

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Housing and Wellbeing Committee
SUBJECT:	Community Wardens (Bognor Regis)
LEAD OFFICER:	Robin Wickham, Group Head of Wellbeing and Communities
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Jacky Pendleton
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: IMPROVING THE WELLBEING OF ARUN: Develop and implement a Wellbeing Strategy to plan services, resources, amenities, activities, and places to help our community thrive. Support the voluntary and community sector to provide services that help the most vulnerable in our community.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: Improving wellbeing by addressing acts of anti-social behaviour and providing opportunities to engage positively and support local communities	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: The recommendations of this report look to utilise funding that has already been budgeted for the 2022/23 financial year. A budget of £100,000 is allocated for the continuation of the Littlehampton community warden scheme and the proposed implementation of the same in Bognor Regis from October 2022 to March 2023. Recommendations are not seeking any further funding beyond what is currently budgeted.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the progress of the committee's decision to scope and agree the implementation of a community warden scheme to Bognor Regis.
- 1.2. To provide detail on a proposal for a dedicated 'Arun West' community warden scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To authorise the Group Head of Wellbeing and Communities to implement an Arun West community warden scheme, within the agreed budget allocated for a Bognor Regis scheme from October 2022.
- 2.2. To authorise the Group Head of Wellbeing and Communities to agree the scope of a community warden scheme in Bognor Regis with effect from April 2023, in partnership with Bognor Regis Town Council, on the provision of match-funding and in-line with the outline budget for 2023/24.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. On 7 March 2022, this committee approved a recommendation to authorise the Group Head of Wellbeing and Communities to scope the implementation of a community warden scheme in Bognor Regis.
- 3.2. This report sets out the progress of that scoping exercise and makes recommendations based on the outcome, looking to make best use of the allocated funding.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1. Proposals to introduce community wardens in Bognor Regis were presented to an extraordinary meeting of Bognor Regis Town Council's Policy and Resources committee on 29 June 2022. This set out a proposed operating model and the financial implications for the town council, making it clear that any such scheme would be party to match-funding from both authorities.
- 4.2. The Bognor Regis Town Council (BRTC) committee resolved to consider the proposal in more detail, with town council officers instructed to return to the district council with confirmation of whether they wish to introduce the scheme and, if so, on what operational basis.
- 4.3. Subsequently, BRTC has indicated that it is not in a position to commit to any such scheme until April 2023 at the earliest. Their budget setting process for 2023/24 will consider this proposal. It should be noted that the financial implications for Arun are not definitively known until BRTC confirm how they envisage the scheme operating i.e. number of wardens and breadth of service.
- 4.4. For the six month period from October 2022 to March 2023, £100,000 has been allocated within the budget for both the continuation of the Littlehampton community warden scheme and the creation of the same in Bognor Regis.
- 4.5. Partnership funding arrangements with Littlehampton town council mean that the cost to Arun District Council for the Littlehampton community wardens will be approximately £37,000 for the same six month period.
- 4.6. £63,000 remains available and currently unallocated.
- 4.7. Full Council approved the budget on 23 February 2022, containing the following financial provision for Community Warden schemes:

2022/23	£100,000
2023/24 onwards	£270,000 per annum subject to satisfactory performance and budgetary approval
- 4.8. As a result of the delay in determining a scheme for Bognor Regis, it is proposed by officers that this Council implements an 'Arun West' community warden scheme. This would provide support for areas to the west of the district, by addressing issues including anti-social behaviour and provide opportunities to engage positively with local communities.

- 4.9. The creation of this initiative would utilise the remaining budget referenced at 4.6 of this report. No additional expenditure for the current financial year is required.
- 4.10. If implemented, the Arun West scheme would be a mobile service allowing the wardens to travel between areas to address place based concerns. As per the current Littlehampton scheme, wardens would not provide an emergency response service and are not a replacement for Police resources. They would be expected to build strong relationships with organisations and local communities to ensure an effective service that meets the needs of residents.
- 4.11. For the committee's information, a link to a previous update report on the community warden scheme in Littlehampton is provided in the background papers section. This is provided to confirm the type of work that all community warden schemes will undertake.
- 4.12. At this stage, the costs would be borne by the district council and means that overall control of the service remains with the council. There are likely to be opportunities to speak with town and/or parish councils about funding contributions should they want a more dedicated service within their areas. This is something that officers would be keen to explore.
- 4.13. The recommended Arun West service provision is for two full-time permanent wardens.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. Consultation has been undertaken with BRTC in respect of a partnership community warden scheme for Bognor Regis. Details of this approach are provided at 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of this report.
- 5.2. Consultation has also been undertaken with the administrator of the Bognor Regis Business Improvement District (BID). The BID has indicated their support for community wardens, although have stated their preference that a permanent presence is maintained within the town centre to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1. Not to implement an Arun West community warden scheme with effect from Autumn 2022:

This option would result in an underspend in the approved budget. There would be no additional 'feet on the ground' support to areas experiencing localised nuisance behaviour.

