issues such as pirated DVDs.

- They have been involved in beneficial neighbourhood projects such as working with local artists to replace an old mural.
- They have good links with local young people

Intelligence

3.7 The Panel noted that in Boroughs where partnership working between wardens and the Police is particularly strong, such as Camden, Southwark and Westminster, there is strong evidence that they provide the Police with crucial intelligence to enable them to tackle local crime. Senior managers in the warden service in Westminster and Camden have said that this is because significant parts of their local communities will not pass information to the Police but are willing to talk to their local street warden. There is evidence that this is also the case within Haringey. Inspector Middleton reported that the Police received a lot of intelligence from wardens. Whilst quality could be variable, they could receive some very good leads from them.

Adding Value

3.8 The view was expressed that that the service often undertook work that should be part of the role of other Council officers. For instance, the youth diversionary work should be undertaken by the Youth Service whilst teachers should address behavioural problems around the vicinity of schools. Although wardens had had some positive effects in engaging with local communities, it was possible that others carrying out the same functions could have the same effects.

3.9 However, the Panel felt that wardens bring an element to service delivery that is outside of the defined agenda of other services and they therefore offered an enhancement to provision by providing services that other Council departments might not easily be able to otherwise provide. They add value in a number of specific ways:

- They are very versatile and generic.
- They are able to undertake work that would otherwise need to be done by several different departments of the Council or possibly would not be done at all.
- They can act to join up the work of several services.
- Wardens are based in neighbourhoods and therefore well placed to respond quickly to demands.
- Residents can sometimes not be bothered to go through the processes necessary to access particular services where only minor levels of assistance are required and prefer instead to deal with wardens who can often do the job quickly and with a minimum of fuss.

3.10 Examples of how this can work in practice are that they can often deal with incidents anti social behaviour far more quickly than the Police, who often have other priorities, and can remove small patches of graffiti immediately instead of referring onwards to the specialist team, thus saving time and expense.

Conclusion

- 3.11 The Panel concur with the overwhelming view that was expressed throughout the review. There is a very strong case for maintaining levels for the service. Its discontinuation would leave a void that would require filling. There have been tangible improvements to the neighbourhoods in which the wardens had been operating and there is a danger that these gains would be lost in their absence. In particular, it would threaten gains made in making Haringey a cleaner, greener and safer Borough. The wider appreciation of their positive role would be increased by greater publicity explaining their role as well as higher visibility.
- 3.12 The Panel noted that, on a national basis, 80% of schemes had been mainstreamed which demonstrates that nationally there is also an appreciation of the great benefits that wardens can bring to neighbourhoods.
- 3.13 There is some uncertainty within the service due to the need to resolve its future funding although it is still not difficult to recruit. The wardens were committed and enjoy their jobs. However, they have financial commitments and are keen for the uncertainty to be ended. The Panel therefore urge that the issues be addressed speedily so that they can be given reassurance about their futures as soon as possible.
- 3.14 The Panel feel that there have been a lot of positive lessons that have been learnt through the operation of the service that could be shared with other front line staff. In particular, wardens have a broad perspective on services and do not only consider their immediate responsibilities. They are also very good at bringing services and people together and other services should be encouraged to liaise closely with the warden service and to think proactively through adopting a “wardens mentality” e.g. taking a holistic approach to service provision and linking up with other services.

Recommendations

- That current action to secure appropriate funding to sustain the Neighbourhood Warden Service at present levels of provision, through the use of mainstream resources and bids for available grant funds, be strongly supported.
- That appropriate measures be taken to publicise their role and responsibilities in order to raise public awareness of the service.
- That Neighbourhood Wardens be supplied with appropriate high visibility clothing to ensure that they are visible to local residents.
- That the positive lessons learnt from the experience of the warden service be incorporated into staff development and training for all front line staff and, in particular, the development of a holistic approach to service provision and effective liaison with other services.

4. The Future Role of Wardens

Introduction

- 4.1 The current debate on the future of the service also provides an opportunity to consider what the strategic role of wardens should be. There is some evidence that their role and function is not always clearly understood. In particular, we noted that there was sometimes a lack of clarity amongst Police teams on their function. It was also suggested that there could also sometimes be confusion in roles between enforcement and community engagement.
- 4.2 Any confusion may be, in part, a legacy of the different funding streams and the different objectives and outcomes required. There has been a need to report different activities for different schemes but there is now a need to consider how the service should be performance managed as a whole. More robust quantitative evidence on the effectiveness of the service will assist in strengthening further the case for future funding.
- 4.3 Freed from some of these confines of the requirements of different schemes, it should now be possible to set common aims and objectives for the service. The role of wardens currently covers a range of activity from “hard” issues, such as enforcement, intelligence gathering and addressing anti social behaviour, to softer issues such as community engagement and youth diversion work. In the event of funding becoming restricted, it may become necessary to prioritise particular elements of their work. Decisions on this should be based on objective criteria such as the contribution that specific activities make to the priorities of the Council and its partners. Our review looked at the various different facets of the work of the wardens.

