

**Report of<sup>[x1]</sup>: Community Scrutiny Committee**

**To<sup>[x2]</sup>: City Executive Board**

**Date<sup>[x3]</sup>: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

**Item No**

**Title of Report <sup>[x4]</sup>: Neighbourhood Policing**



### Summary and Recommendations



**Purpose of report<sup>[x5]</sup>:** To report to the Executive Board the recommendations of Community Scrutiny Committee as part of their discussions on Neighbourhood Policing in the City.




**decision<sup>[x6]</sup>:** No



**Board Member <sup>[x7]</sup>:** Cllr Sajjad Malik

**Ward(s) affected<sup>[x8]</sup>:** All

**Report Approved**  Andy Collett – Financial & Asset Management Services  
Jeremy Thomas – Legal & Democratic Services  
Paul Spencer – Climate Change Officer



**Policy Framework<sup>[x9]</sup>:**



**Recommendation(s)<sup>[x10]</sup>:** The City Executive Board is asked to respond to the Community Scrutiny Committee's recommendations:



1. That the City Executive Board should ask Oxfordshire County Council to effectively link its Youth Services with Neighbourhood Action Groups
2. That the Executive Board should ask Oxfordshire County Council to link any future funding support for Police Community Support Officers to 'hotspot' areas identified by local community crime statistics.



## 1. Background

- 1.1. The Committee requested an update on the development of Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) and the implementation of neighbourhood policing within Oxford. In particular:
  - how local priorities are set, reviewing project based work to tackle local issues
  - how well Neighbourhood Action Groups are engaging the community to gather their views
  - how NAGs are informing Neighbourhood Policing in their areas deployment of Police Community Support Officers across the City.

The report on Neighbourhood Policing that was submitted to Community Scrutiny including an overview briefing paper prepared for Andrew Smith MP is attached as appendix 1.

- 1.2. The Committee noted that the City currently has 48 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's), which will rise to 59 by summer 2008 and 24 Neighbourhood Specialist Officers. Members noted that Oxfordshire County Council had support funded the appointment of PCSO's although this funding was coming to an end. The deployment of these PCSO's was questioned. Members were aware that these had been deployed to areas of the County (West Oxfordshire) where crime statistics were well below the City.
- 1.3. Inspector Andy Talbot (Development and Change Manager Oxfordshire B.C.U.) stated that the key challenges for Neighbourhood Policing were around the Community Cohesion Agenda and Community Engagement. Each Neighbourhood Action Group was tasked with producing an annual community engagement plan. This process had been trialled within the East Oxford NAG. NAG's were also tasked with conducting annual resident satisfaction surveys.
- 1.4. The Committee thought that the public feedback on the work of the NAGs around neighbourhood policing priorities needed to be more consistent and higher profile within communities.
- 1.5. The Committee also thought it would be useful for Councillors to be circulated the details of the full powers of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) and to be kept informed of the numbers of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti –Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's) issued. It was agreed that the circulation of PCSO powers would be helpful and the circulation of ABC and ASBO details to Councillors by Ward would be investigated.

- 1.6. Officers were questioned on the development of the Schools NAG. It was conceded that it had been difficult to sustain this NAG, with the present level of buy-in from Secondary Schools. It was suggested that engagement of young people could be taken forward more proactively by members of the existing NAGs and that the local Youth Services needed to become more closely involved with NAGs.

## **2. Minutes of Community Scrutiny – 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2008**

### **96. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING IN OXFORD**

The Head of Community Housing and Community Development submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Inspector Andy Talbot: told the Committee that 56 of the 59 Police Community Support Officers had been recruited; outlined the main challenges and benefits of neighbourhood policing; spoke of the close relationship the police had with councillors and the community safety team and referred to the Adaptive Buildings Fund which was being used to fund police offices on estates.

Ben Smith: spoke of the need to carry out work in relation to community engagement and communication and referred to a survey carried out recently of those living on Blackbird Leys.

Councillor Susanna Pressel: suggested that there was a need for neighbourhood action groups to make more information available concerning their work to those living in the communities they served; asked about the powers available to police community support officers in relation to environmental matters and suggested that there was a need for more joint working between them and the Council; proposed that the County Council be urged, when they made funds available in future to employ additional police community support officers that they be stationed in areas with the highest crime levels; spoke of the need for the police to work closely with Control Plus

Resolved to RECOMMEND the Executive Board:-

1. That the Executive Board should ask Oxfordshire County Council to effectively link its Youth Services with Neighbourhood Action Groups
2. That the Executive Board should ask Oxfordshire County Council to link any future funding support for Police Community Support Officers to 'hotspot' areas identified by local community crime statistics.

