

Appendix 2- KCWS Consultation document and questionnaire-proposed responses

1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire can be completed online at kent.gov.uk/communitywardenreview

Alternatively, fill in this paper form and return to: **Freepost COMMUNITY WARDENS**. Please make sure that the address is written in capitals and that your response reaches us by the **3 October 2023**.

Section 1 – About You

Q1. Are you responding as...?

Please select the option from the list below that most closely represents how you will be responding to this consultation. Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yourself (as an individual)
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of someone who uses the Community Warden service. <i>Please answer all the questions using their details and not your own.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	A partner agency (e.g. Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Health services/provider)
<input type="checkbox"/>	A representative of a local community group or residents' association
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a Parish / Town / Borough / District Council in an official capacity
<input type="checkbox"/>	A Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a charity or voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)
<input type="checkbox"/>	A Kent Community Warden service member of staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	A KCC employee
<input type="checkbox"/>	An educational establishment, such as a school or college
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a business
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please tell us: <input style="width: 300px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation (partner agency, community group, council, VCSE, educational establishment or business), please tell us the name of the organisation here:

Q2. Please tell us the first five characters of your postcode:

ME15 6JQ

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you are responding on behalf of someone else, provide their postcode. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, use your organisation's postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Q3. How did you find out about this consultation? Please select all that apply.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Nextdoor
- From a friend or relative
- From a community warden
- An email from KCC's Community Warden service
- An email from Let's talk Kent or KCC's Engagement and Consultation team
- Kent.gov.uk website
- KCC County Councillor
- Town, Parish, District or Borough Council / Councillor
- Newspaper
- Poster / postcard
- KCC's staff intranet
- Other, please tell us:

Q4. Have you, or the person / organisation you are responding on behalf of, received support or a service from the Community Wardens?

Please select **one** option.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

If you have answered 'No' or 'Don't know', please go to Section 2, Q8 on page 21.

If you have answered 'Yes', please continue to Q5 on the next page.

If you are responding on behalf of someone else, please remember to answer all of these questions using their details.

Q5 What support / service did the Community Wardens provide to you or the person / organisation you are responding on behalf of?

Please select **all** that apply.

X	Help with community safety issues or providing advice, for example, support relating to anti-social behaviour, scams, rogue traders, flooding, the pandemic or low-level crime.
X	Personal, one to one support for wellbeing and quality of life, such as linking to financial support, housing, information and advice, carers support or social connections and activities.
X	Help with community engagement either by; setting up and / or supporting events, groups, clubs, projects, or volunteering activities in the community.
	Facilitating my organisation in accessing other partners, such as liaising with councils and the police.
X	Partnering with my organisation (this could be to provide local knowledge, advice, support for community safety initiatives, support for emergencies or support for the welfare of clients).
	Other, please tell us: <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 400px; height: 50px; display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"></div>

Q6 Please tell us how often you or the person / organisation you are responding on behalf of has been supported by the Community Warden service?

Please select **one** option.

	A single occurrence
X	More often

Q6a. If you have answered 'More often' to Q6, please tell us how often:

Please select **one** option.

X	At least once a week	
	Once a fortnight	
	Once a month	
	Twice a year	
	Less regularly	
	Have been supported in the past. Please tell us how long this was for.	
	Other, please tell us:	

Q7 How do you or the person / organisation you are responding on behalf of benefit from engaging with / receiving support from the Community Warden service?

Please select **all** that apply.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gain useful information / community updates / advice or guidance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gain access to services / care / support that I was not aware of or had difficulty in accessing Feeling safer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling less lonely / socially isolated
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling of improved wellbeing
<input type="checkbox"/>	No benefit (please go to Q8)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other, please tell us:
<input type="checkbox"/>	

The service supports the communities we represent in feeling less lonely/socially isolated and improving wellbeing

Q7a. If you would like to tell us more about how you or the person / organisation you are responding on behalf of has benefitted from engaging with / receiving support from the Community Warden service, please use the box below. Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else within your response.

The Community Warden service work closely with the police and other agencies to help make Maidstone a safer place to live, work and visit. They provide a visible presence on the streets and in public spaces, helping to deter crime and anti-social behaviour. They also provide support and advice to residents on a range of issues, including home security, personal safety and community cohesion.

