

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C-041-2017/18**  
**Date of meeting: 1 February 2018**



**Portfolio: Safer, Greener and Transport**

**Subject: Options and implications of the Council funding the employment of Police Officers in the Epping Forest District.**

**Responsible Officer: Julie Chandler (01992 564214)**

**Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)**

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) That £215,000 per annum budget provision be made in the District Development Fund (DDF) for 3 years, to fund the following provision, for a pilot period of three years from April 2018 to March 2021:**
  - (a) Employment of three full-time Police Officers by Essex Police, including a sergeant and two police constables, to be tasked and directed by the Council;**
  - (b) Commissioning of Parkguard security company to undertake targeted patrolling and youth engagement work; and**
  - (c) Delivery of additional, targeted sessions at Crucial Crew and Reality Roadshow.**
- (2) That a Service Level Agreement (SLA) be drawn up with Essex Police to set out the detailed requirements and arrangements relating to item a) above, in line with the Heads of Terms for the SLA set out in the report; and**
- (3) That the cost of £215,000 per annum be funded by increasing the Council Tax by £3.69 (2.5%).**

### **Executive Summary:**

At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017, Cabinet considered a report on the proposal for the Council to fund the employment of additional police officers, employed by Essex Police, but tasked by the Council's Community Safety Team. This would be to supplement Essex Police's existing District Community Policing Team in light of the high number of burglaries, crimes and anti-social behaviour in the district. A recommendation from this report was that officers would further investigate the implications of the Council funding additional police officers and this report serves to provide these details.

The work undertaken to collate this information included an initial meeting with the Police District Commander and desk research, followed by tele conference with Nottinghamshire Council and a meeting with the management of Lakeside Shopping Centre in Essex, both of which employ additional Police Officers within their areas.

The District Commander was very clear that Essex Police see the proposal as a really positive initiative and that abstraction of officers would only happen in extreme cases and for very high priority incidents in Essex. He also confirmed that any staff sickness and police training of the EFDC-funded officers would be covered by a credit to the Council.

A meeting was also held with management from the Lakeside Shopping Centre in Thurrock, who have been operating a direct policing service for over five years with Essex Police and it was identified that the arrangement works very well and that there were XYZ abstractions over the period of their Service Level Agreement.

Full details of the various findings relating to implications of the Council paying for additional policing are contained within this report and provide reassurance to concerns raised.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The proposal for the Council to fund the employment of additional police officers to supplement the existing local policing resources originally emanated from a series of high profile ASB and crime incidents in Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey and in Epping High Street. However, over recent months, the district has also seen a significant escalation in the number of dwelling and motor vehicle burglaries (currently the highest number out of all Essex LAs), which has resulted in Essex Police deploying a range of county-wide resources to try and address and deter the high level of crime.

### **Other Options for Action:**

- (i) To await the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner plan and timescale for increasing the Council Tax precept for local community policing, to see if additional policing resources are deployed to the District as a result.
- (ii) To await the results of the recent government plan to increase the Policing Budget across the UK.

### **Report:**

#### Background

1. At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017, Cabinet considered a report on the proposal for the Council to fund the employment by Essex Police of additional police officers, tasked by the Council's Community Safety Team, to supplement Essex Police's District Community Policing Team in light of the high number of burglaries, crimes and anti-social behaviour in the district. A recommendation from that report was that officers would further investigate the implications of the Council funding additional police officers and this report serves to provide the answers to the range of concerns raised.

#### Findings from Meeting with the District Commander of Police, Chief Inspector Lewis Basford

2. A meeting was initially held with the District Commander of Police regarding the overall logistics for the Council funding and tasking Police Officers and the following information was confirmed, which effectively comprise Heads of Terms for a Service Level Agreement:

- **Preferred base for officers to work from:** The Council's Community Safety Office, including secure storage of equipment and clothing. Essex Police would fund the cost of office set up, equipment and any other costs.

