

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

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Future Funding for the Community Warden Service

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees to continue to fund 50% of the Community Warden Service and 100% of the Senior Community Warden post for 1 year (as set out in section 7 below), subject to match funding being secured from partners.
- 2.2 That a review of the service and funding is undertaken during 2022 as set out in para 4.2 below.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Chichester District Community Warden Service has been in operation since 2005 and currently consists of seven Community Wardens and one Senior Community Warden. They are based and operate in the wards of Chichester East, West, South (part); Selsey North and South; Tangmere and Oving; plus East and West Wittering. The service operates on a partnership basis funded by various local partners. Chichester District Council (CDC) hosts the Service and contributes 50% of the service costs and 100% of the supervisor costs. A Steering Group of all partners provides strategic direction and oversight.
- 3.2 The Community Warden Service contributes to the corporate priority to "Support our Communities". They provide a visible presence in their areas and support to communities and individuals who are vulnerable. They are closely aligned to CDC's Neighbourhoods and Wellbeing projects supporting residents to become more involved in their communities and become more active. Despite changes to local policing Community Wardens still regularly engage with Police and pass on vital intelligence to support the local Neighbourhood Policing teams. Community wardens provided a lifeline to residents during the pandemic supporting the identification of vulnerable residents and delivering vital food and medications. They continue to support some of these residents in their communities. They are also integral to newly formed multi-agency forums looking at high risk Anti-social behaviour cases and young people at risk of exploitation, their local knowledge and trust from the community ensures they are able to fully participate and contribute to the meetings.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1 That funding for the Community wardens continues at current levels for 2022/2023.
- 4.2 That a fundamental review is undertaken in 2022 to ensure the Community Warden Service is delivered in the areas most in need, the service is still fit for purpose and a transparent and equitable funding model is developed that meets 50% of service costs.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 The Community Warden Service has been in operation for 16 years and is very much embedded into the communities in which they operate. They are involved in the development of communities and offer support to voluntary groups in their areas such as The Oving tea party which supports both the elderly and isolated in the area and also a number of Community Watch and support schemes.
- 5.2 Cabinet is recommended to approve the CDC commitment to the Community Warden Service by way of approving, £127,295 50% of the service funding for 1 year together with £48,000 100% of the Senior Community Warden post which includes a 2% uplift for inflationary purposes. Partners have agreed to an annual 2% uplift of their contributions through the Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which was revised in April 2018 and expires on 31st March 2022. A one year MOU will be put in place for 2022/23 pending the outcome of the review (para 4.2 above)
- 5.3 It is recommended that in future years, from 1st April 2023, the full 50% of funding be sought from partners to include 50% of the Senior Community Warden role and this will be a key aim of the review of the services (para 4.2 above). This proposal was shared with partners at a recent steering group meeting and all partners felt this would be very difficult to put in place for 2022/23 budgets which is why the proposal is to agree funding for 1 year only. Partners were confident they would be able to meet the funding requirement as is for the next financial year. The hope is following the fundamental review a more transparent and equitable funding model will be in place. This will be brought back to Cabinet in 2022.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1 There is an option to have no Community Warden Service, however any disinvestment in the service would go against the current trend where neighbouring authorities are investing in the development and implementation of such services. Results from the recent partner survey (Appendix 1) demonstrate the feeling of respondents when asked their views on what the impact would be if the community warden service didn't exist. Some of the comments are quoted in full below:

“Quite frankly, our communities would be poorer without the vital links they make, building bridges and developing community relations as well as supporting the Police and Councils and other agencies. Their frontline working is essential.”

“Increase in anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, loss of local intelligence and knowledge, loss of community confidence, particularly in older residents who would feel less safe.”

“Low-level issues would escalate and there would be no sharing of important knowledge of issues within the community.”

Any significant reduction in the service would have a negative impact on those communities and partners.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 The projected total annual cost (excluding the Senior Community Warden salary) is £254,592. This is based on a cost per Community Warden of £36,370 which on a 50/50 basis requires a partner contribution of £18,185 per post. Therefore a total partner contribution of £127,295 is required.
- 7.2 CDC’s proportion of the Community Warden expenditure is already included within the base revenue budget.
- 7.3 Management overheads of the service are absorbed in an existing management role which ensures that CDC has oversight of the Service and benefits from the positive outcomes achieved by the Service.
- 7.4 An MOU has been signed by partners and was reviewed in April 2018 to ensure on-going commitment and refresh mutual expectations. It will be reviewed during 2022 as part of the wider service review.
- 7.5 An uplift in partner contributions (see para 5.3 above) will be pursued for future years with an aim of securing 50% funding for the whole service.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 An online survey with funding partners was undertaken during August 2021 (Appendix 1) to seek their views on the Community Warden Service. We received 11 responses which was representative of all funding partners.
- 8.2 All the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the service provides value for money. Six out of the 11 rated the service overall a 10 and five rated their impact on the community 10. There were some negative comments but all seemed to be from the same respondent and this will be followed up.
- 8.3 A number of the partners felt that Community Wardens should have enforcement powers namely those for littering and dog fouling. This has been explored previously but as we already have an Environmental Protection Team who have and enforce these powers and considering the risk that the public could lose confidence in Community wardens and see them as just enforcement this has not been taken forward. That said community wardens support our Environmental Protection team in these areas of concern raising awareness locally and undertaking litter picks, reminding the public of their responsibilities and passing on intelligence.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1 The corporate risk remains the partial or total withdrawal of funding by one or more partner(s) where no replacement funding can be found which makes one or more warden posts financially unviable. This risk is mitigated by partner agreements to fund for a specified period and to provide a significant notice of withdrawal of funding. The service also holds a reserve to cover salaries for the period of notice and redundancy costs.
- 9.2 Since 2005 Community Wardens have dealt with over 50,000 incidents, the majority of which relate to low level crime and anti-social behaviour, however in the last few years there has been an increase in community based interventions and support for vulnerable people particularly during the pandemic.
- 9.3 Community Wardens provide a visible presence which offers reassurance to those communities. The Senior Community Warden provides a highly visible presence in the City centre and has dealt with a range of issues including cycling and e-scooters in the precinct, engaging with rough sleepers and dealing with ASB. They carry a chiBAC radio so are linked to the shops and can therefore offer a quick time response to incidents.
- 9.4 If funding for the Community Warden Service is not secured the areas in which they currently operate could be further exposed to crime and anti-social behaviour, vulnerable individuals may not be identified and opportunities to refer for support missed. Demand on other CDC services could increase resulting in additional financial cost to CDC.

10. Other implications

	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder: The Community Warden Service has a positive reduction influence of crime and disorder through patrol and prevention education	x	
Climate Change and Biodiversity:		x
Human Rights and Equality Impact: Positive impact in supporting vulnerable people.	x	
Safeguarding and Early Help: Positive impact in identification and referral of issues	x	
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR): Community Wardens will collect and store personal data for the investigation, prevention and detection of crime. Retention is limited to the timescales related to evidential purposes and will be no longer than 12 months.	x	
Health and Wellbeing Community Wardens support community watch schemes that have a positive impact on vulnerable and elderly residents. They also support corporate projects like dementia friendly communities and social	x	

prescribing.		
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11. Appendices

11.1 Partner Consultation

12. Background Papers

None