

SECTION A

Name of policy / project / service	Withdrawal of Commons Warden Service
Background and aims of policy / project / service at outset	<p>The City Council needs to find £1million of ongoing savings in 2013/14, rising to an estimated £3million per annum by 2016/17. Every effort has been made to implement savings without loss of service, but the council has now reached a point where it is necessary to cease provision of some non-statutory services in order to achieve the level of savings required. The council has therefore refocused its priorities and these are now defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing the local economy • Protecting the city's poorest people from the effects of the recession • Increasing the supply of affordable housing <p>The Commons Warden Service does not directly contribute to these refocused priorities and withdrawal of the service will contribute to delivering financial savings required to meet the council's Medium Term.</p> <p>The service consists of one fulltime (37 hours/week) post established in February 2007, with shifts spread over the seven days of the week. The post is dedicated to the care of the Commons, and patrols all three of Lincoln's commons addressing issues of both maintenance and management. In order to be accessible when the open spaces are most used he has a shift pattern that includes working outside normal hours, and to prevent excessive overlap with the Urban Ranger Service, their shifts are taken into consideration in shift planning. The varied shift pattern means that although the warden is only likely to spend a couple of hours a day on each common, the timing cannot be predicted and therefore the fact that the warden might be around provides some reassurance to commons users from a personal safety perspective.</p> <p>Alongside high profile site patrols the main duties include (in no particular order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and littering • Address, deter and report anti-social behaviour and illegal use of the commons • Liaison with the Community Services staff and grounds maintenance contractor to ensure the commons are well maintained • Meet and talk to the users to address any concerns they may have • Promote the commons with those who don't use the commons • Development of the management plan and associated action plan.

- Meet with relevant environmental groups and the Commons Advisory Panel

Statistics relating to incidents dealt with by the Commons Warden over the past year indicate that there could be a limited potential impact on protected characteristics (see Section B for further comment).

Consultation responses suggest that without the presence of a warden people would feel less safe. In some cases, but not all, it is evident that some isolated comments have been made by older, disabled or female persons, although other comments may have come from people with different characteristics. From the latest survey there appears no cluster of comments around a particular protected characteristic. There is no evidence to suggest that these groups would be less safe than any other groups. However, in mitigation of this feeling that they would be less safe work with the Commons Advisory Panel on replacement initiatives such as Park Watch have been suggested. Whilst the Panel have shown a willingness to work with the council on replacement initiatives, no specific programme of work has yet been planned. In addition the Communities and Street Scene Service will continue to work in close partnership with Police in respect of common land.

It should be noted that a separate savings proposal is to withdraw the Urban Rangers Service who work closely with the Commons Warden.

Person(s) responsible for policy or decision, or advising on decision, and also responsible for equality analysis

Decision – Executive
EA – Steve Bird ADCSS

Key people involved *i.e. decision-makers, staff implementing it*

Executive Members
Portfolio Holder for Health and Recreational Services
Director of Housing and Community Services
ADCSS

SECTION B

This is to be completed and reviewed as policy / project / service development progresses

	Is the likely effect positive or negative? (please tick all that apply)			Please describe the effect and evidence that supports this?*	Is action possible to mitigate adverse impacts?	Details of action planned including dates, or why action is not possible
	Positive	Negative	None			
Age			X	See background section above for general evidence.	NA	See background section
Disability		X		<p>The Commons Warden has assisted the Police in searches for five potentially vulnerable missing persons over the past year, where the warden's off road capability and knowledge of the commons have both been an advantage. The warden has also dealt with 12 incidents of homelessness, providing advice and signposting.</p> <p>Withdrawal of the warden will mean that the Commons Management Plan is likely to be progressed more slowly. This could have a longer term impact in that improvements to access for disabled users will be progressed more slowly.</p> <p>See background section above regarding feeling of personal safety.</p>	If requested the council could ask its contractors to assist in such searches, but no off road motorcycles would be available so searched would be on foot	When reviewing progress on the Commons Management Plan consideration will need to be given to the timing of works on access issues to ensure they are prioritised appropriately.
Gender re-assignment			X	No differential impact.	NA	