- **Special Equipment:** The EFDC-funded Police Officers would be provided with body worn cameras.
- **Police Vehicle:** This would be provided and maintained by Essex Police, , and could be parked in Epping High Street for daytime use (subject to the Council's decision on the current police parking spaces), and in the underground parking at the Civic Offices overnight.
- **Duty Pattern:** This would be full-time equivalent (FTE) to suit EFDC and would predominantly be Monday to Friday, including late shifts and some weekends. There would be pre-planned deployment for certain occasions, such as Halloween, Fireworks evening, New Year and other priority times.
- **Tasking and Reporting:** Deployment would be according to priority need within the district, via daily tasking and the EFDC-funded officers would be required to provide regular reports to the Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener and Transport on key activity undertaken and success stories etc.
- **Day to Day Supervision:** The team of police officers would be overseen by the Community Safety Manager and Community Safety Officer, with recourse to the Epping Forest Inspector or Chief Inspector.
- **Minimum Working Contract:** This would need to be guaranteed as a minimum of a three year contract.
- **Abstraction of officers:** This would be on an emergency only basis, apart from mandatory 2 x day police training per annum. Any abstraction of officers would be repaid through a credit note.
- **Sickness:** In the case of an EFDC-funded Police Officer being unfit for work, they would be replaced by Essex Police with an officer from the Community Policing Team. If a long –term sickness issue arose there would be a credit for the hours lost to EFDC.
- **Overtime:** If the EFDC team were required to work overtime in support of general CPT work, or whilst on EFDC duty to carry out arrests etc, Essex Police would cover this cost from its overtime budget.
- **Police establishment:** The officers funded by the Council would be in addition to the district Community Policing Team establishment figures and not used to cover day to day CPT resource deficiencies or reductions.
- **Additional Employment Costs:** The Council would not be liable for payment of any redundancy or other employment costs associated with the posts.

3. All of the above items would be included in a robust and performance based Service Level Agreement drawn up with Essex Police, for the period of the arrangement.

4. It was noted in discussion with the District Commander, that optimum EFDC-funded policing would consist of one sergeant, two police constables, as this set up would be sustainable and would enable effective management and supervision and provide high impact across the district.

### Findings from meeting with Lakeside Shopping Centre

5. A meeting was held with the Regional (South) Centre Director of Intul at Lakeside.
6. Intul currently pay for one sergeant and three police constables and they are based in their own office, as opposed to a joint office with the Lakeside security officers.
7. There is a contract in place, but it is very limited and does not include essential items such as joint tasking; agreed work rosters and target/priority setting. There is no requirement for the police officers to provide feedback to Intul on successes and achievements in their work and we were therefore unable to secure any information related to where the additional resource served to help reduce or prevent crime. In addition, there are no arrangements in place for intelligence briefings around particular crimes and gang activity etc. and there is very limited collaboration and communication with Essex Police in general.
8. This meeting therefore very much highlighted that the Council is ahead of the game, in regard to its proposal for how additional policing would be managed and contracted, and its existing, collaborative working with Essex Police.

### Conference call with Nottinghamshire Council

9. The Community Safety Manager from Nottinghamshire Council was very pleased with the impact of the direct commissioning of policing across the County, although he stated that the Council had not initially set up a Service Level Agreement with the police and this had caused real problems in terms of abstractions from Council duties. It was therefore strongly recommended that EFDC should consider a very robust SLA with Essex Police that does not rely solely on good relationships between managers in each party.

### Corporate Deployment of EFDC-funded Police Officers

10. Apart from undertaking tasks according to local priorities each day, the Council-funded policing team would additionally be available to support EFDC corporate enforcement/other work where a police presence is needed on a priority basis. This could include a range of functions such as:

- Assisting Council officers serving court papers on high risk individuals
- Providing support and effecting 'entry' to properties for the Corporate Fraud Team
- Supporting the eviction of violent tenants
- Providing 'cocooning' work where burglaries take place
- Supporting planning enforcement, illegal developments etc.
- Supporting officers dealing with issues of land drainage, contaminated land, private water supply etc.
- Supporting officers conducting property inspections in regard to tenant issues and Council Tax recovery
- Supporting the Environmental Enforcement Team for illegal gypsy and traveller encampments
- Carrying out enforcement action by arresting persons breaching closure orders, injunctions or criminal behaviour orders.
- Enforcing Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) which are not currently used due to the lack of ability to enforce.
- Issuing 'on the spot' fixed penalty notices

### Occasions over 2017/18 where police support has been required, but unavailable

11. Analysis has also been undertaken in regard to occasions over the last year, where various council officers have required police support and there has been disparity in response and subsequent outcomes. Attached at Appendix 1 are a few examples of these which relate to Community Safety, Public Health, Planning and Housing.

