



## North Devon Council

Report Date: Monday, 4 March 2024

Topic: Street Marshal Scheme

Report by: Hannah Harrington, Place Manager (Town Centres) and Jon Triggs (Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Following the unprecedented success of the Street Marshal Scheme under the Safer Streets project, North Devon Council agreed to extend the existing contract from October 2023 until 31 March 2024 to give officers time to explore other funding opportunities with partners to provide a long-term solution to the provision of street marshals in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.
- 1.2. Prior to this period the Street Marshal Scheme operated in Barnstaple only and the extension agreed was to include Ilfracombe and to evaluate the benefits of this widened provision to both town centres whilst identifying funding streams to support the longer term service.
- 1.3. During this 6 months the scheme has operated in Barnstaple 5 days a week and Ilfracombe 2 days a week.
- 1.4. The scheme has continued to contribute towards a significant reduction in overall crime and incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour reported to the Police. Figures comparing Jan – December 2022 to the same period in 2023 show that:
  - across the whole of the Barnstaple Sector, there has been a -6.8% year on year reduction in overall crime. This is a reduction of 245 crimes, or perhaps more importantly, 245 less victims.
  - in Barnstaple Central Neighbourhood, there has been a -12.4% year on year reduction on overall reported crime. This is a reduction of 167 crimes in the central area, or 167 less victims.
  - in the Barnstaple Central Neighbourhood, there has been a -20.9% year on year reduction in report Antisocial Behaviour incidents, a reduction of 113.
- 1.5. The marshals continue to be a highly valued service by NDC staff, businesses, local residents, visitors, Police and other emergency services.
- 1.6. The current contract expires on 31 March 2024, the purpose of this report is therefore to set out the benefits of the scheme and seek approval for funding to enable a much valued provision to continue for at least a further 2 years.
- 1.7. Initially, the provision of street marshals will continue to be provided through an extension of the existing contract however, a review of the operating model will be undertaken to determine whether an external contract is the most effective and efficient operating model to deliver the service in the



medium to long term or whether employing staff directly would provide an enhanced service and value.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Contract Procedure Rules be waived and approval be given to enter into a new contract up to 30 June 2024 with the existing provider (subject to agreeing terms) on the basis that they have been delivering the service for the last 15 months and have established trusted, invaluable contacts and relationships with NDC staff, Police, businesses, Town Council and the wider community.
- 2.2. That authority be delegated to Place Manager (town centres) and the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to determine the exact operating hours of the scheme in consultation with key partners such as Police and Town Councils, based on demand and available budget.
- 2.3. That authority be delegated to Place Manager (town centres) and the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to determine whether an external contract is the most effective and efficient operating model to deliver the service in the medium to long term or whether employing staff directly would be better value and provide a better service.
- 2.4. Subject to approval of 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 above, the cost of the Street Marshal scheme be funded from the Town Centre Management earmarked reserve and any financial contribution from Town Councils as set out in Section 5.

## 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The current funding for the Street Marshal scheme ends on 31 March 2024 and there are concerns that if the service is simply withdrawn the situation will deteriorate rapidly.
- 3.2. Extending the existing contract until 30 June 2024 will give officers time to review whether an external contract is the most effective and efficient operating model to deliver the service in the medium to long term (at least 2 years).
- 3.3. Allocating the budget within the Town Centre Management reserve together with any potential financial contributions from Town Councils will safeguard the service in the medium to long term (at least 2 years).

## 4. REPORT

- 4.1. As outlined in the report to Strategy and Resources on 04/09/2023, the concept of providing a reassuring visible presence in town centres was first introduced following the pandemic in December 2020 and until October 2023 the scheme was funded through external funding streams and processes including Welcome Back Fund, Contain Outbreak Management Fund and Safer Streets 4. North Devon Council funded the contract from October 2023 to March 2024.

4.2. The street marshals work as a part of a team consisting of street marshals, NDC's ASB Officer, NDC's CCTV staff, NDC's Civil Enforcement Officers and the Police Neighbourhood team providing a multi-agency, high profile presence with the ability to be flexible, responsive - tackling local problems quickly and efficiently.

4.3. The street marshals have continued to form the core of the team through a highly visible presence within Barnstaple and Ilfracombe but are often accompanied by other members of the multi-agency team.

4.4. The aims of the current scheme include:

- To provide public reassurance / safety to the public and businesses.
- De-escalate situations that could lead to anti-social behaviour
- Provide first aid assistance as required
- Report any environmental ASB issues to NDC
- Build relationships with local businesses, encouraging use of the Shopnet radio system and reporting of incidents. Provide a link between businesses and public services and reporting any issues and helping these to be addressed quickly.
- Where reasonable to assist Council and Police staff in their daily duties
- Gather intelligence and enforce the Public Spaces Protection Order.
- Provide a direct link to Council and Police teams by utilising the existing town centre radio network (Barnstaple)

4.5 The service currently provides:

- 2 x SIA accredited, FREC 3 first aid trained security staff covering Barnstaple and Ilfracombe Town Centres with specific focus on the Public Spaces Protection Order 10.30 am to 5.30pm 7 days a week.
- Depending on demand the marshals have typically carried out 5 days a week in Barnstaple and 2 days a week in Ilfracombe.
- Each officer is equipped with a full medic kit, including a defibrillator and oxygen, ensuring they are prepared to provide life-assisting assistance if needed
- Daily reports and if appropriate body worn camera footage to North Devon Council and the Police.
- Witness statements when appropriate
- A dedicated mobile number for businesses to contact them.

