

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2003 at 10.00 A.M.**

Agenda Item No.

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POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Report of the County Secretary

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Executive Member: Iris Tarry

1. Purpose of report

This report was requested by this Committee at its last meeting on 10 June. Issues around how the Police Community Safety Officers, PCSOs, initiative would be evaluated so that success could be quantified and reported back, on a regular basis, to this committee, other elected members, service managers and other agencies as appropriate.

2. Summary

This Committee expressed a wish to:

- Explore the data and criteria that would be used to evaluate the initiative, and
- Agree the information that would be presented to the Committee to enable a judgement to be made on success.

3. Conclusion

Having considered the information contained in the report, the Committee will need to decide how further scrutiny of this issue should be undertaken.

Suggested options for the future could be;

- Regular progress report to this Committee against a pre-agreed format – first report January 2004. Members are asked to note which elements of the criteria listed in paras 4.7 & 4.8 they would wish regular reports on.
- Briefing reports provided to the Crime Reduction Member Panel
- Meet PCSO staff, once initial training has been completed

4. Background

4.1 The PCSO initiative was launched on 22nd September with the following staffing levels and geographical distribution.

Name	Full Time / Part Time	District / Borough	Police Station Based out of	Responsible To
Miss Sharon Renshaw	Full Time	Dacorum	Hemel / Berkhamsted	Insp C. Leach
Mrs Kim Ashworth	Full Time	Dacorum	Hemel / Berkhamsted	Insp C. Leach
Mrs Elizabeth Usher	Part Time	Dacorum	Hemel / Berkhamsted	Insp C. Leach
Mrs Emma Lennox	Part Time	Dacorum	Hemel / Berkhamsted	Insp C. Leach
Mrs Julie Cooke	Full Time	East Herts	Buntingford	Insp P. Lawrence
Miss Sarah Brown	Full Time	East Herts	Buntingford	Insp P. Lawrence
Miss Debbie Sinclair	Full Time	North Herts	Hitchin	Insp R. Hann
Mrs Anne Marie Penasa	Full Time	North Herts	Letchworth	Insp D Partridge
Mr Christopher Brabrook	Full Time	North Herts	Letchworth	Insp D Partridge

The 9 staff above (7 full time and 2 part time Officers) will be joined by a further 4 full time PCSOs who are going through the second phase of training which begins on October 20th.

The following areas are being considered for the deployment of the PCSOs.

Dacorum	Berkhamsted to Tring
	Bovingdon
	Chipperfield
	Markyate
	Flampstead
	Aldbury
	Ashridge
East Herts	Buntingford to The Hadhams
	Puckeridge
	Walkern
	Braughing
	Munden
	Cottered

North Herts	Offa
	Hoo
	Hitchwood
	Ashwell to Royston (rural villages)

Each team will have a vehicle and will patrol its area to ensure high visibility and to respond to identified need.

- 4.2 To ensure the effective recording of the movements of our PCSOs, members have previously agreed that one of our PCSO teams would trial the very latest in handheld recording technology. This technology would also incorporate 'global positioning systems', GPS, to allow our PCSOs to map locations of all incidents witnessed and requests made on their time. This method of recording is seen as essential as it will allow future deployments patterns to be determined by previous demands on the service.
- 4.3 It has been agreed that the Dacorum Team will trial this technology from the middle of October to the end of December. Subject to adequate performance being met the intention is to extend the use of the equipment to the other two teams, North Herts and East Herts from January 2004.
- 4.4 The design of the handheld software has been a joint venture between the County Council and Cadcorp, the software suppliers. (Members will have viewed a presentation of the software at the Seminar on 6th October). Experience over the following three months may well suggest amendments to the software as our use becomes more proficient.
- 4.5 We have consulted with a wide variety of 'rural interest' organisations about the value and extent of the reports which will be most useful. This has included:
- Community Safety Teams at each of the respective District Councils
 - Community Problem Solving Teams within Hertfordshire Constabulary
 - Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils
 - Agencies represented on the Hertfordshire Rural Forum
- 4.6 On a phased approach each PCSO will be equipped with a handheld recording system and relevant software. Each base police station (Buntingford, Letchworth, Hitchin and Berkhamsted / Hemel Hempstead) will also be equipped with desktop software designed to collate and analyse the data. At the end of each shift each PCSO will return to base and download the information they have collected that day. This is a very simple process which takes no more than 2-3 minutes. At the end of each week, the information gathered by each team will be transferred via e-mail to one of the 5 county GIS (geographical information systems) Analysts , for analysis. The Crime Reduction Unit will also receive weekly reports of the information / intelligence gathered to help inform the monitoring and evaluation of the initiative.
- 4.6 The data which is collected will be used to measure the success in the following areas:

- reduction in the fear of crime / an improvement in public reassurance
- improved visible uniformed presence
- reduction/increase in the number of incidents notified to the police
- reduction in crime and disorder levels
- improvements in intelligence gathering
- releasing Police time / resources to respond to, and investigate, major incidents

4.7 In Kent, where a similar scheme has been operating for some time, the positive outcomes have been:

- Prominent and positive media coverage, both regional and national.
- Significant reduction in crime levels
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Complimentary letters from public
- More robust relationships with the public

4.9 The introduction of PCSOs into a rural area may well lead to an increase in the number of reported incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour for a limited period, as in the past there may well have been a tendency not to report incidents. Success will be evident, however if over a period of time there is a reduction in the level of such incidents. The performance management system will need to take account of these fluctuations.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Funding of £475,000 has been set aside, year on year, to support the scheme. The end of year costs forecast, 2003/04, is still unclear but an under-spend is likely. This will be the subject of a separate report.

6. Rural Implications

6.1 The very nature of the service is designed to improve the quality of life of rural communities. Uniformed presence that is readily contactable/available can respond to minor incidents, act as signpost for services and generally re-establish links with residents and businesses will have a positive impact.

Background material referred to by the author while compiling this report:

Scrutiny Committee report – 10 June 2003.