Community Safety

- 4.4 There are high levels of fear of crime within the Borough, as shown by recent residents surveys. Addressing this is a key part of the safer communities strategy and wardens contribute to this by providing reassurance and a visible presence. They also provide a deterrent although this is a limited one as people realise that wardens are not the Police, despite that fact that they have some limited powers.
- 4.5 In respect of community safety, the strategic priority that they have perhaps been the most effective in contributing towards is anti social behaviour. For instance, a warden presence has been encouraged in locations where anti social behaviour was perceived to be a problem in order to act as a deterrent. They also have a role in engaging with victims of crime, people with mental health problems and younger people. An example of this was that they have worked with the family of a victim of a fatal stabbing in Gladstone Avenue to erect a memorial plaque.

Enforcement

- 4.6 Wardens have developed a key role in addressing environmental issues, such as rubbish and fly tipping, and this contributes to achieving the Council's objectives in this area and, in particular, making Haringey cleaner, greener and safer. Many wardens have been retrained so that they are able to address enforcement issues but do not currently issue fixed penalty notices. Enforcement powers can only be delegated to officers who are suitably trained

and experienced and a test of competence must first be passed. Where powers are delegated, this is reflected in job evaluations. The Panel feel that, subject to suitable funding and demonstration of competence, enforcement powers should be extended to all neighbourhood wardens.

- 4.7 Local residents are generally in favour of the wardens' new enforcement capability and it is felt the enhanced role of the wardens in this area will not be detrimental to their relationships with local community members. The Street Enforcement Service could provide a particular outlet for enhanced joint working and tasking and could also provide a specific way of extending the warden approach to joint working.

Community Engagement

- 4.8 Wardens have a role in building links with residents and their organisations and have undertaken a range of activities connected with this, as previously mentioned. Community engagement is important and has helped to build links with communities but, in the context of the public's preferences and the limited resources for warden activity, it could be argued that it should have a lesser level of priority to enforcement. It was also suggested that wardens can spend a disproportionate amount of time addressing the needs of individual members of the community such as through assisting older people in collecting pensions and setting up play schemes during school holidays. However, the Panel feels that these are examples of the broader perspective that wardens have. Although they might not relate to specific problems, they are also of benefit to the community and equally as important as more high profile issues such as enforcement.

Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams

- 4.9 The role of Police SNTs in being visible, familiar and accessible is very similar to that of the wardens but this may not necessarily be a bad thing. Wardens are generally located within crime hotspots as well as deprived areas. Where both wardens and Police teams are present, a degree of separation in roles could be developed with the two teams working closely together. Whilst there are similar roles on some issues, the teams will probably work at different levels with wardens concentrating on enforcement of Council issues.
- 4.10 The Panel feel that the work of the wardens would complement and not overlap with the responsibilities and the SNTs. We noted that the Police feel that SNTs will be able to work closely with wardens irrespective of whichever options for their future role are chosen. If a decision is taken that wardens should focus more on the engagement role, PCSOs could be released to undertake more enforcement type activity. Their view is that decisions on the role of wardens should not be based on what the SNTs will be as this was a side issue. Sharing of intelligence and joint tasking will be of particular assistance in enabling wardens to work effectively with Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs).
- 4.11 The Panel noted that whilst the Metropolitan Police are publicly committed to ring-fenced, ward based, reassurance policing from the SNTs, this resource was likely to be transferred out of the ward in event of an emergency as was seen following the recent bombings. In particular, PCSOs had been transferred away from patrolling duties in residential streets and on estates and have been providing a strong presence in tube stations and at other transport hubs.

Conclusion

- 4.12 Wardens often have to take difficult decisions on how they use their time most effectively and the Panel was impressed by their professionalism in undertaking this. Centralised management of their role has assisted with in this. In the past, they have been managed by Neighbourhood Managers, who also covered other staff. Under the new structure, they all had the same line manager who was able to devote all his time to their role rather than having to cover another staff as well. There are still strong links to Neighbourhoods and they can be turned to if money was needed for particular initiatives. An example of their close working was the regular surgeries that were held in Noel Park and included the Police, wardens and neighbourhood staff.
- 4.13 The good performance of wardens in enforcement so far shows the potential that this role could have. Whilst it is nice to for people to see a Police Officer on the beat, it is estimated that they are only likely to come across a crime being committed once every 10 years. This is likely to also be the case for wardens and their role in preventing crime may have some limits. It may therefore be the case that a focus on addressing abandoned vehicles, graffiti, fly tipping and illegal trading would be a better use of their time if should hard decisions have to be taken over funding.
- 4.14 It would be easy to be undervalue the community engagement part the role of wardens in making decisions on what their priorities in the context of possible future restrictions on available funding. In such circumstances, there would be a strong argument for enforcement and other “hard” priorities to take precedence. However, the Panel feels strongly that community engagement is a vital and special part of the role of wardens and a specific area where they add value. The Panel feels that there should be a place for wardens to undertake both enforcement and community engagement within neighbourhoods and they should both be an integral part of their future role.

