

Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing

Neighbourhoods and Housing Scrutiny Board

Date: 8th November 2006

Subject: The impact of Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens across four ward areas in Leeds.

Electoral Wards Affected:

ALL

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

This study has found that PCSOs and wardens are highly valued and have generally made a significant impact in Leeds, but would highlight that there is ongoing debate regarding their roles and responsibilities, particularly in terms of environmental enforcement work. Currently PCSOs prioritise anti-social behaviour and intelligence gathering while wardens concentrate on tackling environmental issues. Both have made promising achievements in terms of public reassurance, although the study has identified differences between the impact of PCSOs in inner and outer wards.

An important distinction between PCSOs and wardens is how they are funded. The council only pays a percentage of the cost of a match-funded PCSO, but does not have direct control over them in the same way as wardens.

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of research into the impact in Leeds of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and neighbourhood wardens. Scrutiny board set a number of objectives for this study:
- i. to study at least 2 inner and 2 outer council wards;
 - ii. to study neighbourhoods where PCSOs/wardens are well established;
 - iii. to include areas where council match-funded PCSOs are in operation.
- 1.2 The research involved two components. The first was a quantitative study of existing research and information. The second was qualitative research gathering data from officers themselves, local communities, elected members and other service providers. This second element took the form of structured interviews and focus groups.
- 1.3 The chosen wards were **Chapel Allerton** (focussing on Chapeltown and Meanwood areas), **Gipton & Harehills** (focussing on Harehills area), **Horsforth** and **Morley** (North and South). These were selected both as a representative range of areas within Leeds and because all have well-established match-funded PCSOs and, in the case of the inner wards, neighbourhood wardens operating within them.

What were the main findings?

- 1.4 The research found that PCSOs and wardens have generally made a significant impact in their areas and have been well received by local communities, elected members and other service-providers. PCSOs and wardens are much more visible and familiar to local people than regular police officers. They are making promising achievements in their primary roles of public reassurance, community engagement and intelligence gathering. Local police and council managers consider them a valuable resource.
- 1.5 In the four Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) studied, local commanders expressed recognition of the need to ensure that match-funded PCSOs operate in the areas they are funded to patrol with exceptions being made only for major police operations or emergencies. Match-funding does not affect the PCSO role, but simply where and how certain officers are deployed. There is a trade off for the council between part-funding PCSOs (the council pays between 25-50% of the cost of a PCSO) and having direct control over the activities of street patrols.
- 1.6 In interviews with a range of local community representatives there was no negative feedback regarding PCSO and warden services. Everybody that was spoken to felt these officers had made a big difference to their areas and to local people's feelings of personal safety.
- 1.7 In general PCSO and warden powers seem appropriate to carry out their work effectively, although for the former there was considerable debate concerning PCSO powers of detention and whether handcuffs should be issued to officers.

- 1.8 There is considerable debate about whether it would be appropriate for inner-city PCSOs to pick up on some environmental work and whether this would compromise warden services. While PCSOs have the necessary powers it is unclear how satisfactorily they could balance environmental enforcement with their other roles; officers would almost certainly prioritise other incidents. That said the outer wards, where there are no wardens, are an example of how PCSOs can carry out environmental work successfully, albeit that officers are not under the same reactive pressures as their inner-city counterparts. This issue is yet to be settled and there are rational arguments on both sides.

A related factor is that the public see wardens as independent of the police and so wardens can often integrate more easily than PCSOs in areas with high levels of distrust for the police. In outer wards the potential benefits of a warden service are less obvious and the decision to concentrate funding on PCSOs appears to have been appropriate.

