

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 146-21

Classification: OFFICIAL

Title of report:
Special Services Agreement – Basildon Borough Council and Essex Police

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Basildon District

Report by: David Stovell, Finance Business Partner

Date of report: 16th September 2021

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1. Purpose of the report

To seek the Commissioner's approval to continue the partnership arrangement between Basildon Borough Council (hereafter referred to as 'the council') and Essex Police, whereby the council agrees to provide annual funding of £160,000 for the provision of additional policing services in the Basildon district.

2. Recommendations

That the Commissioner agrees the Special Services Agreement (SSA) and endorses it with his signature.

3. Benefits of the proposal

The SSA provides annual funding of £160,000 for the deployment of three additional community police officers to work within the Safer Basildon hub. This proposal is an extension of an existing agreement between the parties which concluded on 1st August 2021. The strategic objectives of the SSA are in alignment with the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, the Council's Corporate Plan and the strategy and action plan of the Safer Basildon Partnership.

4. Background and proposal

The existing partnership arrangement was agreed in the 2019/20 financial year following Full Council approval of the investment in February 2019. The SSA was signed by the

respective parties in December 2019, with a back-dated commencement date of 1st November 2019 and an end date of 1st August 2021.

In February 2021, the council notified the local policing commander of its desire to renew the agreement with the same financial terms. A first draft of the new agreement was provided in April 2021 and following various representations and re-drafts, a final version was produced by August 2021. This final version is identified as "S25 agreement" in section 14 of this decision report. The Commissioner's signature is requested on page 14 of the agreement.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

If the agreement is not extended the postholders will be redeployed and the force will incur a budget pressure linked to the reduction in funding.

6. Police and Crime Plan

This paper concerns the opportunity to enhance the level of revenue income for the force, which in itself supports each of the priorities identified within the Police and Crime Plan. It will specifically enhance the level of local, visible and accessible policing in the Basildon district.

7. Police operational implications

The Basildon District Commander and Town Centre Team Leaders have been extensively engaged in generating this agreement. Underscoring the entire approach has been consideration of how partnership working supports operational policing. It is, nevertheless, entirely clear and correct that the primary term within the SSA reiterates that the Chief Constable will retain operational control and independence at all times over the officers whose posts are funded by this agreement.

8. Financial implications

The revenue funding agreed by the council is £160,000 per financial year for three posts, which are identified as non-established roles in force HR records. Hence, the posts are not otherwise financially supported by grant or precept funding.

The costs associated with the three posts are forecast at £167,632, creating a potential shortfall in funding of £7,632. However, the force charging procedure document (G 1901, paragraph 3.4.1) allows an abatement to charges to be made. The amount in question falls within the delegated limits of a Chief Superintendent. Chief Superintendent Anslow, South LPA Commander, has duly provided his agreement to provide the abatement, as substantiated by the background paper in section 14 of this report entitled 'Approval for abatement of charges'.

9. Legal implications

The agreement attached for approval within section 14 is entered into pursuant to section 25 of the Police Act 1996. Under the Act (as amended) any person may make a request for special police services, subject to payment of charges as determined by the Commissioner.

There are no other legal implications beyond the standard clauses contained within the SSA. The original SSA was reviewed and agreed by the Force Solicitor. No material changes are contained within the SSA in section 14.

10. Staffing implications

This agreement provides funding towards the costs of three non-established police officer posts.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

There are no equality or diversity implications contained within this decision report.

12. Risks

There is a small financial risk associated with this proposal as an abatement to the charges of £7,632 is included within it. However, this is mitigated by the council's payment allowing Essex Police to maintain an important local Community Policing Team uplift that has so far achieved positive outcomes for the communities in Basildon. The potential additional cost to Essex Police is small, yet the benefit will be significant. Furthermore, as the police officer establishment within the South LPA is increasingly young in service, this small additional cost will be likely be absorbed within the existing budget and will not have a wider adverse impact on the force's finances.

As with any such agreement, there is a risk of disputes between the parties to the agreement arising from its interpretation. The process for dealing with such disputes is set out within section 9 of the agreement.

13. Governance Boards

The approval to invest in additional police officer posts was made at a Full Council meeting of Basildon Borough Council in February 2021.

The status of the posts is reviewed regularly at the Non-Established Posts Star Chamber, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, most recently on 1st September 2021.

14. Background papers

S25 agreement – OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Special Services
Agreement Basildon C

Approval for abatement of charges – OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Decision Report
Abatement.docx

Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the PFCC Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Chief Executive / M.O. Sign: 

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 14 December 2021

Chief Finance Officer / Treasurer Sign: .....

Print: Julia Berry

Date: 14 December 2021

Publication

Is the report for publication? YES X
NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable)

Protectively marked "Official-Sensitive"

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet? YES NO 2. Of Appendix? YES X NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

The appendices are not for publication as all are protectively marked "Official-Sensitive"

Date redaction carried out: 20 December 2021

Treasurer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: 

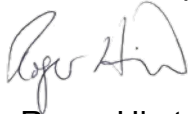
Print: Julia Berry

Chief Executive/Treasurer

Date signed: 21 December 2021

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 17 December 2021

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....
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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: