

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 13th January 2025
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: No
Title of Report: Notice of Motion-Special Constables

Executive Director: Alan Richards - Executive Director Environment and Place
Report Author: Simon Ford - Head of Community Safety
Executive Councillor: Cllr Martin Terry – Cabinet member for Community Safety

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Council received a Notice of Motion titled Council Tax Scheme for Southend's Special Constables at its meeting on 5th September 2024 (see Appendix 1), seeking financial discounts (e.g. Council Tax allowances) for Southend residents who maybe interested in becoming Essex Police Special Constables, on the guarantee, that if the scheme is permitted, successful applicants, will only work in the City of Southend. The purpose of the scheme thus being to increase policing presence across the City.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. Note the letter from Essex Police and Fire Crime Commissioner (PFCC) at **Appendix 2**, giving particular attention to *paragraphs 1 to 6* of the letter.
- 2.2. Thank the PFCC for his considered response and note that the Notice of Motion is not supported by the PFCC.
- 2.3. Note the alternative suggestions proposed by the PFCC Office and the initial consideration of these as set out in section 5 of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Notice of Motion (NoM) seeks to enhance and amplify police presence within the City by proposing a tax allowance scheme for Southend-on-Sea City residents interested in applying to Essex Police to become Special Constables, on the proviso that successful applicants undertake the Special Constable role within City boundaries.

3.2. The proposal was forwarded to both the PFCC and Chief Constable for their comment. In summary and as detailed in paragraph's 1 to 6 on page 2 of Appendix 2, they raise significant concerns in undertaking such a measure including but not limited to:

- Paragraph 2 taxable benefits for Special Constables living in other districts but currently working in Southend,
- Paragraph 3 HR administration difficulties their end,
- Paragraph 4 that overall policing deployment is a matter for the Chief Constable, and operational deployment would be his decision based on demand across the County at any one time (i.e.no guarantee that Special Constables can solely work in a specific location)

3.3. In addition to the concerns raised, the PFCC has taken the time to set out a range of alternative ways which the Council could support police work (see section 5 below)

4. Reasons for Decisions

4.1. That both the PFCC and Chief Constable (the highest levels of policing authority in Essex), do not support the NoM, but offer alternative options – as below

5. Other Options

5.1. See Appendix 2 page 2: **(1) Community Specials Scheme**

5.2. Sponsoring Community Specials would require the Council paying all allowances and expenses of individual volunteers. In essence the Council would be financially supporting police employees – but they would still come under Essex Police and potentially be tasked to other areas of the County as per paragraph 4 in appendix 2 (page 2). If the Council chooses to make such investments, then similar investments could be added to the current Council Community Safety Unit – amplifying resources and having more direct control on local deployment instead

5.3. See Appendix 2 page 2: **(2) Employer Supported Policing Scheme (ESP)**

5.4. This option has been previously reviewed by SCC HR but did not proceed. This would require further exploration with HR colleagues to introduce and consider feasibility, but again, if an employee takes up the offer, and is permitted to conduct the Special Constable role within normal SCC working hours, there is still no guarantee that they would work within the City boundaries - as per paragraph 4 /appendix 2 (page 2).

5.5. See Appendix 2 page 3: **(3) Delivering through Community Safety Partnerships**

5.6. A range of alternative investment examples are provided here, which in essence captures the same point above (para 5.2), in that it might be more

beneficial and targeted, to financially support our own deployments, or explore other areas which would enhance safety through the work of Southend Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which would enable SCC to have greater control over where investments are applied to the direct benefit of the City, and not wider.

6. Financial Implications

The proposals in this report do not have any financial implications, however, if Cabinet decide to explore any options at section 5 they must be for consideration and full evaluation only at this stage to allow the full financial implications to be identified. Following that financial modelling Cabinet could then decide on the way forward once that information is available and what impact it could have on the Council's budget.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. None at this stage, although if the allowance scheme were to proceed, a range of legal implications some of which already detailed, would need further consideration and discussion

8. Policy Context

- 8.1 As above

9. Carbon Impact

- 9.1. Nil

10. Equalities

- 10.1. Nil at this stage

11. Consultation

- 11.1. Undertaken with PFCC Office and Chief Constable Essex Police (see Appendix 2)

12. Appendices

- 12.1. **Appendix 1**: NOM Special Constables proposal
12.2. **Appendix 2**: PFCC responding letter to the NOM

13. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
Executive Director(s)	Alan Richards	3/1/2025
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	8/1/2025

Monitoring Officer	Jayne Middleton	8.1.25
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Martin Terry	8/1/2025