

BILLERICAY Town Council has become the first to formally sign an agreement with Essex Police to fund a Community Special Constable.

The move comes as part of Essex Police's continued commitment to drive up the number of volunteer officers and keep policing local, visible and accessible. As well as launching a Specials Recruitment campaign, called 'My Other Life', the force has been working with town and parish councils across Essex to secure funding for dedicated Community Special Constables. Councils are being invited to cover the cost of expenses of the volunteer officer – which is approximately £1,000 a year – which will secure them a Special committed to policing their area.

As part of the agreement the Community Special will be expected to carry out a minimum of 16-hours on duty a month in their designated area, working as part of a Community Policing Team and will work with the council to identify and tackle the issues that matter most to their neighbourhood.

Many of Essex Police's existing Specials carry out an average of 40 to 45 hours a month and 500 hours each year, so the scheme could bring a significant increase in visible policing in participating areas.

Billericay Town Council has become the first to sign the formal agreement which took place at their meeting on Thursday December 14 2017

Councillor Jim Devlin, Chairman of Billericay Town Council, said: "Billericay is proud to be associated with Community Special Constables. We feel it is a valuable addition to the safety and security of the town and will provide residents with reassurance."

Supt Simon Anslow, who leads Essex Police's Special Constabulary, said: "We are delighted that Billericay Town Council has become the first to sign the formal agreement to fund a Community Special Constable. "Once recruited, the volunteer officer will be at the very heart of providing local, visible and accessible policing in Billericay and keeping their community safe."

There is a dedicated section on the Essex Police website about becoming a Special and information about how to support Community Specials <https://www.essex.police.uk/join-the-police/special-constabulary/>.

Special Constables have full police powers, uniforms, equipment and training. To become a Special you need to be: 18 or over; commit to a minimum of 16-hours each month for operational duties plus mandatory training; meet the required fitness standard; and commit to the initial training requirement of 20 days. Community Specials are committed to policing the area that pays for them. However where a critical incident occurs, for example a terrorist attack, the Community Special may be called on to help in another area of the county.