

The Highland Council

Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee – 19 August 2013

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	CS/27/13

Housing and Property Service Junior Warden Scheme

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Housing and Property

Summary

This report informs Members of the success of the recent Junior Warden Scheme which was run as a pilot in Thurso working with other Community Safety partners and Ormlie Community Association. Members are asked to consider proposals to extend the model across other parts of Caithness and Sutherland.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Housing and Property Service has the lead role in Tenant Participation and oversees the Council's response to Antisocial Behaviour. The development of a Junior Warden Scheme has allowed the service to focus resources on both of these two important areas of business and to facilitate and support an exciting new project.
- 1.2 The Junior Warden Scheme aims to provide an alternative mechanism to engage with young people and community groups, promote positive behaviour and encourage active involvement in the local community. The scheme aims to support young people to make a difference where they live and remove barriers to participation.
- 1.3 This report provides Members with the background to the Thurso based pilot. It highlights some of the outcomes and seeks Member endorsement for on-going support to extend this community led model to the remaining five secondary schools across Caithness and Sutherland.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Junior Warden Scheme was run over a twelve week period with twelve young people recruited during their first year at Thurso High School. The Council's Tenant Participation Officer, along with Ormlie Community Association (OCA) interviewed and selected twelve interested young people to participate in the pilot.
- 2.2 The programme for the type of activities that the group were involved in included: walkabouts, first aid, visits to Key Housing Association, Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and SSPCA. The benefits to the group will be evidenced during a presentation which is being delivered to the

Area Committee later in this meeting by participants in the Junior Wardens scheme supported by OCA's Development Manager, Helen Allan.

- 2.3 Identifying an existing Community group, in this instance OCA, to deliver the project, and having secured a financial commitment from partners in advance, meant the promotion, co-ordination and management of the scheme could be achieved with minimal financial impact for all partners.

3. Promoting Positive Outcomes

- 3.1 This community-led project approach contributes to four of the Council's Programme For The Highlands themes: Children and Young People, Caring Communities, Empowering Communities and Safe and Strong Communities.
- 3.2 It also links directly to both local and national outcomes detailed in the Single Outcome Agreement between the Highland Community Planning partners and Scottish Government by involving young people and finding new ways of engaging them on their own terms.

4. Further Development of the Project

- 4.1 Members' views are sought on proposals to extend the model across the other five secondary schools in Caithness and Sutherland. The costs, allowing for re-allocation of existing staff resources, are anticipated to be £3,000 for each of the five further projects - £15,000 in total.
- 4.2 The geography of the Highland area requires each scheme to have a degree of flexibility. This will allow us to reflect particular learning opportunities or experience in relation to the environment, health & wellbeing, wider community safety and community development issues affecting the particular communities the young people live in.
- 4.3 If extended to other schools it will be important to ensure that relevant parties are fully engaged and have the opportunity to participate in the planning of the individual schemes to suit specific needs.
- 4.4 Two of the Junior Wardens have been invited to attend the Highland Council Tenant's Conference being held in Inverness on the 21st September, 2013.
- 4.5 Importantly OCA are continuing to work with this Junior Warden group to allow them to identify a particular project to work on for their community, this will allow the young people to gain skills in community development which defines this as an innovative approach. The young people involved have also been asked to act as mentors for next January's intake of Junior Wardens.

5. Summary

- 5.1 From the launch of the project though to the celebration ceremony, when each of the participants was presented with a Completion Certificate and a Saltire Award for youth volunteering, there was a sense of excitement and

anticipation.

- 5.2 Those involved in the project witnessed the growth in confidence of the young people as they developed new skills, increased their understanding of their community and enjoyed new experiences.
- 5.3 The model can only be extended if the £15,000 funding can be secured. Bids for funding for equipment and materials will be made to Safer Scotland or other appropriate sources and will be led by the appointed community group, supported by the Council and its Community Safety Partners.

6. Implications

- 6.1 **Resources:** The resource implications arising from commitment of time from the Community Warden and Tenant Participation Officer will be managed within the current budgets.
- 6.2 **Legal:** There are no identified implications arising from this report.
- 6.3 There are no specific equality, climate change or risk implications arising from this report

7. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the success of this new Junior Warden Scheme model
- b) Agree that the model is extended across the remaining five secondary schools in Caithness and Sutherland over the coming twenty-four month period, subject to securing funding.

Designation: Depute Chief Executive/Director of Housing and Property

Date: 2 August 2013

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