4.6 Since the start of the contract the team has been diligently working each day to ensure the safety for all, whether it is Barnstaple and Ilfracombe's residents, businesses or visitors. The incidents they deal with are wide ranging, from dealing with anti-social behaviour and street drinking to curbing retail theft and vandalism. Another crucial aspect of their role is offering protection and support



to those in most need, whether it is safeguarding vulnerable people or being a first responder in a medical emergency.

#### 4.7 Since the start of the scheme:

- Street Marshals have responded to 431 incidents in Barnstaple
- Street Marshals have responded to 39 incidents in Ilfracombe
- Street drinking is still the most reported incident in both Barnstaple (25%) and Ilfracombe (49%)
- Police were called to 4% of incidents in Barnstaple. None in Ilfracombe
- Ambulance service was called to 39% of medical incidents. None in Ilfracombe

#### 4.8 The results of a recent survey of businesses and general public in both Barnstaple and Ilfracombe showed that:

- 92% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in ASB
- 80% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in violence
- 79% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in criminal damage
- 93% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in street drinking
- 79% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in theft
- 70% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in drug use
- 89% of businesses feel that the presence of street marshals has a positive impact on the day to day running of their business and 96% feel they have a positive impact on the community.

4.9 In both Barnstaple and Ilfracombe Street Marshals have provided evidence of breaches and witness statements that have led to Community Protection Notices, Community Protection Warning Letters and Fixed Penalty Notices being issued for breaches of the Public Spaces Protection Orders.

4.10 Opportunities for external funding have been explored unfortunately there are currently no grant programmes open that the scheme would be eligible for. For example, no towns in North Devon are eligible to apply for Safer Streets 5 funding.

4.11 Barnstaple Town Council have agreed to consider a future contribution from Town Council reserves towards the street marshal scheme once a satisfactory agreement and management proposal between the Town and District Councils has been approved. The level of contribution is still to be confirmed and in addition to the NDC funding being put forwards from the town centre management reserve would maximise the length of Street Marshal provision further.

4.12 Anti-Social Behaviour is not unique to Barnstaple and Ilfracombe and can be experienced by any community; the scheme can therefore be flexible and

extended into other areas as and when needed subject to evidence, scope and partner funding being secured.

- 4.13 Whilst an external contract has been very successful there is an opportunity to review the operating model to ensure the resource is utilised to its maximum potential. This could potentially involve employing street marshals directly to work alongside existing staff in various teams enhancing capacity of those teams. Additional benefits of direct employment potentially include the ability to control consistency of staff. The review will consider both the options in detail.

## 5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 At its meeting on 5 February 2024 Strategy and Resources approved placing £200,000 from the 2023/24 additional business rate income into the Town Centre Management earmarked reserve to re-invest back into our town centres as part of ongoing management provisions such as safety and security.
- 5.2 The estimated cost of a 3-month contract, providing 7 days a week / 7 hours per day coverage (days and hours to be split across Barnstaple and Ilfracombe) is £27,500
- 5.3 The forecast balance within the Town Centre Management Reserve at 31 March 2024 is £203,332; and it is proposed that the initial 3 month contract outlined within this report, if approved, be funded from this earmarked reserve balance and that delegation be given to officers to determine the exact operating hours of the scheme in consultation with key partners such as the Police, based on demand and the available funding above.
- 5.4 The review of operating models will determine the costs associated with both potential operating models and once the preferred model approved, be funded from the Town Centre Management Reserve and that delegation be given to officers to determine the exact operating hours of the scheme in consultation with key partners such as the Police, based on demand and the available funding above.
- 5.5 Additional funding opportunities will continue to be explored, bids submitted as appropriate and contributions from partners sought in order to determine how long the service can be provided. The costs associated with the ongoing operating model will be contained within the financial framework outlined in this report and will be funded from the Town Centre Management earmarked reserve balance together with any financial contribution from Town Councils once confirmed.

## 6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will be updated for this scheme.



## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1 There are no environmental impacts from this scheme.

## 8 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1 What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1 Improving customer focus: the scheme addresses some of the key concerns that customers have around feelings of safety in town centres. The marshals provide a reassuring presence, provide intelligence to NDC and can respond quickly to incidents.

8.1.2 Regeneration or economic development: the presence of street marshals contributes to people's feelings of safety and encourages them to visit town centres thus supporting the regeneration and economic development of those centres.

## 9 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph 1

## 10 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

- Safer Streets Round 4 bid
- Strategy and Resources report 04/09/2023

## 12 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Hannah Harrington, Place Manager (Town Centres)