

27 February 2023	ITEM: 3
Extraordinary Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Council Funded Police Officers Options Paper	
Wards and communities affected: Tilbury Town Centre and/or Purfleet as well as potential other wards in options	Key Decision: Possibly Key – Dependant on option selected
Report of: Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michael Dineen, Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement & Community Safety	
Accountable Director: Julie Nelder, Acting Director of Public Realm	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report has been provided to the CGS O&S committee after its members supported the following recommendation on 8th September 2022.

‘Support the decision to carry out a review of the funded Town Centre Police Officers, as is good practise with all Council contracts’

The contract in place concerns the Council funding of 4 Essex Police Officers, currently deployed as part of the Town Centre Teams (TCT) within Community Policing in Tilbury and Purfleet.

Options for consideration are:

- I. The Contract is terminated complying with the contractual stipulations within the contract.
- II. The 4 additional officers are able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ Corringham according to intelligence and operational demand.
- III. 2 funded officers remain in Tilbury with the 2 Purfleet Officers being able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ Corringham according to intelligence and operational demand.

- IV. 2 funded officers remain dedicated to Purfleet and Tilbury (1 in each area) and 2 officers are able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ according to intelligence and operational demand.
- V. No change to current arrangements

The TCT, since their inception in 2019, have provided increased visible policing with their priorities being to tackle ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) in our busiest areas, protect the vulnerable, and tackle crimes against businesses. Following the initial success of this team and the benefit to our local community the Council committed funding to extend the Town Centre Police team in January 2020 to Tilbury and Purfleet, through the Council Funding of 4 additional officers to be deployed in these two areas.

The roles are dedicated to work within the key town centers to provide a proactive response to emerging crime trends and appropriate local issues as identified by the command team.

The key purpose is to promote public confidence and to take a dynamic and flexible approach to Community issues in our towns.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the options presented to them with regards to the future funding of the 4 funded Town Centre Police Officers, in line with good practice and make a recommendation to Cabinet for a decision on the options suggested.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Council recognises that anti-social behaviour has always been a key priority for residents, and in January 2019, The Leader, within his annual Portfolio Holder Report announced that an additional revenue surplus funding of £750k be committed to provide additional police officers. Following the introduction of the Thurrock Town Centre Team in July 2019 in Grays, South Ockendon and Stanford Le Hope, it was agreed that the Council funded officers would be best placed complimenting the Town Centre policing team in the most vulnerable areas of the Borough at that time, Tilbury and Purfleet.
- 2.2 The Thurrock Council funded officers, of which there are 4, joined the existing Town Centre Team, in January 2020 with the posts funded by the Council until February 2024, within the £750k allocated budget. The cost of these additional officers is not within the Councils base budget and is an allocated fund.
- 2.3 The contract and funding expire in February 2024, as with any contract, it is always good practise to review, considering the landscape changes over time

within Essex Police and Thurrock Council, to ensure it is still meeting the needs of Thurrock residents and presenting good value for money. This is also timely with the current financial constraints that Thurrock Council is facing that all options for potential savings are at least considered.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The following options are outlined with associated benefits and risks for consideration by Members:

- I. The Contract is terminated complying with the contractual stipulations within the contract.
- II. The 4 additional officers are able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ Corringham according to intelligence and operational demand.
- III. 2 funded officers remain in Tilbury with the 2 Purfleet Officers being able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ Corringham according to intelligence and operational demand.
- IV. 2 funded officers remain dedicated to Purfleet and Tilbury (1 in each area) and 2 officers are able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ according to intelligence and operational demand.
- V. No change to current arrangements

3.2 Options with associated risks and benefits:

Option	Benefits	Risks	Mitigation
<p>The Contract is terminated complying with the contractual stipulations within the contract.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a financial saving made due to the ending of the funding. The timing of this termination would affect the sums involved • The funds that are saved would be able to be reinvested in Thurrock Council and would offset some shortfalls in other areas of the Council • Community Policing Team officers for Tilbury and Purfleet will retain ownership of their beats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential breach of legal contract • Protentional increased crime and ASB in Tilbury and Purfleet • Potential reduction in confidence in policing in Tilbury and Purfleet • Perception of reduction in visible policing • Risk to our most deprived communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No breach if 3 months' notice given • Police have been consulted on this review • CPT officers will continue to provide service to residents in these areas
<p>The 4 additional officers are able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ Corringham according to intelligence and operational demand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved morale of officers due to increased resource across high demand areas of Borough • Increased public reassurance in high footfall areas • Reduce crime & ASB in high footfall areas • Increased confidence in Police by retailers / businesses within Town Centre Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protentional increased crime and ASB in Tilbury and Purfleet • Reduction in confidence in policing in Tilbury and Purfleet • Risk to our most deprived communities • Residents not within TCT wards do not see the benefit • Restrictive to only TCT areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police have been consulted on this review • CPT officers will continue to provide service to residents in these areas • All residents visiting the high footfall areas will see the benefits

