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To: Kent Community Safety Partnership – 19th March 2013

Classification: For information

Subject: KCC Community Wardens – Application for Powers

Summary: This report provides a brief update on the KCC Community Warden Transformation process that is currently being implemented. Following extensive consultation with staff, partners and unions a request has been made to the Chief Constable to enable KCC Community Wardens to be provided with powers to assist them in their day to day work. In addition, other changes are being made to terms and conditions to enable more flexible working and closer links with other partnership work-streams.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The KCC Community Warden Service has been in operation since 2002 providing a valuable service to the residents of Kent. The overarching aim of the Kent County Council Community Warden Scheme is to enable the people of Kent to live safely and independently in their neighbourhoods and communities.
- 1.2 The core objectives of a Community Warden are:
- Provide a reassuring conspicuous presence
 - Promote community solidarity and encourage communities and neighbourhoods to identify and solve problems
 - Tackle anti-social behaviour
 - Act as “eyes and ears” for other agencies
 - Be a trusted friend for the community
 - Improve access to local authority services
 - Provide information and advice about Kent County Council, local district councils and other public services
 - Promote social inclusion.
- 1.3 KCC Community Wardens are currently accredited by Kent Police under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS), in accordance with Home Office & ACPO guidance and they work closely with Police, local authorities and other statutory partners and agencies on community safety issues in their areas. They raise community awareness of problems such as bogus callers preying on vulnerable people in their homes. They also address environmental issues such as fly tipping, graffiti and vandalism. They engage with the young, elderly and vulnerable in activities such as youth clubs and sporting events and advice surgeries. Wardens also deal with a range of anti-social behaviour such as dog fouling, litter and neighbourhood disputes and incidents.

- 1.4 Community Warden Area Supervisors already work closely alongside partners in the 12 District/Borough based Community Safety Units (CSU's) across Kent. With the recent introduction of the Support Warden role to work alongside the Supervisor, it has allowed the service to respond flexibly to a range of tasks and issues that are raised by communities and discussed in daily partnership briefings within the CSU's.
- 1.5 The objective of these proposed changes is to enable the service to build upon the current Kent Police Accreditation status and adopt a number of powers that will allow KCC Community Wardens to respond to the needs and expectations of the residents of Kent in dealing with low level anti-social behaviour and other community concerns.
- 1.6 These proposals will form part of a wider transformation to the KCC Community Warden service over the medium term with the Warden Service being equipped with more skills such as restorative justice, better links with police information systems and the opportunity to focus on wider areas of community safety activity in conjunction with partners and provide a more focussed responsive service to a greater proportion of Kent residents.
- 1.7 In addition to the above, changes are also being implemented that will enable KCC Community Wardens to work when priorities dictate outside their normal areas and to have more flexibility to cover vacant areas, work on partnership priorities or focus on hot-spots areas. Individual KCC Community Wardens will retain their current base locations but can be directed by their Supervisors/Managers to cover wider geographic areas when the need arises.

2.0 Proposed Powers Requested

- 2.1 The proposed powers that are requested are as follows:
- *Power to require name and address for anti-social behaviour:* Power of a constable in uniform under section 50 of the Police Reform Act 2002 to require a person whom he has reason to believe to have been acting, or to be acting, in an anti-social manner to give his name and address.
 - *Power to control traffic for purposes other than escorting a load of exceptional dimensions:* The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 enables accredited persons to be given powers to direct traffic (for purposes other than escorting loads of exceptional dimensions) based on the powers constables have under sections 35 and 37 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. It also gives accredited persons the power to direct traffic for the purposes of conducting a traffic survey. Accredited persons conferred with powers under this paragraph must also be given powers under paragraph 3A of Schedule 5 of the Police Reform Act.
- 2.2 To support the above arrangements a pilot project is currently being run in conjunction with Dover District Council that is trialling a formal process between the KCC Community Warden and the District Council that will enable the KCC Community Warden to request the District Council to raise a penalty notice where appropriate.

- 2.3 Once the trial is completed and reviewed it is proposed to seek approval from Kent Chief Executives to a formal Memorandum of Understanding with District/Borough Councils to enable individual KCC Community Wardens to act as a “Professional Witness” providing detailed information to enable the relevant local authority to issue penalty notices where appropriate and where all other options have been exhausted.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That the proposed changes to the roles and responsibilities of the KCC Community Warden Service are noted.

For Further Information:

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