

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet **Date:** 21 December 2017

**Subject:** Proposal for Increased Uniform Presence within the District

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor S Kane (Safer, Greener & Transport)

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### **Recommending:**

**(1) That a District Development Fund supplementary estimate in the sum of £25,000 be approved to fund the appointment of Parkguard security company to provide regular uniformed patrols of the District as a short term measure during the period 2 January 2018 to 31 March 2018.**

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1. Over the last 18 months, the Council has seen a significant increase in the number of youth nuisance incidents in the District and cases of general anti-social behaviour (ASB) amounting to 10% more than in the previous year. In addition, the level of recorded crime and violence has increased. It appears that this has been a result of the reduction in Essex Police resources from 2015/16, which has seen the number of community police officers in the Epping Forest District reduced by about 50%, together with the sale of Waltham Abbey and, proposed sale of Epping and Ongar police stations and the closure of custody and front office facilities at Loughton Police Station.

2. Recent examples of the escalation in serious youth nuisance and ASB problems include incidents over Halloween and in Waltham Abbey and Epping, where large groups of young people have behaved in intimidating and threatening ways, which has led to the Council's Community Safety Team using a range of powers including closure orders, injunctions and Community Protection Notices (CPNs). Although these particular issues have been addressed very well by the Council's Community Safety Team, working closely with the Community Policing Team, there is a real problem across the whole of the District and this has caused unrest and concern amongst many of the District's communities.

3. The Leader of Council and Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener and Transport therefore requested the Assistant Director (Community Services and Safety) to investigate potential options to address these ongoing issues in the District. A report was made to the Cabinet at its meeting on 7 December 2017, which considered the following potential options:

- (i) the commissioning of a private security company who are accredited by the local police service under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) (Uniformed Organisation) to undertake regular patrolling and targeted work;

(ii) the funding of a number of additional Police Officers for the District, who would be employed by Essex Police, but tasked through the Council's Community Safety Team; and

(iii) A hybrid of the options above, plus provision of a range of youth engagement work.

4. The Cabinet considered the costs and implications of each option, and agreed to undertake further discussions with Essex Police to fully determine the options and implications of the Council funding two additional dedicated Police Officers as part of a hybrid model of operation to improve levels of policing in the District.

5. However, the Cabinet also felt that Parkguard Security Company should be appointed, as a short term measure, to provide regular uniformed patrolling of the District during the period 2 January 2018 to 31 March 2018, subject to further review. As there was no provision made for this within the budget for 2017/18, the Cabinet are requesting the Council to approve a District Development Fund supplementary estimate of £25,000 to fund the appointment of Parkguard up to 31 March 2018.

6. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.