

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE BOARD – 1 JULY 2003

REPORT OF THE MANAGER OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Purpose of report

To advise Members of the concept of Community Support Officers (CSO) and the success the Police Northern Division has had in winning CSO's for the area.

Decision required

To support the initiative and to recommend to the District Council and other partners an application for a CSO in the Ashby Community Action Zone Area.

Policy matters

The proposal is supported by Council Policy and Crime Reduction Strategy. The emerging Community Strategy for the area envisages the appointment of "community custodians" and these officers would, it seems, meet this criterion.

Financial/staff resources

Some funding is included in the approved base budget, but the Council is to be asked to support any scheme shortfall.

Health/anti-poverty implications

Crime is closely related to factors of multiple deprivation and this initiative would seek to work with communities in a multi-agency setting.

Crime and disorder

The project is designed to promote community safety. Views of the partnership will be fed into the meeting.

Human rights

Covered in protocols

E. Government

Nil

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Leicestershire Constabulary is one of 27 forces which was successful in their bid to pilot the roles of Community Support Officers (CSO's) under the Police Reform Act 2002.
- 1.2 The North Area was successful in securing one Supervisor and four Community Support Officers. These now work from Quorn Local Policing Unit and area administered/managed by the Operational Support Department.
- 1.3 The responsibility for operational deployment remains with the Local Policing Unit Commander. A summary of the powers of CSO's follows and then a review of the operations at the Quorn Pilot.

2.0 CSO Powers

- 2.1 The powers of CSO's are set out in part 1 of schedule 4 of the Police Reform Act 2002. In summary the powers are as follows:

- Issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) for offences of disorder.

NB This power is subject of a pilot scheme run by the Home Office and has not yet been approved for CSO's. It is unlikely to be available before August 2003.

- Issue FPN's for dog fouling, littering and riding cycles on the footpath.
- Power to request name and address for FPN's for offences that cause injury, alarm and distress.
- Power to request the name and address of persons acting in an anti-social manner.
- Power to request a person to stop drinking in 'designated' public areas and to surrender open containers.
- Power to confiscate and dispose of alcohol from young persons.
- Power to confiscate and dispose of cigarettes and tobacco products from young people.
- Power of entry to save life and limb, or to prevent serious damage to property.

- Power to seize vehicles driven carelessly, inconsiderately, or used to cause alarm or distress.
- Power to stop vehicles for purposes of an authorised PACE road check.
- Power to maintain and enforce a cordon established under terrorism legislation.
- Power to stop and search drivers / passengers under terrorism legislation.
- Power to regulate traffic for the purpose of escorting abnormal loads.
- Power to stop a vehicle for emissions testing.

They also have the powers exercisable by traffic wardens:

- To stop vehicles and pedestrians whilst regulating traffic .
- Dealing with contravention's of certain traffic signs / regulations.
- Regulating dates of birth, driving licence, insurance and MOT's from drivers.
- Requiring names and addresses if persons fail to comply whilst regulating traffic.

It is envisaged that the CSO, particularly in 'housing areas' will assist and support neighbour disputes, tenant relations, work with young people, crime, nuisance and vandalism reduction initiatives, advice and property protection. Illegal use of bicycles, motorbikes and vehicles will be a key issue.

It should be borne in mind that in addition to the above powers CSO's have the same powers as any other citizen to make arrests or to act in defence of themselves or another.

However, the powers of the CSO need to be set in context, in as much that it is envisaged that the vast majority of their time will discharge their patrolling the streets without recourse to their powers as is largely the case with regular police officers.

3.0 Deployment Benefits from the Quorn Pilot

- 3.1 Each of the four Community Support Officers (CSO's) has an allocated beat for which they will be expected to develop their knowledge of local issues, contacts and specific incidents.
- 3.2 CSO's will be deployed in local locations dependent on which has the greatest demand of operational need.
- 3.3 CSO's will be working in a planned way, focusing their efforts on making our community safer and tackling community concerns. Performance will be measured in key areas of :

