
POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To apprise Members of the role of the Police Community Support Officers and to seek Members views on a request by the Essex Police Authority for additional funding support for this initiative.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Police Authority has recently written to the District Council seeking a response as to whether the Authority would be interested in matched funding for additional Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) for the period 2004 - 2007.
- 2.2 The contract for the PCSOs would be for three years and Members are asked to consider whether this is a project worthy of support by the Council. If supported, the Council would be required to fund 50% of the total amount for a 3 year period. Appendix 1 outlines the total incurred costs.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2002/03 the Home Office provided funding for a pilot scheme involving 10 PCSOs in the Harlow Division. In 2003/04 Essex Police included in its budget matched funding, with the Home Office and Essex County Council, for a further 80 PCSOs of which, the Rayleigh Division will receive 6. Recruitment for these Officers is currently taking place, with three (two of these part time) appointed to date.
- 3.2 Whilst the PCSOs will not have the power of arrest, they will be given the following powers:
- The issue of fixed penalty notices in respect of;
 - Cycling on the footway
 - Disorder
 - Dog Fouling
 - Litter
 - Confiscation of alcohol in designated public places
 - Confiscation of alcohol from young persons
 - Confiscation of tobacco from young persons
 - Removal of abandoned vehicles
 - Seizure of vehicles used to cause alarm
 - Entry to save life or limb or prevent serious damage to property
 - Carrying out road checks
 - Enforcing cordon areas under §36 Terrorism Act 2000
 - Stop and search of vehicles and items carried by persons in authorised areas §45 Terrorism Act 2000 in the company of a constable
 - Stopping vehicles for the purpose of testing.

- 3.3 The request from the Police Authority is attempting to achieve a further expansion of this initiative.

4 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Before taking any decision regarding direct funding support for this initiative, Members might like to consider referring the matter in the first instance to the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).
- 4.2 The Rochford CDRP, of which this Council is a constituent member, receives funding from the Home Office in the form of grant aid. The funding stream provided by the Home Office, called Building Safer Communities Fund (BSC) has allocated some £80,999 to the Partnership for various initiatives this year. The Home Office have indicated that funding to the Partnership from this source will continue for a further two years, although no indication of the sums of money involved or the possible criteria that might be attached to this funding stream in the future has been given. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate for the Partnership to consider the allocation of some of next year's and the following year's allocations to support this initiative.
- 4.3 There would remain the issue of year 3 funding support (2006/07) should the Home Office funding stream not continue beyond the next 2 years.
- 4.4 Members at this stage might also consider whether an approach to Parish Councils, either individually or in groups, might attract further funding support
- 4.5 As part of this year's budget making process, Members of the Finance and Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be meeting with the Parish and Town Councils to discuss matters of common budgetary interest. This may be a suitable topic to add to that agenda to see whether Parishes or the Town Council would also be prepared to provide funding support for this initiative. One problem envisaged with enlisting Parish support is that operationally, it will be extremely difficult to manage or allocate PCSOs below the District/Borough level.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Strategic Risk

- 5.1.1 Further PCSO cover within Rochford will only occur if additional funding support is given.

5.2 Resource Risk

5.2.1 Should the Rochford CDRP decide to contribute towards the matched funding for the PCSOs, there are Home Office conditions currently attached to the BSC fund that would restrict the amount available for this purpose:

- The conditions of grant for the Home Office BSC fund stipulate that there is a minimum of 27% capital spend, amounting to £21,870.
- There is also a requirement by the Home Office that the CDRP's drug spend from the BSC fund should be the same as the baseline allocation for the Communities Against Drugs fund in year 2002/03. For Rochford, this amounts to £59,300 which would leave a residual amount from the fund of £21,699. This amount would only be sufficient to support additional PCSOs for Rochford.
- Should the Rochford CDRP decide to match fund the PCSOs initiative, it might result in the failure to financially support other worthwhile bids which are made to the Partnership.

5.2.2 The Police have made it clear that a withdrawal of funding in any one Borough or District will result in a withdrawal of the additional PCSO services in that Council's area. Given the nature of Partnership, the expectation would be that initially the local Borough or District Council would step in, should this happen within the 3 year period.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 It is expected that the PCSOs would provide a visible presence within the community but no evaluation on their effectiveness is presently available from the Police.

7 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That this Committee defers taking any decision on providing funding support for this initiative pending

- (1) a decision from the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership as to whether it would be prepared to provide matched funding for the years 2004/05 and 2005/06 and at what level.
- (2) feedback from discussions with the Parishes and the Town Council around the budget process and an indication from them as to whether they, individually or collectively, would be prepared to support such an initiative.

Paul Warren
Chief Executive

Background Papers:

Chief Constable's letter dated 25 July 2003
Chair of Police Authorities letter dated 1 August 2003

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APPENDIX 1**TOTAL INCURRED COSTS**

Local Authority contribution - 50% of total incurred costs (in brackets)

Number of PCSO's	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	First year incl. start up-costs (£)	Second year costs (£)	Third year costs (£)
1	14,866 (7,433)	14,522 (7,261)	14,958 (7,479)
2	29,732 (14,866)	29,044 (14,522)	29,916 (14,958)
3	44,598 (22,299)	43,566 (21,783)	44,873 (22,436)
4	59,464 (29,732)	58,088 (29,044)	59,831 (29,916)
5	74,330 (37,165)	72,611 (36,306)	74,789 (37,395)
6	89,196 (44,598)	87,133 (43,566)	89,747 (44,873)
7	104,062 (52,031)	101,655 (50,828)	104,704 (52,352)
8	118,928 (59,464)	116,177 (58,089)	119,662 (59,831)
9	133,794 (66,897)	130,699 (65,350)	134,620 (67,310)
10	148,660 (74,330)	145,221 (72,611)	149,578 (74,789)
11	163,526 (81,763)	159,743 (79,872)	164,535 (82,268)
12	178,392 (89,196)	174,265 (87,133)	179,493 (89,747)

Notes

1 Based on Spinal column point 19 of Scale 4

2 First year includes uniform, recruitment & training costs

3 Assumed pay rise of 3% built in