

## **REPORT TO EXETER CITY COUNCIL SCRUTINY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE**

**Date of Meetings: 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2014**

**Report of: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PUBLIC REALM**

**Title: RESOURCING ENFORCEMENT SERVICES**

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.

### **Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Executive

## **1 What is the report about?**

- 1.1 To obtain Member approval to create an Enforcement Team for off street parking, illegal encampments, litter and dogs from existing staff resources.

## **2 Recommendations:**

- 2.1 That an Enforcement Team of 5 FTEs is created from the current four Community Patrollers and the Environmental Enforcement resource to focus on statutory and business critical enforcement work.

## **3 Reasons for the recommendation:**

- 3.1 To enable a cohesive approach to enforcement issues in order to help maintain the public realm environment and protect important revenue streams.

## **4 What are the resource implications including non financial resources.**

- 4.1 There are no additional resourcing implications above a modest sum to provide enhanced training in conflict management for the team (£950) and a provision for personal protection equipment (£500)

## **5 Section 151 Officer comments:**

No comment.

## **6 What are the legal aspects?**

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to collect stray dogs.

## **7 Monitoring Officer's comments:**

## **8 Report details:**

- 8.1 Recent budget savings have resulted in a reduction of enforcement capabilities for environmental issues from 12 to 7 full time equivalents (FTE).
- 8.2 The tables below summarise this reduction.

<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Service Cost £</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Main Duties</b>
Community Patrol	288,490	7 FTE	Out of hours response, late night noise nuisance, abandoned vehicles, playground equipment checks
Environmental Enforcement	197,807	5 FTE	Litter enforcement, dog fouling, dogs off leads, pest control, trade refuse, commercial premises

<b>2013/14</b>	<b>Service Cost £</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Main Duties</b>
Community Patrol	195,380*	4 FTE	Out of hours response, abandoned vehicles, playground equipment checks, dog fouling, dogs off leads
Environmental Enforcement (Street Scene)	27,519	1 FTE	Litter enforcement, dog fouling, dogs off leads,
Environmental Health and Waste Enforcement	102,038**	2 FTE	Pest control, trade refuse, commercial premises

Figures include \*£17K and \*\*£47K redundancy payments.

- 8.3 In addition, from April 2014, delivery of on-street Civil Parking Enforcement across the city transferred back to Devon County Council, after six years of delivery under an agency agreement by the City Council
- 8.4 This agreement provided for the on-street enforcement team to also cover the City Council's off street car parks and as a result the City Council was able to reduce the number of front-line parking staff during this period from 15 to 9. Over the years, more of the Devon County Council enforcement resource was directed to on-street enforcement but sufficient off-street enforcement presence remained to maintain the levels of off-street parking tariff compliance.
- 8.5 The table below shows the staff establishment and net income details.

Year	ECC Funded FTEs	DCC Funded FTEs	ECC Off Street PCNs	ECC Off Street PCN Income £	ECC Car Park Income £	DCC On Street PCN Income £
2013/14	9	15	1,840	47,777	5,621,113	761,130
2012/13	10	15	2,375	57,539	5,697,721	527,783
2011/12	12	15	3,145	65,868	4,976,584	489,823
2010/11	12	15	2,790	54,957	4,755,260	465,411
2009/10	15	15	2,884	62,571	4,772,299	541,043
2008/09	15	15	2,040	48,944	4,721,230	404,931

