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# Overview and Scrutiny

## Review of Lewisham's Wardens Service

### Safer & Stronger Communities Select Committee

June 2008

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#### **Membership of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee:**

Councillor Jarman Parmar (Chair)  
Councillor Dean Walton (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Jackie Addison  
Councillor Simon Carter  
Councillor Hilary Downes  
Councillor David Edgerton  
Councillor Daniel Houghton  
Councillor Seamus McDermott  
Councillor Eva Stamirowski  
Councillor Alan Till

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report is the product of a review of Lewisham Wardens service carried out in the 2007/08 municipal year by the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee.
- 1.2 Community Safety is a key priority for the Mayor. Wardens are intended to contribute to this policy objective by providing a highly visible, uniformed, semi-official presence in residential areas, public areas and town centres to reduce fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.3 Lewisham's Wardens Service has its origins in various separate services, financed by various funding streams, which have developed over a number of years. The service started in 2001 on the Honor Oak estate, working in conjunction with the local housing office to tackle a range of issues of concern to local residents. As the different schemes developed across the borough, residents received a different service depending on where they lived. Although enjoying some popularity with residents, the schemes were fraught with a number of operational problems.

## **2. Background to the review**

- 2.1 The committee therefore initially aimed to focus its review on investigating these problems. The original scope for the review was to explore:
  - how Wardens are funded and their value for money;
  - how Wardens interact with the community;
  - the impact of Wardens on reducing anti-social behaviour/improving community safety;
  - future options for the Wardens Service in Lewisham;
  - how best Wardens can work with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Safer Neighbourhood Police Teams; and
  - the issue of resisting abstraction.
- 2.2 However, between the point when the committee decided to review the Wardens service, in June 2007, and when it started its work in October 2007, a restructure of the service was carried out, following an internal review driven by both funding and performance issues. This reorganisation involved major changes, including the appointment of a new manager. This necessarily required changes to be made to the scope of our committee's review.

## **3. Scope of the Committee's review**

3.1 The Committee wanted to contribute to the positive development of the Wardens service following its reorganisation. To do so, it needed to develop a better understanding of the role of Wardens, in particular how and to what extent the service functioned in providing a visible, uniformed presence and how and to what extent it worked alongside other teams and agencies in the borough to foster a safer and stronger community.

3.2 The Committee therefore agreed to revise the scope of its review so that it broadly looked at whether the service was achieving its intended aims of :

- providing a visible, uniformed, semi-official presence in residential, public areas and town centres;
- reducing the fear of crime, especially street crime in the areas covered by the Wardens schemes;
- reducing actual crime and promoting the reporting of crime to the police and relevant agencies; and
- reducing the incidence of anti-social behaviour and liaising with other council services to enforce our anti-social behaviour strategy

3.3 Within that approach, the committee agreed to refocus its review to look specifically at:

- what differences there were between wardens and similar services;
- what performance management measures were used for Lewisham's service;
- what comparisons with other boroughs might reveal about how such services are funded and delivered elsewhere, and with what success;
- what challenges the service now faced, including funding issues; and
- whether the service was delivering value for money.

#### **4. Initial achievements of the reorganisation of the Wardens Service**

4.1 The Committee found that the appointment of a new manager followed by the reorganisation of the Wardens Service, which was completed in November 2007, had resolved a number of issues that it had originally intended to address.

##### *Sickness absence*

4.2 In the year July 2006 to June 2007, the average number of days per employee for sickness absence was over 28.4 per year. The new

manager put in time and management resources to address this issue successfully, so that by October 2007 the level of absence was down to 2.33 days per employee for the last quarter, equating to 9.33 days per year (provided the improvement is sustained). This is a reduction of over 65% in sickness absence, compared with the same period last year. This is commendable, and we note that Corporate HR have used the Wardens Service as a case study to show how good management practice can lead to substantial reductions in sickness absence.

#### *Performance Indicators*

- 4.3 A new performance management system was also introduced to monitor service delivery and inform future service developments. 16 performance indicators are used to monitor results and progress. The service is now performing on or above target against approximately 75% of the indicators. The indicators will be refined over the coming year. We will address the question of how useful these indicators currently are for measuring outcomes rather than outputs later in the report, at paragraphs 6.26 – 6.29.

#### *Working Patterns*

- 4.4 In order to establish a single service operating consistently across the borough, a single rota was established. All staff now work the same hours, regardless of their location. The service operates from 10:00am to 10:00pm in the summer and from 10:00am to 8:00pm in the winter.

#### *Mobile Wardens Team*

- 4.5 Within the overall Wardens team (which numbers 47 officers in total) a new mobile team equipped with mountain bikes was also introduced to be deployed to hotspot areas. The mobile team is also intended to support other wardens operating across the other five schemes. The importance of this team is considerable, since for those parts of the Borough falling outside those areas that have dedicated teams occasional visits by the mobile wardens will the extent of the service they receive in their neighbourhood.

#### *Staffing*

- 4.6 However although we were pleased to note these improvements in the service, there is still an outstanding issue about staffing, which we will address later in the report, at paragraphs 7.15-7.16.

## **5. Sources of evidence for the review**

- 5.1 The Committee gathered evidence from a number of sources between October 2007 and February 2008. As well as hearing directly from the Cabinet Champion for Community Safety, evidence included reports and briefings from the Council's Crime Reduction Unit, located in the Community Service Directorate; question and answer sessions at meetings; presentations from officers working for the neighbouring

boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark; desk research; and an analysis of news and articles from the local press.

5.2 In the next two sections we present the evidence that we found and evaluated, before we present our conclusions in section 8.

## 6. What are Wardens intended to do and what do they do?

*The role of Wardens compared to the Police and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)*

6.1 Neighbourhood Wardens are intended to provide a highly visible, uniformed, semi-official presence in residential and public areas, town centres and high-crime areas with the aim of reducing crime and fear of crime; deterring anti-social behaviour; fostering social inclusion and caring for the environment. Their overall purpose is to improve quality of life and contribute to the regeneration of an area. Around the country, wardens have a number of roles depending on local needs, such as

- promoting community safety and assisting with environmental improvements, such as litter, graffiti, dog fouling and housing.
- contributing to community development and providing a link between local residents, key agencies such as the local authority and the police.
- engaging with local residents - for example, many schemes have organised 'litter picks' with young people, helped set up football teams and visited schools
- providing an information service to the public
- escorting and providing a visiting service for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the disabled and victims of crime.

6.2 In carrying out all these roles, neighbourhood wardens are intended to liaise with and complement the work of the Police and PCSOs.

6.3 PCSOs are members of support staff employed, directed and managed by their Police Force. They are intended to complement and support regular police officers, providing a visible and accessible uniformed presence and working with partners and community organisations to address anti-social behaviour, the fear of crime, environmental issues and other factors which affect the quality of people's lives.

6.4 PCSOs differ from the police most obviously in their lack of powers of arrest. But PCSOs do have some enforcement powers provided by legislation to allow them to directly tackle some anti-social behaviour issues, which distinguishes them from most local authority neighbourhood wardens. The Head of Crime Reduction put the argument to us that this can be seen to be an advantage, on the grounds that sometimes people feel more comfortable speaking to community wardens than to the police, and that wardens are often able

to encourage people, especially those who are younger, to reflect on how their actions affect others.

6.5 However, not all wardens lack enforcement powers: we learned that four of the 17 London Boroughs with wardens provide them with such powers. In Lewisham, though, community wardens do not have enforcement powers as PCSOs do, who are therefore clearly identified as part of the police service.

6.6 PCSOs generally work in Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). Each team is normally made up of six police and PCSOs, operating within a targeted patrol area. They aim to work in partnership with local residents, the Council and other agencies to identify and tackle issues of concern in each neighbourhood, such as anti-social behaviour, graffiti, noisy neighbourhoods, or vandalism, and find lasting solutions. Examples given of the sort of activities they undertake are:

- reporting vandalism or damaged street furniture,
- reporting suspicious activity;
- providing crime prevention advice,
- deterring juvenile nuisance
- visiting victims of crime.

6.7 The existence of three types of uniformed personnel (Police, PCSOs and neighbourhood wardens) on the streets tackling the same, similar or related issues therefore raised questions about the distinctive contribution of neighbourhood wardens to the objective of promoting community safety in Lewisham, and how well they were performing, which we sought to address.