12. In addition to the occasions where police support has been required over the last year, the Council has also needed to employ Parkguard, a private security company, to provide a uniformed presence. This has ranged from direct support to Council staff, through to patrols and targeted work across key locations in the district. The following Parkguard deployments have been made in recent years:

**06/08/15 -09/01/16** - Hi-vis patrolling and intelligence gathering at Limes Farm following stabbings and other crimes

**17/03/16** –Parkguard Officers and recovery dog, for planned operation and engagement at Limes Farm to address drugs supply, firearms & cash incident

**14/06/16** – Provision of officers and weapons recovery dog for pre-planned weapons sweep Limes Farm

**2016/17**- Patrolling and youth nuisance management in Waltham Abbey

**Summer 2017** – Patrolling in Hillhouse and surrounding area following significant youth ASB

**31/10/17** – Hi-vis reassurance and patrolling in Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey

**05/11/17** – Hi-vis reassurance Limes Farm

**2016/17** – Support for EFDC officers in regard to evictions of potentially violent tenants

**2017/18** Support for EFDC officers in Waltham Abbey, to prevent breach of peace for another high profile eviction where council officers had previously been aggressively intimidated and prevented from doing their job.

### Other Considerations

13. With the recent announcement by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) that the precept for policing will be increased in 2018/19, at a level of approximately £12 per annum for Band D properties, an additional sum of c £6.5m will be generated in Essex. It is not certain how and when this funding will be spent, but the PFCC has indicated a commitment to providing more police officers on the street. A request has been submitted to the PFCC's office for clarification of this.

### Summary

14. Cabinet is asked to consider the findings presented in this report and to decide whether it wishes to proceed with the funding of additional Police Officers to work in the district, or alternatively to commission a security company to undertake patrolling and targeted work in the district, or indeed secure a mixture of services.

15. From internal discussion and consideration of work undertaken elsewhere in Essex and further afield, it is suggested that a hybrid option (as detailed at Option 3, below) would provide the most beneficial resource to the Council in terms of preventative and proactive work to address local issues.

16. To ensure good supervision and resource management of additional police resources, the model would need to include three police officers, including a sergeant and two police constables.

17. The services of a security company would only be called upon to support high profile incidents or seasonal priorities, or to provide targeted youth engagement work.

18. Any funding applied to initiatives such as Crucial Crew and Reality Roadshow would seek to add value in terms of sessions to encourage positive behaviours and lifestyles.

19. Alternatively, Cabinet may wish to wait for confirmation of the proposed use of the additional police precept funding, although this delay is likely to prevent the opportunity to allocate any EFDC budget for additional policing or uniformed support for the district in 2018/19.

#### Background information and Costed Options

20. The following information is taken from the previous Cabinet report and provides the approximate costings of options available:

#### **Option 1. EFDC to employ a private security company to provide regular, uniformed patrols and targeted work in the district.**

**Considerations:** A Security Company would provide a deterrent to crime and disorder, but would not have any enforcement powers or indeed powers of arrest when needed.

Cost for 3 x FTE staff (1.5 patrols) per annum	£140,000
<b>Total cost for total 3 year period</b>	<b>£420,000</b>

#### **Option 2. EFDC to pay for three Police Officers**

**Considerations:** A dedicated Police resource for the district could provide the most impact across the District's communities, at a similar cost to a security company (pro rata), but with full powers of arrest and enforcement. The officers would also be available to support Council officers in specific work as identified in the main body of this report, where arrest may be necessary.

Cost for 3 x FTE Police Officers per annum	£185,000
<b>Total cost for 3 years period</b>	<b>£555,000</b>

#### **Option 3. A hybrid of Options 1 & 2, plus Youth Engagement work**

**Considerations:** The Council could choose a hybrid of options, potentially including three Police Officers, plus a security company to be commissioned to undertake targeted work such as dog patrols or youth engagement, plus additional work within Crucial and Reality Roadshow programmes. However, a crew of two police officers would be less able to provide the level of warranted support that the Council currently needs.

1 x Police Sergeant and 2 x Police Constables	£185,000
Security company targeted work	£ 20,000
Enhancement of Crucial Crew/ Reality Roadshow	£ 10,000
Cost per annum	<u>£215,000</u>
<b>Total cost for three years</b>	<b>£645,000</b>

### **Resource Implications:**

To support discussions with the Government about funding, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner undertook a survey last year to find out the views of Essex residents. More than 5,000 people completed the survey and 66% of people said that in general they would be prepared to pay more for policing to improve the service. In terms of amounts, 75% of those expressing a view said they were prepared to contribute an additional £10 or more per annum to invest in policing.