- 1.9 Interviews with PCSOs identified a tension between their role in tackling anti-social behaviour and their 'non-confrontational' working ethic. While current deployment and working practises of PCSOs seems generally appropriate, careful consideration needs to be given to any developments of their role that may affect this balance. Some PCSOs felt their training was 'out of touch' with the reality of their work on the streets and that parts have proven of no benefit.
- 1.10 The research also found that in all study areas PCSOs are based centrally in police stations, often with a number of shifts operating from the same building. In contrast the wardens operate far more locally from offices based on the estates they work. These house only 2 or 3 officers and are easier for people to 'drop in.' This localisation appears to be one factor in making integration within inner-city housing estates easier for wardens than for PCSOs.
- 1.11 For both PCSOs and wardens a lack of transport combined with large beat areas was identified as a source of significant inefficiency. This has been partially relieved for PCSOs by the introduction of bicycles and PCSO transportation is an issue which is currently being reviewed by West Yorkshire Police.
- 1.12 While PCSOs and wardens do operate together on occasion, there is an opportunity to improve this. Different working patterns and limited channels of communication seem to be the main barriers to co-operation with a lack of understanding between PCSOs and wardens of their respective roles being another, less significant, factor.
- 1.13 Finally there is strong agreement among police supervisors (especially sergeants) that PCSOs have created management issues that have not been adequately addressed. The two main issues officers identify are the lack of any additional training for police supervisors in the management of support staff (who have different working terms and conditions) and the added workload put onto supervisors by increasing the number of personnel they are responsible for.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Since the early 1990's official statistics demonstrate that successive Governments have achieved considerable success in the reduction of high volume crime with burglary and car theft being most notable (official statistics show a national reduction of 43% and 35% respectively since 1993/94).
- 2.2 Yet surveys reveal that when the public are asked about crime levels, the majority of respondents believe that they are rising. Falling crime levels have not been accompanied by a rise in public perceptions of safety, or confidence in the police.
- 2.3 The response in Leeds was to introduce neighbourhood wardens and, after the 2002 Police Reform Act allowed their creation, PCSOs. Leeds City Council runs the warden scheme directly while the PCSOs are managed by West Yorkshire Police with the council match-funding a number of officers to operate in specific areas. This is currently 71 posts and is set to increase by 99 to 170 by the end of this financial year. The police estimate that the total number of PCSOs operating in the city by this date will be around 330. This is in line with Home Office targets.

3 Summary of existing local and national research

3.1 *'A national evaluation of Community Support Officers' (2006): Home Office.*

- 3.1.1 PCSOs spend the majority of their time in contact with the public, usually on foot patrol. They most often deal with youth disorder, alcohol related issues, low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.1.2 Local people are often more willing to approach a PCSO than a regular police officer. This is due to many factors, including approachability, accessibility (through foot patrols) and the time officers' have available to 'listen'.
- 3.1.3 Nationally PCSOs have not had a significant impact on crime figures. However many of the incidents they deal with are not categorised as crimes.
- 3.1.4 The ability of PCSOs to make local people feel safer is based on two key factors:
 - the length of time they have been deployed in an area;
 - how well informed local people are of the PCSO role.
- 3.1.5 Evidence shows that PCSOs are particularly effective at dealing with youth disorder – the main public concern in all the study areas. There is strong evidence that in areas where PCSOs were well known the public feel they make a real impact.
- 3.1.6 PCSOs tend to be significantly more diverse in terms of gender, age and ethnicity than their regular police colleagues.
- 3.1.7 In conclusion PCSOs provide a service that is highly valued by the public and police. The public are more likely to pass on information to PCSOs than regular police and

also greatly appreciate PCSOs ability to tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour. However there are some concerns highlighted for future consideration:

- the turnover of staff and its impact on service provision within a neighbourhood;
- the implications of PCSOs doing tasks outside their normal patrolling and community engagement function in order to 'free up' regular officers;
- how to ensure proper supervision of PCSOs without overburdening police sergeants.

3.2 *'An evaluation of neighbourhood and street wardens in Leeds' (2005): University of Leeds.*

- 3.2.1 Properly managed wardens can act as a vital, street-level link in bringing together local service provision. However by filling this void left by other local providers, other services and residents can come to rely on wardens too heavily.
- 3.2.2 Wardens are seen as independent of West Yorkshire Police and have worked well in areas where police officers are highly distrusted. However many warden successes are difficult to quantify under current organisational measures (for example, crime statistics).
- 3.2.3 There is a link between the quality of their local, urban environment and people's fear of crime. Neighbourhood wardens have had a big impact on the physical environment and assist the renewal and regeneration of neighbourhoods; two thirds of the incidents wardens deal with on a daily basis are environmental issues.
- 3.2.4 Amongst the extended policing family (police constables, PCSOs etc.), wardens are the most likely patrol personnel to be tied to a tight, geographical area.
- 3.2.5 Residents cited 'local knowledge' as the most important skill for a neighbourhood warden. There is also evidence that neighbourhood wardens are able to successfully engage with hard-to-reach groups.
- 3.2.6 There is evidence of considerable differences in the levels of contact with wardens across various neighbourhoods in Leeds. These could not be adequately explained by demographics alone. The research emphasised the importance of a long-term commitment from individual neighbourhood wardens.

3.3 *'PCSO Interim Report' (2006): Sheffield Hallam University.*

- 3.3.1 In West Yorkshire on average 50% of people interviewed knew the difference between a PCSO and a regular police constable. People were less aware of the role of neighbourhood wardens, although those who did were never less than 40%.
- 3.3.2 In West Yorkshire 47% of people surveyed described sightings of PCSOs as 'frequent' or 'regular.'

