



Metropolitan Police Authority

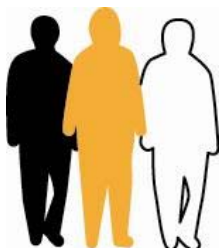
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# Safer Neighbourhoods Scrutiny

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Report by Hamera Asfa Davey  
Analysis undertaken by Melissa Pepper

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Met streets – delivering order, control and safety to the public realm

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## **FORWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The MPA has a well-established history of undertaking focused reviews into particular policing policy areas or service delivery. Our in-depth reviews have tended to focus on how to improve areas of poor policing performance or how to enhance existing policing practice. The Safer Neighbourhoods (SN) scrutiny is an example of the latter.

The introduction of SN has been a massive success story for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Throughout our consultation we heard time and time again from Londoners, partners and police officers how SN teams have bought a change to how Londoners relate to and perceived their local police. Many community volunteers told us they knew their SN officers by name and were increasingly confident about asking officers to address those concerns that mattered most to Londoners. It was heartening to hear how well SN had been received and how localised policing was helping to increase confidence and satisfaction in the MPS as whole.

However, there is always scope to improve the policing response we provide to Londoners. SN policing has now been in operation in London for seven years and therefore it is an opportune time to consider whether the current method of delivery is still meeting the needs of Londoners and partners. The intention behind our scrutiny was not to reinvent the SN policing model or propose a radical new way of delivering SN policing. Rather it was to consider whether the ward-based approach was still meeting the needs of all boroughs and whether any adjustments were required to ensure SN teams were able to continue to meet with their core requirements of crime reduction; reassurance and problem solving.

Our work coincided with a MPS SN review. In moving forward, the information gathered by the MPA will be used by the MPS to inform their suggested changes to the SN structure. The MPA has also devised a number of parameters in the form of recommendations and principles which the MPS must consider when devising their ways forward.

In developing the terms of reference for the MPA scrutiny our intention had been to build a consensus view on ways forward. However this has not been possible. Whilst all scrutiny panel members agree with the principles expounded in our recommendation, some scrutiny panel members have alternative views and these are set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Finally, we would like to thank, on behalf of the MPA the MPS officers, staff, Local Authority partners and community volunteers who contributed to and supported this work. In particular we owe a special thanks to the MPA staff involved, especially Hamera Asfa Davey and Melissa Pepper overseen by Siobhan Coldwell. A particular mention must also be given to Thomas Foot, Fauzia Ashraf-Malik and April May-Zubel.

February 2011

**Reshard Auladin – Independent Member  
Safer Neighbourhoods scrutiny panel chair**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** In taking forward any changes to the current Safer Neighbourhoods policing model, the MPS must abide by the following principles.

- The MPS should evidence the case for change and demonstrate they have consulted and agreed changes with local stakeholders regarding:
  - the supervisory ratio of Safer Neighbourhood Sergeants (please refer to pages 22-23)
  - the composition of Safer Neighbourhood teams (please refer to pages 24-25)
  - variances to the Safer Neighbourhood ward structure (please refer to pages 27-28)
  - clustering or brigading of wards (please refer to page 28)
- The crime and disorder remit of Safer Neighbourhood teams must be better promoted by the MPS. (please refer to page 19)
- The Safer Neighbourhoods team scope must continue to cover the three key requirements for Safer Neighbourhoods policing and meet with the original objectives of the National Reassurance Policing Programme. (please refer to page 19)
- Local Safer Neighbourhood teams must have clear guidelines and parameters for Safer Neighbourhoods delivery. (please refer to page 20)
- The MPS must enhance their information and communication methods. Accessible and appropriate information provision supports engagement with Londoners and has a positive impact on confidence. (please refer to pages 20-21)
- Where multiple 'Safer' teams are working alongside each other, the additional principles must apply:
  - Working together – all 'Safer' teams must be aware of each other's priorities and must work together where priorities are aligned;
  - Governance – all 'Safer' teams should be tasked by and be accountable to one senior officer
  - Coordination – one 'Safer' team should have overall responsibility for coordinating activities in the ward/area. (please refer to page 27)

## **BACKGROUND**

Met Forward, the MPA's strategic mission was agreed by Members at a meeting of its Full Authority Committee in April 2009. A key commitment in Met Forward was to undertake a Safer Neighbourhoods (SN) scrutiny. To inform the direction of the SN scrutiny, an initial scoping study was undertaken between February 2010 and June 2010. The findings from this study were presented to the Strategic and Operational Policing (SOP) committee on the 1 July 2010.