### **3. Comments from Board Member : Safer Communities**

No comments

### **4. Comments from Executive Director – City Regeneration**

Partnership working with the police and other agencies has yielded positive results, some examples of which are described in the Head of Community Housing and Community Development's report appended. An example is the positive results reflected in the Barton Customer Satisfaction Survey recording improvement in the tackling of anti social behaviour.

There is a need to carry out further work in relation to community engagement and improving the lines of communication and the Head of Community Housing and Community Development will pick this up through existing partnership structures.

In the event that additional policing resources become available we will press for those resources to be applied to known hotspots.

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**Background papers:** None

## Appendix 1

**Report of**<sub>[x11]:</sub> **Head of Community Housing and Community Development**

**To**<sub>[x12]:</sub> **Community Scrutiny Committee**

**Date**<sub>[x13]:</sub> **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2008**

**Item No**<sub>[EM14]:</sub>

**Title of Report** <sub>[x15]:</sub> **Neighbourhood Policing in Oxford**



### Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report**<sub>[x16]:</sub> This report outlines the development of the Neighbourhood Policing structure within Oxford and also provides the latest information in regards to the numbers of PCSOs currently in post

**decision**<sub>[x17]:</sub> No

**Risk**<sub>[BL18]:</sub>

**Portfolio Holder**<sub>[x19]:</sub> **Councillor Altaf Khan**

**Scrutiny Responsibility**<sub>[x20]:</sub> Community

**Ward(s) affected**<sub>[x21]:</sub> All

**Report Approved by:**

Sham Stratford, Head of Community Housing & Community Development  
Altaf Khan, Portfolio Holder for Safer Cities

Andy Collett, Finance

Clive Thomas, Legal<sub>[EM22]</sub>

**Policy Framework**<sub>[x23]:</sub>

**Recommendation(s)**<sub>[x24]:</sub>

1. The Committee is asked to comment on the information contained within this report.



1. Introduction

This report outlines the development of the Neighbourhood Policing structure in Oxford and also provides the latest information in regards to the numbers of PCSOs currently in post.

2. Attached to this report template is a briefing paper constructed for Andrew Smith MP on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The paper provides an overview of NAG activities, Oxford neighbourhood priorities, and a very brief summary of some of the benefits of Neighbourhood Policing in Oxford.

3. Included within the briefing paper is a case study where Neighbourhood Policing has successfully operated in Barton, Risinghurst and Sandhills.

[x25]

**Recommendations:**

1. The Committee is asked to comment on the information contained within this report.

**Name and contact details of author**[x26]:

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**Oxford Safer Communities Partnership**  
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**Background papers**[x27]:

**Neighbourhood Policing in the Thames Valley: Briefing Paper for Andrew**  
 **Smith MP – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008.**



**Neighbourhood Policing in the Thames Valley:**

Version number: 3.0  
01/11/07

# **Briefing Paper for Andrew Smith MP**

**Dr. Lucy Mason, Chief Constable's Office**  
**Insp. Andy Talbot, Neighbourhood Policing Implementation Manager for**  
**Oxfordshire Basic Command Unit**  
**Ben Smith, Neighbourhood Policing Co-ordinator, Oxford City Council**

**18<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

## **Overview**

In March 2008 we fully rolled out, ahead of the April 2008 deadline, neighbourhood policing across the entire Thames Valley Police area (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire). All 265 neighbourhoods have now gone 'live'. The next challenge for us, which forms a key part of our Strategic Plan for the next three years, is to embed the neighbourhood management approach and to make sure that increasing our responsiveness and community engagement is part of everything that we do.

This heralds a real step-change in the way that we interact with our communities, and is supported by lots of work to map our communities, to understand the issues that affect them, and to involve them in the solutions.

So far the feedback from areas which have had dedicated neighbourhood policing teams for a while is that they make a real difference, and many Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in particular have forged close links with their communities.

## **About Neighbourhood Policing in Oxford**

Oxford City Local Policing Area (LPA) is coterminous with the boundaries of Oxford City Council.

There are six Neighbourhood Inspectors who have geographical responsibility for the neighbourhood teams. The Inspectors' areas of responsibility are coterminous with the six Oxford City Council Area Committees.

Oxford City is divided into 22 neighbourhoods, which are graded as either Priority, Enhanced, or Capable. The grading relates to a matrix which determines the level of resources allocated to each neighbourhood. Oxford has five Priority neighbourhoods, (Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Rose Hill, Barton and Oxford City Centre), 12 Enhanced neighbourhoods, and five Capable neighbourhoods.

Oxford City currently has 48 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) which will rise to 59 in total from summer 2008. Ten of these are part-funded by Oxford City Council and four are part-funded by Oxford University.

