

**Sussex Police**

**Challenge Programme: Crime Prevention Project**

**Briefing Note – 7 February 2008**

Introduction

This briefing note provides an update for the Crime Prevention Project under the Challenge Programme. It is aimed at divisional and district commanders and Sussex Police Authority to enable external partners and stakeholders to be updated.

Background

The introduction of the neighbourhood policing model within Sussex presents the opportunity to review the crime prevention function within the force. The Challenge Programme identified the function performed by crime prevention officers (CPO) and crime prevention co-ordinators (CPC) could more effectively be aligned to neighbourhood policing. As such the work previously undertaken by CPO's and CPC's is currently being transferred to neighbourhood specialist teams. Two posts are to be created within Corporate Development to co-ordinate crime prevention activities, CPO posts will be reduced from 15 to 9 and the CPC post is to be discontinued.

The ongoing support to neighbourhood watch, is the area within the project of most concern to the public. As such, the Challenge Board agreed to retain two CPC posts in West Sussex for 12 months to facilitate the transition to neighbourhood specialist teams. Finally, the existing telephone messaging system "Ringmaster", used to communicate with neighbourhood watch, will in time become obsolete and commitment to introduce an up-to-date system has been agreed.

CPO & CPC Posts

All nine CPO positions across the force have now been filled. Two staff have also been selected for two temporary posts on West Downs. A new generic job description is being written for the CPO role which will provide a consistent approach across the force but allow for local arrangements by divisional commanders.

Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood watch in Sussex is well supported by the public, particularly in West Sussex. However there is inconsistency across the county in terms of structure, communication between police and neighbourhood watch and the accuracy of watch member records.

A new model to address these issues and integrate neighbourhood policing teams has been developed and is currently under consultation with district commanders, practitioners and Neighbourhood Watch. The concept of the model involves police community support officers having specific responsibility to maintain contact with neighbourhood watch co-ordinators on their ward. Links will also be maintained at a district level by the NST inspector or sergeant. At a force level, a new Neighbourhood Watch Manager is being appointed as head of profession for neighbourhood watch with responsibility for maintaining links with the Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Federation.

Neighbourhood Watch Search Teams

The North Downs and West Downs Neighbourhood Watch Search Teams make up two of the four volunteer search teams in Sussex. Previously co-ordination between police and the teams was undertaken by CPC's. The Force Search Manager will maintain overall head of

profession for the teams but local liaison will fall to two nominated sergeants within West and North Downs.

#### Information Systems

“Ringmaster”, the telephone messaging system used to communicate with watch co-ordinators is no longer supported by the system suppliers. Presently three options are being evaluated with email and text as the main lines of communication. The new system seeks to enable watch members to update their details on line, thereby maintaining accurate lists of members. It is anticipated the system will be in place by June 2008.

#### Consultation

There has been concern from neighbourhood watches that the commitment from Sussex Police to neighbourhood watch would decrease as a result of the change. To reassure watches that aligning neighbourhood specialist teams to neighbourhood watch will provide greater communication and commitment, a series of meetings has taken place and is ongoing.

#### Timescales

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| February 08 | Consultation on new model with District Commanders, Neighbourhood Watch Federation, SPA.  |
| March 08    | Training of neighbourhood specialist teams  |
| April 08    | Neighbourhood specialist teams take ownership for neighbourhood watch<br>Ringmaster system remains but not supported<br>HQ posts recruited, CPO and CPC posts withdrawn |
| June 08     | New IS system implemented   |
| March 09    | New model fully embedded<br>Two West Sussex CPC posts withdrawn   |

#### Conclusion

The project is on track and Sussex Police are confident that the new model will provide an enhanced service to neighbourhood watch and the general public. It is accepted that there will be a transition period whilst neighbourhood policing teams take over the responsibility for neighbourhood watch, but the service provided will be significantly enhanced in future.