

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	23 November 2016
Subject:	Recruitment of Environmental Warden
Report of:	Interim Head of Community Services, Richard Kirk
Corporate Lead:	Chief Executive, Mike Dawson
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Clean and Green
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

The report considers the involvement of Tewkesbury Borough Council in proposing and leading on the formation of a partnership between the Borough, Town and Parish Councils in Tewkesbury Borough, principally to recruit an Environmental Warden for a three year period to help reduce incidences of dog fouling and related environmental issues.

Recommendation:

- 1. To APPROVE the recruitment of an Environmental Warden subject to ensuring cost neutrality over the proposed three year appointment and entering into a satisfactory partnership agreement.**
- 2. To delegate responsibility to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Clean and Green, to negotiate a partnership agreement with Parish and Town Councils wishing to participate; the agreement to include Terms of Reference.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

The recruitment of an Environmental Warden in partnership with Parish and Town Councils will help support the existing work of all Councils in trying to tackle environmental crime issues, especially the problem of dog fouling. It will also help strengthen the existing close working relationships.

Resource Implications:

Funding for the post will be paid through contributions from Town and Parish Councils wishing to be partners. The management arrangements associated with the new officer(s) would be met from existing resources within the Environmental Health team. It is anticipated that the work of the new officer(s) will result in fewer complaints from the public regarding dog fouling and other environmental issues to all partners.

Legal Implications:

A partnership will be entered into with all wishing to participate. A partnership agreement will need to be negotiated, drawn up and entered into with the Parish and Town Councils and Meetings that reflect the proposals.

Employment and recruitment will be carried out in accordance with Tewkesbury Borough Council policies. The contract of employment will reflect the nature of the work being undertaken for different Parish Councils.

Any insurance policies will need to be checked with regard to any relevant liabilities in respect of the employment of the Environmental Warden when carrying out the work at the different locations.

Risk Management Implications:

As Tewkesbury Borough Council is proposing to take the lead, the project will need to be closely managed by officers to make sure that clear targets are agreed, monitored and achieved. Failure to do so will not only damage the reputations of all partners involved, but will also lead to the risk of failure of a larger number of environmental crimes to go unchallenged which itself could lead to damage to the environment and an increase in ill health.

Performance Management Follow-up:

A robust performance management framework will be important to gauge the success of the project and therefore is the subject of the consultation with Town and Parish Councils. The proposal put to them includes the following:

- Annual reports to be produced and shared with all partners; including the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Biannual meetings of partners; this could happen at the same time as the regular Town and Parish Seminars.
- Targets and outputs will be reported to Members as part of the regular quarterly monitoring cycle.
- Daily / weekly reports will be passed to each Parish / Town Council when work is carried out in their areas.

Environmental Implications:

The purpose of the project is to tackle local environmental despoilment issues and, if the project is a success, will lead to quantifiable improvements in the environment.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 Legislation such as the Environment Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives Districts and Parishes powers to take action to combat environmental crime including dog fouling, littering etc. Dog fouling is a perennial issue within the Borough and a continual source of complaints to Parish, Town and Borough Councils and residents.

1.2 Various agencies already apply resources to tackle the problem, including Tewkesbury Borough Council. However, much of this resource is applied reactively to issues that are brought to the attention of the authorities and lack coordination. Appendix 1 gives information on the resources and initiatives the Council uses to tackle dog related issues, including the Council's stray dog service and the Paws on Patrol Scheme.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1** The intention is for the new officer(s) to begin in the new financial year (1 April 2017). Parish and Town Councils have been asked to consider the proposal and, should they wish to participate, include the proposals within their budget setting process for 2017/18.
- 2.2** The Environmental Warden would work within the existing environmental health team and would be supported by the officers and established resources in that team, for instance receiving support with more difficult cases, taking calls and messages whilst out of the office and reporting cases on the Idox Uniform computer database. The officer would be recruited by Tewkesbury Borough Council and would therefore receive the benefits that any other Council employee would receive, as well as complying with the Council's terms and conditions of employment.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1** Parish and Town Councils are invited to explore options for delivery and will be supported by officers to ensure that any potential alternative options achieve the project's aims.
- 3.2** Should Members choose not to support the recommendation, dog control and environmental crime enforcement by Tewkesbury Borough Council would still continue as described in the document at Appendix 1. Members could instead choose to offer support to Towns and Parishes to form a partnership between themselves, without the inclusion of Tewkesbury Borough Council.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1** The proposal contained at Appendix 1 was sent at the beginning of October to all local Town and Parish Councils for comment and response. Initial approaches to Parish and Town Councils on this matter were made approximately a year ago and have continued since.
- 4.2** Gloucestershire Constabulary has also been contacted and briefed regarding this project due to their involvement in environmental crime issues.
- 4.3** Responses received are shown at Appendix 2. So far there have been 10 responses showing an interest, 19 responses from those not wishing to participate and 16 either wanting to give the matter further consideration or waiting on the next meeting of their Members. Six had sent no response as of 11 November.