There is clear public support for a higher council tax provided it increases investment in policing. Therefore it is proposed to increase the council tax by £3.69 (2.5%) per annum at band D to raise the funds for the proposed expansion of this service.

The District Development Fund is anticipated to require a transfer from the General Fund Reserve in 2018/19 to prevent it running at a deficit. If the council tax is not increased to pay for this expansion in service the General Fund Reserve will reduce by £645,000 more than is currently anticipated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This may require reductions in other services or increases in some charges. However, given that the entire district will benefit from this expansion in service the most appropriate means of paying for it is to increase the council tax.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

Essex Police receives a Precept to provide Community Policing within the Epping Forest District and is responsible for the governance of local policing.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

This report relates wholly to Community Safety.

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

Consultation with internal EFDC colleagues and local Police Inspector.

### **Background Papers:**

None.

### **Risk Management:**

It has been identified that youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour are becoming more prevalent in the district and this report seeks to provide options to assist with the reduction of risk within local communities of the district. Anti-social behaviour has been identified as a priority of Epping Forest District Community Safety Partnership every year in its annual Strategic Assessment since 2008.

### **Equality Analysis:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading for all members involved in the consideration of this report. The equality information is provided at Appendix 3 to the report.

### Example 1:

During June 2017, Community Safety became involved in a case with the Council's Housing South team in relation to serious ASB being generated from a council property in Sandford Avenue, Loughton.

On 31/08/17 a Closure Order was obtained and the habitual occupier allowed to remain in the property whilst the issue of cuckooing was determined. Re-deployable CCTV was erected to cover the area.

On 06/09/17 Community Safety reported a breach of the Order to police and due to lack of resource at the time the police attended 1 ½ hours later and no-one was at the property. Subsequent information was received into the Council from direct neighbours regarding the closure order being ignored and that police were not attending when reports were being made. The incidents below relate to reports of breaches, where there was delayed police attendance or non-attendance.

13/09/17 report of breach  
11/10/17 report of breach  
13/10/17 report of breach  
15/10/17 report of breach  
18/10/17 report of breach

On 25/10/17 the Council's Community Safety Team reported a breach directly to the Police Hub. The District Inspector ordered an immediate response and Police attended within 8 minutes of report and arrested 2 persons. One person had numerous previous convictions for possession of 9mm handgun, possession of a sawn off shotgun and other firearms offences together with possession with intent to supply Class A drugs. As there was no local representation to the contrary for EFD Community Safety, in custody, the man's 'reasonable excuse' was accepted and he was released with No Further Action. The second person arrested had minor previous convictions and was charged, pleading guilty and received 12 weeks custody.

Using the evidence of numerous breaches of the Order, Community Safety obtained a new closure order on 09/11/17 for the property, banning the habitual occupier. At the same time Loughton Community Policing Team raided the property and arrested the occupier. Stolen goods were recovered and the occupier charged with theft from motor vehicle and motor vehicle interference. The new Closure Order was served on the occupier whilst in custody and locks changed on property. The occupier was held in custody as being of 'no fixed abode and appeared at court the next day. He pleaded guilty and received a suspended prison sentence. The council had no duty to house him as he was considered intentionally homeless. Absolute possession was granted by the court on 28/11/17 due to the Closure Order being in place.

### Example 2:

Birch View, Epping is a block of flats near St Margaret's Hospital which houses a mix of private and social housing tenants. One female council tenant formed a relationship with a 'Prolific and Priority Offender' who was under the supervision of Integrated Offender Management. The man was of a violent disposition and Class A drug user. He moved in and immediately, there were reports of threats and intimidation from him to other residents. This culminated in a vulnerable tenant being assaulted by the offender and being attacked by the offender's dog. Community Safety applied for an injunction with power of arrest against the offender.



There were problems with service of the papers which could not be actioned by a process server. Also the police were requested to serve papers, due to the level of violence shown by the offender, but were unable to do so, due to operational commitments and lack of resources. The lack of service of papers allowed problems to continue and the offender proved very elusive. This resulted in officers from Community Safety eventually serving the papers on him following several visits to the building. An injunction was granted, banning him from intimidating or threatening the vulnerable resident. This was breached on at least three occasions and police were unable to attend and took no further action.

A further injunction was obtained which banned the offender from the property and surrounding area, which eventually resulted in the offender moving away. During this time the council had to give the exploited tenant a priority move.

