

**Council**

1 February 2018

**Agenda Item 71**

Brighton &amp; Hove City Council

**Subject:** Neighbourhoods and Communities Portfolio – Proposed Field Officer Role Business Case - Extract from the proceedings of the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee meeting held on the 22 January 2018

**Date of Meeting:** 1 February 2018

**Report of:** Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law

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**Wards Affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE*****Action Required of Council:***

To receive the report referred from the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 for information.

**Recommendations:**

That full Council notes the contents of the report.

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**  
**NEIGHBOURHOODS, INCLUSION, COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES**  
**COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 9 OCTOBER 2017**

**THE BRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE, LUCRAFT ROAD, BRIGHTON**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Daniel (Chair), A Norman (Opposition Spokesperson), West (Group Spokesperson); Bewick, Cattell, K Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Penn (for Moonan) and Miller (for Simson).

**Invitees:** Chief Superintendent Lisa Bell, Police Representative; Joanna Martindale; Hangleton & Knoll Project and Anusree Biswas Sassidharan, BME Police Engagement Group

Apologies: Councillor Knight.

**PART ONE**

- 56.1 The Committee considered the further report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing setting out the business case for a new Field Officer role. The report was introduced by the Environmental Health Manager, Environmental Protection.
- 56.2 It was noted that consideration of the recommendations contained in the “Proposed Field Officer Business Case” report put forward to the previous meeting of the Committee on 27 November had been deferred.
- 56.3 The Environmental Health Manager, Environmental Protection, explained that the proposed implementation dates and timetables detailed in the report and recommendations 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 had been updated to address concerns raised by members at the November meeting. The Risk Log in Appendix 1 had also been amended accordingly. Concerns raised had included resourcing of the programme, loss of the Noise Patrol service, and the scale and management of the programme. The proposed controls to address these concerns were referred to in risks 1 – 4 of the Risk Log. Concerns about delivery and implementation of an effective mobile platform the ICT and Digital First had also been addressed and the timetable had also been updated to reflect the progress being made with implementation of the tablet and trialling of the associated UNIFORM applications, this was also detailed in Appendix 1.

- 56.4 The Environmental Health Manager explained that the Business Case for the Field Officer role had been developed in collaboration with staff and service heads, external partners, unions and also information collated from recent community workshops. Similar work being carried out by other local authorities had also been considered, with further work undertaken since the previous meeting of the Committee regarding models used elsewhere. The Business Case had been presented to and received full support of the Corporate Modernisation Delivery Board and in addition detailed presentations had been given to each of the political groups. In answer to questions the Environmental Health Manager explained that this role would complement existing specialist officers and would provide a more streamlined service without duplication and would require approval of the Policy, Resources and Growth Committee to the necessary amendments to the Council's existing "Scheme of Delegations to Officers" before the Field Officers started in post.
- 56.5 Councillor West stated that he did not consider that the report had addressed any of the earlier issues raised to his satisfaction. He explained that he still had major concerns in terms of cost, suitability, workload and managing expectations. Councillor West stated that the report currently put forward for consideration differed very little from that submitted previously in his view and his preference was still that a pilot scheme should take place first; the risks had been "dumbed down", the concerns expressed by the unions were well made in his opinion.
- 56.6 The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing, stated that aims and objectives of the proposed Field Officer role were consistent with those of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Portfolio, namely of putting communities at the heart of service delivery, whilst at the same time supporting delivery of savings and making the most effective use of resources. The rationale for operating a "city wide" approach to service delivery was to avoid dividing the city into different models of service delivery with the attendant risk of creating hotspots and varying degrees of enforcement and would provide a single point of contact. The 4 different rota options set out in Appendix 1 had different hours of delivery and different costings but had been budgeted for and had been updated following consideration of the previous report and had also been addressed both in considering the financial implications and within Appendix 1.
- 56.7 Councillor Peltzer Dunn stated that whilst he had some concerns in relation to the practicalities of delivering some of the interface with the noise patrol team, he considered that it was also important to take a global view and on that basis he was happy to support the report recommendations. He did consider however that it was important for the Committee to be advised regarding progress requesting that a further update report be provided to the Committee in 12 months. Councillor Miller concurred and it was confirmed that this would be done.

- 58.8 Councillor Miller stated that he welcomed this initiative which provided the opportunity to deliver improvements for residents. He considered that in the longer term it was important to ensure that there was no conflict or duplication and that expectations were managed. The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing explained that these posts would compliment existing roles and would provide greater flexibility by being available at weekends. They would not however replace the wider remit of specialist officers e.g., housing officers.
- 58.9 Councillor Cattell stated that she had supported these proposals when the earlier report had been considered by the Committee at its meeting in November 2017. The further information provided in the report reinforced that and she was happy to support the recommendations.
- 58.10 Councillor Penn confirmed that she also supported the report recommendations which she considered would provide innovative, robust and flexible solutions at local level. The collaboration with other partners was also welcomed. It was important to ensure that measures were put into place to ensure officer safety
- 58.11 Councillor A Norman confirmed that the clarification provided in respect of the various issues raised at the previous meeting was welcomed and she was satisfied by the reassurance it provided. Her only remaining concerns were in respect of ensuring that staff who were rendered potentially vulnerable in consequence of lone working were properly protected. It was confirmed that a range of measures including call – in arrangements, buddying etc., would be put in place to ensure staff safety.
- 58.12 Councillor Bewick also welcomed the report but was also in agreement to ensure that realistic expectations were set.
- 58.13 Councillor K Norman also welcomed the report citing the changes in process which were anticipated in relation to invoking Public Space Protection Orders. The incidence of certain types of offence in the absence of a flexible and pro-active response was recognised.
- 56.14 A vote was taken and on a vote of 8 to 1 the recommendations in the report were agreed.
- 56.15 Councillor West requested that the report be referred to Council for information in view of its far reaching in his view, implications. A further vote was taken on whether the Committee wished to refer the report to full Council which was lost on a vote of 8 to 1. Councillor West was advised that it would be possible for the Green Group to write to the Chief Executive formally requesting that the report be referred.

**56.16 RESOLVED:**

- (1)** That the Committee agrees to the creation of a Field Officer Team as set out at Option 1 of the Business Case on Page 12 of Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2)** Agrees the revised proposed of functions and services based on the outcome of workshops with frontline staff and managers as set out at paragraphs 3.43 to 3.50 of the report;
- (3)** Agrees the funding and resources required for the set-up of the Field Officer support role as set out at paragraphs 3.29 to 3.42 of the report and pages 16 to 20 of Appendix 1 to the report;
- (4)** Notes the timetable; for implementation and associated communication and engagement work with key stakeholders as set out in section 5 of the report (paragraphs 5.1 to 5.12), and pages 28 and 29 and pages 38 to 39 of Appendix 1;
- (5)** Notes the updated risks and mitigation actions set out in pages 21 to 26 of Appendix 1;
- (6)** Notes the updated Digital First timetable for delivery as set out on pages 27 to 28 of Appendix 1; and
- (7)** Notes that the detailed amendments to the Scheme of Delegations to Officers referred to at paragraphs 3.16 to 3.19 of the report will be reported to the Policy Resources and Growth Committee for approval before the Field Officers started to exercise Council functions.

