

## PFCC Decision Report

**Please ensure all sections below are completed**

<b>Report reference number:</b> 177-21
<b>Classification:</b> Not protectively marked
<b>Title of report:</b> Knife bins 2022/23
<b>Area of county / stakeholders affected:</b> Countywide
<b>Report by:</b> Samantha Grant
<b>Date of report:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
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### 1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To approve the allocation of up to £20,000 from the PFCC's 2022-23 Community Safety Fund and 2022-23 Violence and Vulnerability Fund to provide funding for the emptying of knife bins across the county.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Approve the allocation of £15,000 from PFCC's Community Safety Fund and £5,000 from Violence and Vulnerability Fund to fund the emptying of the knife bins across the county, on the basis that Essex Police are responsible for managing a contract with the provider identified to empty the knife bins.

### 3. Benefits of the proposal

- 3.1. The knife bins collect several different articles. Items put into the bins include knives, potential weapons and other sharp objects. Other important items found include viable firearms, imitation firearms, BB guns, air weapons, machetes, swords, knuckle dusters and nun-chucks. Controlled drugs have also been deposited as well. It is important that there are robust regular arrangements for the emptying and overall maintenance of the knife bins.
- 3.2. The knife bins achieve several important functions:
  - Reduce the number of domestic and non-domestic knives in circulation by encouraging their owners to surrender them,
  - Provide a legitimate route for members of the public to dispose of any unwanted knives or other weapons,

- Reinforce the message that illegal possession and use of knives is unacceptable and likely to lead to serious consequences for the individuals,
- Reduce levels of violent crime across Essex.

#### **4. Background and proposal**

- 4.1. In March 2020 the charity “UTurn” took ownership of 14 knife amnesty bins situated around Essex. The knife bins vary in size and are mostly located at or near Police stations. The Charity received £15,000 from the PFCC to undertake awareness work, and also undertook to rebrand the bins (from a previous charity – Only Cowards Carry), maintain them and arrange collection and disposal of the knives.
- 4.2. In February 2021 “UTurn” produced an interim report where they had managed to empty ten of the fourteen amnesty bins.
- 4.3. In August 2021 the charity indicated that it could no longer continue to look after the amnesty bins, mostly due to the risk to staff, particularly after a loaded and viable firearm was deposited in one of the bins and another firearm was also found. The Charity outlined that that they were happy to remove the bins entirely or hand them over to Essex Police to continue to maintain and empty and dispose of the contents.
- 4.4. Since August 2021, Essex Police has had responsibility for the knife bins with police staff / officers emptying the knife bins. This includes Special Constabulary emptying the bins and placing the knives into wheely bins and then storing at Police stations and awaiting disposal from an approved contractor.
- 4.5. The proposal is for one contractor to take on the role of emptying and disposing of the items found in the knife bins. This will ensure that there is a sustainable process in place for the regular emptying of the bins and storage and disposal of the contents.
- 4.6. Through Essex Police’s Serious Violence Unit, a suitable contractor to empty the bins and dispose of the contents has been identified, at a maximum yearly rate of £20,000. This contractor has expertise in ensuring appropriate disposal of the items, including recording, and evidencing this. Essex Police will have the contract for this with the identified contractor. This decision sheet covers the first year of funding. Further decision sheets will be submitted for future years.

#### **5. Alternative options considered and rejected**

- 5.1. The PFCC could opt not to allocate this funding, however, this would mean the knife bins either being removed or falling into disrepair, with the risk that weapons could be removed from them. The Essex V&V partnership believe that these knife bins are an asset to our communities, and they should be regularly maintained to ensure the security of the weapons being stored and to give residents an opportunity to dispose of dangerous bladed articles.

#### **6. Police and Crime Plan**

- 6.1. This funding will support multiple areas within the Police and Crime Plan, most notably reducing drug-driven violence.

## **7. Police operational implications**

- 7.1. In November 2021 EP Facilities collected the knives/weapons/content from the Chelmsford bin, so some seven months from the previous collection. From that bin two wheely bins of knives were recovered. The total weight of the knives/weapons/sharp items recovered was 54kg (647 knives/weapons/sharp items that made up the 54kg).

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1. The PFCC will allocate £15,000 from the 2022-23 Community Safety Fund and up to £5,000 from the 2022-23 Violence and Vulnerability Fund. Further years funding will be subject to future decision reports.

## **9. Legal implications**

- 9.1. The agreement is subject to our standard funding agreement. The responsibility for overseeing the contract with the contractor will sit with Essex Police (Serious Violence Unit). The contract holder will be Essex Police.

## **10. Staffing implications**

- 10.1. No staffing implications

## **11. Equality and Diversity implications**

- 11.1. The award of this funding is not anticipated to have any direct equality and diversity implications.

## **12. Risks**

- 12.1. No significant risks have been identified. The contractor identified to empty the bin will be expected and obliged to ensure high safety standards. The contract will be managed by Essex Police.

## **13. Governance Boards**

- 13.1. This proposal has been discussed by the V&V Operations Board, on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022, and the Board is in support of the proposal.



**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:** .....

**Chief Executive/Treasurer**

**Date signed:** .....

**Decision and Final Sign Off**

I agree the recommendations to this report:

**Sign:** 

**Print:** Jane Gardner

**Deputy PFCC**

**Date signed:** 21 January 2022

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

.....  
.....  
.....

**Sign:**

**Print:**

**PFCC/Deputy PFCC**

**Date signed:**