

# 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 approve the new funding model based on the number of community wardens per area.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agree the proposal to delete the current vacant community warden post.
- 2.3 That Cabinet recommends to Council funding of 50% of the total cost of the Community Warden Service for 3 years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 (as set out in para 5.2), subject to match funding being secured by partners.

### 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. The Council (CDC) hosts the Service and currently contributes 50% of the service costs and 100% of the Senior Warden costs. A Steering Group of all partners provides strategic direction and oversight.
- 3.2 Cabinet at their meeting 2 November 2021 resolved to continue this level of funding for 1 year subject to a review of the service areas and funding model.
- 3.3 The review which has been undertaken looked at various data sets and shows the areas in which community wardens currently work are still generally the most deprived in the district with most having over 50% of households with at least one dimension of deprivation. Selsey is highest at over 64% and Tangmere and Oving is lowest at 48%. Within the community warden areas there are 3537 households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction, an indicator of low income, with the most in the city wards and Selsey. Tangmere and Oving have the least but with 232 out of 1,106

households they had a high proportion at 21%. These areas have a significant number of vulnerable residents within them with all wardens except those covering Chichester East and Whyke spending over 13% of their time on welfare for residents. There are also relatively high levels of crime compared to other areas of the district. Chichester East and Whyke has the highest monthly average of crimes at 114 and Chichester West and Tangmere and Oving have the least at 35.

#### **4. Outcomes to be achieved**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 To achieve a fair and equitable sharing of costs for the community warden service.
- 4.3 Annual saving of £42,000 for the Council.

#### **5. Proposal**

- 5.1 The Community Warden Service has been in operation for over 16 years and is very much embedded into the communities in which the service operates. The wardens are involved in the development of communities and offer support to voluntary groups in their areas which include a number of Community Watch and support schemes.
- 5.2 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Council’s commitment to the Community Warden Service by way of approving £133,000 which represents 50% of the current service costs for 3 years which will be subject to inflationary increases. Partners have in the past agreed to an annual 2% uplift of their contributions through the Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which was revised in April 2018. This will be revised following this Cabinet decision to reflect the new funding model and the need for partners to match fund salary uplifts and retain the 50/50 funding balance moving forwards.
- 5.3 The only area with two community wardens currently is Tangmere and Oving. Looking at the data and the current contribution from both parishes this falls well short of what would be considered necessary for two community wardens. One post has now become vacant and it is proposed this post is deleted in order to achieve further savings and to bring service levels in line with other areas.
- 5.4 As part of the future services framework Cabinet requested that 50% of funding for the whole service be sought from partners to include 50% of the Senior Community Warden role. The new funding proposal has been shared with partners in good time

for them to make the necessary financial arrangements and gain agreement to achieve this funding. Additional funding partners have been identified and are being approached to gauge support, however the current model does not include this funding in case it cannot be achieved this financial year and almost all the costs are being absorbed by current funding partners. Should this additional funding be forthcoming then current proposed contributions will be adjusted accordingly.

## **6. Alternatives that have been considered**

- 6.1 There is an option to have no Community Warden Service, however, results from the partner survey shared with Cabinet in November 2021 demonstrated the concerns of respondents when asked their views on what the impact would be if the community wardens service didn't exist.
- 6.2 Retention of the vacant community warden post has been considered as a "floating warden" but has been discounted due to financial considerations.

## **7. Resource and Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The projected total annual cost of the Community Warden Service is £266,000 This is based on a cost per Community Warden of £38,000 which on a 50/50 basis requires a partner contribution of £19,000 per post. If the current vacant post is deleted this will offer up additional savings to both CDC and funding partners therefore a total partner contribution of £133,000 is required.
- 7.2 Registered Providers contributions will be based on the housing numbers per provider in each area with each household equating to around £10.
- 7.3 The Council's proportion of the Community Warden expenditure is already included within the base revenue budget.
- 7.4 Management overheads of the service are absorbed in an existing management role which ensures that officers have oversight of the Service and the Council benefits from the positive outcomes achieved by the Service.
- 7.5 An MOU has been signed by partners and was reviewed in April 2018 to ensure on-going commitment and refresh mutual expectations. A further review will be undertaken with the steering group following this report.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 An online survey with funding partners was undertaken during August 2021 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.
- 8.3 A small 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.

8.4 The new funding model has been shared with all funding partners and little feedback has been received to date.

## 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 55,000 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 in which they work. 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
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder:</b> The Community Warden Service has a positive reduction influence of crime and disorder through patrol and prevention education	X	
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity:</b>		X
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact:</b> Positive impact in supporting vulnerable people.	X	
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help:</b> Positive impact in identification and referral of issues	X	
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):</b>	X	

Community Wardens 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.		
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b> 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 prescribing.	x	

## 11. Appendices

None

## 12. Background Papers

None