Having reviewed the scoping study's findings, SOP committee Members agreed it would be useful for the SN scrutiny to focus on, the issue of structure and specifically on the current ward-based model for SN teams; and, the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) and Police Officer allocation to SN teams.

The scrutiny terms of reference were approved at the 16 September 2010 SOP committee. The scrutiny research and consultation phase began shortly after and was completed by December 2010.

### ***The wider context***

The MPA SN scrutiny consultation took place during the period of the coalition Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)<sup>1</sup>. It was inevitable that against this backdrop of financial uncertainty and unease about the impact on front line policing, concerns would be expressed about the timing of the MPA SN scrutiny. It was therefore imperative that all participants understood and recognised that any conclusions and recommendations made by the MPA would not be informed by the CSR but what was required to make SN policing more effective and efficient.

Throughout the period of the SN scrutiny, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) have been continuing their review of Territorial Policing (TP). This review, known as the TP Development Programme, began in January 2010. The primary aim of the Development Programme was to identify opportunities to improve service delivery and develop more efficient and effective ways of working. Where relevant, reference has been made to the TP Development Programme in the following report.

One key aspect of the TP Development Programme is a review of SN policing. The MPS SN community and key stakeholder consultation has recently been completed. An analysis of the consultation, key findings and proposed ways forward will be presented to the MPA in April/May 2011.

Whilst there is a difference of opinion between the MPA and MPS as to the extent decisions regarding the SN team structure are an operational matter, the following scrutiny has been

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<sup>1</sup> The Spending Review is a Treasury led process to allocate resources across all government departments, according to the Government's priorities. Spending Reviews set firm and fixed spending budgets over several years for each department. It is then up to departments to decide how best to manage and distribute this spending within their areas of responsibility.

undertaken on the assumption that the overall SN policy framework is a matter for the MPA.

### ***Objectives of the scrutiny***

The SN scrutiny focused on three key areas:

- the remit of SN;
- the SN team allocations of 1 – 2 – 3 and 1 - 2 – 6 and whether these allocations are helping to deliver the SN remit; and finally,
- whether the ward structure is the most efficient way of delivering the SN team remit.

### ***The MPA SN scrutiny panel***

The SN scrutiny panel was chaired by SOP committee chair Reshard Auladin (Independent Member), and involved the following MPA members:

- Jennette Arnold – Assembly Member
- John Biggs - Assembly Member
- James Cleverly - Assembly Member
- Clive Lawton – Independent Member
- Joanne McCartney - Assembly Member
- Steve O’Connell - Assembly Member

Members were supported by MPA officers from the Policing, Policy, Scrutiny and Oversight and the Policing Planning and Performance Improvement Units.

## SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY METHODOLOGY

Scrutiny findings have been informed by:

- desk based research;
- consultation.

Information from the desk based research is referenced throughout the main body of the report. Key pertinent findings from the desk based research can be found in appendix one.

A reference list itemising the key documents read can be found in appendix two.

The consultation consisted of the following key strands:

- Six formal scrutiny panel sessions facilitated by MPA Members. 19 expert witnesses gave evidence to the panel. Witnesses included MPS officers, Local Authority (LA) staff, a Police Authority Member from another force area and representatives from national specialist policing organisations.
- Four police focus groups: two with Borough Commanders; one with a group of Police Constables and Police Community Support Officers; and the last with Safer Neighbourhood Inspectors.
- One community volunteer focus group with 54 SN Panel chairs and Community Police Engagement Group (CPEG) volunteers. 27 of the London boroughs were represented at this focus group.
- Attendance at an Enfield Community Police Engagement Group Management Board meeting.
- An informal interview with the Hackney Safer Schools Partnership.
- ‘Shadowing’ the Greenwich West Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

In addition, a number of informal meetings were held with representatives from the Home Office, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the MPS.

Where relevant, information from MPA Full Authority meetings, the annual London Assembly plenary on policing<sup>2</sup>, the London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee investigation into front line policing<sup>3</sup> and feedback from the GLA/MPA road shows<sup>4</sup> has been included to support scrutiny findings.