- a) Crime reduction (all categories)
 - b) Disorder nuisance reduction (all categories)
 - c) Increased visibility (comparing hours available to patrol time)
 - d) Increase in public satisfaction
- 3.4 A real emphasis is being made so that CSO's are part of the police family. They are being deployed within the same tried and tested working practices of traditional basic policing. They will compliment the Beat Officer, Local Community Co-ordinator, Special Constabulary and Traffic Wardens.
- 3.5 Whilst CSO's are being trained to work as an independent resource to tackle local issues, there will be occasions when joint working is necessary. When community improvement initiatives need the resources of CSO's, Beat Constables and other staff, CSO's will form part of a team approach.
- 3.6 A deployment package has been developed to enable CSO's to be deployed in the right place at the right time. This has been achieved through the Quorn Commanders proven community consultation process. Local officers have forged comprehensive links with local parish councils, NHW, incident and crime patterns has supported this process. Deployments are constantly monitored and CSO's will be flexible to match the needs of local communities.
- 3.7 The CSO will provide a much needed resource to patrol community hot spots and tackle local concerns. These include nuisance behaviour, litter, dog fouling, parking, drinking in public places (subject to local byelaws). These problems are regularly voiced by local Councillors. The CSO will be deployed to match local concerns.
- 3.8 The CSO's will free up the time and resources of regular officers who will still be deployed to local communities, but can now focus more on serious crime and persistent offenders. This will complement the way local problems and local crime is tackled, through varying resources which are linked to each other.
- 3.9 Traditionally at times of major crime, beat officers and other Constables have had to be "abstracted" to other locations of need for protracted periods of time. The Leicestershire Constabulary is committed to ensuring that so far as is possible, CSO's remain within the communities they serve.
- 4.0 **Finance**
- 4.1 Leicestershire Constabulary has been allocated Home Office Funding for the implementation of CSO's with a part funding package available over the next three years (to March 2006).
- 4.2 Future funding appears to be dependent upon joint funding and the outcome of the CSO deployment. Growth bids are currently being progressed, as is the recognised cost benefits of these innovative resources.

- 4.3 The annual cost of deploying a CSO is £24,000 (this includes salary, shift allowance, overtime limits, national insurance and superannuation). Future deployment is being sought at 50% funding from Local Authorities ie. £12,000 per annum per CSO. The Government has initially agreed to provide the other 50% for 2 years.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 CSO's provide a valuable resource to tackle local community issues. They will be deployed to maximise effect in communities with minimum abstraction.
- 5.2 They will be best placed to reduce crime, reduce disorder and nuisance, increase 'policing' visibility and increase public reassurance through local police management structures.
- 5.3 They will tackle local problems and where necessary enforce legislation, without the abstractions that police officers regularly face, with serious crimes and incidents. This will be achieved with good consultation within the local communities, via parish councils.
- 5.4 CSO's provide an ideal opportunity for Local Authorities to part fund and work in Crime and Disorder Partnerships. CSO's will work with the police at the point of service delivery. They will provide excellent value for money.

6.0 The Proposal

- 6.1 The Police Northern Division has bid for several CSO's and has been successful in obtaining funding through the Home Office scheme to appoint a CSO for Coalville Town Centre. The Town Centre is the highest crime area and a safe town centre is a key priority for the Council. The CSO will also tie into the extension of retail radio and pubwatch in connection with CCTV.
- 6.2 The next most likely areas where the CSO concept was felt to have most potential was in the two Community Action Zones. Greenhill has already seen the introduction of a Neighbourhood Warden and additional policing of Beat 25. The new CAZ 2 in Ashby covers the three main housing estates and there would be benefits to the Town Centre there also.

7.0 Costs

- 7.1 The annual additional cost to the police of employing a CSO is met 50% by the Home Office and in this case the 50% would have to be met by other partners. The Council's Housing Division has indicated that it could part fund the post for three years leaving a shortfall to be met by other partners and or the Council.

- 7.2 The following table outlines the provisional costing and income sources. The Executive Board is asked to agree to fund the shortfall, from a supplementary estimate.

Cost Provisional Contributions	2003 / 2004	2004 / 2005	2005 / 2006
Home Office	6,250	12,500	12,500
NWLDC Housing	2,000	4,000	4,000
Partnership in Safer Communities	3,000	3,000	3,000
Ashby Town Council	TBC	TBC	TBC
Shortfall	250	5,500	5,500
	12,500	25,000	25,000

Further details on contributions will be reported to the Board. Confirmation that the Housing Division can contribute legally is being sought.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED THAT:

- A) THE PARTNERSHIP NOTES THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICE IN GAINING A CSO FOR THE COALVILLE TOWN CENTRE**

Background papers: Working papers on file.

S B Town
9 June 2003

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(Committee Reports/Executive Board/Community Support Officers)