

Full Council – Thursday 5th September 2024

Notice of Motion

Council Tax scheme for Southend's Special Constables

Recent events, both locally and nationally, have reinforced the need for Southend to have sufficient police officers to be deployed at times of heightened need.

Whilst the Council has limited ability to directly increase police recruitment and deployment in Southend – this being a matter for Essex Police and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex – we can make it more appealing for Southend residents to volunteer to police their own community.

It is already Council policy (Minute 83 of Cabinet held on 25th June 2019) that we should recruit 34 Special Constables to provide support and visibility across all wards in Southend.

The Council needs to take the lead in reinvigorating this policy, so that we have more Special Constables across the City. This will mean there are more police officers deployable for major events, protests, times of high footfall and to offer reassurance to our residents.

Therefore, Southend-on-Sea City Council resolves:

1. To note that the recruitment and operational deployment of Special Constables is a matter for Essex Police and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex;
2. That, as part of the Council's budget-setting process for 2025/26, a new Council Tax Scheme is considered which provides a Council Tax exemption/rebate for Special Constables who undertake a minimum number of hours of duty per year;
3. That the new scheme, if agreed, comes into force on 1st April 2025;
4. To explore with local transport providers the possibility of providing free/discounted travel for Special Constables who undertake a minimum number of hours of duty per year;
5. To urgently discuss the need for more Special Constables in Southend with Essex Police, including:
 - a. Guarantees (outside of a significant emergency) around ensuring Special Constables are deployed within or for the benefit of the City of Southend;
 - b. How the benefits in points 2 and 4 can be used to drive forward a joint recruitment campaign.

Proposed: Cllr J Courtenay

Seconded: Cllr C Campbell