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<sup>2</sup> The London Assembly meets regularly to hold to account bodies such as Transport for London, the MPA, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and London Development Agency. The Assembly met on the 10 November 2010 and put questions to the Commissioner of the MPS, Sir Paul Stephenson and the Chair of the Police Authority, Kit Malthouse. Information from this session will be referred to in the scrutiny report where relevant.

<sup>3</sup> The London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee are currently undertaking an investigation into front line policing. This will consider how policing will be affected by the budget cuts. Information from the Budget and Performance Committee sessions held on the 16 September 2010 and the 7 December 2010 are referred to in this scrutiny report.

<sup>4</sup> A series of MPA/GLA road shows were held throughout November – December 2010. Five sessions were held in total, one in each of the MPS command areas. At each of the five events, Kit Malthouse was either joined by Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing, Ian McPherson and the then Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing, Lynne Owens.

Finally, in considering the information that has been gathered through the consultation process, the following should be kept in mind:

- The consultation participants are not a representative sample of police officers, PCSOs and community volunteers. The participants were either directly approached by the MPA to take part in the consultation process or self selected. However, their feedback highlighted a broad uniformity of opinion and for this reason their suggestions on how SN delivery could be enhanced must be considered;
- The MPS SN consultation has recently been completed. Initial analysis of the consultation findings indicate that the MPS findings tally with the information the MPA gathered;
- Throughout the report certain terms are used to describe groups of individuals who participated in the process:
  - 'Focus group participants' refer to those individuals who took part in structured focus group discussions.
  - 'Police panel participants' refer to those individuals who took part in the formal MPA member led scrutiny panel sessions. This group includes police officers (of varying rank) police staff (of varying grade) individuals who work for national police organisations and the Chair of the MPA.
  - The term 'police participants' is used to describe police consultees, whether they took part in a focus group or a panel session.

### ***Report format***

In order to determine what changes if any are required to the ward-based SN team structure, the report begins by considering the current structure as viewed by the consultees, before outlining the various suggestions and recommendations made by consultees on how to improve the SN ward-based approach. The final chapter looks at related issues such as the role and remit of SN panels and partnership working.

Appendix one of the report outlines alternative views provided by some<sup>5</sup> members of the SN scrutiny panel.

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<sup>5</sup> Joanne McCartney, Jennette Arnold and John Biggs



## CHAPTER ONE: PARTICIPANTS VIEWS ON HOW SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS ARE CURRENTLY WORKING

The following section of the report considers participant's views on the before mentioned scrutiny objectives. Findings have been broken down under the following headings:

- The benefits of SN policing
- The difference made by SN teams
- The ward-based one size fits all approach
- Role of SN teams
- Role of PCSOs and Sergeants

### ***The benefit of SN policing***

Throughout the evidence gathering, all participants were hugely positive about SN teams. The MPA were told that:

- Londoners view SN teams as being '*their*' police;
- SN teams are valued by Londoners as they deal with local concerns; and finally,
- The SN ward-based structure has provided an opportunity for SN officers and PCSOs to develop positive relationships with communities and in particular young people.

The benefits of SN policing were also recognised and championed by all participants. The MPA were told that:

- SN policing had '*allowed*' Londoners to get involved in policing;
- SN teams had helped the MPS to gain a better understanding of Londoners concerns and how best to respond to them;
- SN teams were vital in gathering local intelligence as they had the capacity to develop and sustain engagement with local people/businesses/partners. As a result of this proactive engagement by SN teams, it was felt Londoners were increasingly confident about the MPS as a whole;
- SN teams are fundamental to policing London. The teams provide a basic level of policing in each borough, thereby allowing non SN officers and PCSOs to focus on other issues and concerns; and finally,
- The SN policing presence provides reassurance to Londoners and deters crime and ASB from occurring in the first place.

The Commissioner of the MPS, Sir Paul Stephenson, has consistently reiterated the benefits of SN policing. At the London Assembly plenary on the 10 November 2010, he said:

*'SN has bought us huge benefits in terms of increasing confidence and reductions in concerns of anti-social behaviour.'*

At the various MPA/GLA road shows, the Assistant Commissioner (AC) for TP referred to SN teams as the '*Met's jewel in the crown.*'

However, there did seem to be one disadvantage to the public good will and focus on SN policing. A number of police participants felt the public did not recognise there was more to local policing than SN teams. These comments were nevertheless tempered with recognition by police participants that many Londoners are primarily concerned about quality of life issues, local crime and anti social behaviour (ASB). As SN teams primarily dealt with local crime and ASB, it was unsurprising Londoners had become particularly focused on the work of their local policing teams.