4.4 Those responding positively and the proposal put to them (as shown at Appendix 1) are as follows:

Parish/Town Council	OPTION 1 – Precept based				OPTION 2 – Population based		
	Precepts (£)	% Pro rata	Pro-rata 1 x FTE for 1 year (note 1)	Hours per year (note 2)	Population (note 3)	Pro-rata 1 x FTE for 1 year (note 1)	Hours per year (note 2)
Ashleworth	£5,000	0.29%	£67.17	5.1	555	£155.41	11.8
Badgeworth	£11,517	0.68%	£155.41	11.8	1,280	£358.22	27.2
Bishops Cleeve	£320,629	18.83%	£4,313.18	327.5	10,688	£2,996.18	227.5
Brockworth	£169,057	9.93%	£2,274.46	172.7	7,184	£2,013.69	152.9
Northway	£140,000	8.22%	£1,883.31	143.0	5,123	£1,436.85	109.1
Shurdington	£19,500	1.15%	£262.08	19.9	1,915	£537.34	40.8
Tewkesbury (have specified an amount in their response)			£3,000			£3,000	
Wheatpieces	£46,685	2.74%	£628.21	47.7	3,454	£968.00	73.5
Winchcombe (specified ½ day per week)			£2,592.06			£2,592.06	
Woodmancote	£32,450	1.91%	£435.93	33.1	2,938	£823.13	62.5
TOTAL			£15,611.81	760.8		£14,880.88	705.3

4.5 For the purposes of this paper, the following assumptions are made:

1. The Councils which have expressed an interest will continue to do so and will wish to procure services as per the table above. Option 2 is the preferred option (Ashleworth and Shurdington Parish Councils have submitted specific proposals, opting for option 2).
2. No other Parish or Town Councils wish to participate.
3. The Warden would concentrate exclusively on dog fouling issues.

4.6 Using these assumptions, a Warden would be employed on a part-time basis by Tewkesbury Borough Council operating within the participating Parish areas for a three year period.

4.7 The participating Parishes all have dog fouling ‘hot spot’ areas for which it is felt the work of the Warden would bring benefits. The Council has devoted resources to trying to tackle problems in these areas which, if the Warden is successful, will result in a reduction in officer time, allowing them to concentrate on other environmental health activities. The Warden would work with those Parishes to agree mutually agreeable times and locations to patrol.

4.8 There is a risk that a part-time position would not be filled as good quality candidates would be looking for full-time work. Conversely, the part-time and flexible nature of the job may suit someone who is looking for a position that suits their lifestyle and way of working. This would not be known until the recruitment process commences. Should the position not be filled through recruitment, partners would need to decide on if they would be willing to wait to re-advertise or seek the services of an agency / contractor (meaning less hours for the same money).

4.9 Obviously with the vast majority so far not responding or still to decide, the situation is very likely to change.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Environmental Wardens will operate in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy when tackling dog owners who do not clear up after their dog.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 None.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 As detailed elsewhere in the report.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 Reducing environmental crimes can improve community safety, economic, social and environmental sustainability. For example, dog fouling is commonly reported occurring on playing fields within the Borough, therefore reductions in dog fouling incidents will increase the confidence of locals to make greater use of the facilities provided and the outdoor spaces.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 Reductions in dog fouling incidents will reduce the risk of serious diseases such as toxocariasis which can cause blindness in children. Value for money will be realised by partners due to the pooling of resources to tackle the shared issue of dog fouling.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices:

1. Recruitment of an Environmental Warden: Report to Town and Parish Councils in Tewkesbury Borough.
2. Summary of Parish and Town Council responses.