

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for
Community and Regulatory Services

DECISION NO:

23/00122

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Review of the Kent Community Warden Service

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, I agree to:

- (i) AGREE a new Geographical Allocation Policy for the Community Warden's service;
- (ii) AGREE to implement a new model of operation for the Community Warden's service; and
- (iii) DELEGATE authority to the Director Growth and Communities to take any necessary actions including but not limited to entering into contracts or legal agreement as required to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

As part of the Securing Kent's Future strategy and the Council's commitment to delivering the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) is delivering a planned reduction in base budget of £1m over 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

A proposed model for the service to achieve the savings, and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) were subject to public consultation from 12 July to 3 October 2023.

The proposed decision will be discussed by Members of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee on 18 January 2024.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- (i) **Do nothing** - This would not achieve the required savings and does not support Securing Kent's Future's priority for balancing the budget and reviewing all discretionary services and minimum statutory requirements.
- (ii) **Non-staffing related savings** - majority of budget is staffing costs.
- (iii) **Securing external funding, in part or full** - ongoing work, to date nothing viable has been identified.
- (iv) **Narrowing the service's remit** - not supported by public consultation.
- (v) **Becoming a reactive service** - not supported by public consultation.
- (vi) **Reducing the size of the service and then having the same number of wardens in each district** - does not recognise differing levels of need – public consultation responses confirmed different levels of community need should be considered.
- (vii) **Reducing the size of the service and then allocating wardens based on need only, with no minimum commitment to each district** - public consultation responses showed low agreement from all 12 districts to service reductions, i.e. all districts value and wish to retain the service.
- (viii) **Cessation of the service** – Although not considered as part of the consultation, the

subsequent publication and adoption by the County Council of Securing Kent's Future requires cessation of the service to be considered as an option of the Review. Work building on Universities of Essex and Kent's impact analysis is to continue, supporting understanding and evidence of KCWS's contribution to SKF's New Models of Care. A further public consultation would also be required which would result in not meeting the savings target in 24/25 due to the timescales involved.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date