

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY**

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Community Safety held on Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 4pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

### **Present**

Councillor Lee Hunt  
Councillor Cal Corkery

**1. Apologies for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Gemma New. Councillor Hunt noted that she had reported that she was happy with the reports.

**2. Declarations of members' interests.**

No interests were declared.

**3. Retention of additional community wardens**

Councillor Hunt thanked the News for the recent article on this subject.

Roy Goulding, Community Safety Manager introduced the report and in response to questions from members explained that:

The government originally funded Neighbourhood Wardens across the country. Since austerity measures were introduced, funding had been provided by the local authority. A number of Local Authorities no longer have Neighbourhood Wardens with the same responsibilities. Some had been merged with Community Service Officers.

Funding had been identified from the Housing Revenue Account. He is very aware of the constraints of temporary contracts and is working to see if longer term funding is available.

The wardens are not a statutory service.

Councillor Corkery noted the essential role Community Wardens play within the community particularly in the wards he represents. Anti-social behaviour is residents' main concern so it is important to have regular patrols. He was pleased that they also attend community meetings but expressed concern of the potentially unsettling impact of the temporary contracts on staff.

Councillor Hunt noted that:

- He was happy to continue the funding for a further year but wanted longer term funding solutions.
- It is difficult for the council to plan ahead when it is not known what funding the government will provide from one year to the next. However, he gave assurances that whilst he is the lead for the Community Services portfolio, he is aiming to maintain the service.

- He would not welcome a move to contracting private security guards as some other Local Authorities had done. Community Wardens are publically accountable.

#### **DECISION**

**The Cabinet Member for Community Safety approved the proposal to retain the eight additional Community Warden posts for a further extended period until 31 March 2021.**

#### **4. Health & safety service plan 2019/ 2022**

Steve Bell, Environmental Health Team Leader introduced the report and in response to questions added that:

- Inspection of food premises is significant part of the enforcement remit.
- If there was an issue with the staff cafeteria, the code of practice requires the team to inform the Chief Executive. Another Local Authority would be called in to carry out any enforcement procedures.

Councillor Hunt noted that this is a very important service and he was reassured by the approach taken.

#### **DECISION**

**The Cabinet Member for Community Safety approved the manner in which Regulatory Services proposes to deliver its H&S responsibilities for the period 2019 - 2022 as set out in Appendix 1.**

#### **5. Scams - a plan of action 2019 - 2022**

Ed Skinner, Regulatory Services Lead introduced the report and in response to questions he and Richard Lee, Regulatory Services Manager clarified the following points:

The council is looking at becoming more involved in the Proceeds of Crime Act and to generate more income for regulatory services.

On one occasion when working with another authority, he had been required to arrange for a house in Spain to be seized under this act.

The Home Office determines how the money from the proceeds of crime is split: 50% is allocated to the Home Office and the remaining 50% is split equally between the three agencies involved in the investigation, enforcement and prosecution. Portsmouth City Council is both the investigating and prosecuting agency.

One officer at band 10 costs the council approximately £50,000.

Approximately two years ago, the Environmental Health, Trading Standards and two other services combined their activities. .

Councillor Corkery noted that the focus on older people was sensible.

Councillor Hunt noted that the more criminals the council prosecutes, the more assets can be seized and the more criminals can be caught and that people with mental health problems living at home are at risk of falling victim to scams more easily. The council will always prosecute to its fullest ability.

#### **DECISION**

**The Cabinet Member for Community Safety approved the manner in which Regulatory Services delivers its scams prevention work, and agreed that the council becomes a '*Friends Against Scams*' Local Authority.**

#### **6. Financial investigations & asset recovery**

Ed Skinner, Regulatory Services Lead introduced the report and in response to questions clarified the following points:

The Home Office stipulates that a tiered approach must be taken regarding spending from the reserve account. The first priority is to re-invest to ensure that there is more capacity to carry out investigations. From 2006/ 7 there are about 25 public agencies that can employ financial investigators them including the Environment Agency, the Royal Mail and DEFRA.

The second priority is providing funding for functions that reduce crime. The team offers funding to the Safer Portsmouth Partnership for community projects that are self-funding and sustainable and have a crime reduction element.

Councillor Corkery noted that it is important that these reports come to a public meeting. It provides Councillors and the public the opportunity to find out more about what the council is doing.

Councillor Hunt thanked all the staff involved and stated that everyone should understand that the council will come after criminals involved in illegal activities including counterfeit tobacco and seize their assets wherever possible.

#### **DECISION**

**The Cabinet Member for Community Safety:**

- 1. Acknowledged the powers available to AFIs employed within Regulatory services and authorised their inclusion within the council's enforcement policy.**
- 2. Acknowledged the benefits this work has yielded since its implementation, and approved the manner in which Regulatory Services seeks to deliver its financial investigation & asset recovery plan going forward**
- 3. Approved the retention of the reserve account so recovered monies can be reinvested in keeping with the Home Office policy: Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme.**

## 7. The importance of shellfish production areas & sampling.

Richard Lee, Regulatory Services Manager introduced the report and in response to questions clarified the following points:

Section 4.2 explains the latest sanitary survey that was carried out to determine the stock levels and the viability of the beds. If there is no economic value, then the responsibility of the Local Authority no longer exists.

He did not know the reasons for the significant reduction of salt marshes in Portsmouth and Langstone Harbours.

Southern Inshore Fishery Conservation Authority dictates the seasons that shellfish can be harvested. The seasons have reduced and the number of species of fish permitted.

As part of the Action Plan, the council keeps fishermen and merchants informed of any issues or potential contamination e.g. when there are discharges into the harbour.

Councillor Hunt noted that:

- Fifty two boats are involved in shipping in this region, on a part time basis and are chasing fewer fish.
- The certificate follows the fish to ensure they can be traced.
- Nitrates are captured in the bivalves' shells, so there is potential that they could solve the nitrates problem

### **DECISIONS**

**The Cabinet Member for Community Safety:**

- **Acknowledged the responsibilities of RS in respect to shellfish.**
- **Recognised the importance of shellfish to the local fishing industry and to the 'health' of our harbours.**
- **Approved the manner in which shellfish sampling is to be undertaken for the next 12 months.**

The meeting concluded at 5.40 pm.

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Councillor Lee Hunt  
Cabinet Member for Community Safety