- 8.6 All nine City Council staff are required to maintain the three Pay on Foot car parks at Guildhall, Mary Arches Street and John Lewis. Although there is no requirement for enforcement at these sites because customers cannot leave without paying, Pay on Foot demands an extremely high level of staffing to maintain the equipment and troubleshooting customer problems for sixteen hours each day, seven days a week.
- 8.7 With the transfer of the on-street enforcement team back to Devon County Council in April 2014, we need to resource off-street pay & display car park compliance to deter non-payers and protect the 2014/15 budgeted parking fee income of £5,670,000 as a matter of urgency. Enforcement is a visual deterrent and a lack of active enforcement is likely to lead to an increase in those risking parking without paying. An additional £60,000 is expected to be raised from Penalty Charge Notices.
- 8.8 Arrangements have already been put in place for the existing Community Patrollers to undertake car park enforcement patrols on a targeted basis throughout the charging period of 08:00 to 18:00 hrs in addition to their other duties in order to protect parking income but a sharp reduction in the number of penalty charge notices issued in April 2014 demonstrates that they are struggling to absorb this in addition to their existing duties.
- 8.9 During 2013/14, the Council spent £78,000 against a budget of £3000 on specialist contractors to facilitate the removal of an unprecedented number of small illegal encampments from Council land. The need to remove these encampments is not predicted to change in the foreseeable future but the Council cannot afford to resource it in this way again.
- 8.10 A contract was negotiated with Exeter University during 2013/14 whereby ECC provide dog/litter enforcement patrols on campus for four hours per week in return for a payment of £8,500 per annum.
- 8.11 In addition the team have already undertaken frequent public reassurance and deterrence patrols in and around Belmont Park following two high profile dog attack incidents over the past year.

It is proposed to create a single team of 5 FTE, comprising the existing Community Patrollers and the Environmental Enforcement (Street Scene) post to undertake the

following statutory and business critical enforcement work:

<b>Task</b>	<b>2014/15 Outcome Aim</b>
Off Street Parking Enforcement	To protect parking income stream of £5,670,000
Removal of Small Encampments	Prevent the need to overspend by up to £70,000
Litter Enforcement Patrols	To help prevent environmental degradation
Dog Enforcement Patrols	To help prevent environmental degradation and enhance public safety
Collection of Stray Dogs	Comply with statutory responsibility
Dog/Litter Patrols (University)	Maintain contract income of £8,500 per annum
Out of Hours Response	To provide cover between 08:00 and 21:00 hrs daily

As well as the above core tasks the team would continue to carry out existing ad-hoc duties such as investigating abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping, locking/unlocking council premises and deterring anti-social behaviour where appropriate.

The team would not have capacity to deal with late night noise nuisance as their core tasks would now fall within the 08:00 to 21:00 period. It is considered more desirable for the staff to be fully employed during these hours rather than waiting for complaints to respond to late at night.

Late night noise issues can still be reported to the City Council via the 24 hour Control Room. In the event of the noise coming from a student premises then the University Estates Patrol can be contacted to respond. In other circumstances details will be passed to the Council's Environmental Health Officers who can carry out targeted monitoring of a property if the noise nuisance is a regular occurrence rather than a one-off instance. These officers are already now covering weekend nights.

The requirement to make these changes is immediate to enable the 2014/15 Outcome Aims in the above table to be achieved. It is unfortunate that the critical business drivers have overtaken the proposed Community Scrutiny Community Patrol Task and Finish Group but they are necessary immediately to protect the council's financial position following the transfer of on-street parking enforcement to the County Council.

## **9 How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

- Improve the environment and my neighbourhood – by enforcing against those responsible for littering and dog fouling
- Keep my city safe and looking good – by removing illegal encampments and enforcing against those who fail to keep their dogs on leads/under control
- Help me run a successful business in Exeter – by ensuring appropriate turnover of parking bays through sensible and sensitive parking enforcement patrols

## **10 What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

- 10.1** Personal risk to staff to be mitigated by appropriate training, comprehensive risk assessments and adequate personal protection equipment.

**11 What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?**

11.1 A dedicated and focused Enforcement team will contribute towards maintaining the standard of community safety and environment. Particularly in the areas of dog and litter enforcement as well as the removal of small encampments from Council land, which are often associated with anti-social behaviour and drug taking

**12 Are there any other options?**

**Assistant Director**

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

**Background papers used in compiling this report:-**

None

Contact for enquires:

Democratic Services (Committees)

Room 2.3

01392 265275