<p>2 funded officers remain in Tilbury with the 2 Purfleet Officers being able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ Corringham according to intelligence and operational demand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tilbury, a priority area, remains with additional policing • Improved morale of officers due to increased resource across high demand areas of Borough • Increased public reassurance in high footfall areas • Reduce crime & ASB in high footfall areas • Increased confidence in Police by retailers / businesses within Town Centre Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential increased crime and ASB in Purfleet • Potential reduction in confidence in policing in Purfleet • Risk to one of our most deprived communities, however crime data is low in Purfleet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in officers within the high footfall TCT areas • CPT officers will still patrol Purfleet
<p>2 funded officers remain dedicated to Purfleet and Tilbury (1 in each area) and 2 officers are able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ according to intelligence and operational demand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tilbury, a priority area, remains with Council funded police officers • Presence of additional Council funded Police Officer remains in Purfleet • Improved morale of officers due to increased resource across high demand areas of Borough • Increased public reassurance in high footfall areas • Reduce crime & ASB in high footfall areas • Increased confidence in Police by retailers / 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential increased crime and ASB in Purfleet and or Tilbury • Potential reduction in confidence in policing in Purfleet and Tilbury • Perception of reduction in visible policing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased officers mobile within the high footfall TCT areas • CPT officers will still patrol Purfleet and Tilbury alongside the 1 TCT officer for each

	businesses within Town Centre Areas		
No change to current arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No legal or reputational risk Relationship with Essex Police and Partnership remains strong • No adverse risk to crime and ASB in Tilbury and Purfleet • No change to confidence in policing in Tilbury and Purfleet • No risk to perception of reduction in visible policing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed opportunity to review value for money/Preferred use of resources • Current contract conditions are restrictive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Applicable

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 These recommendations are made to the Portfolio Holder and the CGS S&O committee:

To ensure continued need, best practise, value for money and any cost savings to the Council are identified and discussed by members

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 This report provides opportunity for members of CGS O&S to be consulted on the varied options that officers, in conjunction with Essex Police, have considered reasonable for discussion and challenge by this committee.
- 5.2 The Chief Superintendent for West Local Policing Area has been consulted with on these options
- 5.3 The Police Fire and Crime Commissioner has been provided the opportunity to comment on these options
- 5.4 Members with lead for:

Communities (Cllr Abbas)
Environment and ASB (Cllr Maney)
Police and Crime Panel Representative (Cllr Collins)

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 This team of officers is central to delivering Thurrock Council's priority of:

People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

This means:

- High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
- Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
- Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

- 6.2 These additional officers support the following Community Safety Partnership Priorities for 22/23:

3. Violence and Vulnerability: tackling gang related activity and offensive weapons to reduce drug driven violence

6. Tackling Community Based Anti-Social Behaviour and Safeguarding Victims

- 8. Safer Streets through increased visibility and community engagement
- 9. Tackling offending

6.3 These additional officers support Essex Police's focus on:

- Victims
- Visibility
- Violence
- Vulnerability

6.4 They will deliver on the following priorities of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex:

- Reducing drug driven violence
- Preventing business crime, fraud, and cyber crime

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

Government Intervention & Section 114

In July 2022, the Council was made aware of concerns around the valuation of specific investments. A review process commenced, and the initial findings highlighted significant concern with three investments and the position was shared informally with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

On the 2 September 2022 DLUHC announced directions to implement an intervention package at the Council.

The Secretary of State exercised his powers under section 15(11) of the Local Government Act 1999 to give a Direction without complying with the requirement at section 15(9) to give Thurrock an opportunity to make representations about the Directions, as he considered the failures of the Council's compliance with its Best Value duty in respect of the functions specified in the Directions sufficiently urgent. This was because of the following:

- the scale of the financial and commercial risks potentially facing the Authority, which were compounded by the Authority's approach to financial management and the seriousness of the allegations that were made by third parties about the processes applied to the operation of the Authority's commercial strategy, and;

- the failure of the Authority to provide assurance to Ministers and the Department on the adequacy of the actions that they were taking to address the issues, taking account of the scale and pace of the response required.

The Secretary of State nominated Essex County Council to the role of Commissioner

On 19 December 2022, the Council's Acting Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer issued a report under Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. This advises Councillors that the Council faces 'a financial situation of an extremely serious nature'.

Implications relating to this specific report

This work is funded through an earmarked reserve which was created in 2018/19 to cover a four-year period up to the value of £0.750m.

It should be noted that whilst the external audit review remains outstanding and consequently the 2021/22 position cannot be finalised, the availability of reserves remains unconfirmed at this stage

There is a commitment to fund this work until 26th February 2024 via a legal agreement. If the decision is made to cease the work prior to this date, Thurrock Council would make a one-off saving of approximately £0.017m for each month between the cessation date and 26th February 2024.

The other options involve operational changes but would not result in any financial saving.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**
Team Leader Contracts

The Legal agreement between The Chief Constable of Essex Police and The Chief Executive of Thurrock Council was signed on 8/1/20.

The Contract commenced on 27/1/20 for a period of 4 years to 26/2/24. The Legal Agreement is restricted to staff only.