There are 24 Neighbourhood Specialist Officers (NSO). These are fully warranted police officers who have dedicated neighbourhood roles and receive specialist training and have a supervisory role for the PCSOs as well as patrol. In addition, 16 Neighbourhood Officers and nine members of the Special Constabulary support the neighbourhood policing teams. There are also response and specialist units which can be called up for additional support when needed.

### *Neighbourhood Action Groups*

There are twelve Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) that have been set up in Oxford. They are a multi-agency and community group set up to identify and resolve key issues in their neighbourhood. Each NAG sets its priorities through consultation as to what issues were of most concern to the community, and works towards solving the problems. Public consultation includes methods such as:

- Public Meetings
- Surgeries at community buildings
- Police exhibitions / presence at local events
- Questionnaires
- Street briefings
- One to one engagement – door stop interviews

The first Neighbourhood Action Group to be set up in Oxford was in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys. It is made up of residents, Housing Officers, Parish Council representatives, Police, City and County Councillors, the Area Committee Co-ordinator, Neighbourhood Watch, Youth Service, a Secondary School representative, Oxford City Council Crime and Nuisance Action Team (CaNACT) and Oxford City Council Street Wardens and Park Rangers.

PCSOs and Street Wardens have been used to very good effect to scan for problems, assess the nature of the problem, and involve residents in the solutions. A good example is Blackbird Leys where drug dealing was identified as a neighbourhood priority. Hundreds of residents were visited in an identified locality and asked a series of questions:

- What is the drug-dealing problem?
- Where is it occurring?
- When is it occurring?
- Why is it occurring?
- Who is drug dealing?
- How is drug dealing occurring?



The results of this detailed one-to-one survey showed that the perception of drug dealing was much worse than the reality. The NAG therefore increased its focus on tackling the perception of drug dealing.

Appendix 1 gives a detailed Case Study of the work of another Priority area NAG, for Barton, Risinghurst and Sandhills, in reducing anti-social behaviour.

## **Neighbourhood Priorities in Oxford**

Neighbourhood Priorities across Oxford fall into five categories:

- Environmental (i.e. litter and fly tipping)
- Road traffic related (i.e. Speeding or parking)
- Anti-social behaviour
- Drug dealing
- Criminal damage or vandalism.

## **Benefits of Neighbourhood Policing**

Neighbourhood policing can and is making a difference. The NAG are having success in focussing on small geographical areas and are working closely with Oxford City Council's Crime and Nuisance Action Team (CaNACT). CaNACT has Neighbourhood Action Officers (NAO) whose boundaries are coterminous with Area Committees. In addition, each NAG area has an anti-social behaviour case-working group that focus on individuals and individual premises. These case-working groups ensure effective and appropriate use of ASBOs, ABCs (Acceptable Behaviour Contracts) and injunctions in support of neighbourhood priorities.

Neighbourhood Policing in Oxford is linked with targeted police operations. It is no coincidence that with the arrival of dedicated neighbourhood police teams, crime has fallen. Ring-fenced neighbourhood police teams working in conjunction with targeted police operations is proving to have significant and positive results (see Appendix 2 on crime statistics for Priority neighbourhoods).

- In Oxfordshire residential burglaries are now at their lowest since 1989
- Car crime (theft of vehicle and theft from vehicle) is now at its lowest since the mid 1980's

We have found there are several key elements to success: Visibility, Engagement, Problem-solving, and Communication. The Neighbourhood Specialist Officers, PCSO, Oxford City Council Street Wardens, and Park Rangers provide a huge increase in visibility that is reassuring to local people and increases their feeling of safety. Communication is also important using various media including local newspapers, radio and television.

The Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) website includes dedicated neighbourhood policing pages for each NAG and is a very useful resource ([www.saferoxford.org.uk/neighbourhood](http://www.saferoxford.org.uk/neighbourhood)).

## **Appendix 1: Case Study**

The following case study will focus on the reduction of anti social behaviour as selected as a priority for the Barton, Sandhills and Risinghurst Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG). This case study looks at the range of actions that Thames Valley Police together with its partner agencies have been undertaking to combat the problem and thus alleviate concerns of local residents.

### **Background**

On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2006 a Public Consultation exercise was undertaken at the 'Barton Bash', Oxford. The Barton Bash is a community event attended by many different agencies and community groups and held at the local community centre. There were a wide range of programmes on offer from dance groups and DJ's, to advice shops and raffles. The event attracted a wide range of age groups and across the socio economic spectrum of residents who live in the local area. The event was very well supported by the local community and was a very successful local event having been established during previous years. Due to the popularity of previous events and engagement by the local community it was felt that that this event would be an ideal opportunity to hold a public consultation exercise in line with neighbourhood policing.