#### *The Wardens Service at Lewisham*

6.8 We therefore examined what wardens actually do in Lewisham, to see whether they were functioning as intended, and examined the available evidence to see how successful they were and whether they were providing value for money. In doing so, we drew on some basic comparative information about wardens in the 17 London Boroughs which have them, and in particular on more extensive comparative information from the neighbouring boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark.

6.9 Lewisham has, at 46 wardens in its service, the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of wardens of the 17 London Boroughs with this service (after Southwark with 90), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest ratio of wardens per thousand population at 0.2 (again, below Southwark with 0.33), although Lewisham's extensive area means that it has only the 4<sup>th</sup> highest ratio of wardens per square mile, after Southwark, Camden and Westminster. Lewisham is one of only four boroughs where wardens cover the entire borough (the others again being Southwark, Camden and Westminster).

- 6.10 In terms of working with the Police and Safer Neighbourhood Teams, 10 of the 17 Warden Services pass intelligence to the SNT/police partnership; 6 work jointly; and Lewisham does both.

*The development of the Wardens Service since the 2006 review*

- 6.11 We were told that the public survey which underpinned the Council's review of the Wardens Service in 2006 indicated that the public would confide much more readily in wardens than in the police. Building trust and improving communication and referrals was therefore regarded as a fundamental role of the Wardens service. It was therefore envisaged that the wardens would focus much more on:
- reporting environmental crime and damage
  - assessing new hot spots of anti-social behaviour and involving other agencies as appropriate
  - building relationships with local residents, both young and old, to develop better understanding and cohesion in local communities
  - signposting residents to local services
  - acting as a calming influence in situations where anti-social behaviour and crime could arise, e.g. patrolling bus stops after school.
- 6.12 We learned that the development of the Wardens Service has been influenced by wider changes in policing rolled out across London. Since the Wardens review in 2006, the Safer Neighbourhoods programme has been developed, with Safer Neighbourhood Teams established across the borough. As part of the programme, SNT panels give local residents an opportunity to express their views about the particular crime and anti-social behaviour needs in an area.
- 6.13 Given the different services and personnel involved, the objective is to co-ordinate the various community safety and policing roles to give real benefit through tackling and also preventing crime. We heard that the Council sees the wardens as a key resource in this effort, particularly through being able to be directed to new 'hot spots' as required. In some wards, we were told, there is already excellent co-ordination of the agencies involved. Officers see a key task for the revamped service as ensuring that this level of co-ordination is achieved in every ward.
- 6.14 Lewisham has now set up a Joint Action Group (JAG), one of the roles of which, we learned, will be to ensure that the different visible presence roles are co-ordinated and used to maximum effect. Until the JAG has been in operation for sufficient time for its performance and the outcomes to be measured, we note that it is not possible to draw on any objective data as to the overall impact of the JAG and specifically whether how successful it is in co-ordinating the different players and securing maximum efficiency in the use of resources.
- 6.15 We were told that a greater emphasis is being placed on joint tasking and joint delivery on a range of areas related to community safety, and

in order to achieve this objective, there needs to be a range of options available in the 'tool box' to deliver the best fit. The example given was that a single approach of additional police may help to achieve some targets, but may not meet others.

- 6.16 In terms of the objective of a long-term solution to community safety, officers believe that the key is strong community cohesion, and community wardens have been identified as a key player in helping to build improved community responsibility.
- 6.17 An example we were given of one area where the Warden Service could be more pro-active in order to facilitate this was anti-social behaviour by young people. Officers believed a recent programme of work with Catford Girls School had proved very successful, and the head teacher had praised the work of the Wardens involved.
- 6.18 Wardens are frequently based outside most of the secondary schools within the Borough, as well as covering the majority of the 'hot spot' bus stops after school. The rationale, therefore, is that allowing Wardens into schools to talk to the young people about anti-social behaviour and providing Wardens with the opportunity of getting to know and be known by them can help prevent bad behaviour when the school day ends. This work is undertaken jointly with the SNTs to enable maximum use of all available resources and provide as full coverage across the borough as possible.

*Providing a visible, uniformed, semi-official presence in residential, public areas and town centres*

- 6.19 In checking whether Wardens do achieve their first intended aim, we conclude on the basis of the limited evidence that we were able to find for the review that Wardens do provide a visible, uniformed presence in the borough. Wardens wear very different uniforms compared to the police or PCSOs, and clearly the concept of 'street wardens' means something to young people, for example, judging from the results of Lewisham's Annual Residents Survey, where those young people with personal safety concerns have over the last three years consistently put 'more street wardens' 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in a list of measures that would help them feel more safe.

