



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	<b>Council: Wednesday 20 January 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 10</b>
Subject	<b>Motion: Policing in West Oxfordshire</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Merylyn Davies, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, Email: <a href="mailto:merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk">merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the motion originally proposed and seconded at Council on 26 February 2020, in the context of the discussion at the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 November 2020.
Annex	<a href="#">Annex 1</a> : Draft minute from that meeting
Recommendation	That the Council considers and determines the motion in the light of the discussion at the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Corporate priorities	Not applicable.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Council held on 26 February 2020, the following Motion was proposed and seconded by Councillors Laetisia Carter and Duncan Enright respectively:-  
*“Despite remaining a low crime area residents of West Oxfordshire are rightly concerned about the increase in crime, particularly involving vulnerable people/young people and antisocial behaviour across the district. Our Community Safety Plan is reaching its end in 2021. Policing is under increasing financial pressure. West Oxfordshire District Council would like to work in closer partnership with Thames Valley Police to increase capacity to police our towns and villages. As a response to growing complex crime the Council resolves to negotiate with Thames Valley Police to put more police officers on patrol in West Oxfordshire, including the possibility of jointly funded posts”.*
- 1.2. The motion having been duly proposed and seconded stood referred without discussion to the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and advice.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. [Annex I](#) to this report comprises the draft minute detailing the consideration of the matter by the Committee on 19 November 2020.
- 2.2. Council will see that the Committee has not made a recommendation on this matter, and requested that the minute from its meeting be presented as an overview of Members’ opinions.
- 2.3. Council is invited to consider and determine the motion, in the context of the Committee’s comments and any further proposed amendments to the motion which may arise.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. This report does not, in itself, have any financial implications.
- 3.2. However, any decision of the Council to progress “jointly funded posts” would have a currently unknown financial impact which would need to be considered when the Council approves its budget for 2021/22.

## **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. None

## **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. Not applicable

## **6. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 6.1. It is for the Council to approve, reject or amend the motion.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1. None

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON  
THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2020**

**22. MOTION: POLICING IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE**

The Committee gave consideration to the following motion proposed by Councillor Laetisia Carter and seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright at the meeting of the Council held 26 February 2020 and referred to this Committee for consideration and comment:-

*“Despite remaining a low crime area residents of West Oxfordshire are rightly concerned about the increase in crime, particularly involving vulnerable people/young people and antisocial behaviour across the district. Our Community Safety Plan is reaching its end in 2021. Policing is under increasing financial pressure. West Oxfordshire District Council would like to work in closer partnership with Thames Valley Police to increase capacity to police our towns and villages. As a response to growing complex crime the Council resolves to negotiate with Thames Valley Police to put more police officers on patrol in West Oxfordshire, including the possibility of jointly funded posts.”*

Councillor Carter addressed Members and outlined her reasons for believing the motion should go forwards. She explained some of the problems being faced by residents and felt that the Council should mirror the example put forward by Carterton Town Council, which had helped to fund a PCSO post. Councillor Carter did not feel that it was fair that some towns could afford to bolster their policing and wanted the District Council to do so.

This was seconded by Councillor Enright who reiterated the importance of the Community Safety Plan.

The Committee agreed that this was an important issue and recognised the difficulties that communities experiencing anti-social behaviour had to deal with.

The Chairman reminded Members of the previously discussed Budget item and asked the proposer if she wished to include a sum of money in the motion, to help guide officers. Councillor Carter felt that should be left blank so as not to restrict the work in priority areas. The Cabinet Member for Finance also felt it would be helpful to have an idea of the amount of funding and where Councillors would like this to come from.

The Cabinet Member for Communities addressed the Committee and reiterated the level of work that the Council was already involved in with the Police, including weekly updates from the Community Officers, the focus on recognising and reducing instances of Domestic Violence and the previously discussed funding for improved CCTV systems.

Councillor Bull advised that Carterton Town Council had part funded the PCSO post independently of the District Council and suggested that Town and Parish Councils be approached to consider similar actions. She therefore proposed that the response to the motion be that Council should encourage Town and Parish Councils to support or part fund PCSOs in their own towns.

This was seconded by Councillor Leverton. On being put to the vote the result was tied and the Chairman chose not to exercise his casting vote.

Councillor Enright suggested a compromise whereby the Council would look at proceeding with the Community Safety Plan with a view to employing more police officers and encourage Town and Parish Councils to look at the Carterton model.

Councillor Carter did not want to dictate to town and parish councils, without the District Council looking at the principle of bolstering TVP funding first and this was seconded by Councillor Cooper.

On being put to the vote, the result was again tied and the Chairman felt that the committee was not able to make a decision based on the information available.

In conclusion, the Committee was generally supportive of community initiatives but was concerned that the responsibility for funding should not fall to the District Council alone, especially in the current financial climate. It was recognised that discussions with town and parish councils should be supported with a view to advising how they could jointly fund PCSO posts if they wished.

The Chairman proposed that Council be advised that the Committee was unable to reach a decision and requested that the minutes from this meeting be presented as an overview of Members' opinions.