

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA PARTNERSHIP

14TH MAY 2003

POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

The Steering Group asked, at its last meeting, for a report on Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) with particular reference to numbers, pilot areas and recruitment. This report addresses these issues and others in order to give the Steering Group a full picture of this new addition to the policing family.

FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. Chief Superintendent Stewart has provided background information on the role of PCSOs at past meetings and it is not intended to repeat this. If any member of the Steering Group wants a separate briefing, the Head of the PPU would be happy to provide it.

Numbers

2. The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) have agreed to fully fund the deployment of 30 PCSOs in the Royal Borough. The Council had indicated that it is prepared to purchase a further 12 this year. Discussions are currently taking place with the MPA on a Service Agreement to cover the first 30 and any further PCSOs the Council decides to purchase. The force of 30 has been arriving in small groups of 6/7 and is now fully up to strength.
3. A review of the effectiveness of the new PCSOs will be undertaken in this financial year to assist the Council in reaching a decision on whether to consult local residents on an increase in the Council Tax to purchase a much larger number of PCSOs.
4. This initiative is very much in line with the key theme of 'Safe Communities' within the KCP's Community Strategy and is one of the key actions referred to within it. The Council wants to work closely with its partners before deciding on whether to extend the scheme and the Steering Group will be asked to contribute the continuing debate over the course of the next year.

Pilot Areas

5. To fully test the effectiveness of the new PCSOs the Council and Police agreed to pilot them in 3 areas for the first six months. The following criteria were used in deciding which areas to choose:

- the PCSOs should be given the opportunity to develop their role in areas that exhibit a **range** of disorder problems but do not necessarily have the very highest levels of recorded crime and disorder. It will take time for the PCSOs to develop their day-to-day working arrangements with Police colleagues, Council staff and others in the local community. Deploying them all in the most difficult areas before these working arrangements have been fully developed would carry an unacceptable level of risk of possible failure.
 - the PCSOs will be managed by Sector Inspectors so we should aim to make sure that pilot area (s) do not cut across sector boundaries
 - the pilot area (s) should be linked in with other initiatives, e.g. the Police sponsored Public Re-assurance Project, our own public CCTV operation, etc
 - we should choose an area that links in well with existing Council strategies, e.g. community safety strategies and the targets in the LPSA
 - we should be aiming for maximum visibility for the PCSOs; focussing them in small areas where large numbers of people are likely to see and interact with them.
 - we should not raise expectations by putting more PCSOs in an area than they can reasonably expect to retain in the longer term, i.e. having more than 10 PCSOs in one ward
6. Councillor Paget-Brown consulted with all Council Members before deciding on which wards to recommend to the Police. He had detailed responses from Councillors in every ward of the Royal Borough. After applying the above criteria, the wards of Earl's Court, Campden and Colville were chosen. In reaching this decision it was also agreed to allow some flexibility around the edges of these Wards, e.g. the Acklam Road area up to the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, just over the northern boundary of Colville needs to be included, as does Old Brompton Road.

Recruitment

7. KCP members may have seen the major poster campaign run by the MPA to attract people to apply to become PCSOs. This resulted in a large number of applicants that the MPA has been handling centrally.
8. This Council was one of the first areas to receive PCSOs; matching up home addresses with deployment areas was not a major criterion used by the MPA. It is the expectation that, over time, this will change and

that more residents of the Royal Borough will be recruited locally and deployed in this area.

Other Issues

10. The Council and Police are working closely together to ensure that the PCSOs work closely with the relevant Council and staff, and that the local community has the opportunity to influence how they are deployed. The following arrangements provide some further background information to demonstrate this.
11. Chief Inspector Algar and Mr Taylor will work with the three Sector Inspectors to agree the arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of the PCSOs during the pilot study. It is expected that the evaluation will require a range of measures including:
 - Testing of public perception of the fear of crime at the start and end of the pilot study.
 - Analysing changes in the number of reports on the types of disorder offences we are expecting the PCSOs to tackle.
 - The outputs of the PCSOs in terms of the enforcement action that they take.
 - “Mystery shopping”, i.e. using residents to test the effectiveness of PCSOs in responding to their needs.
12. Sector Inspectors will be responsible for the day-to day deployment of the PCSOs. The Police Sector Working Groups will be the vehicle through which the local community can have an input into the process of making sure that the PCSOs address local issues. Each Sector Inspector will decide how best to organise this involvement, e.g. a discussion at each meeting of the Working Group or, perhaps, establishing a small Steering Committee.
13. In the normal course of events PCSOs will be patrolling on their own, although there will be circumstances where safety considerations require them to pair up.
14. At the present time the PCSOs will be working shifts, which cover the period 9 am to 11 pm. These times will need to be varied according to local circumstances to help ensure an appropriate street presence in the hour or two before and after this period.
15. One of the first tasks of the Sector Inspectors will be to work out “beats” for the PCSOs and to consider the best way in which they can engage with people they come into contact with on the streets.
16. The day-to-day activities of the PCSOs all depend on the particular needs of each Ward, but it is expected that the following issues will be common to them all:

- a. Litter, including commercial waste and black bags
 - b. Graffiti and fly-posting
 - c. Dog fouling
 - d. Legal/dangerous parking
 - e. Dangerous cycling
 - f. Ticket touting
 - g. Closing down times at licensed premises
17. Mr Graham Taylor, head of Policy and Partnerships Unit at the Council will be responsible for making sure that appropriate links are made between the PCSOs and the following parts of the Council:
- a. Waste Management Team
 - b. Traffic Wardens
 - c. Noise and Nuisance Team
 - d. Licensing staff
 - e. Community Safety Team, including the Drug Action Team
 - f. Parks Police
 - g. CCTV Control Room
 - h. Market office in Tavistock Square
 - i. Youth Offending Team
 - j. Graffiti Squad
18. Mr Taylor will liaise with colleagues in the Legal Services Department to make arrangements for PCSOs to issue enforcement notices and fixed penalty fines on behalf of the Council.

Next Steps

19. This is major initiative designed to help address some of the strong concerns expressed by residents when the KCP consulted on the Community Strategy. The Partnership Steering Group will have an important role to play in advising the Council on whether it has been successful and if local residents should be consulted on whether to extend it.

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6th May 2003.