*The extent of public support for Wardens*

- 6.20 The Cabinet Champion for Community Safety, Cllr Onuegbu, told us in her evidence that the key factor in the Council's decision to continue and expand the Warden Service had been the views of residents who were overwhelmingly in favour of more Wardens. The Annual Residents' Survey was cited in a report to the committee as indicating that the public would confide much more readily in the wardens than in the police, and in particular the November 2007 survey was cited as showing that when residents were asked what they wanted more of, community wardens were the highest ranked request.

- 6.21 However, there are two problems with this line of argument. Firstly, the results in the Annual Residents Survey cannot be taken to be representative of Lewisham residents, since the question ‘Which of the following would help you feel more safe?’, which included the option of street wardens, was, as explained above, only put to those young people (aged between 11 and 17) with personal safety concerns. Secondly, the options of more police or more PCSOs were not offered in the question. When the options of ‘More police’ or ‘More wardens’ were put in a contemporary opinion survey across London, 55% opted for ‘More police’ at 55% and only 16% opted for ‘More wardens’.
- 6.22 To address this issue of the extent of public support for wardens, we also looked at the results of the desk research and the analysis of news and articles from the local press. While noting that there were a number of expressions of support for or confidence in the Wardens, we also noted that there have been negative comments about the Wardens service as well.
- 6.23 This ambivalence was neatly illustrated by comments from the Chair of the Lewisham Community Police Consultative Group (LCPCG), who highlighted how the Wardens had proved invaluable in talking to families on a particular estate and helping police to gather evidence in relation to serious crimes, while also advising that this was not a universal state of affairs.

*The impact of the Wardens in reducing the fear of crime, actual crime and anti-social behaviour*

- 6.24 The lack of hard data to help make reliable assessments was further confirmed when we asked the Cabinet Champion for Community Safety, Cllr Onuegbu, what solid evidence there was that Wardens made a significant impact in improving “liveability” in the borough. We were informed that there was no definite evidence as such and that the Wardens formed part of a broader effort, involving the police, Safer Neighbourhood Teams and other agencies, to tackle crime and promote community cohesion. In her view, the key factor about Wardens was that residents say that they want more of them and that they work.
- 6.25 However, as a committee we wanted more substantial empirical evidence than simply a mixture of residents’ preferences, press comment, officer assurances and an individual example of success in developing positive relationships between local residents and the Wardens service. We therefore turned to examine the performance measures used for the service, to see if these could verify whether the service is achieving its intended aims of reducing the fear of crime; reducing actual crime; promoting the reporting of crime to the police and relevant agencies; and reducing the incidence of anti-social behaviour.

*Performance measures*

- 6.26 The Wardens service has developed a series of performance indicators and is building up a bank of data. However, the indicators mostly measure outputs in terms of the day-to-day activity of the Wardens service. As a committee charged with reviewing the Wardens service to see if it is achieving its aims, though, our concern was with outcomes.
- 6.27 There are two particular difficulties about identifying cause and effect when looking at the service's activities and outcomes. Firstly, with regard to the objective of 'reducing the fear of crime', the Head of Crime Reduction acknowledged that the levels of 'fear of crime' are reported in general terms, and that self assessment by the Wardens themselves contribute to this measurement.<sup>1</sup> Some of the aims of the service are therefore more quantifiable and therefore more reliably measured than others.
- 6.28 Secondly, the Wardens service works within a patchwork of services and with Lewisham's partners. We found that this means it can be difficult to identify through hard evidence the impact that is directly attributable to the service itself in measuring any achievement of key aims such as 'reducing the fear of crime', 'reducing anti-social behaviour' and 'building community cohesion' . If policy objectives are to be achieved and value for money obtained, Lewisham Council needs to be clear that its Wardens Service is having a genuine and systematic impact on these goals, beyond anecdotal reports of individual successes.
- 6.29 There therefore needs to be more understanding of the relationship between what the Wardens do (i.e. the performance indicators) and the outcomes in terms of their impact on the aims of the service listed above. We will set out the implications of this in our recommendations in section 8.
- 6.30 As a contribution to thinking about other ways that these policy objectives might be achieved, the committee examined the different choices that two other South London boroughs, Lambeth and Southwark, had made about their Warden Services.