3.3.3 *“In Leeds and Pudsey & Weetwood, 84% and 80% of people felt at least ‘reassured’ by the presence of PCSOs alone. In these areas, it would appear that public reassurance has increased markedly since the Leeds evaluation of 2004 and that this reassurance can be attributed to the specific contribution made by PCSOs.”*

The research team found that the public in all three areas surveyed were equally as reassured by PCSO presence on the streets as uniformed police officers.

3.3.4 In all areas surveyed people were significantly more likely to be ‘very positive’ or ‘positive’ about the quality of service they had received from PCSOs compared with that from police officers. However this may be explained by the relatively low sample size or the possibility that people have higher expectations of police officers. This needs more research.

3.3.5 In all areas the reassurance value of CCTV was not as high as that reported for PCSOs.

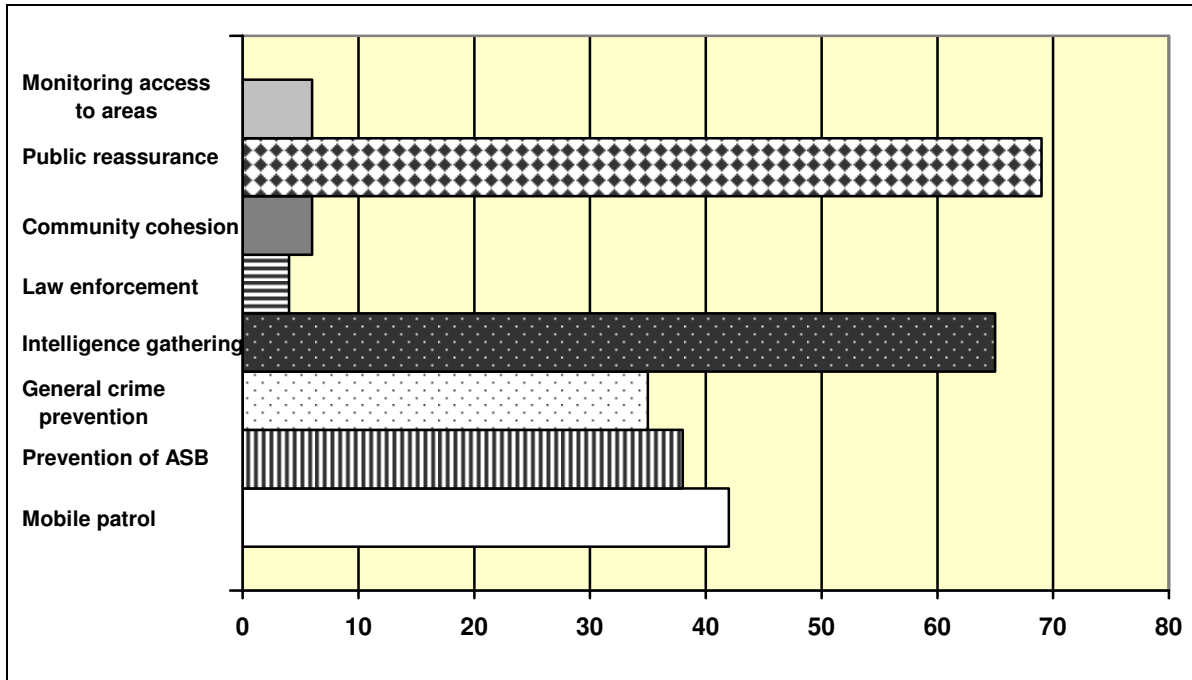
3.4 *‘Patrolling with a Purpose - An Evaluation of Police Community Support Officers in Leeds and Bradford City Centres’ (2004): University of Leeds.*

3.4.1 PCSOs constitute an important link in the chain that binds together the ‘extended policing family’. They provide a street level linkage between diverse service providers that impact, directly and indirectly, on crime and disorder. Clear and consistent communication of the role, aims and limitations of PCSOs can help build trust and effective inter-agency working relations.

3.4.2 PCSOs in Leeds contribute to significant reductions in vehicle-related crime by providing crime prevention advice. These reductions occurred particularly in ‘hot spot’ areas, suggesting that the PCSO patrols are appropriately targeted. However some geographical crime displacement is also apparent.

3.4.3 For many members of the public the confidence and reassurance vested in PCSOs is enhanced by their uniform and identity which visibly associates them with the police. Nevertheless, a significant degree of public confusion remains regarding their powers and role.

3.4.4 The public report high levels of satisfaction regarding contact with PCSOs. Some 96% say that the officer(s) had dealt with or responded to them well. Two-thirds of these said that the officer(s) had dealt with them very well or excellently.



