



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22nd JUNE 2022

COMMUNITY WARDENS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – FRONTLINE SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from Cabinet to introduce a new Community Warden service, effective across RCT, to support the Police in providing a visible, reassuring presence in our town centres, parks and communities. The report also outlines a Council funding proposal for additional Police Community Support Officers for RCT, to be employed by South Wales Police.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Director – Frontline Services, to proceed with the measures necessary to give effect to the proposals set out in this report, namely: -
1. To establish a new Community Warden Service to include a new team of Community Wardens with supervisory staff and provision of appropriate vehicles and equipment to support their deployment.
 2. To undertake a review of the existing roles and responsibilities of the Streetcare Enforcement team.
 3. To establish effective working procedures between the new team, the Council's Community Safety Team and the wider Community Safety Partnership to co-ordinate appropriate partner responses to areas of anti-social behaviour or community nuisances.
- 2.2 It is further recommended that Cabinet agree to provide funding to South Wales Police to employ an additional 10 Police Community Support Officers, (PCSOs), dedicated to RCT, but nevertheless deployed and directed by the Police.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and where residents feel safe, is a key aim of the Council's corporate priority of creating places where people are proud to live work and play. The introduction of Community Wardens to provide a highly visible and reassuring presence in our communities will significantly contribute towards achieving this aim.
- 3.2 The Council's Streetcare Enforcement team is responsible for the enforcement, via the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, (FPNs), of certain day-to-day environmental crimes and offences including, but not exclusive to: litter dropping and dog fouling / control in support of the Council's Public Space Protection Orders, (PSPOs). It is envisaged that the new Community Wardens will also be warranted to carry out enforcement activities with respect to the PSPOs as part of their role and should thus form part of a revamped Environmental Enforcement & Awareness team.
- 3.3 The Council's Community Safety Team is responsible for working with partners to respond to reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) by individuals or in communities, using an evidence based, targeted approach to address problem areas. This work includes liaising with young people in communities, in conjunction with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, and working with schools and parents to prevent ASB. The enforcement of the PSPO in relation to ASB related to use of drugs and alcohol in our communities and town centres is a key priority to reduce the impact of alcohol and drug misuse on our communities and promote safe and confident communities and the Community Wardens will strengthen the Council's proactive approach to securing compliance with the PSPO. Effective procedures to harmonise the work of the Wardens and the Community Safety Partnership will enable the Council to monitor the impact on ASB referrals to inform future decisions about resources required to deliver the Partnership's priorities.
- 3.4 It has been widely reported and acknowledged that problems linked to, and caused by, ASB have increased over the past few years, especially during the period covered by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. In order to help combat such problems, the Welsh Government has previously approved funding for an extra 100 PCSOs across Wales and the Council is seeking to enhance that provision with an additional offer of funding another 10 PCSOs solely dedicated to supporting the communities of RCT. Ongoing proactive dialogue will be held with the Chief Constable of South Wales Police to confirm arrangements around the Police's plans for the recruitment and future deployment of the PCSOs.

4. COMMUNITY WARDEN ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The new Community Warden service will provide a visible, uniformed presence in our communities, 7 days a week, with a focus on town centres and parks, by helping to build partnerships to reduce the fear of crime and ASB.
- 4.2 The primary duty of a Community Warden will be to provide reassurance, assistance and help to create a safer, more pleasant living environment for all.
- 4.3 The Wardens will undergo rigorous training to ensure they can effectively and proportionately use the Council's enforcement powers to uphold the Council's PSPOs.
- 4.4 However, the Wardens will not replace the Police, or any other kind of wardens; instead, they will complement existing services, working closely with PCSOs and local neighbourhood policing teams to help ensure a coordinated and visible presence in the community.
- 4.5 Therefore, in essence, it is expected that the roles and responsibilities of the Community Wardens in supporting our communities will broadly encompass two main approaches:
- **Preventative**: Being a local point of contact, providing advice and support, as well as making referrals to other Council service areas, enhancing communication, and informing resource targeting. Supporting the Community Safety Partnership with developmental work in our communities to consult with and engage local residents in community safety initiatives and working with the YEPS Service to promote diversionary activities for young people.
 - **Reactive**: a focused response to areas that are experiencing ASB and or juvenile nuisance. Providing a visible uniformed patrolling of hotspot areas at key times and locations, reporting incidents and safeguarding concerns to partners as appropriate.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required. There are no negative or adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report.
- 5.2 Moreover, the introduction of this new service can be seen as another step forward to ensuring strong and safe communities thrive across RCT for the benefit of all residents, providing an important link between the Council, our Partners and its communities to promote community cohesion and ensure an effective response to identified issues.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Community Wardens, and any supervisory staff, are employed at levels broadly consistent with other Frontline Services enforcement functions.
- 6.2 Additional patrol vehicles will be added to the Council's fleet replacement programme to enable the Community Wardens to be mobile to meet the needs of local communities. (Where possible, these vehicles will be Ultra-low Emission Vehicles). Uniforms, personal protective equipment, (e.g., body-worn video cameras) and mobile communications will also be provided.
- 6.3 Inclusive of the provision of the PCSOs, resources have been made available to meet the full cost of the proposal, and these have already been identified within the Council's budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Community Wardens will be warranted to enforce, where applicable and appropriate, offences associated with the following Statutory Legislation:
- The Environmental Protection Act, 1990 – Section 88, including the offences of dropping of litter, chewing gum, cigarette butts, etc.
 - The Anti-Social Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Section 68, including offences under Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order 2020 such as dog fouling, etc.
 - The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, (2005).

8. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 8.1 The proposals outlined in this report will help to improve community safety, particularly in our town centres and parks and assist in the creation of safer living environments across RCT.
- 8.2 The establishment of a Community Warden service can also be seen to be contributing towards the Council's plans to tackle Climate Change by encouraging and supporting residents to respect their local environments and dissuading people from committing harmful environmental crimes such as littering and dog fouling.
- 8.3 The work of Community Wardens, especially in relation to town centres and open spaces, can be seen to contribute to the delivery of the

Council's Corporate Priorities with respect to the theme of "place": creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work by making Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment clean and attractive.

- 8.4 Further, this report has considered the potential long-term impact of a Community Warden service to help ensure fair and consistent standards of environmental enforcement across a wide area, which in turn helps to support and promote the Council's well-being objective of creating an environment where people are proud to live, work and play.
- 8.5 Community Wardens will work closely with the Police, all partners of the Community Safety Partnership, Elected Members and local residents and so, in providing this service, the Council can be seen to be collaborating with others to consider the needs of all citizens.
- 8.6 Safer town centres, play areas and parks, which are effectively and fairly enforced for the benefit of all residents, will help support the delivery of a Wales of cohesive communities, a prosperous Wales and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Community Wardens will provide a uniformed, professional patrolling presence in our communities, offering reassurance, assistance and effective reporting of issues to the police and statutory services in order to create a safer, more pleasant living environment within our communities.
- 9.2 The Wardens will ensure close links and integrated working across a breadth of Council services such as Environmental Enforcement, Community Safety Team, CCTV, the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, Trading Standards, etc., as well as with locally Elected Members.
- 9.3 The Community Warden service will also involve communication and joint working with external agencies and organisations, including all member organisations of the Community Safety Partnership: e.g., the Police; Health Board; Probation Service; Fire Service, etc., as well as community-based and voluntary organisations.
- 9.4 The introduction of Community Wardens together with the addition of 10 RCT dedicated PCSOs represent an opportunity to promote safe and cohesive living environments across RCT that are clean and vibrant places to live.



Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity

Contact Officer
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