## **7. Comparative information from the London Boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth and its implications for Lewisham**

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<sup>1</sup>This problem is not unique to Lewisham. In an ESRC-funded research project, Dr Stephen Farrall, from the Department of Criminology at the University of Keele, found that the process of measuring the fear of crime was itself questionable, and tended to overestimate how afraid people actually were. According to Dr Farrall's research, which was completed in 2003, the inaccuracy was due to the fact that traditionally studies that estimate the fear of crime have tended either to ask leading questions, or questions that are not sufficiently detailed. There are similar

- 7.1 We took evidence from John Edwards, Divisional Director of Public Realm at London Borough of Lambeth, and Chris McCracken, Head of Service at Southwark Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme.

*London Borough of Lambeth*

- 7.2 For some years Lambeth had a Wardens Service consisting of 35 Wardens covering a number of locations across the borough. The Council had carried out consultation and given consideration to a borough-wide expansion of the service. But the estimated cost (c. £3.1 million) and the incoming 2006 Labour administration's emphasis upon crime enforcement as opposed to 'soft' efforts to combat anti-social behaviour and crime, led the Council to decide in April 2007 to replace the wardens with PCSOs. It therefore invested in 21 additional PCSOs from the Metropolitan Police. Each PCSO costs Lambeth Council £20,000, with the remaining cost being met by the Police.

*London Borough of Southwark*

- 7.3 Southwark, in contrast, has 90 wardens in its service, with eight area teams covering the whole borough and a mobile Warden team, at a cost of between £4m and £4.5m per year. Each area team has the same level of resources, irrespective of crime or anti-social behaviour levels, but the mobile team is able to react to 'hot spots' across the borough. There are also 22 PCSOs in Southwark who are line managed by the police but are embedded within the Warden Service, with PCSOs in each of the area teams, as well as in the mobile Warden team.

- 7.4 In Southwark's assessment, there were two definite advantages in having a Wardens Service: firstly, Chris McCracken thought that the presence of wardens raised the bar for the police and resulted in an all-round better service for residents because of the 'competition'; and secondly, wardens are much more involved in community engagement activities than PCSOs are, despite what the police might claim. In his view, the strength of PCSOs is in tackling crime, whereas the strength of Wardens is in improving the environment and in promoting community cohesion.

- 7.5 However, John Edwards challenged this from Lambeth's experience, pointing out that environmental improvement and community engagement activities are still taking place in Lambeth, delivered elsewhere in the Council by other service providers. These activities have been absorbed into other services, resulting in an overall saving being made of £800k per year. An assessment, though, of the pros and cons of Lambeth's switch to PCSOs would need to take into account an increase in illegal street traders which had been attributed to the lack of a Warden presence and the loss of useful interaction between Wardens and ward councillors.

7.6 We followed up the key points we drew from this evidence, about environmental crime, community engagement activities and community cohesion, when we questioned the Cabinet Champion for Community Safety, Cllr Onuegbu and the Executive Director for Community Services.

*Wardens and environmental crime*

7.7 In response to our question about the role of the Wardens in relation to environmental crime, they explained that the Love Lewisham Campaign was designed to encourage all members of the Council as well as the community to take action to improve the environment in Lewisham. All staff, in particular those highly visible, uniformed staff, are required to report environmental crime. There does, therefore, seem to be some overlap between what Wardens and other Lewisham staff do in this field.

*Wardens and community engagement activities*

7.8 We also noted that while it was difficult for the service to substantiate the claim that “Wardens have an excellent relationship with their local residents, and therefore are aware of those who are known offenders, and therefore are able to reduce crime and anti social behaviour through this relationship”, the extent of Wardens’ community engagement activities was much more tangible.

7.9 We heard that Wardens attend regular neighbourhood meetings and Tenants & Residents Associations’ meetings and ensure they are available to local Residents’ Associations to discuss any issues of concern. We also noted that in addition to carrying out their day-to-day duties, Wardens are also involved in a wide range of community projects. This is commendable and we recommend that Wardens’ community engagement activities should be extended by ensuring that Wardens work closely with the new Local Assembly structures. Overall, we believe that this work is very positive and clearly distinguishes Wardens from other forms of visible presence on the streets and in particular PCSOs.

