## Maidstone Borough Council

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Via email: Clair.Bell@kent.gov.uk

Cc: <a href="mailto:communitywardensreview@kent.gov.uk">cc: communitywardensreview@kent.gov.uk</a>.

Date: TBC

## Kent Community Warden Service Public Consultation Response on Behalf of Maidstone Residents.

Dear Clair,

I write with a sense of urgency and deep concern for the proposed changes to the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS). I attach a response to the consultation, which has been unanimously approved, cross-party, by members of our Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee and our Overview and Scrutiny Committee who all expressed deep concern at the changes proposed.

The KCWS is not just a service; it is the heartbeat of our community in Maidstone, a beacon of support and a bridge to those often left on the margins.

The planned reduction of the KCWS, coupled with recent changes to the role of PCSOs, is akin to removing the safety net from under our most vulnerable citizens. The KCWS is our eyes and ears, our early warning system for issues related to mental health, self-neglect, and general welfare. They are friends to the vulnerable and guardians for our young people. Their absence will create a void that other agencies, already stretched thin, will struggle to fill.

The financial pressures leading to these changes are understood, but the long-term implications are alarming. The proposed cuts may offer short-term savings, but they threaten to trigger a domino effect, increasing demand for acute services and straining public funding. In essence, we are not just cutting a service; we are eroding the very fabric of our community. The KCWS is a lifeline for many, and its reduction could have a ripple effect, leading to increased levels of violence and deprivation.

On a more general note I wanted to make you aware of how misleading I and other Members found the consultation document itself. The nature of the questions are such that they are incredibly difficult to answer and are, in many cases, leading to the audience, giving them little option but to support elements of the proposal as the alternative would suggest the service is not necessary. This should be reviewed as it may bias outcomes of consultations.



I implore you to reconsider these cuts. Let us not balance our books at the expense of our community's wellbeing. I urge you to explore alternative funding options, such as from more appropriate services within KCC, who will bear the consequences of change, or the ICB or even the Private Sector, in the form of sponsorship, to ensure the KCWS can continue to serve as our community's guardian.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust you will give it the consideration it deserves.

Yours sincerely,

## **Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid**

Cabinet Member. Housing and Health

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