3.4.5 PCSOs were asked to identify their 3 core functions from the list of options above. As can be seen 'law enforcement' received the lowest response and 'public reassurance' the highest.

3.4.6 The researchers conclude that for maximum impact upon public reassurance PCSOs need to be targeted at times and places which judiciously combine:

- high levels of crime risk;
- high levels of public fear of crime;
- low presence of other 'capable guardians' (wardens etc.);
- high visible presence to the public.

4 A study of four electoral wards in Leeds

4.1 The impact of PCSOs and wardens:

PCSOs in Leeds spend around 82% of their duty-time outside the police station. For regular police officers this figure is only around 43%.

- 4.1.1 Across all the study neighbourhoods it is clear that PCSOs and wardens are making a significant impact in reassuring their local communities and that both are far more visible to local people than regular police patrols. PCSOs are deployed for community engagement and dealing with low-level incidents, such as underage drinking or anti-social behaviour. A large variety of tasks, other than general street patrol, fall under this role, including promoting neighbourhood watch and property marking schemes.
- 4.1.2 The impact of PCSOs and wardens on crime figures is less clear. However the NPTs studied, in-line with ACPO guidelines, do not treat this as PCSOs' prime function. Officers are deployed to tackle anti-social behaviour and reassure the public and are only responsible for following up minor crimes, such as petty criminal damage. Often these are cases where the chances of catching an offender are considered low and the PCSO's main function is to support the victim and give crime prevention advice.
- 4.1.3 That said PCSOs and wardens generate a lot of high quality intelligence. This is widely recognised as being of great assistance to regular police officers in combating crime. For example police and council managers strongly linked the recent, successful 'crack house' closures in Harehills to intelligence provided by local PCSOs and wardens.
- 4.1.4 Wardens and PCSOs also carry out a great deal of crime prevention work. For example if they pass a vehicle that has been left insecure or with property on display they report it under the 'VCRAT' system. The DVLA then send the vehicle owner an advice letter. They also carry letters to leave for householders if a property is found insecure. Additionally both are involved in regular 'Smartwater' property marking initiatives.

4.2 Public surgeries

- 4.2.1 Both PCSOs and wardens hold regular public surgeries. The impact of these depends upon the location used. Wherever possible this should be identified in terms of local experience of 'what works.' Such factors might include:
- a building which is well used by the public;
 - with a single main entrance or thoroughfare which officers can man for maximum effect;
 - where a private room is available for people who want to speak in confidence.
- 4.2.2 A good example of this was identified by the Horsforth NPT. Officers from the team also operate in Adel & Wharfedale ward and hold surgeries in the local ASDA. The supermarket is used by a wide range of local people and has a single main entrance where PCSOs set up a table and hand out crime prevention leaflets. A private room is

also made available for them to use. In addition an ASDA ‘greeter’ announces the presence of the PCSOs frequently over a microphone to help maximise awareness amongst shoppers. The supermarket is happy to provide these facilities as it benefits from extra security and publicity by having PCSOs regularly on site.

4.2.3 In parts of the outer wards PCSOs do however feel that some form of mobile surgery would be very useful for increasing their accessibility among people for whom transport and mobility are an issue.

4.2.4 In Gipton & Harehills some PCSOs feel that their surgeries are a failure. Local residents are often too afraid to be seen talking to the police and the direct telephone-line to the NPT office is far more popular for reporting problems or supplying information. Fortunately local wardens also hold surgeries and are not affected in this way, which is a good example of how they can offer an alternative reporting avenue and service to the public and complement the work of PCSOs.

4.3 Roles and responsibilities

PCSOs

“PCSOs are not a replacement for police officers. Their purpose is to complement and support police officers by addressing many of the quality of life issues that affect our communities, such as reporting vandalism, that do not require the experience or powers held by police officers but which often take officers away from more appropriate duties.” (ACPO).

4.3.1 Table 5 sets out how often PCSOs felt that they carried out a number of identified specific functions when interviewed by the University of Leeds in 2004.

Table 1: PCSO specific functions (%)			
	Often/Very often	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never
Monitor occupied homes	19	19	59
Monitor void properties	8	17	70
Deal with environmental issues (graffiti, litter abandoned vehicles)	26	32	43
Gather evidence as professional witnesses	49	28	21
Interact with residents	72	17	11
Offer security advice to the public	58	40	2
Respond to incidents reported by the public	79	17	4
Respond to alarms	47	45	8
Respond to incidents notified by the police	60	29	8
Control traffic	13	62	25
Signposting and referring people to other services	34	25	36
Facilitating partnership working between services	38	36	21

These figures come from PCSOs in the city centre but are typical of the response of officers to this report. In inner wards particularly, PCSOs face responsive pressures and so environmental issues are not a high priority.

