

Report of : Director of Environments and Neighbourhoods

Report to : Executive Board

Date: 5 March 2014

Subject: Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) – Response to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board Review

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. A Scrutiny Working Group was established to oversee the review, meeting 3 times between November 2013 and January 2014, before making their conclusions and recommendations to the Scrutiny Board on the 10th February 2014. The final report of the Scrutiny Board is appended. It is evident from the conclusions and recommendations of the review, that Scrutiny Members have carefully considered the potential implications and impacts of changes to the way in which PCSO's currently operate, and their discussion have been instrumental in helping to progress the debate about how best should use it PCSO resource in the future.
2. The report sets out the Department's response to the recommendations. The Department supports the scrutiny board's unanimous recommendations to revise the role of PCSO's and the move to basing them in more local inter agency teams. The Department will undertake further work with the police on the question of the distribution of resources in an attempt to reconcile the desire to maintain local ward presence, whilst addressing city wide needs.

Recommendations

3. Executive Board is asked to:

Support recommendations 2 and 3 of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board Review, and note the further work to be undertaken in relation to recommendation 1.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report outlines the Environment and Housing Department's response to the recommendations made by the Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Board following their review of the role and allocation of Police Community Support Officers in Leeds (appended).

2 Main Issues

- 2.1.1 The recommendations of Scrutiny and the response from the Department are set out below.

2.1.2 Scrutiny Recommendation 1

That the Executive Board considers the following two advisory positions of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board in relation to the allocation of Council funded PCSOs in Leeds, with position two reflecting the majority view of the Scrutiny Board:

Position one:

That the Executive Board supports the continuation of the existing allocation model for Council funded PCSOs in terms of promoting an equal distribution of the full resource available across the city, which is currently reflected in the allocation of 5 PCSOs in every ward in Leeds.

Position two:

That the Executive Board supports the introduction of a new allocation model during 2014/15 for Council funded PCSOs. This model should involve a dedicated flexible resource of PCSOs to be deployed against demand, with the remaining resource being allocated using an intelligence based approach linked to combined crime and Neighbourhood Policing Team confidence data for wards across Leeds. However, this model should also apply a minimum baseline of 4 PCSOs within each ward.

2.1.3 Advice

The Department recognises the merits of the arguments which have been put forward on both sides. Whilst there are significant differences between the levels of crime in different wards across the city, accompanied largely by differing degrees of confidence among the public, it is understood that outer areas have larger geographies that make them difficult to cover. The retention of a significant local presence within wards, either 4 or 5, is therefore supported.

- 2.1.3.1 The creation of a flexible city-wide team of officers, who can be deployed on a temporary basis to address crime hot-spots, seasonal criminality and long standing problems would be advantageous. This will enable the Council to be

more responsive to the needs of citizens, ensuring that the right resources are deployed at the right time and to the right place. There is an identified need to provide more coverage, for example, to deal with noise complaints during the evening and early hours, that a more flexible approach to PCSOs could address. The creation of a city wide team may also serve to better guarantee the minimum numbers to be deployed at ward level, by reducing the need for abstraction.

2.1.4 Given the lack of agreement, the Department will work with the Police to see how far both of the objectives can be achieved, balancing the demand for local presence with some flexibility.

2.1.5 Scrutiny Recommendation 2

That the Executive Board supports the principle of enhancing the role of PCSOs to maximise environmental enforcement resources and ensures that any additional functions placed upon PCSOs is managed effectively in view of the expectations already placed upon them.

2.1.6 Scrutiny Recommendation 3

That the Executive Board supports the principle of moving towards more locally deployable bases and developing a more integrated partnership approach between police and other partners within neighbourhoods to enable decisions being taken collectively around how best to deploy resources to address a particular problem within a community.

2.1.7 Advice

Recommendation 2 is fully supported. The Council and West Yorkshire Police are already undertaking development work to establish more integrated approaches to service delivery. Discussions have been taking place with a range of partners including environmental services, community safety, children's and adult's services and Public Health.

