

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services)

Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee: 7 February 2007

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**Subject: Community Warden Survey**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the results of the Community Wardens Service survey conducted in June 2006, and to compare the results with a similar survey carried out in July 2004.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** In June 2006, a total of 2,000 questionnaires were randomly sent out to tenants and residents living in the communities in which the Community Wardens Service currently operates. The purpose of the survey was to determine residents' perceptions of the warden service and of anti social behaviour issues that impact on their lives.
- 2.2** Copies of the results of this survey have been placed in Members' rooms and will be posted on the Council's website.
- 2.3** This survey is a follow-up to a similar survey carried out in July 2004 in the areas the Community Wardens service operates. The report highlights the percentage increase/decrease in tenants and residents perceptions of anti social behaviour and the warden service over the two year period 2004 -2006.

#### **3. Main Issues**

##### Survey

- 3.1** A total of 505 questionnaires were returned, providing a response rate of 25.25% which is considered to be a very good rate of return.

Respondents were asked 8 questions and were also requested to select from the following 5 options within each question:-

Very common/Common/Neither/Un-common/Very Un-common

Below is a summary of the main issues raised by the respondents to the questionnaire.

Q1. In which of the following areas do you live?

**3.2** The responses to the questionnaire came from the following areas:

|                            | <u>2006</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Dalmuir /Mountblow         | 21.6%       |
| Whitecrook/ Clydebank East | 19.8%       |
| South Drumry/Linnvale      | 10.7%       |
| Dumbarton West             | 18.0%       |
| Bonhill East               | 16.4%       |
| Haldane                    | 10.9%       |
| (no response given)        | 2.6%        |

Q2. How common are these to your neighbourhood?

**3.3** From a choice of 6 options, dog fouling was the most commonly occurring form of anti social behaviour, with 78% of respondents reporting that dog fouling is either common or very common, and of these respondents, 51.5% felt that the problem was very common. This was followed by rubbish and litter lying around (62%), groups of young people hanging around (59%), people who have been drinking or using drugs (55%) and vandalism and graffiti (44%).

The least common form of anti social behaviour was that of noisy neighbours or loud parties with 27.5% stating that it is common or very common.

This same question was asked in the 2004 survey. However in 2004 there were only 5 possible options for the respondent to pick from, but in 2006 this was extended to 6 to include "dog fouling". This addition was made to the 2006 survey as the results of the 2004 survey highlighted dog fouling as being a major concern for residents.

An analysis of the results from both surveys highlighted in table 1 below, shows that for each of the above anti social behaviour activities there have been reductions in the perception of how common or very common tenant's residents perceive problems to be.

**Table 1: Comparison Table 2004 -2006**

|  | <b>%<br/>Common/Very<br/>Common<br/>2004</b> | <b>%<br/>Common/Very<br/>Common<br/>2006</b> | <b>%<br/>Decrease<br/>from 2004 -<br/>2006</b> |
|--|--|--|--|
| How common are noisy neighbours to your neighbourhood?                             | 30.3%  | 27.5%  | 2.8%   |
| How common are vandalism and graffiti to your neighbourhood?                       | 54.1%  | 44.0%  | 10.1%  |
| How common are groups of young people hanging around to your neighbourhood?        | 62.4%  | 59.0%  | 3.4%   |
| How common are people who have been drinking or using drugs to your neighbourhood? | 55.4%  | 54.9%  | 0.5%   |
| How common is rubbish or litter lying around?                                      | 64.0%  | 62.0%  | 2.0%   |
| How common is dog fouling in your neighbourhood?                                   | N/A  | 78.6   | N/A  |

For example, between the period 2004 -2006 the prevalence of vandalism and graffiti has reduced from 54% to 44%, groups of young people hanging around has reduced from 62.4% to 59% noisy neighbours has reduced from 30.3% to 27.5%, rubbish or litter has reduced from 64% to 62% people who have been drinking or using drugs has reduced from 55.4% to 54.9%

It was not possible to compare the problem of dog fouling as no data is available for 2004.

The above figures highlight positive reductions in each area and show that over the 2 year period the perception of anti social behaviour among tenants and resident living in the communities in which the wardens operate is reducing.

Similar to the current survey, the authority wide anti social behaviour survey undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership in September 2005 and the Citizen Panel (January 2006) showed that issues of litter and dog fouling are the two main issues of concern to residents of West Dunbartonshire.

In response to this and in recognition of the need to increase resources to tackle problems of litter and dog fouling it was agreed at the 13 September 2006 Social Justice Committee to supplement the work of the existing Litter Control Team by recruiting 2 Litter Control Assistants. In addition it was also agreed, as part of pilot exercise, to provide front line support to the Litter Control Officers by providing a designated number of Community Wardens with the necessary powers to issue fixed penalty notices for litter and dog fouling offences.