4.3.2 PCSOs are often used to respond to local concerns which PCs find difficult due to lack of time. For example they have recently been committed to deal with the problem of alcohol abuse in Horsforth Park. Police supervisors generally feel a new confidence that such incidents of anti-social behaviour can be committed to and dealt with thoroughly whereas in the past the job would often have had to become low priority for regular police officers due to more urgent commitments.

Another example of this is personal follow up visits to burglary victims. PCSOs in all four NPTs do these to fill a void which PCs, due to time pressures, cannot. A patrol PC often has to deal with burglaries as quickly as possible in order to get to another incident, which can leave victims feeling let down and unsupported.

4.3.3 A major role of PCSOs is intelligence gathering. A number of police managers stated this data is as good in quality as that from PCs and in addition PCSOs have local knowledge which is unique. It is a common occurrence for PCs to circulate photos of suspects to local PCSOs for identification. While they cannot know everyone on their beat, PCSOs are very aware of local criminals and problem individuals (who are also very aware of them in return).

4.3.4 PCSOs will also get involved in police work or initiatives. The merits of these need careful consideration as they risk taking officers away from their core function of community policing. One Inspector describes this danger as "*mission creep*." Local commanders should always consider how to build into such initiatives the unique skills of PCSOs. A good example is the use of a Speed Indication Device (SID) by the Horsforth NPT among others. The intention is for PCSOs to work alongside PCs in crewing the device, which will give them an opportunity to speak to motorists that are stopped and discuss road safety with them informally. An issue PCSOs can face on some quiet beats is a lack of contact with the public (especially with people who work during the day). Therefore initiatives that generate positive communication opportunities can be a good use of PCSO time.

Neighbourhood wardens

4.3.5 Warden powers are far more limited than those of PCSOs and their main priorities are issues concerning the local, urban environment. A study of wardens' activity data from 2004 showed that in an average month each warden dealt with:

- 120 environmental issues (6 a day);
- 27 nuisance problems;
- 14 crime related matters;
- 3.5 traffic problems;
- 3.5 needle collections;
- 1.5 incidents of drunkenness;
- 23 other incidents.

In addition each warden on average made the following number of official reports to relevant authorities each month:

- 41 rubbish related matters;

- 21 reports to council departments;
- 20 anti-social behaviour incidents;
- 11 reports to the police;
- 2.5 untaxed vehicles;
- 1.5 cases of vandalism;
- 1.3 abandoned vehicles;
- 1.3 cases of graffiti (wardens also clean up graffiti where possible);
- 1.1 housing repairs;
- 81 other reports to self or colleagues

4.4 Relative pay levels

Table 2: Comparison of neighbourhood warden, PCSO & PC salaries				
	Minimum basic salary £	Maximum basic salary £	Shift allowance	Hours worked
LCC warden	16,137	17,985	14%	8am – 10pm
WYP PCSO	16,203	17,967	14 - 20%	7am – 3am
WYP constable	19,803	31,092	Overtime payments	24hrs

4.4.1 PCSOs receive pay increments based on service in the same way as other police staff. They also receive a shift allowance for working unsociable hours. But while an experienced PCSO or warden may not be so much cheaper than a new probationer PC in terms of salary, they cost much less to train. Over the long term, once incremental salary increases are considered, even an experienced PCSO or warden would be much cheaper to employ than a PC with the same years' service. In the case of council funded PCSOs, the council pays no more than 50% of the overall cost.

4.5 Community Policing

4.5.1 Many police officers identify PCSOs with traditional community policing. But this does beg the question of how the community feel about the police? If local people are hostile and the police distrusted then the presence of PCSOs is likely to be more a cause for local concern than for welcome.

4.5.2 PCSOs require strong communication skills and the fact that many have them reflects well on the WYP recruitment process. Talking to strangers is not easy for many people and PCSOs are no different. Their uniform also adds a barrier. PCSO training is far shorter than that of regular PCs and it is to their credit that most cope so well on the streets. The national and local statistics available show the public are well satisfied with the response and service they get from PCSOs.

“Officers must have the wit and patience to turn potentially hostile contacts into positive ones. This is no mean task, day after day, night after night, in all weather. No matter what their mood the police are expected to be firm but pleasant.”
(Graef, 1989:90).

