

**REPORT TO:** CABINET

**DATE:** 20 JULY 2017

**TITLE:** COMMUNITY SAFETY

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** COUNCILLOR EMMA TOAL, DEPUTY LEADER  
AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR YOUTH AND  
COMMUNITY

**LEAD OFFICER:** JANE GREER, HEAD OF COMMUNITY  
WELLBEING (01279) 446406

**This is a Key Decision**  
**It is on the Forward Plan as Decision number 1007582**  
**Call-in Procedures may apply**  
**This decision will affect no ward specifically.**

**RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:**

- A** Approve an additional resource of £200,000 for the financial year 2017/2018 to be invested into the Community Safety Team and for public realm improvements at the Stow and Bush Fair, enabling the Council to provide a package of initiatives to reduce antisocial behaviour and develop additional community safety initiatives in Harlow.

**REASON FOR DECISION**

- A** The Council has committed to help combat anti-social behaviour and environmental crime in Harlow. The additional resource will help achieve outcomes which will include a reduction in the level of antisocial behaviour (ASB), crime and fear of fear of crime.

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Council has a commitment to improve and develop services to make Harlow a safer place for those who live, work and visit the district. The Council's Community Safety Team are effective in delivery on community safety issues such as anti-social behaviour, environmental crime, monitoring of CCTV, nuisance youths and dealing with illegal traveller encampments. They work closely with the Police and other partners to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in Harlow.
2. The Community Safety Team comprises of one manager and eight Community Safety accredited Officers including three Community Rangers. Between April 2016 and March 2017 the team dealt with 3651 complaints.

3. Following a number of serious offences that have taken place, the Police have made a commitment to dealing with ASB by the implementation of their 12 week plans which target individual shopping areas dependant of the level of reported ASB.

## **PROPOSALS**

4. The additional resource will be sufficient to recruit and train up to three additional Community Safety Officers who will work on a rota basis to ensure the needs of the community can be met. It will also allow the Council to develop other initiatives to improve the quality of life for those that live, work and visit the town.
5. The new Community Safety Officers will be highly visible and approachable to members of the public and others, and will develop a problem-solving approach to dealing with both victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. They will help identify long term preventative solutions to reduce ASB and also reduce fear of crime.
6. They will pursue the introduction of Public Space Protection Orders and the enforcement of them as appropriate and, working with others, will develop other initiatives to help reduce ASB, such as the introduction and enforcement of byelaws.
7. They will work closely with the community, schools, colleges, neighbourhoods, Neighbourhood Watch schemes, community safety partnerships and others, to educate people and learn and listen to others. They will help build public confidence by talking to people in the local community to explore their viewpoints and break down any barriers that might exist.
8. Taking a more proactive approach to dealing with ASB and environmental crime is likely to achieve outcomes that have a positive impact on the community. It will help to address public confidence and fear of crime.
9. A more proactive approach to dealing with emerging crime and ASB trends, particularly in local neighbourhood centres such as The Stow, Bush Fair and Staple Tye and the Town Centre will be adopted. The Council will be in a position to take a lead on problem solving using enforcement and education and will work with our partners to achieve more. It will allow for a considered response to developing hotspot areas at an early stage, before problems escalate.
10. The Council is also committed to improving the environment and public realm in its neighbourhood centres at Bush Fair and The Stow. These initiatives will enhance the centres as places to visit shop and do business by creating more welcoming environments. Improving lighting, street furniture and planting will all contribute to discouraging crime and ASB and the negative perceptions that

persist.

11. A project is currently progressing to deliver some small scale public realm improvements to The Stow which focuses on the above plus the addition of branding and signage. However, an additional budget of £35,000 would benefit the Stow and enable a more comprehensive scheme and achieve greater impact. A similar project, based upon the experience at The Stow could be progressed at Bush Fair and requires a budget of £70,000. The project would aim to achieve better lighting, improved street furniture and layout, planting and signage.
12. The Joint Finance and Performance report elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda includes recommendations regarding the funding of the proposals contained within this report.
13. The additional funding allocated provides sufficient resource to recruit and employ the new Community Safety Officers for the remainder of the financial year (£95,000) and for a number of public real improvements to be made at The Stow and Bush Fair (£105,000).

## **TIMESCALES & TRAINING**

14. Recruitment for the new Officers will commence as soon as possible with the new Officers in post by Autumn 2017. It will then be necessary to undertake the appropriate training and Disclosure Barring Service Checks. Training will include the Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme. It is anticipated that the training will be completed within three months from their start date. It is envisaged that public realm improvements at The Stow and Bush Fair will be undertaken during the 2017/2018 financial year.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Place (includes Sustainability)**

None specific.

Author: **Graeme Bloomer, Head of Place**

### **Finance (Includes ICT)**

The costs of the proposals contained within this report will be met from a one off contribution from the outturn position reported within the Joint Finance & Performance Report on the Cabinet Agenda. Whilst some of the proposals will require ongoing financial provision this issue will be addressed in the future budget reports to be presented to Cabinet later in the 2017/18 financial year.

Author: **Simon Freeman, Head of Finance**

**Housing**

None specific.

Author: **Andrew Murray, Head of Housing**

**Community Wellbeing (includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)**

As contained within the report.

Author: **Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing**

**Governance (includes HR)**

As contained within the report.

Author: **Brian Keane, Head of Governance**

**Background Papers**

None.

**Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

ASB – Anti social behaviour