

From: Stuart Beaumont – Head of Emergency Planning & Community Safety

To: Kent Community Safety Partnership – 19th March 2015

Subject: KCC - Community Warden Service Update

1. Introduction

1.1 In light of the significant financial challenges facing Kent County Council and the need to reduce the budget allocation to the KCC Community Warden Service as detailed in the County Councils medium term financial plan (MTFP) from 2015/16, a full service review was completed. The management of the service explored opportunities to redesign the KCC Community Warden Service, with the aim of providing maximum value to the residents of Kent within budgetary constraints. A proposed option to achieve the desired savings was subjected to a public consultation exercise during the autumn of 2014.

1.2 The KCC Warden Service's core objectives are:

- Promote community confidence and cohesion.
- Identify and assist in problem resolution.
- Act as “eyes and ears” for other agencies.
- Improve access to local authority services.
- Be a trusted friend for the community.

1.3 Since 2012 due to budgetary constraints the service has been operating with an average of 80 uniformed staff. There are currently just over 70 wardens, including uniformed warden supervisors, in post. The 2012 service redesign proved successful in terms of more efficient business support, matrix management, performance monitoring and budgetary control arrangements. During 2014 the community warden service became part of the Public Protection Unit in the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate.

2. Consultation

2.1 Following a deep dive service review and the examination of a range of possible management actions, a draft proposal was produced and subjected to an extensive six week public consultation process, that attracted a high volume of feedback in terms of on-line and hardcopy consultation feedback, many letters, emails and other types of correspondence. An external agency was commissioned to analyse the responses and their feedback and a summary of all responses received is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 As well as the formal responses to the consultation, 10 e-mails, 19 letters were also received from a wide range of responders, together with eight written petitions and 1 e-petition.

2.3 The public consultation included feedback that a number of Parishes wished to explore options for fully or partly funding a Community Warden in their area. As part of the redesign process going forward it is proposed to have further discussions with Parishes individually and with the Kent Association of

Local Councils (KALC) in order to develop commissioning arrangements where appropriate to increase the resources available to the service.

- 2.4 Also of note was a measure of support to recruit and train volunteers to support the Warden Service and to work closely in individual Parishes. Discussions have taken place with Kent Police regarding this proposal and they have confirmed their support for this measure and that they have offered to assist KCC officers to develop the proposal. This proposal is now being developed with ongoing discussions taking place with KALC with a view to running a pilot project later in 2015.
- 2.5 As part of the consultation feedback, Kent District Chief Executives submitted proposals relating to the management and supervision of local KCC Community Wardens. It is proposed to explore with local district partners how community wardens can further support the work of district community safety units via the local tasking and coordination systems.

3 Redesign Proposal

- 3.1 Following careful and thorough reflection of the response to the consultation, letters received and the e-petitions, the original proposal contained within the consultation has been adjusted to include, via the Kent Association of Local Councils and working with Parish Councils, the establishment of a cadre of volunteer community wardens during 2015/16 and to discuss with Parish Councils the potential for them to assist in resourcing community wardens.
- 3.2 Following receipt of the public consultation feedback it has been decided to maintain the community warden uniformed presence close to its current level of 70 uniformed posts.
- 3.3 This amended service redesign proposal will preserve as much community based front line delivery resource as possible. All other expenditure is being reviewed, in order to streamline business support arrangements, update procedures and reduce management overheads.

4. Service Redesign – Deployment

- 4.1 KCC Community Wardens have for many years been associated with and or been based in specific areas often associated with parish boundaries. Since 2012 more flexible deployment has been adopted as wardens vacancies have arisen with the aim of maintaining individual parish boundary cover but also responding to local district or pan Kent priorities. However, the importance of the close working relationship between community wardens and individual parishes and communities is recognised and was highlighted in the consultation feedback, therefore it is proposed to maintain these working relationships and there is no suggestion of a centralisation of resources.
- 4.2 Parishes and communities that currently have a nominated community warden contact will continue to have a designated officer contact point. The resource allocation will mirror the current uniformed presence across the county which has been reduced since 2012 from 101 posts to 73 posts using vacancy management. It is therefore not proposed to reduce the uniformed presence to the level proposed in the public consultation proposal. KCC community wardens will be required to continue and build upon the flexible working arrangements that are currently in place and will only expand their boundaries to include other priority areas where resources allow and on

demand. It is important to stress that wardens will continued to be based and work in Parish / community locations.

4.3 The service will continue to work with KCC services, in conjunction with external partners, to identify those most vulnerable residents and individuals to ensure they receive priority attention from the KCC Community Wardens.

4.4 The service, in collaboration with KALC, will work closely with the voluntary sector, in particular volunteers who are currently associated with current KCC services, to recruit during 2015 /16, approximately 30 volunteers to support the Warden Service to work closely with Parishes and local communities. Informal discussions to explore the possibility of establishing this has already commenced with Kent Police and KALC colleagues and a working group has been established.

5. **Service Redesign – Management, Supervisory and Business Support Arrangements**

5.1 The original proposed changes to the supervisory role contained within the public consultation proposal will be implemented with the introduction of a uniformed Team Leader role, which will be very different to the current uniformed District Supervisor role, as it will be much more operational in focus. Each Team Leader will have 10 to 12 Wardens (depending upon the area), to deploy across two districts, to work largely on KCC work-streams, mirroring the current situation but also enabling more flexible deployment to respond to KCC priority work-streams. A proportion of the Community Warden staff are currently available to accept tasking's from District based Community Safety Units and it is proposed to review and refresh this working arrangement.

6. **Recommendation(s)**

Recommendations:

The Kent Community Safety Partnership are requested to note the changes proposed to the KCC community Warden service following the receipt of the public consultation feedback.

7. **Contact details**

Report Author:

- Jim Parris – KCC Community Safety Manager
- 03000 413428
- james.parris@kent.gov.uk
- Appendix 1 – Public Consultation Summary Feedback