Recommendation

- That, looking forward, the strategic priorities of the Neighbourhood Warden service should be promoting community safety, enforcement and community engagement.
- That all Neighbourhood Wardens be provided with suitable training and developmental opportunities to enable them to be delegated appropriate enforcement powers, subject to the identification of appropriate funding and demonstration of competence.

5. Deployment

Introduction

- 5.1 The Panel heard that decisions on the areas where the wardens have been deployed were originally driven by funding streams and there has never been sufficient funding for a Borough wide service. The funding has not been co-terminus with ward boundaries with the result that wardens have been deployed in specific parts of wards. This has had the result of possibly antagonising some residents who live outside of these areas. The current review provides an opportunity to determine where the wardens should be deployed.
- 5.2 Complete wards can now be targeted and decisions on deployment based on common objective criterion. Working on the basis of wards would make planning easier and fits better into how the Council intends to conduct its business. However, it is currently very difficult to obtain funding for some particular wards and there will be a need for some degree of prioritisation. If sufficient money were to become available, it was suggested to us that it might be desirable to have a Borough wide service. In the absence of this, it will be necessary to prioritise.
- 5.3 The Panel heard that it is important that the service links effectively with other Council services and partners. The relationship with multi disciplinary neighbourhood teams is of prime importance and it was suggested to us that this may need particular strengthening as, since the transfer of the service to Environmental Services, this has not been as close as previously. In addition, the relationship with the borough wide Street Enforcement Service is also important and, in particular, should be an influence on the future configuration of the warden service.

Deployment Options

- 5.4 Given the desirability of the warden service throughout the whole borough, the Council must consider how to deploy the current teams of wardens once they are mainstreamed. It was not considered practical to extend the current number of wardens across the whole borough immediately. One view that was expressed was that wardens should neither be extended Borough-wide nor purely area based as at present. Parts of the service could instead be peripatetic and focus on short to medium term issues within particular localities. It might be possible to extend the service to areas that had not had wardens so far with such an approach. Another option would be to make their enforcement function Borough-wide, whilst remaining neighbourhood-based for their community safety and engagement roles. However, it is necessary to develop relationships and trust in order to engage effectively and this would be difficult to do effectively if wardens were spread too thinly.

Conclusion

- 5.5 The Panel feel strongly that the whole of the Borough would benefit from the presence of wardens but it is recognised that this will require additional resources that may not be easily forthcoming at the moment. We feel that a quantitative approach which entails resources being spread evenly throughout

the Borough would have a negative effect both on quality and continuity. The service should therefore remain area based.

- 5.6 There are currently close links between Wardens and the geographical areas that they currently work within and it is important that these are maintained. The fact that wardens are area based means that they can build up a rapport with local residents, particularly younger people. The links with neighbourhoods are especially important in the light of the Council's intention to improve area based working. A Borough wide service might adversely affect this relationship. It is also easier to manage workloads locally.
- 5.7 Communities are possessive of their wardens and they are felt to have made a large contribution to improving some areas where they have worked. Some areas have benefited from wardens for a long time and a significant reduction in the service that they receive locally would be very noticeable to residents.
- 5.8 The Panel feel that there is nevertheless a need for focussed work in other areas of the Borough. It was noted that it had been possible to stretch resources temporarily to other areas of the Borough in order to cover specific issues and felt this should continue so that the expertise of wardens could be used most effectively.
- 5.9 The needs of all areas of the Borough need to be considered and wardens deployed if particular issues arise. Permanent expansion should be looked at as a long-term objective if and when the necessary resources became available. In the meantime, decisions on their placement should be considered after consideration of the following matters:
 - Indices of social deprivation
 - Specific environmental and cleanliness concerns
 - The Crime and Drugs Audit and the Safer Communities Strategy

Recommendation

- That Council considers the extension of the warden service to cover all areas of the Borough as a long-term objective.
- That, in the absence of sufficient additional resources to provide a service for all areas of the Borough, the mainstreamed service should continue to concentrate their work where currently based. However, the service should be flexible to allow for deployment in other parts of the borough in accordance with strategic priorities. Decisions on the areas where wardens are deployed must be based on specific and transparent criteria including:
 - ⇒ Indices of social deprivation
 - ⇒ Specific environmental and cleanliness concerns
 - ⇒ Priorities within the Safer Communities Strategy

Synopsis

The Panel found that the Review was an interesting examination of the Council's work. Particularly informative were the direct discussions and walkabout with the wardens themselves. Whilst the wider issues of enforcement, community safety and community

engagement need ongoing work it is hoped that this review is a positive contribution to the specific issue of Haringey's Neighbourhood Warden Service.