

Response to Volunteers and Special Constables Task Group

4th September 2014



Rec No	Recommendation
R1	<p>Clearly defines how Special Constables will be attached to communities</p> <p>The Force's review of the Special Constabulary identified a model in Trowbridge whereby Special Constables were assigned to a specific Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT). Each Special Constabulary team consists of approximately six Special Constables led by a Special Sergeant. This ensures that the NPT Sergeant has a clear point of contact with regard to tasking Specials through the Special Sergeant. This model allows Special Constables to become involved in the setting of NPT priorities, getting to understand the local issues, and helping to identify solutions and being part of that solution. Specials are the first port of call for requests of assistance at events or crime trends on an NPT. This approach aims to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of each Special Constabulary team and ensures the NPT and the community value the contribution that Specials can make. This approach is now being rolled out across the whole of the Force area. The Special Constabulary is now set up with each NPT having at least one team of Specials attached to it although a period of time for this new approach to embed is required. This approach echoes my vision as set out in the Police and Crime Plan Updates of an attachment of Special Constables to each NPT as well as other specialist areas.</p>
R2	<p>In light of R1, agrees an appropriate number of Special Constables and develops a strategy and implementation plan for the recruitment, retention, and training of Special Constables</p> <p>The Panel will be aware that in my Police and Crime Plan I talk about a minimum of 300 active Special Constables across the Force area. This target has not yet been reviewed although is unlikely to be achieved in the short term. This is mainly due to the attrition rate of Special Constables and current recruitment levels. Whilst there is no strategy for the number of Specials required the Force is above the national average for current levels. Contact has been made with those who have recently left the Special Constabulary asking for their reasons for doing so. The most usual reasons for leaving included joining as a regular, moving away or work commitments. Some responses did refer to lack of support from within the Special Constabulary and the wider force. As referenced in my Police and Crime Plan updates, a training plan has been developed by People Development which addresses the lengthy period of training required prior to a Special Constable being allowed on duty. A particular focus will come in e-learning prior to class room training. The outcome is aimed at increasing Special Constabulary numbers as this change in approach will reduce the amount of time spent training and will allow Special Constables to be on patrol sooner. Ongoing training and retention were identified as issues in the Force's recent review of the Special Constabulary as well as the recruitment of Specials. These issues are still being addressed within</p>

	<p>the subsequent action plan and I have asked for regular updates to be provided at the Commissioner's Monitoring Board.</p>
R3	<p>Uses available national guidance and the experience of the Kent Constabulary to explore opportunities for achieving best practice in the recruitment, training, and deployment of Special Constables</p> <p>The training plan that has been developed by People Development takes account of best practice and is linked with national guidance. It does, however, reduce the recommended time in a classroom environment but this is currently being trialled with success in Devon and Cornwall. By being as inclusive as possible and encouraging members of the public from all communities to apply to become Special Constables inevitably causes difficulty with regard to the level of individual commitment when training. This is because the current training programme relies heavily on weekend training for around six months. The alternative is to have an intensive three week period at the beginning of the training period which has been trialled by Devon and Cornwall. However, both approaches mean that some individuals struggle to commit for either such a long period of time, or for such an intense period of time.</p>
R4	<p>Considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Using the Volunteer Centre Wiltshire to help develop and enhance the Constabulary's use of volunteers b) Signing up to the Valuing Volunteering Promise to demonstrate the Wiltshire Constabulary's commitment to the principles of Choice, Inclusion, Support, Safety, Reimbursement and Reward when using volunteers c) Introducing a time credits scheme to build on the valuable contribution already made by many Police Officers who take part in unpaid voluntary work; and d) Introducing a scheme to encourage employers to support and promote the recruitment of Police and Community Safety volunteers from within their workforces <p>From April 2014 Police Volunteers have sat with the Strategic Control of Superintendent, Crime Prevention. Scott Bateman (a Special Constable) is now leading on volunteers with support from Insp Crime Prevention. Scott was awarded the MBE for introducing over 10,000 volunteers to the Ambulance Service. Together with Terry Wilkins (ACPO lead on 'Citizens in Policing') they have prepared a Plan and Policy around police volunteers. My Special Constabulary Police and Crime Plan Update and the recommendations from the Panel Task Group have been passed to Scott Bateman for his consideration. An update on the work that has been undertaken by Insp Crime Prevention and Scott Bateman is due to be presented to the Commissioner's Monitoring Board shortly.</p>
R5	<p>Confirms that Neighbourhood Alert will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Be implemented with crime-reduction as its central purpose; b) Be used to reinvigorate the Neighbourhood Watch schemes across Wiltshire and Swindon; and c) Co-ordinate the growing number of different 'watch' schemes <p>Wiltshire and Swindon Community Messaging (also known as Neighbourhood Alert) went live in 4 trial areas on 18th August 2014 (Malmesbury, Pewsey, Swindon West, and Warminster). I will provide a detailed update for Members on</p>

	<p>this at the meeting. Neighbourhood Watch areas are being aligned to the 27 Neighbourhood Policing Team areas and work is underway to bring the remaining 23 areas on line. Once this has been completed other ‘watches’ (such as Farm Watch, Horse Watch) and partner agencies can be added. Messages can be tailored and sent to specific demographic groups and / or geographical areas from county wide to street level or a small cluster of homes. A communications strategy is in place including promotion of Community Messaging at the high foot fall Emergency Services Show on 7th September. Training on the use of the system is being rolled out to Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Typically, the police will use the system to send messages about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime prevention advice • Appeals for information • Community safety campaigns • News about cases such as sentencing outcomes for offenders • Community events, news and meetings
<p>R6</p>	<p>Acknowledges that achieving Neighbourhood Alert’s full potential as a crime-reduction tool will require active and ongoing commitment from Neighbourhood Policing Teams and defines how this will be achieved</p> <p>Wiltshire Constabulary Corporate Communications will manage the community messaging service on my behalf. A member of staff is in post to administer the system for Wiltshire Constabulary and is working with NPT and other frontline police services. NPT staff are being trained to use the system and will be actively encouraged by Corporate Communications. I have committed funding to community messaging which includes marketing and promotion of the system as part of the commissioned service provided by Wiltshire Constabulary Corporate Communications. Assistance and training for Neighbourhood Watch volunteers is supported by the National Neighbourhood Watch Association.</p>
<p>R7</p>	<p>Defines what criteria he will use to monitor and assess Neighbourhood Alert’s effectiveness</p> <p>The criteria which will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the community messaging system are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of members of the public who sign up to receive messages • The amount of usage • Feedback from users (police and public) • Longer term crime trends • A re-invigorated Wiltshire and Swindon Neighbourhood Watch with increased membership (measured by the number of coordinators). Community messaging is a tool for their executive to manage and access their coordinators. Contact between NPT and Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators is already being further developed as progress on the rollout is made.

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