2.1.8 Recommendation 3 is fully supported. The Police will work with asset management on the potential for colocation in areas which allow PCSO resources to be locally deployed. Multi-disciplinary tasking arrangements will be extended. As more joint working is developed, regular performance reviews will take place with senior officers in WYP and Leeds City Council to ensure that roles, responsibilities and the deployment of resources are effectively managed.

3 Corporate Considerations

3.1 Consultation and Engagement

3.1.1 Detailed discussions have taken place with the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services, the Lead member for Community Safety and with members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board. Ward members across all political groups have confirmed that there continues to be support for the Council to continue to contribute towards the funding of ward based PCSO's.

- 3.1.2 Discussion has also taken place with the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Divisional Commander for Leeds on behalf of West Yorkshire Police.
- 3.1.3 Consultation is on-going with senior service managers in key service areas, such as Community Safety and Environmental services.
- 3.1.4 West Yorkshire Police and Leeds City Council Services undertake regular consultation with residents through a wide range of means to assess local needs and priorities. The methods include community forums, PACT meetings, resident surveys, face to face meetings, local patrols and events, Area Committee meetings, newsletters and other media publications.
- 3.1.5 The partnership working and tasking arrangements between LCC and NPT's are determined via consultation with local communities, elected members and through intelligence products produced by West Yorkshire Police (WYP), LCC and the Safer Leeds Executive – the city's Community Safety Partnership.

3.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 3.2.1 LCC, WYP and the OPCC follow Equality procedures which ensure that their services are accessible to all the residents of Leeds. Services are developed and delivered in response to need and intelligence information, which aims to address inequality and improve lives.

3.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 3.3.1 The development of more integrated working between West Yorkshire Police and a range of locality based services, aims to deliver improved outcomes for local people and is aligned with Safer Leeds ambition to 'Make Leeds an attractive place to live, where people are safe and feel safe, and the City is clean and welcoming.'
- 3.3.2 The work of the city's NPT's supports the delivery of the Safer Leeds Plan, which aims to reduce crime and its impact across Leeds and effectively tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour in our communities.

3.4 Resources and value for money

- 3.4.1 The Home Office provides funding to the OPCC to provide a PCSO service across the whole of West Yorkshire. The PCC has recently agreed to reduce the contribution by local Authorities to support ward based PCSOs from 30% to 21% per annum. This will provide a budget saving to the Council of £454,000.
- 3.4.2 Through the development and delivery of more integrated working arrangements between a wide-range of service providers, communities will benefit from the delivery of more joined up services, working together better to address identified local needs and deliver improved outcomes.

3.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 3.5.1 Budget provision for PCSO's has been made within the Council's 2014/15 budget framework.

3.5.2 The provision of ward based PCSOs is subject to a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Office of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner. The SLA was agreed by Executive Board in March 2013, and ratified by the Chief Legal Officer. The SLA makes provision for the PCSO arrangement to continue for up to three years subject to an annual agreement which takes in to consideration:

- Council budgets reductions.
- On-going commitment from the west Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner to provide sufficient match funding to maintain current PSCO levels.
- The development of partnership working with other local service providers to support the delivery of local priorities and ensure that resources and opportunities for joint working are maximised.

3.5.3 The Scrutiny working group have considered these issues as part of their review.

3.5.4 This decision is subject to Call In procedures.

3.6 Risk Management

3.6.1 The ongoing provision of the PCSO service in its current form is subject to significant ongoing investment from the OPCC and LCC. Both organisations are in the process of managing budget reductions. Discussions take place between senior elected members and strategic managers to discuss the potential implications of budget cuts and minimise the impact of these on local services wherever possible. This approach will continue in the future.

3.6.2 Regular meetings also take place within localities, with senior officers to assess the practical arrangements to take forward joint working and maximise resources. These discussions are used to assess risk and develop plans to mitigate potential issues should they arise.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Executive Board is asked to:

4.2 Request the Director of Environment and Housing to bring back a workable solution on the deployment of PCSOs, following consultation with the Police, and report back to the Executive Board.

4.3 Support recommendations 2 and 3 of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board Review.

5.0 Background documents¹

None

Appendix

Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Report – Review of the role, number and allocation of Police Community Support Officers in Leeds

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.