

To: Members of the Special Sub-Group

Councillors D Clews, Farrow, Hayfield, Jenns, Parsons and Smith

For the information of the other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact Democratic Services on 01827 719221/719226 or via email – democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

This document can be made available in large print and electronic accessible formats if requested.

SPECIAL SUB-GROUP

16 February 2021

The Special Sub-Group will meet on Tuesday, 16 February 2021 at 6.30 pm via Teams. An email invite will be sent to all Members and the meeting will be live streamed on the Council's YouTube channel, accessible from the home page of the Council's website or at <https://www.youtube.com/user/northwarks>

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**
- 2 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

3 **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to put questions to elected Members. Questions should be submitted by 9.30am two working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THIS MEETING WILL BE TAKING PLACE REMOTELY.

Members of the public wishing to address the Board must register their intention to do so by 9:30am two working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

If you wish to put a question to the meeting, please register by email to democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk or telephone 01827 719221/719226.

Once registered to speak, an invitation will be sent to join the Teams video conferencing for this meeting. Those registered to speak should dial the telephone number and ID number (provided on their invitation) when joining the meeting to ask their question. However, whilst waiting they will be able to hear what is being said at the meeting. They will also be able to view the meeting using the YouTube link provided (if so they made need to mute the sound on YouTube when they speak on the phone to prevent feedback).

4 **Neighbourhood Warden Service** – Report of the Director of Housing

Summary

This report provides information about the role of the Neighbourhood Warden Service in the Housing Division and proposes a change to the working hours provided

The Contact Officer for this report is Angela Coates (719269)

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

Agenda Item No 4

Special Sub-Group

16 February 2021

**Report of the
Director of Housing**

Neighbourhood Warden Service

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information about the role of the Neighbourhood Warden Service in the Housing Division and proposes a change to the working hours provided.

Recommendation to the Special Sub-Group

- a That the work of the Neighbourhood Warden Service be noted;
and**
- b That the 12 additional hours proposed to deliver the service be
agreed.**

2 Consultation

- 2.1 A copy of this report has been shared with Unison.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Warden team provide a cleaning and caretaking role for the sheltered accommodation, flats, communal rooms and communal outdoor spaces as part of the Council's Landlord services. It is a well established and received service although its focus has changed since it was first implemented.

- 3.2 The role centres around ensuring that our properties and outdoor spaces are a clean and safe environment that people want to live in and socialise. The duties include:

- To provide a cleaning and housekeeping service for flats and sheltered scheme communal rooms.
- Responsibility for the good appearance (internal and external) and health and safety and security of communal areas of flats and sheltered scheme communal rooms. This includes testing fire alarms and emergency lights in accordance with the agreed procedures and rotas.

- To promote community safety – with a specific role about fire safety.
- To work with the Tenant Participation and Neighbourhoods Officer to liaise with local Tenants groups to understand their environmental concerns and take appropriate action.
- To inspect the local area on a regular basis, become aware of prevalent issues, link with the Tenancy Services Officer to monitor issues that might occur and act to resolve issues with them.
- To advise members of the public about the availability of Council services and to take and pass on concerns on their behalf.
- To improve the physical condition of the local environment by ensuring it is kept clear from litter, bulk rubbish and graffiti. This will be either by taking personal action or reporting the issue to another service to deal with but ensuring the work is carried out.
- Work in partnership with the Council's environmental services to ensure swift action is taken on issues such as abandoned cars and dog fouling.
- Act and / or report on deterioration in the condition of the external parts of Council dwellings.
- Undertake a handy person service to be able to act swiftly and undertake minor repairs which would otherwise be a low priority.

3.3 The Wardens have a critical health and safety role with regard to our flats. The importance of these health and safety routines is reflected in the recent Social Housing White Paper. This indicates that there will be an enhanced role for the Housing Regulator to oversee these arrangements in liaison with the new Building Regulator.

3.4 In addition to health and safety matters the White Paper sets out an expectation for neighbourhood management and the requirement for tenant satisfaction to be tested on whether we meet agreed standards. Annually we will ask tenants whether our communal areas meet the required standard, state the number of complaints we have had about communal areas and satisfaction with keeping the communal areas clean and safe as well as our contribution to the neighbourhood.

3.5 Until January of this year the service documented findings from visits in a paper format. From February 2021 an 'application based' system has been introduced. This enables the team to record their visit findings on an application on their smart phone. It is early days, but the software allows for reporting so that common issues and trends can be identified and tackled. It will also enable the team to evaluate areas in accordance with an agreed standard and in doing so promote a team effort to enhance those that need attention. Reports will assist with monitoring and providing for focussed interventions as well as tracking issues and improvements.

4 Current Position and Proposal

- 4.1 One of the Neighbourhood Wardens has recently retired. Given the importance of maintaining health and safety with good housekeeping and safety checks in blocks of flats and the requirements set out in the Social Housing White Paper, the capacity of the team to deliver key tasks has been reviewed. In future we are likely to have to stretch the Wardens' role again so that they keep an eye on estates generally.
- 4.2 The retirement of one Warden provides the opportunity to make a moderate increase to the capacity of the team to meet the expectations of our tenants and in advance of the Regulator's new requirements coming into force. It also reflects an increase in duties in relation to Health & Safety as the Division introduces more fire alarms in the flats to ensure that our residents are safe and the regulations for fire safety are met. This impacts on the workload of the Wardens as each "system" has to be tested on a regular basis along with the emergency lighting, an increase in the core hours would ensure that these obligations are met and the Wardens can continue to provide a high level of service delivery.
- 4.3 The current makeup of the service includes 6 Neighbourhood Wardens. 3 are full time and 3 work on a part time basis. The Housing Services Manager has proposed to the corporate Management Team that the team would benefit from having 4 full time Wardens and 2 part time. Management Team have agreed to the proposal.
- 4.4 The Neighbourhood Warden Service is a pivotal link with the community and in our Landlord services. The team work well together and deliver a first-class service. They play an essential part of enabling the Council to achieve its health and safety requirements.

5 Report Implications

5.1 Finance and Value for Money

- 5.1.1 The Neighbourhood Warden is a grade 5 post (£19,312 / £10.00 per hour).
- 5.1.2 An increase in one Neighbourhood Warden's hours from 25 to 37 hours per week requires 12 additional hours to create a full time post.
- 5.1.3 Including National Insurance and pension costs this equates to a total additional cost of £8,016.00 annually for the 12 additional hours.

5.2 Human Resources Implications

- 5.2.1 Currently the Team is made up of 3 Wardens with 37 hours and 3 Wardens with 25 hours. This equates to 5.04 Full Time Equivalents.
- 5.2.2 If the proposal is agreed the establishment would have 4 Wardens with 37 hours and 2 with 25 hours. This equates to 5.36 Full Time Equivalents.

5.2.3 The vacant post will be advertised and recruited in accordance with the Council's Human Resources procedures.

The Contact Officer for this report is Angela Coates (719369).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date