Many PCSOs identified that this was an area in which their training was insufficient and many felt that the classroom element could have been compressed into a shorter timescale to allow more practical development of these skills. It was also felt being partnered with an experienced PCSO when newly qualified is good practise before patrolling alone.

4.5.3 **Community policing in outer wards**

In the outer wards of Morley and Horsforth there are clearly greater levels of trust for the police than in inner wards. They generally seem to have a more static population, less highly stressed, with clearer loyalties to their place of residence and a stronger sense of community. Involvement in decisions over the use of PCSOs is often devolved to a more local level than in inner wards; parish councils in both Horsforth and Morley choose to fund additional officers. One elected member theorises that this involvement encourages ‘active citizens’ which are a vital element of successful community policing.

4.5.4 **Community policing in inner wards**

It is often more difficult in the inner-city to identify who ‘the community’ is that is to be policed. Neighbourhoods are often far smaller and less cohesive than in outer wards and more likely to be comprised of pockets of alienated people and social groups predisposed to be hostile towards anyone in a police uniform. High levels of anti-social behaviour mean PCSOs can become very reactive, rushing from one incident to the next with little time for stopping and speaking to people.

Table 3: Relative populations and crime levels by ward (2004-05 data)		
	Total households	Total recorded crimes per 1000 population
Chapel Allerton	10,749	209.77
Gipton & Harehills	10,972	257.78
Horsforth	9187	90.85
Morley North	9197	99.57
Morley South	9297	110.15

4.5.5 The figures above illustrate another problem; inner-city PCSOs face higher crime levels than colleagues in outer wards, yet they are match-funded by LCC in equal numbers across the city.

4.5.6 Neighbourhood wardens do not suffer from the same natural hostility as PCSOs (they report being subject to far less physical and verbal abuse). In Gipton and Harehills both wardens and PCSOs feel there are advantages in maintaining an obvious distinction between wardens and the police - such as local people inviting wardens in high visibility clothing to visit them at home who would not allow PCSOs to do the same for fear of reprisals. There is also a link between wardens' environmental work and their relationship with the local community. An elected member for Gipton & Harehills identified this as a strong source of public faith and the local Phoenix Residents Association agrees.

4.6 Base location & transport

4.6.1 The wardens interviewed are based on the estates in which they work. These are small, local offices with 2-3 wardens each. The premises are also used as drop in points for local people and other service providers working in the area. One warden described the effect of these offices as making him and his colleague "*part of the furniture on the estate*". Unfortunately very limited ICT facilities at the offices is an issue and leads to inefficiencies with wardens having to 'borrow' email access at other locations as and when available.

4.6.2 PCSOs are based in local police stations. This resolves communications and ICT issues, but gives only limited assistance to their local integration. Additionally, while bicycles are a big help, when on foot patrol reaching distant beats is considered a real issue in many places. PCSOs are not allowed to drive police vehicles and patrol cars very rarely have time to give them lifts. Public transport is an option, but this is not always available, especially at night. WYP are currently looking at a number of options for PCSO vehicle transportation.

4.7 Night patrols

4.7.1 A shift system has been established for deploying wardens to regularly work up until 10.00pm and is currently being established across the city. The details of how the shift systems are operated are agreed locally, to meet community needs. Although they have no powers beyond those of normal citizens, wardens can often recognise night time trouble-makers and then identify and report them to the relevant agencies. Local witnesses often will not pass such identifications on out of fear of reprisals. Night patrolling also reassures residents and is often initiated at their request.

4.7.2 PCSOs work shifts which are set locally and report that evening and night time duties are particularly effective. They can be seen by residents who are away at work during the day and local people often feedback that the reassurance value of uniformed patrols is even greater at night.

4.8 Partnership

- 4.8.1 The University of Leeds research recommended that wardens be integrated into NPTs. It would be inadvisable to combine them as part of a formal team under police control since the priorities of wardens and PCSOs differ. The police are naturally crime focussed and their role often means coming into contact with the public in confrontational situations. Wardens have the freedom to be more proactive and to reach out to local people; they tend to have a softer approach. Nevertheless it is important that links between wardens and NPTs continue to be improved since wardens are an important part of wider neighbourhood policing.
- 4.8.2 Community safety managers and the police are continuing to improve their co-operation. For example in the East area, community requests get tasked out to PCSOs via council area management speaking to NPT inspectors. They also get feedback from the police on member enquiries (it took time to get this in place, but the system is reported to work well now). The area forums usually include a sergeant and PCSO(s) who also attend neighbourhood tasking meetings. Finally for Gipton & Harehills an electronic 'intelligence box' has been created which both local wardens and PCSOs can access and contribute to.