### **Example 3:**

Community Safety investigated complaints of drug use at a property in Prescott Green, Loughton. The work necessitated working with Community Policing and gathering evidence for obtaining a search warrant for drugs. Operation Raptor (Gangs Team) also participated in this operation which resulted in the arrest and prosecution of three males for drugs offences. A Closure Order file was started but with negotiation the tenant was persuaded to give up the tenancy. The council's investigator attended the property to carry out a lock change and on doing a risk assessment suspected that at least two other unknown individuals were present at the premises. Police assistance was requested, however due to a lack of resources only a single CPT officer was available to assist.

On gaining access to the property, two persons were present and on checking police intelligence systems were both found to be wanted. The single officer detained one person whilst the other made off. During this action the man became very violent to the police officer and the council's investigator needed to give assistance to the police officer resulting in him receiving cuts and bruises, his shirt being ripped and his clothing covered with the man's blood, which was later found to be contaminated with the Hepatitis virus.

### **Example 4:**

The Council's Public Health team investigated a case where a field in a rural location was the scene of a suspected illegal animal slaughter ('smokie'). As a result of investigations and deployment of CCTV this activity was confirmed and a plan was developed to raid the location. Other information identified a second location and due to the likelihood of knives at the scene and need for arrest, police were requested. Community Policing were able to supply staff to assist with two warrants executed simultaneously where an illegal animal slaughter was identified and subsequently closed down.

### **Example 5 – Request for Assistance Planning public meeting**

Recent planning meetings have proved to be contentious with the public in the proposals for development they put forward and police were requested to attend the locality to prevent any breach of the police. The most recent meeting they supported was 14/12/17.

### **Example 6 – Planning Enforcement**

Planning Enforcement have used police assistance on a number of occasions in relation to risk assessments regarding attendance at Roydon Lodge, Chalet Estate (Traveller Community) due to a history of threats and violence. In 2016, there were difficulties in arranging Police attendance for most of the year. Enforcement officers attended site on 01.06.16 as arranged with police, but no officers turned up. However, over the last year police support has been more positive, as below;

25.01.17 Full police attendance for site inspection

13.04.17 Process server had police attendance for service of stop notices

20.09.17 Police attended with drone operator for overflight of site.  
There was no problem arranging these visits.

### **Example 7 – Private Sector Housing**

In November 2017, an officer from Private Sector Housing had obtained a warrant to enter a property for inspection under the Housing Act 2014. On notification to the property owner the officer received threats and intimidating remarks. The owner had a previous history of being threatening and intimidating to council officers and it was feared that this might happen on execution of the warrant and a breach of the peace was likely to occur. Community Policing officers were requested and supported the council's officer in safely carrying out an inspection of the property.

### **Example 8 – Housing North**

- a) A disabled council tenant who presented at reception and was belligerent and abusive refused to leave the building. Police assistance was summoned to remove him. Police were unable to attend which required the Housing Manager staying on the premises after closure of the building to supervise the person and arrange via ambulance service removal.
- b) In Butlers Drive, Waltham Abbey a private house holder had illegally acquired council land and parked vehicles on it which were being used for storage. After repeated requests from Housing and Legal to vacate the land, Housing officers attended to secure it. The person had a history of aggression and non-compliance and it was felt that there would be violence towards officers enforcing the possession. Police were requested to prevent a breach of the peace but were unable to attend. As a result Parkguard were employed to provide security for officers in attendance. During the attempt at possession the situation escalated into aggressive confrontation, which also involved the occupiers of neighbouring properties who took the side of the house holder. Due to the imminent threat of violence to Council officers the police were called as an emergency. They attended and arrested and charged the householder with aggravated trespass.
- c) A housing tenant in Silver Street Waltham Abbey was suffering delusional episodes and had fixated on his elderly and bedridden neighbour, alleging that she was making continual noise. The man was of a violent disposition and had a propensity to use knives. An injunction was obtained against him and due to the risk posed to officers, police were requested to serve it. Police were unable to assist. Housing and Community Safety therefore served the injunction on him at a pre-arranged visit to the Civic Offices.
- d) Housing supported by Community Safety investigated the partner of a tenant at Birch View, Epping who was of an extremely violent disposition. It was identified that he was involved in 'mates crime', had carried out a machete attack on a vulnerable person and was subjecting his partner to domestic abuse. He also had possession of a bow and arrows. A Closure Order was obtained to exclude him from the locality and police were requested to serve it. Police were unable to supply officers and the order was served by Housing and Community Safety.