

Title of meeting:	Cabinet decision meeting
Date of meeting:	3 rd November 2020
Subject:	Retention of additional Community Wardens
Report by:	Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services
Report Author:	Assistant Director - Neighbourhoods
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To propose the retention of an additional 8 community wardens until 31 March 2022

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Cabinet:
 1. Approves the proposal to retain 4 additional community warden posts on a permanent employment basis.
 2. Approves the proposal to retain a further 4 additional community warden posts for a further extended period until 31 March 2022.

3. Background

- 3.1. The administration's priorities included a commitment to providing additional community wardens.
- 3.2. The council employs a team of 8 community wardens. Additionally, since January 2019 the council has also employed a further 8 community wardens who are funded until 31 March 2021 bringing the total number of community wardens to 16 plus 2 community Warden Managers.

- 3.3. The team works to 'help keep the city safe, clean and tidy and to provide support and advice when needed'.
- 3.4. The additional 8 x community wardens cost approx. £327,100 per annum and are funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Cabinet reserves, and the Flexible Supported Housing Grant (FSHG). This funding is committed until 31 March 2021.
- 3.5. The additional community wardens provide cover from 8am until 2am Mon-Fri and from 10am - 2am at the weekends.
- 3.6. The team carry out their duties across the City and also patrol the Local Authority Housing blocks.

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. The whole of the community warden team deal with approx. 16,000 demands per annum. (was previously 12,000)
- 4.2. The team are able to respond to demands placed upon the service as well as provide visibility and reassurance with more proactive patrols able to be carried out in identified hotspots.
- 4.3. The team were able to support critical services including homelessness support, waste services, and community safety issues during the lockdown period and beyond.

5. Proposal for retention of additional community wardens

- 5.1. The proposal is to retain the additional community warden team (8ftes), 4 on a permanent basis and 4 for a further period - until 31 March 2022 in order to continue to carry out this work - across the city and in the Local Authority Housing Areas. This will be in addition to the existing team of 8, making a total of 16 community wardens.
- 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 8 community warden posts is £327,100 per annum.
- 6.2. This will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Flexible Homeless Support Grant (FHSG) and the Cabinet Reserve (CR). This funding will ensure that we can continue to provide an additional 8 community wardens, 4 of these roles will be permanently funded from the HRA, and 4 will be funded until 31 March 2022.
- 6.3. Re-evaluation of the team will be undertaken in Summer 2021 with a further report on the future of the team brought to cabinet in October 2021.
- 6.4. It is noted that this means that 4 (of the existing 16) staff will continue to remain on fixed term contracts until 31 March 2022.

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. Equality impact assessment

- 8.1. A preliminary EIA was carried out and there are no significant impacts or need to carry out a full EIA (Appendix 1)

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).
- 9.2. The Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 provide that employees who have been continuously

employed for four years or more on a series of successive fixed-term contracts are automatically deemed to have become permanent at the four year point unless the employer can objectively justify continued use of a fixed term contract (i.e. the project or task which the fixed term employee is working on is due to come to an end shortly after the four year period).

10. Director of Finance's comments

10.1. As the report sets out the redesigned Community Wardens Service is to commence 1 April 2021 and run until the 31st March 2022 at a cost of £327,100. This amount covers the additional 8 community warden posts.

10.2. Table 1 - Funding for Extended Community Wardens Service

	HRA	GF Reserves	FHSG	Total
April 2021 - March 2022	£ 183,176	£ 73,524	£ 70,400	£ 327,100

10.3. The table above sets out the funding model for the trial for the continuation of the expanded 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 £73,524 is funded from the Cabinet 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 only has surety over the amount of Flexible Homeless Support Grant it will receive up to 31st March 2021, the grant is likely to continue but the Council will not know the amount until an announcement is made by central government, if the Council later find that it will not receive this grant, or the grant is not sufficient to cover this cost then either the expanded service will need to end (this equates to a reduction 2 ftes and the service hours would have to be reviewed) or an alternative source of financing will need to be identified.

10.6. Given the above funding model the Council can only commit to this redesigned trial until the 31st March 2022, 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 2022.

Signed by:

Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - preliminary Equality 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

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

..... on

.....
Signed by:
Leader of the Council