7.10 Officers also explained that Wardens work closely with the NDC in New Cross and with Lewisham Homes and Phoenix Housing in their respective areas. We noted that a number of Registered Social Landlords in the area, including London and Quadrant, Hyde and Phoenix Housing, had expressed support for the service and were willing to look at ways in which the existing service could be supported or even extended. However, as yet these funding streams are not yet guaranteed.

*Wardens and promoting community cohesion*

7.11 We also raised questions on what the role of Wardens was in promoting community cohesion. The Executive Director for Community

Services explained that the role is to recognise areas of potential conflict at an early stage and make sure that the right people – whether social services, the police, detached youth workers or whoever was most appropriate – know about it and act accordingly. A key aspect of the role is therefore providing the intelligence to act before any tension develops into more significant problems. Here again we question whether there is not some overlap between what Wardens and other council staff – detached youth workers – do in this field.

*Enforcement powers – should Wardens have them?*

7.12 We addressed the issue of following Southwark's example and giving Wardens enforcement powers, for example powers under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 2004 to deal with litter, dog fouling, riding on pavements and fly tipping. On the one hand, we recognised the argument that there was a danger that the relationships that had been developed between communities and Wardens might be compromised by this move, and that this might erode the distinction between Wardens and PCSOs. On the other hand, if Wardens were provided with these powers it could well assist in dealing with nuisance-type activity, while still enabling Wardens to maintain relationships with the community.

7.13 On balance, we were persuaded by the latter argument. Should the Warden Service continue to be supported, **we recommend that Wardens should be trained in issuing fixed penalty notices in relation to dog fouling, litter and fly tipping, and propose that this should be taken into consideration in the development of the 3 year strategy for the Wardens Service, currently under development.** Our Committee should monitor future developments with regard to the Wardens Service.

*Mobile Wardens Service – how to make the best use of this team*

7.14 We also have some concerns about the mobile Wardens service, which we saw as potentially in danger of continually reacting to situations if they are not deployed carefully. We note the experience from Southwark that mobile Wardens need to be given time to embed themselves in an area in order to ensure that they can tackle any problems effectively. The Executive Director for Community Services has acknowledged that this is a key area of concern for the Council and the Safer Neighbourhood Panels. **We therefore recommend that particular attention is paid to this issue of making the best use of the Mobile Wardens team, in both policy and operational terms.**

*Staffing – ensuring stability, competence and commitment*

7.15 We noted from evidence given by the Head of Crime Reduction in December 2007 that four agency staff had been recruited to fill vacancies in the Wardens service. However, by February 2008 the number of agency staff had risen to nine. While we were reassured by officers that this issue would be resolved after the current moratorium on filling council vacancies permanently ended in the new financial

year, we would like reassurances that staff have now been permanently recruited to all these posts.

- 7.16 Before we embarked on this review we had thought that a lack of training might be at the root of the problems the service was experiencing. We welcome the fact that there is a wide range of courses that Wardens undertake, all of which are externally delivered and certificated, and that the management team will be looking to identify a range of other relevant training in order to develop a course that provides an accredited qualification.

*The issue of funding for the Wardens Service*

- 7.17 We noted the Wardens service is resourced through a number of different funding streams, including the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme, depending on geographical area. There is an issue about the sustainability of the service in the New Cross NDC area after that funding stream has ended, which we noted that officers were considering and intend to progress shortly. There is also an issue about whether the RSLs involved in stock transfers will actually continue to support those parts of the Warden Service that are currently funded through the HRA, although officers seemed upbeat about the prospects.

- 7.18 However, the bigger question arises from the fact that nearly two-thirds of the £2.75million comes from the Council's General Fund – and whether this expenditure actually represents value for money. We shall now bring all the strands of our review together and develop our conclusions.