Pregnancy and maternity			X	No differential impact	NA	
Race		X		Three incidents of graffiti were reported by the Commons Warden in the past year. If graffiti were of a racist nature it may not be reported, and therefore removed as quickly.	The grounds maintenance or cleansing contractor can provide this service, but only when seen and reported. The Urban Rangers may remove it when they see it, so it would be impossible to remove it more quickly.	Existing contracts provide for graffiti removal and will remove it promptly when reported.
Religion or belief			X	No differential impact	NA	
Sex			X	See background section above for general evidence.	NA	See background section
Sexual orientation			X	No differential impact	NA	
Marriage / civil partnership			X		NA	
Human Rights (see page 8)			X		NA	

** Evidence could include information from consultations; voluntary group feedback; satisfaction and usage data (i.e. complaints, surveys, and service data); and reviews of previous strategies*

Did any information gaps exist?	Y/N/NA	If so what were they and what will you do to fill these?
No		

SECTION C

Decision Point - Outcome of Assessment so far:

Based on the information in section B, what is the decision of the responsible officer (please select one option below):

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| | Tick here |
| • No equality or human right Impact (your analysis shows there is no impact) - sign assessment below | [] |
| • No major change required (your analysis shows no potential for discrimination, harassment)- sign assessment below | [] |
| • Adverse Impact but continue (record objective justification for continuing despite the impact)-complete sections below | [X] |
| • Adjust the policy (Change the proposal to mitigate potential effect) -progress below only AFTER changes made | [] |
| • Put Policy on hold (seek advice from the E&D officer as adverse effects cant be justified or mitigated) -STOP progress | [] |

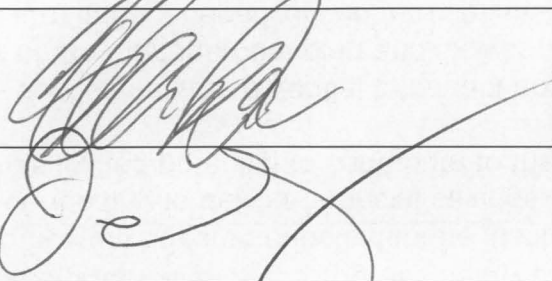

Conclusion of Equality Analysis
(describe objective justification for continuing)

In the context of needing to deliver financial savings, the Commons Warden Service is not a statutory function, and has limited potential to contribute to the revised strategic priorities.

Closure of this service has the potential to impact on the management of the commons through failure to progress parts of the management plan and slower responses to maintenance and enforcement issues, which could in turn impact negatively on perceptions of safety and vulnerability for some open space users potentially across all characteristics.

The Commons Advisory Panel have recognised this and would work with the council to mitigate these impacts. The local Police are not currently represented in the Commons Advisory Panel, but are to be invited to join shortly. Police membership of the Commons Advisory Panel would mean it would be well placed to both feed into, and take advice from, the Commons Advisory Panel so as to establish priorities for Police resources.

When and how will you review and measure the impact after implementation?*	<p>The local Police would be asked to provide reported crime statistics for the commons as a part of their engagement with the Commons Advisory Panel. The Commons Advisory Panel will then monitor these.</p> <p>The council established questions relevant to perceptions of managing public safety in public open spaces within its annual Citizens Panel Survey this year. This has provided a benchmark form which to monitor perceptions in the future.</p>		
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Checked and approved by responsible officer(s) (Sign and Print Name)	Steve Bird		Date	7th March 2013
Checked and approved by Director (Sign and Print Name)	John Bibby		Date	7th March 2013

When completed, please send to info.equality@lincoln.gov.uk and include in Committee Reports which are to be sent to the relevant officer in Democratic Services

The Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance to the Public Sector Equality Duty is available via:
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/new-public-sector-equality-duty-guidance/>