4.9 Public reaction

A key element of this study was to determine the public reaction to PCSOs and wardens. None of the groups surveyed gave any negative responses. Highlights of the results are given below.

- 4.9.1 ***Residents of the Broadfields Sheltered Housing Complex, Horsforth:***
"They [PCSOs] do an excellent job, we know them and they are reliable. They keep an eye on the place. Things have been bad in the past; we've had a lot of trouble from gangs of youths. The PCSOs respond to the information we give them; they even have nicknames for all the residents."
- "The PCSOs visit us frequently. Before they were here there were crime problems. Kids used to play on the fire escapes and roofs. There was also a lot of stone throwing ... the kids are frightening to us, but the PCSOs know many of them and can stop problems before they start. They also deal with illegally parked cars and rubbish."*
- "The PCSOs will also call in if there is anything unusual, such as a light on at night. They have helped when residents have fallen and been locked in."*
- "The community police [PCSOs] always speak to people and have time for us. As well as listening they also provide a lot of information. They are the best thing that ever happened to us."*
- "The PCSOs respect people and don't make you feel foolish when you report anything. They are not feared by elderly and young people in the way regular police are."*

4.9.2 **Chairman of the Horsforth pubwatch scheme:**

"Definitely they [PCSOs] have had a positive effect. They talk to people and they pick up on things; I get on well with them. Some people said at first that they were policing on the cheap, but they have made a real difference - I mean they get a full response from the regular police straight away [if needed]. The PCSOs are very good and friendly. The more the better, that's what I say."

4.9.3 **Meanwood Elders Neighbourhood Action:**

"Meanwood Elders Neighbourhood Action covers LS6, 7 and 17 areas of Leeds offering a range of services to older people. We have recently had quite a lot of contact with PCSOs from the Chapeltown area as one of our members who lives in the Miles Hill area has been having a lot of trouble with local young people, including two thefts from her home and other nuisance disturbances.

"I know from talking to our member that the PCSOs who have worked with her have been incredibly supportive and have helped to arrange a variety of safeguards to try and help the lady feel more secure and safe in her own home, as well as helping her to feel better within herself. We have also met the PCSOs ourselves and were much impressed by their commitment and attitudes."

4.9.4 **CASAC Leeds:**

"We have done lots of work with the local PCSOs and neighbourhood wardens in terms of door knocking to promote CBR [CASAC Burglary Reduction] and they have been extremely helpful. We have done this... for general awareness around the issues relating to burglary - keeping doors locked etc.

"I have found that the PCSOs are extremely helpful when organising specific operations. This has mostly involved 'door knocking' [with a safety engineer] in order to advise people of our service ... I don't think that we could have offered our service in this way without the PCSOs because regular police officers have other priorities. It is my understanding that the PCSOs are extremely familiar with their particular areas and have always been extremely friendly and helpful.

"These figures relate to the number of properties visited in the Chapeltown area:

*February 2005 - 33
March 2005 - 25
September 2005 - 25
October 2005 - 27
November 2005 - 63
March 2006 - 40*

"Another of our safety engineers works regularly with the PCSOs in Morley and we have also completed door knocking activities in the Horsforth area during the past 12 months."

4.9.5 **Bell Isle Family Centre:**

"We have had a lot of success with the Community Support Officers, being based in Belle Isle, near a challenging high school, their input has been invaluable to us.

4.9.6 Leeds Federated Housing Association:

“Leeds Fed has about 120 properties on the Stonegate estate in Meanwood. Our Housing Officer reports that although he has less contact with them now than in the past (we’ve recently closed an estate office) they [PCSOs and wardens] have a wealth of local knowledge and seem to know the people causing trouble in the area. He added that they have become part of the environment.”

4.9.7 Head teacher of Hovingham Primary School:

“I would like to make very positive comments about the PCSOs and wardens in this area. They have attended public meetings at our school, the wardens have also followed up complaints made by our parents/superintendent in the area and attended some of local ‘fun afternoons’ over the holiday. The PCSOs also attended and had great fun supervising the bouncy castle. They also patrol at the end of the school day to ensure the safety of our parents, carers and children as parking is hazardous and traffic moves far too quickly outside our school ... I think they provide a valuable service to the community.”

4.9.8 Leeds YMCA

“We have a positive relationship with both PCSOs and neighbourhood wardens. They do an effective job in not only dealing with issues of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, but in bringing different organisations in our community together and being pro-active in improving the range of diversionary activities available to young people. They have actively involved us in the local multi-agency team meetings.”