## **8. Conclusions and further recommendations**

- 8.1 The Wardens Service in Lewisham has emerged from a period of extremely poor performance and it is reassuring that the service has now been stabilised. The Committee is reassured that the recent restructure gives the Wardens Service an excellent opportunity to prove itself and its worth.
- 8.2 However, it is clear that the funding streams from the various RSLs and the NDC are not secure which may result in a further charge to Lewisham's budget. Given this background it is vital that the Mayor ensures that the service is both an effective means of tackling issues such as 'fear of crime', 'building community cohesion', 'reducing environmental crime' and 'tackling anti-social behaviour' and that the service enjoys support from Lewisham's residents.
- 8.3 Although we received various pieces of evidence that the Wardens Service is popular, in the sense of having the necessary good relationships with the community to underpin its work, we were not

wholly convinced by the quality of the evidence, for the reasons we have set out above.

- 8.4 **We therefore recommend that the Mayor should conduct further research into the popularity of the Wardens Service, across the borough, comparing those areas that do and do not have a dedicated Wardens Service, and test the popularity of the Wardens Service against other options such as more police, PCSOs, youth workers and other services that might impact on the problems that the Wardens Service is intended to address.** This could be achieved via the Annual Residents survey in part or by other research at a suitable opportunity.
- 8.5 Coupled with the issue of popularity is the more crucial question of whether the Wardens Service is actually an effective agency that is achieving the various aims it has been set and is providing value for money.
- 8.6 We found that the Wardens' overall contribution to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and the value for money that the service provides has not been easy to quantify and evaluate. The Wardens Service works within a patchwork of services and with Lewisham's partners. This means it can be difficult to identify the impact that the Wardens Service is having on key policies like such as 'reducing the fear of crime', 'reducing anti-social behaviour', 'building community cohesion'. What is required is hard evidence of what impact each service in the patchwork is making and the extent to which it is doing that solely through its own efforts or because it is working in partnership.
- 8.7 The available evidence on this is ambiguous, and for that reason Lewisham needs to be clear that its Wardens Service is having a genuine impact in achieving its aims beyond anecdotal reports of individual successes. The Wardens Service has developed a series of performance indicators that measure the day-to-day activity of the Wardens Service. There needs to be more understanding of the relationship between what the Wardens do (i.e. what the performance indicators mostly measure) and their impact on issues like 'fear of crime'. We therefore recommend that this is sought through more detailed research and investigation within Lewisham.
- 8.8 Once in possession of the results of the research and investigation recommended above, **we further recommend that the Mayor consider future options for the service, whether this be expanding the service across the borough; adopting some of the future options for the service set out for us by the Head of Crime Reduction, such as linking into the 'Love Lewisham' environmental scheme and becoming an integral part of the community mediation provision; providing the service in a more clearly articulated partnership with others such as the**

**Metropolitan Police; or even deciding that much of what the Wardens do can be absorbed within existing services.**

**Summary of recommendations**

1. We noted that in addition to carrying out their day-to-day duties, Wardens are also involved in a wide range of community projects. This is commendable and we recommend that Wardens' community engagement activities should be extended by ensuring that Wardens work closely with the new Local Assembly structures. (7.9)
2. We recommend that Wardens should be trained in issuing fixed penalty notices in relation to dog fouling, litter and fly tipping, and propose that this should be taken into consideration in the development of the 3 year strategy for the Wardens Service, currently under development. (7.13)
3. Our Committee should monitor future developments with regard to the Wardens Service. (7.13)
4. We therefore recommend that particular attention is paid to this issue of making the best use of the Mobile Wardens team, in both policy and operational terms. (7.14)
5. We would like reassurances that staff have now been permanently recruited to all the agency-filled Warden posts. (7.15)
6. We welcome the fact that there is a wide range of courses that Wardens undertake, all of which are externally delivered and certificated, and that the management team will be looking to identify a range of other relevant training in order to develop a course that provides an accredited qualification. (7.15)
7. We recommend that the Mayor should conduct further research into the popularity of the Wardens Service, across the borough, comparing those areas that do and do not have a dedicated Wardens Service, and test the popularity of the Wardens Service against other options such as more police, PCSOs, youth workers and other services that might impact on the problems that the Wardens Service is intended to address. (8.4)
8. Once in possession of the results of the research and investigation recommended above, we further recommend that the Mayor consider future options for the service, whether this be expanding the service across the borough; adopting some of the future options for the service set out for us by the Head of Crime Reduction, such as linking into the 'Love Lewisham' environmental scheme and becoming an integral part of the community mediation provision; providing the service in a more clearly articulated partnership with others such as the Metropolitan Police; or even deciding that much of what the Wardens do can be absorbed within existing services. (8.8)