Clause 3.2 of the agreement states:

Both parties agree to provide a minimum 3 month notice of termination of contract. Failure to comply will result in the funding partner being responsible for a full 3-month pro rata payment post notification of contract termination.

Clause 3.4 of the agreement states:

Pursuant to clause 3.2, either party may terminate this agreement at any time upon service of at least three months prior written notice.

Providing written notice is served to Essex Police that the contract will be terminated with a 3 month notice period the termination can take place as outlined.

Any proposed variation (as opposed to termination) to the current arrangements will need to be checked against the current agreement, and where necessary the Police Services' approval may be required.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Community Development Manager

The potential for loss of additional policing will have a negative impact on reducing inequalities within our deprived communities.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e., Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder and Impact on Looked After Children

This report will potentially impact on Essex Police HR and Legal teams, dependant on option agreed.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

N/A

9. **Appendices to the report**

Appendix 1: Community Equality Impact Assessment

Report Author

Michelle Cunningham
Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Council Funded Police Officers Options Paper
Lead Officer Contact Details	Michelle Cunningham

Why is this policy, strategy, function, or service development/review needed?
<p>This community equality impact assessment provides the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee members with more information with regards to the options and decision required in regard to the review of Council funded additional Essex Police Officers, currently deployed as part of the Town Centre Team (TCT) within Community Policing in Thurrock.</p> <p>This review of the funded Town Centre Police Officers contract, is good practise as with all council contracts.</p>

1. Community impact (this can also be used to assess impact on staff although a cumulative impact should be considered)

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function, or service development/review have on communities and workforce?
Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with 'protected characteristics. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimized or eliminated?
Local communities in general			x	On 2017 deprivation rank by ward in Thurrock Tilbury is 2 nd (where 1 highest) and Purfleet 5 th .	The potential for loss of additional policing will have a negative impact on reducing inequalities within our deprived communities.
Age		x		There is no evidence to suggest that there would be any positive or negative impact on those vulnerable due to their age regardless of option	
Disability		x		There is no evidence to suggest that there would be any positive or negative impact on those vulnerable due to a disability regardless of option	

Gender reassignment		x		There is no evidence to suggest that there would be any positive or negative impact on those vulnerable due to gender reassignment regardless of option	
Marriage and civil partnership		x		There is no evidence to suggest that there would be any positive or negative impact on anyone due to their marriage/ civil partnership status regardless of option	
Pregnancy and maternity		x		There is no evidence to suggest that there would be any positive or negative impact on anyone due to being pregnant regardless of option	
Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)			x	West Thurrock and S Stifford ward have the highest rate of racial hate crime in Thurrock – however detailed analysis does not identify Purfleet as having any additional vulnerabilities in relation to race hate crime	Hate crime is investigated by the Community Policing Team which will not be affected by these options
Religion or belief		x		There is no evidence to suggest that there would be any positive or negative impact on anyone due to their religion regardless of option	
Sex		x		From data from May 21 to July 21 West Thurrock and South Stifford and Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park wards featured in the top 5 wards for Domestic Abuse in Thurrock.	The town centre team do not respond to call regards Domestic abuse or provide support or investigate these types of crimes.
Sexual orientation		x		There is no evidence to suggest that there would be any positive or negative impact on anyone due to their sexual orientation regardless of option	
Any community issues identified for this location?			x	W Thurrock and S Stifford ward rank 33 in the top 100 unitary wards for crime rates in Sept 22. No other wards in Thurrock are within this group. West Thurrock and South Stifford and Tilbury St Chads are 2 of 3 wards determined for Thurrock based localities work using analysis determined where offenders known to criminal justice services reside (this therefore includes those offenders open to our services but offending out of borough) and where victims / perpetrators known to Essex Police reside (not	Community Policing Team officers for Tilbury and Purfleet will retain ownership of their beats

				where offences happen).	
Workforce		x		Will impact 4 officers within Essex Police	This will not affect terms and conditions, just potentially role and location

2. Consultation, data and intelligence

2.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function, or service development/review e.g., on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk
This is a vital step

Consultation with overview and scrutiny regards options.
The Community Safety Inspector who manages the officers has been consulted on.
Once the PFH has agreed the papers this will be shared with the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Superintendent for the West.

2.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function, or service development/review outlined?

Thurrock Council Data documentation
Thurrock Community Safety Partnership strategic assessment 2021
A detailed assessment cannot be completed due to a lack of data at ward level for some protected characteristics

3. Monitoring and Review

<p>3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function, or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
Fortnightly review of all crime rates across Thurrock through Essex Police tasking	Fortnightly ongoing	Insp Fisher
Bimonthly detailed review of hate crime across Thurrock	CSP executive & IAG	District Commander
Annual Strategic Assessment identifying locations and crime types of concern	March 2023	CSP Manager

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
This review provides the opportunity to provide demand led policing across the District thus minimising any negative impacts

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Head of Service who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Cheryl Wells	Strategic Lead – Community Safety, Emergency Planning & Resilience	12.12.22