It is anticipated that both these measures will assist the efforts of the Litter Control Team in tackling these environmental issues.

Q3. Are there any other issues in your neighbourhood that you would like us to address?

- 3.4** A number of respondents highlighted other issues in their locality that they wished to be addressed. Issues included improved lighting, car parking, traffic measures, and facilities for young people. Details of residents concerns have been passed to appropriate departments and Community Safety Partners for them to address and respond directly to individual respondents.

Q 4. Are you aware that the Community Wardens are in your area?

- 3.5** 54% of respondents said they were aware that Community Wardens were in their area while 45% indicated that they were not aware that Community Wardens were operating in their area.

An analysis of the results shows that there has been a 22% increase in awareness of the Community Wardens service over the two year period from 32.1% in 2004 to 54.1% in 2006.

The warden service will continue to be promoted through the Council newspaper, website, local press and community events. The Community Wardens information leaflet is currently being updated and will, in an effort to increase awareness of the service, be redistributed to residents in the areas served by the wardens.

Q5. If yes, have you seen a Community Warden in your area?

- 3.6** Of the 54% of respondents who indicated that they were aware of the Community Wardens, 60% stated that they had seen Community Wardens patrolling their area. 40% however advised that they had not seen the wardens operating in their area.

An analysis of the results show that there has been a 35% increase in the number of respondents who indicated that they have seen Community Wardens in their area over the two year period, from 25% in 2004 to 60% in 2006.

Monitoring will take place to ensure that the wardens are carrying out regular foot patrols ,engaging with tenants and residents and participating in community events to increase their profile in the areas in which they are working.

Q6. Do you know how to contact your Community Wardens?

- 3.7** 22% of respondents indicated that they were aware of how to contact the Community Warden Service.

An analysis of the results show that there has been a 15% increase in the number of respondents who indicated that they know how to contact the Community Wardens over the two year period, from 7% in 2004 to 22% in 2006.

There has been extensive advertising of all our anti social behaviour services including the Community Wardens in the local media in the past 24 months. Steps will be taken to continue to promote and raise awareness of the service through a sustained publicity campaign both in the local media and in the areas the wardens are patrolling.

Q7.How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood during the day?

- 3.8** 75% of respondents indicated that they felt very safe or safe in their neighbourhood during the day.

An analysis of the results show that there has been a 1.7% increase in the number of respondents who indicated that they felt safe or very safe in their neighbourhood during the day over the two year period, from 73.7% in 2004 to 75.4% in 2006.

Q8.How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighbourhood after dark?

- 3.9** 59.6% of respondents felt unsafe or very unsafe in their neighbourhood after dark.

An analysis of the results show that there has been a 1.8% decrease in the number of respondents who indicated that they felt safe or very safe in their neighbourhood after dark over the two year period from 57.8% in 2004 to 59.6% in 2006.

It is anticipated that the support offered to communities through Strathclyde Police and the increased volume of highly visible Community Warden foot patrols, will help reassure residents about issues of safety and resulting in an increase in the number of residents feeling safer in local communities.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

4.1 There are no personnel issues relating to this report.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications relating to this report.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

6.1 Scottish Ministers have stated their wish to see a real impact on tackling anti-social behaviour from the outputs delivered, and have stated that failure to evidence this throughout 2006/07 and future years will result in a reduced level of funding where appropriate. There is therefore a risk that Scottish Executive funding to tackle anti-social behaviour could be reduced if there was evidence that Community Wardens were perceived as not contributing to a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the areas where they operate.

#### **7. Conclusion**

7.1 It is evident from the results from the survey that whilst anti social behaviour is still a concern for residents in the areas the wardens operate, in the 2 year period between the surveys, residents living in these areas perceive that the problems of anti social behaviour are reducing.

The results indicate that resident perceptions of the prevalence of vandalism and graffiti, groups of young people hanging around, noisy neighbours, rubbish or litter, people who have been drinking or using drugs have all reduced between 2004 and 2006.

7.2 The survey highlights that awareness of the wardens service has increased significantly over the period, 2004 -2006 from 32% to 54%.

7.3 The survey also indicates that despite considerable efforts to publicise the service, further publicity is required to raise the profile of the service and to ensure that residents are aware of how to contact the service. The campaign to raise awareness of the Community Wardens will continue to form an integral part of the communication strategy to raise the profile of all of the existing anti social behaviour services.

**8. Recommendation**

**8.1 The Committee is asked to note this report.**

**Irving Hodgson  
Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services  
( Housing and Regeneration)  
Date: 11 January 2007**

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| <b>Person to Contact:</b> | Martin McKendrick, Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton G82 3PU, Tel No. (01389 737249 |
| <b>Appendix:</b>          | None  |
| <b>Background Papers:</b> | Community Wardens Survey July 2004  |
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>    | 1,2,3,5,16, 20 & 21.  |