In addition to this, the Community Warden service supports some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. They feed into our Community Safety Vulnerability Group on a weekly basis and provide vital information to statutory services on mental health, self-neglect and general welfare of customers who are often disengaged from services or hard to reach. They also help to free up hospital beds by helping vulnerable people home. This is a constant work stream and important to relieve the pressure on the NHS.

The Community Wardens also build trusting relationships with the vulnerable, community leads such as Parish Councils and the community in general. They also build trusting relationships with Young People in the community, helping them to make better decisions, reducing ASB and risk-taking behaviour. For Maidstone this includes attending our Ward Cluster meetings where we regularly bring together Elected Members and Parish Council representatives of up to 4 district wards, to discuss community safety concerns and shared action plans to reduce ASB, crime and community tensions.

They have also participated in the delivery of the Community Safety Partnership and specifically the Maidstone Task Force, whose success has been at the heart of Kent Police's Neighbourhood Policing Review. Within this role, the KCC wardens worked to support the creation of legacy support services that reduce social isolation and improve social prescribing.

Section 2 – Our Proposals

This document provides details of the proposed changes to where and how the Community Warden service operates (see pages 6 to 9).

We have proposed not to change the service’s current remit and objectives. This means the range and variety of ways wardens can support an individual or community would be the same.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the service maintaining its current remit and objectives?

Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q8a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q8 in the box below.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else within your response.

Through the delivery of their current objectives the KCWS has become and integral to the support provided to communities in Maidstone. Each of the objectives are closely aligned to our own Objectives as a local authority, particularly providing a Safe, Clean and Green and supporting Homes and Communities. Our answer of Tend to Agree as opposed to Strongly Agree is due to our concerns, as an organisation, the reduction in the number of wardens, and the uncertainty as to how many wardens Maidstone would receive, will negatively impact on the capacity of those wardens to effectively deliver all the objectives effectively and the level of service that many of our communities have become dependent on. The KCWS has become a (reliable) vital support to many of our communities and there are concerns that the capacity of the limited number of wardens proposed would lead to a disjointed or sporadic service at best and at worst could lead to many vulnerable people left without any support at all. This in turn would lead to significant pressures on the service to meet demand and possible lead to gaps or a reduced service overall as resources become too stretched. There are additional concerns for the wardens themselves working in such an overstretched and under resourced environment would lead to a lack of job satisfaction leaving the service at risk of staff retention. High staff turnover would see a deficit in local knowledge and a complete lack of continuity of care and support for our residents

We have proposed for wardens to continue to be community-based, so they can continue to be proactive in the support they provide to communities.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with wardens being community based?

Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q9a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q9 in the box below.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else within your response.

As detailed in Q8a, the KCWS are integrated in many of the communities across Maidstone, particularly in rural areas where the levels of demand on other services like Kent Police are more sporadic and are therefore receive less resourcing. The uniformed reassurance provided by the KCWS provides reassurance and makes them approachable and allows residents to trust them with information that they may be less willing to share with other agencies. The reduction in KCC wardens, in combination with recent changes to Police Community Support Officers and increasing pressure on the charity sector to receive funding is going to significantly and disproportionately impact on the most vulnerable and most deprived people in our communities. As an example, the KCWS in Maidstone have played an integral role in supporting those individuals who choose to self-neglect or have mental health conditions. Some of these individuals choose to disengage from services such as mental health and social services, which can impact on their own health and sometimes their community. The trust that wardens are able to foster with these individuals requires time and determination that our statutory services, such as GPs or mental health practitioners are unable to provide due to service pressures.

We have proposed to retain six teams covering two districts each, with a minimum of one team leader and three wardens per team, and to distribute the further 14 wardens across the teams according to need.

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach?

Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q10a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q10 in the box below.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else within your response.

Whilst we feel that it is important to retain a service, there is a concern that the proposed levels will simply not be able to meet the demands and expectations of the service itself, which may ultimately compromise the service itself due to increase risk of sickness and issues retaining wardens in the service. The reduced capacity will consequently impact on some of the services and systems in place for Maidstone. Reduce community engagement or support of vulnerable people will undoubtedly lead to increases in community tension and meaning that vital information about vulnerable people or important relationships with them could be lost, impacting detrimentally on other services, such as mental health and social services.

We have proposed to reduce the Community Warden service by 32 warden posts and two management posts to achieve the savings required.

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach to achieve the £1 million saving? Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q11a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q11 in the box below.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else within your response.

See Q10a

To retain a community-based approach, we have proposed to allocate wardens to electoral wards. Wards may be grouped to reach a population ratio of approximately 6,000 to 12,000 residents per warden.

