

Title of meeting: Community Safety decision meeting

Date of meeting: 28th January 2020

Subject: Retention of additional Community Wardens

Report by: Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To propose the retention of additional community wardens until 31 March 2021

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Cabinet:

Approves the proposal to retain the 8 additional Community Warden posts for a further extended period until 31 March 2021.

3. Background

- 3.1. The administration' priorities included a commitment to providing additional community wardens.
- 3.2. The council employs a team of 8 permanent Community Wardens.
- 3.3. Since January 2019 the council has also employed a team of a further 8 community wardens who are funded until 31 March 2020.
- 3.4. The teams work to 'help keep the City safe, clean and tidy and to provide support and advice when needed'.
- 3.5. The additional team costs approx. £320,000 per annum and is funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Community Safety (CS) reserves, and the Flexible Supported Housing Grant (FSHG). This funding is committed until 31 March 2020.
- 3.6. The team operate across two shift patterns and the service provides cover from 8am until 2am Mon- Fri and from 10am - 2am at the weekends.
- 3.7. The team carry out their duties across the City and also patrol the Local Authority Housing blocks.

- 3.8. In April 2018 a team of 4 High Street Wardens were employed to assist with homeless issues linked to High Streets and other areas of the city. This was further expanded at the beginning of 2019 and a new team of 8 community wardens (consuming the 4 High Street roles) was put in place with the additional responsibility of managing anti-social behaviour concerns in Portsmouth City Council Housing blocks in the evenings. That is the current team in place that this report is requesting an extension of their roles until the 31st March 2021.

4. Impact of the additional resources

- 4.1. Demands for the service (whether placed on the service by members of the public or identified by the team when they are out working) have increased since additional community wardens were employed. (see appendix 1)
- 4.2. The team are able to provide visibility and reassurance with more proactive patrols able to be carried out in identified hotspots.
- 4.3. There has been a significant increase in the number of jobs that the team are able to carry out (see appendix 1).

5. Proposal for retention of additional community wardens

- 5.1. The proposal is to retain the additional community warden team (8ftes) for a further period - until 31 March 2021 in order to continue to carry out this work - across the City and in the Local Authority Housing Areas.
- 5.2. This means we can maintain the cover currently provided for every day of the year (except Christmas day, Boxing Day and New Years' day)
- 5.3. The team will continue to work to the purpose - 'to help keep the City safe, clean and tidy and provide help and advice when needed.'

6. Costs of retaining the additional team

- 6.1. The cost of retaining the additional community warden posts is £320,000 per annum.
- 6.2. This will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account, Environment and Community Safety Reserve, and the Flexible Homeless Support Grant. The funds from the Reserve are only provided until 31 March 2021 (see 9.2 for funding table).
- 6.3. Re-evaluation of the team will be undertaken with a further report on the future of the team brought back to cabinet in October 2020.

7. Reasons for recommendations

- 7.1. The community warden team of 16 is able to provide cover from 8am to 2am which was not possible with the smaller team of 8 staff.
- 7.2. The Community Warden team has made progress to resolve and reduce issues impacting on residents, the community, and businesses.
- 7.3. The team of 16 Community Wardens has increased the amount of actionable work they are able to do as well as carrying out additional patrols providing visibility and reassurance to residents and businesses.

8. Integrated impact assessment

- 8.1. An integrated impact assessment has been completed and it is attached at Appendix 2.
- 8.2. The assessment identifies no negative impacts associated with the options outlined in this report.
- 8.3. The data available indicates that some people in Portsmouth with protected characteristics are more likely to benefit from the addition of community wardens.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. The report speaks for itself and there are limited legal implications beyond those that arise as between the Authority and the individual staff member within the employer/employee construct. There will be potential costs associated with staff if the Service is discontinued in the future (notice and potential redundancies etc).

10. Director of Finance's comments

- 10.1 The report seeks to further extend the increased Community Wardens service for another year until 31st March 2021, funded as set out in table 1 below.

- 10.2 Table 1 - Funding for Redesigned Community Wardens Service

	HRA (56%) £	GF (22%) £	FHSG (22%) £	Total Cost £
April 2019 to March 2020	164,100	64,500	64,500	293,100
April 2020 to March 2021	179,200	70,400	70,400	320,000

- 10.3 The table above sets out the funding model for 2020/21 for the Community Wardens service. As you will see the Housing Revenue account will fund just over half of the Service during this trial period.
- 10.4 A further 22% (£70,400) is funded from the Environment and Community Safety Portfolio reserve; this cannot be relied upon as an ongoing funding source due to calls on the reserve to meet other obligations.
- 10.5 The Council does not currently have surety that the Flexible Homeless Support Grant will continue past March 2020, the grant is likely to continue but the Council will not know the amount until an announcement is made late 2019/20. If the Council fail to receive FHSG past March 2020 then the Council will need to identify a further £70,400 from portfolio reserves. An amount has been earmarked in the reserve if no FHSG is received.
- 10.6 Given the above funding model the Council can only commit to this redesigned trial until the 31st March 2021, officers will need to ensure that when the Service is mobilised that it does not enter into commitments that would obligate it past 31st March 2021.
- 10.7 The report that will be brought back to Cabinet in October 2020 will need to identify where the additional £140,800 will be funded from if the trial is a success and the Council wishes it to continue indefinitely.

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Signed by:

Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Community Warden demands

Appendix 2 - Integrated Impact Assessment

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
None	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/rejected by

..... on

Signed by: Councillor Lee Hunt, Cabinet Member for Community Safety.