The local PCSO's and Street Wardens undertook a consultation exercise at the event and the results identified three key priorities that the Neighbourhood Action Group could focus on over the following period. The top identified priorities were:

- 1) Anti Social Behaviour around Underhill Circus
- 2) Use of Mini Motorcycles
- 3) Drug dealing and its use

### **Setting Actions**

The period following the consultation exercise saw a range of actions set and implemented. The main aim was to prevent anti social behaviour and also identify and deal with any perpetrators. The first step of the process was to identify what was happening, when it was happening, by whom, and why the area of the shops was attracting this type of behaviour.

Prior to the consultation there were already agreed plans for a regeneration of the shops area, however, this work was not due for completion for at least 15 months at the time of the consultation. The intention of the shop area regeneration was to make the shops a more accommodating area for the local residents and to design an area that would not promote anti social behaviour.

In the short term there needed to be a quicker response to the identified top priority of anti social behaviour. The immediate action undertaken was an

increase in high visibility patrols by Police Officers, PCSO's and Street Wardens. Additionally, the local shops were also visited and local licensees advised about the sale of alcohol to the young people.

A medium term strategy of educating local people of the Alcohol Free Zone was initiated and this included placing increased signage around the local area. There were a number of different forms of youth engagement, this included youth provision over the summer of 2006 for a 5-day football course funded by Oxford City Council. Other play schemes also took place over the summer and these successfully reduced the number of young people who were enticed to 'hang out' at the shops area. Additional to the schemes mentioned above and as a precursor to the main regeneration scheme, a local artist was funded to re-render a wall at the shops area. The local artist was tasked with involving local young people to design and assist with the creation of the wall so to instil a sense of community in the young people.

### **Successful results and positive community feedback**

All of the above actions and projects together with NAG actions to reduce the local usage of mini motorcycles, and formulating a more robust manner of dealing with drugs in the local area has meant that collectively the whole area has improved, and the quality of life for the local residents has also improved.

We know this because during February 2007 the NAG in the Barton area completed a Community Satisfaction Survey and the results of which were very positive. One hundred residents were randomly surveyed and the majority of residents stated that there had been an improvement in the tackling of anti social behaviour. For example, 45% of residents said that things had got better and there was a reduction in teenagers hanging around the streets over the previous 6 months, only 2% said that the situation had got a lot worse. 34% of those surveyed stated that general vandalism had decreased; only 1% said it had got worse.

Overall there were very few residents who stated that problems had become worse. There was also a general trend stating that there were now fewer drug problems in the area and a strong trend stating that the previous problems with mini motorcycles had now improved. These results prompted the local daily paper (Oxford Mail) to publish a very positive article spread over two pages.

### **Neighbourhood Policing in action**

The introduction of Neighbourhood Policing has meant that the personnel for the local neighbourhood team has increased from 1 Police Officer and 2 PCSO'S in mid 2006 to now having 3 Police Officers and 4 Police Community Support Officers entirely dedicated to the Barton, Sandhills and Risinghurst NAG area by September 2007.

During the second half of 2007 the NAG has targeted the identified priorities even further and many ASBOs have been issued and many Anti social Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) have been signed. Many of the prolific offenders have been targeted and arrested and some of the main protagonists are in prison. The area will soon benefit even further with the imminent opening of a Police Base right in the heart of the Barton estate within the Community Centre, metres from the Underhill Circus shops area. This will mean that visibility will be increased further and abstractions of Thames Valley Police personnel and or Oxford Council's Street Wardens away from the area will be reduced to minimal levels.

## Appendix 2: Local Crime Statistics

### Stats for Rose Hill neighbourhood

	April to December 2006	April to December 2007	% change
<b>All crime</b>	427	267	-37%
<b>Burglary dwelling</b>	45	18	-60%
<b>Violence against the person</b>	78	68	-13%
<b>Criminal damage</b>	164	97	-41%
<b>Vehicle crime (theft of, theft from and vehicle interference)</b>	62	31	-50%

### Stats for Blackbird Leys neighbourhood

	April to December 2006	April to December 2007	% change
<b>All crime</b>	953	879	-8%
<b>Burglary dwelling</b>	31	30	-3%
<b>Violence against the person</b>	274	230	-16%
<b>Criminal damage</b>	229	198	-14%
<b>Vehicle crime (theft of, theft from and vehicle interference)</b>	109	106	-3%

### Stats for Barton neighbourhood

	April to December 2006	April to December 2007	% change
<b>All crime</b>	480	383	-20%
<b>Burglary dwelling</b>	52	17	-67%
<b>Violence against the person</b>	126	103	-18%
<b>Criminal damage</b>	123	97	-21%
<b>Vehicle crime (theft of, theft from and vehicle interference)</b>	57	46	-19%

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N.B. Minutes and notes following the Parliament debate on Neighbourhood Policing on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March can be found via the following weblink:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080319/hallindx/80319-x.htm>

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