6.2. Consideration given to provision of one or two wardens for Arun West proposal:

The provision of two full-time community wardens within the scope of an Arun West scheme is considered preferable as it will allow broad coverage of what is a wide

area. It also provides for continuation of service when annual leave and sickness occurs.

The table below provides a cost comparison for one or two warden posts for the period October 2022 to March 2023.

	One warden	Two wardens
Salary inc. on costs	£20,380	£40,760
Operational budget and project costs	£8,000	£13,000
Total	£28,380	£53,760

The costs for employing two full time wardens as part of this proposal comfortably fall within the available budget of £63,000 and within budgetary provision for 2023/24 (4.7).

6.3. Delaying the creation of a Bognor Regis community warden scheme until 2023/24:

The initial intention was to operationalise a community warden scheme in Bognor Regis, mirroring that in place in Littlehampton, from October 2022. Match funding from the town council was sought to provide an affordable partnership approach.

Bognor Regis Town Council are not in a financial position to commit to this timeframe. Neither do we, at this time, have a definite decision on whether BRTC will want to contribute to a community warden scheme for the whole town from April 2023.

7. COMMENTS BY THE INTERIM GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1. Budgetary provision is set out at section 4.7 of this report and is as per the budget approved by Council in February 2022.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. There are no direct impacts on the above areas arising from this report.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1. There are no direct impacts on the above areas arising from this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1. An increase in the Council's establishment by two full time officer posts. No further HR implications.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1. There are no direct impacts on the above areas arising from this report.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1. Officers will require a base of operations and comfort break facilities. Due to covering the west of the district, it is proposed that Arun West community wardens would principally operate from Bognor Regis town hall.

12.2. Hotdesking would be suitable meaning that allocated office space is non-essential.

12.3. Small storage facilities will be required for uniform and equipment.

12.4. Arrangements will be required for the safe parking of a corporate vehicle.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1. **Appendix A** provides an equalities impact assessment for information.

13.2. The Social Value Act requires local authorities to consider how their services might improve economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the area they operate in. Community Wardens add a positive social value to the communities they serve when considered against this requirement. By working with residents, they aim to enable more resilient communities.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1. There are no direct impacts on the above areas arising from this report.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1. Community wardens have a direct positive impact on reducing the harmful impact of anti-social behaviour and addressing the fear of crime. They do so by intervening where ASB is in progress, providing intelligence and witness statements to partner agencies, and offering reassurance to residents.

15.2. There is a requirement that community wardens identify specific concerns within communities and tailor initiatives to address them. This could include the delivery of fraud awareness talks, home security advice, or personal safety advice.

15.3. In achieving Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) status, community wardens are assigned the following enforcement powers by Sussex Police:

- Power to require persons drinking in a designated place to surrender alcohol and to dispose of any alcohol.
- Power to require name and address of a person acting in an anti-social manner.
- Power to stop cycles when accredited person has reasons to believe that a person committed the offence of riding on a footpath.

Utilising these powers provides assistance to the police and reassurance to the public.

15.4. The Safer Arun Partnership is presently reviewing its annual strategic priorities. The current proposals include 'tackling anti-social behaviour' and 'community resilience'. Implementation of a wide reaching community warden scheme would make a considerable contribute to both priorities.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1. There are no direct impacts on the above areas arising from this report.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1. Data sharing between community wardens and other agencies is governed by relevant partnership information sharing agreements.

17.2. Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 provides that any person can lawfully disclose information to a chief officer of police, a police authority, local authorities, probation service or health authority where necessary or expedient for the purposes of the Act. More plainly, this means that sharing information on individuals within a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership does not infringe the Data Protection Act.

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Housing and Wellbeing Committee minutes: 17 March 2022](#) – see item 760 for related decision.

[Housing and Wellbeing Committee community wardens update report: 24 January 2022](#)

Appendix A Equalities Impact Assessment