4.9.9 Email relating to a phone-call from a Beckhill resident to LCC

“She [the resident] is extremely pleased with the estate. She’s lived there for four years and ... she said the atmosphere was different, there was an air of optimism, it’s clean, lovely, and a great place to be. She said [the local wardens] have made such a difference to the estate and felt she had to phone up today to say how pleased and grateful she was that all the services have helped make it a better place to live and she would like to thank them.”

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 Careful consideration should be given to any expansion of the role and powers of PCSOs. There is already a tension between officer's being 'non-confrontational' and their charge to tackle anti-social behaviour. It should be acknowledged however that many PCSOs favour such an expansion and **building more awareness and experience of these issues into PCSO training would be beneficial**. Many PCSOs reported feeling unprepared for the 'reality' of their job. **It is suggested that West Yorkshire Police also consider commissioning new training for NPT supervisors** to assist them in managing PCSOs who have different terms, conditions and responsibilities to regular officers.
- 5.2 **Neighbourhood wardens should be seen as complementary, but distinct from, PCSOs**. In the inner wards, where distrust of the police is high, wardens have been able to build up closer relationships with communities. PCSOs have an enforcement role and exist to release police officer time and to help meet police targets. Wardens demonstrate more flexibility with an emphasis on social inclusion and community regeneration. In the outer wards, where levels of crime and disorder are different, PCSOs can operate in a more proactive manner.
- 5.3 There are examples of good practise regarding warden and PCSO intelligence sharing and co-operation, such as electronic 'intelligence boxes.' However channels of direct communication still remain a problem. **PCSOs are issued 'Airwaves' personal radios which are capable of receiving incoming telephone calls, but this feature is not currently enabled** because of concerns that it would reduce a PCSO's ability to monitor and respond to his or her radio. There would also be a cost-implication in making such an upgrade. **It is recommended that the options for direct communication between wardens and PCSOs are fully explored with a view of addressing current deficiencies. In addition the council should also reconsider the communication and IT equipment available in warden offices** (particularly in terms of email access and report submission).
- 5.4 **West Yorkshire Police is asked to consider whether the benefits wardens get from operating at a very localised level can be relevant to police personnel**. There are a number of ways other police forces are attempting to introduce more local policing beyond that of NPTs. The Metropolitan Police is moving to an 'estate-based' model with teams of six officers operating from small bases within the heart of communities. **It is recommended that, once appropriate conditions have been addressed, the police look at establishing local, secondary bases for PCSOs** within beat areas. These would offer 'on site' facilities for PCSOs and a drop in location for members of the public. It is also recommended that these bases be created with the intention of becoming multi-agency with other local service-providers using the facilities and sharing costs as appropriate.

Another approach to community engagement which West Yorkshire Police are asked to consider is that demonstrated by Leicestershire Constabulary: officers are given small 'microbeats' to patrol and oversee. These can cover a few streets, an estate, crime hotspots or vulnerable locations. Officers are encouraged to become

guardians for their little area and to build relationships with residents. On the St Matthews estate in Leicester, crime has fallen by more than 20% in nine months using this technique.

- 5.5 Some elected members from the inner-city expressed concerns that area committees can sometimes lead to inconsistencies in decision making and do not always address the complex needs of individual wards and neighbourhoods. In the outer wards studied this concern was not raised. In these areas there are additional, direct links between parish councils and NPTs with the former having some genuine influence over tactical decisions around the deployment of local PCSOs.

It is therefore recommended that ways of strengthening ward or even estate-level links to NPTs be explored where appropriate. This would be consistent with the new Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities,' which stresses the importance of empowering localities and specifically of increasing the responsiveness to communities of PCSOs and the police.

- 5.6 By the end of 2006/07 there should be at least five city council match-funded PCSOs in each ward of the city. Although obviously people will still want to see increased numbers of officers, when combined with PCSOs funded through the Home Office and other organisations this will provide a significant number of policing staff across the city; West Yorkshire Police estimate that the total number will be around 330 by the end of the financial year.

It will be important that ward resources are targeted where victims most need those services and it suggested that this be done by the police in conjunction with local stakeholders as discussed above in 5.5. It is known that public fear of crime is often greatest in high-crime areas and targeting of resources at identified hotspots would be consistent with policy on other performance targets such as burglary reduction.

- 5.7 **It is also recommended that should additional funding become available in the future, consideration be given to financing a balanced mix of patrol personnel** including additional neighbourhood wardens where appropriate. Such decisions should be taken based upon local circumstances and need. Due to the inherent limitations of their role, the ability of PCSOs to impact on communities is likely to reach a peak without other support.
- 5.8 **Finally it is recommended that this report be used to encourage best practise** and is circulated to Safer Leeds, area management and West Yorkshire Police.

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