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals to ...?

*Select **one** option per proposal/row.*

Proposals	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Allocate wardens to electoral wards		X				
Group wards to reach a population ratio of approximately 6,000 to 12,000 residents per warden.		X				

Q12a. Please tell us the reasons for your answers to Q12 in the box below.

If your comment relates to a specific proposal in Q12, please make that clear in your answer.

In 2020/21 Maidstone Borough Council introduced Ward Cluster meetings where we regularly bring together Elected Members and Parish Council representatives of up to 4 district wards based on a number of factors including the nature of the concerns impacting on each ward. The effectiveness of this approach has seen Maidstone Police adopt the use of Clusters for assigning areas to their new Beat Officers. This is unique to Maidstone and ensures good coverage across all communities. However, the current resourcing levels for Kent Police is seeing the limited numbers of officers stretched thinly and making them less effective than was perhaps hoped from their new model. Therefore whilst we would support the grouping of wards, it is with the caveat that they:

- Mirror the clusters created in Maidstone
- Are resourced appropriately

We have proposed to identify the wards in which to base all wardens using data and information as described in the Geographical Allocation Policy on pages 7 to 9.

Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach?

Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q13a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q13 in the box below.

If you think we have missed out any data, information, or considerations from the proposed Geographical Allocation Policy, please include these in your answer.

Maidstone Borough Council, through its community safety work, advocates the use of data and evidence to create evidence led approach. This may however see wardens removed from communities in which the KCWS have been integral for many years as the data may not support their retention. Consideration will need to be given into how those communities and the vulnerable people within them are supported. Particularly those who vulnerable people who have already built relationships with the service and could be isolated or even exploited without the services' support.

Q14. Please tell us how the proposed service changes could affect you or the person / organisation you are responding on behalf of.

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else within your response.

Please see the responses to Q8 to Q13

Due to the size of the changes being proposed to the Community Warden service (reduction in numbers and changes to allocations) it is quite possible for there to be changes to the level of service you currently receive.

Q15. What would you like us to ensure is considered or put in place if wardens need to be withdrawn from an area?

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else within your response.

For Maidstone we would ask that consideration is given to how the proposed changes will impact on the following:

- Supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, feeding into our Community Safety Vulnerability Group on a weekly basis.
- Providing vital information to statutory services on mental health, self neglect and general welfare of customers who are often disengaged from services or hard to reach.
- Helping to free up hospital beds by helping vulnerable people home. This is a constant work stream and important to relieve the pressure on the NHS.
- Building trusting relationships with the vulnerable, community leads, such as Parish Councils and the community in general, including attending our Ward Cluster meetings
- Participation in the delivery of the Community Safety Partnership and specifically the Neighbourhood Task Force

Q16. If the Community Warden service is withdrawn from your area, what alternative sources do you think you would turn to?

Please select **all** that apply.

X	Adult Social Care services
X	Charities or voluntary sector organisations
X	Community groups
X	District / Borough council
X	Doctor / GP
X	Kent Police
X	Parish / Town council
	Don't know
X	Other, please tell us:

As an authority we anticipate increase demand on all the services listed above, regardless of whether they have the resources or capacity necessary to meet the demand.

We have completed a consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposed changes to the Community Warden service.

An EqIA is a tool to assess the impact any service change, policy or strategy would have on age, sex, gender identity, disability, race, religion / belief or none, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage and civil partnership and carer's responsibilities.

The equality impacts are summarised on page 12. The full EqIA is available online at kent.gov.uk/communitywardenreview or in hard copy on request.

Q17. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything else we should consider relating to equality and diversity. Please add any comments below:

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else within your response.

The very nature of the wardens' roles aligns them to people with protected characteristics and helping them to access services. This includes poverty, which for Maidstone Borough Council has been identified as a further area of concern for our residents. They often provide the support /links where families or society are not. The proposed reductions will impact on the level support the KCWS are able to provide.

Q18. Do you have any additional feedback on our proposals and/or suggestions on how else we could make savings to our Community Warden service budget?

One of our biggest operational concerns is the impact this might have on the helping people home scheme. The wardens play a key role in facilitating the move of vulnerable people away from hospital beds and back into their homes. As mentioned before, the wardens regularly raise concerns to our Vulnerabilities forum. They bring to the conversation vital information that is only possible through the unique relationships they form.