### ***The difference made by SN teams***

The success of the neighbourhood policing approach is reliant on a tripartite relationship between the police, partners and crucially the public. A 2006 partnership guide into neighbourhood policing produced by the Home Office<sup>6</sup> recognised that individual partner agencies do not have the capacity to provide complete solutions to local crime and disorder concerns. Therefore the introduction of Safer Neighbourhoods provided a unique opportunity to bring together local people with local police and partners to identify and tackle issues of concern in their neighbourhood.

For the last seven years, the MPS Strategy, Research and Analysis Unit (SRAU), have monitored and reviewed the implementation of SN teams in order to assist the MPS in understanding what local people want from the police. One of the methods the MPS uses to assess Londoners confidence in the police service is the Public Attitude Survey (PAS). This includes a question which asks Londoners to state '*how good a job...[they] think the police in their area are doing.*' Since 2006 (the rollout of the 1 – 2 - 3 model was completed by December 2006)<sup>7</sup> public confidence has risen in the MPS from 56% to 66%. More people now believe the police are doing a 'good job' in their local area.

The work of the SRAU has also found that Londoners feel better informed about local policing. The PAS survey question on 'how well informed' people feel about local policing, has risen from 40% in 2006 to 66% in 2010.

Respondents to the PAS survey are also now more likely to say they have '*seen police patrolling on foot or bicycle*' in their local area. The PAS survey question on 'visibility' has increased from 41% of respondents in 2005/06 to 59% of respondents in 2010/11.

The work of SRAU corresponds with what the scrutiny consultees told the MPA. SN policing has made difference to how Londoners perceive their local police.

### ***The ward based one size fits all approach***

During the scrutiny panel sessions it became evident the MPS approach to the implementation of SN teams had been distinctive. In London SN teams are coterminous to

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<sup>6</sup> Home Office (June 2006) *Neighbourhood Policing – Partnership Guide* London: Home Office

<sup>7</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2006). September Full Authority Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/mpa/2006/060928/07/>

existing political ward boundaries. Regardless of the geographical size of a ward or its crime and ASB needs, each ward has a dedicated SN team<sup>8</sup>.

The rationale for adopting this approach was outlined in the original business case for SNs and has been referred to in a number of MPA committee papers such as the one listed below<sup>9</sup>. In 2008 the MPS felt a deployment model based on wards would deliver a number of benefits, including:

- Local engagement and accountability;
- Coterminosity with LA structures and MPS borough command units; and
- Officer visibility.

However, in the same report the MPS also recognised a *'simple adherence to ward boundaries may be inappropriate ...'* and that... *'the community-ward based approach [the ward based approach] would be flexible enough to recognise and accommodate this.'*<sup>10</sup>

During the scrutiny consultation, police panel participants stated the adoption of the ward-based approach had been the most expedient way of ensuring a speedy roll out of SN teams.

A few police participants and community volunteers also felt the advent of SN teams had benefitted outer London boroughs in particular. In their opinion some outer London boroughs had historically been overlooked by the MPS because they were considered to be less complex and therefore with less need. The ward-based roll out of SN teams, therefore, had provided a consistent and equitable distribution of SN resources.

From the outset, the public and partners were informed each SN team would be permanently based in its own ward. Other than when extreme emergency situations occurred in other parts of the borough or London, SN officers and PCSOs would not be abstracted from their wards. There appears to be a contradiction between the MPS recognising a *'simple adherence to ward boundaries may be inappropriate ...'* and informing the public and partners that each SN team would be permanently based in its own ward.

Throughout the course of the evidence gathering, it became apparent that in some instances borough commanders had recognised it would be unhelpful to adhere to the ward-based approach. Police focus group participants told the MPA the variations to the ward-based approach had been introduced in order to better meet the needs of communities. As one senior MPS officer stated at a panel session:

*'We have borough commanders trying to do the right things by their communities, and have a very solid [SN] framework that can't move.'*

Police focus group participants provided examples of the informal changes:

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<sup>8</sup> The 624 wards in London are policed by 630 SN teams. The vast vast majority of the SN teams consist of one Sergeant, two PCs and three PCSOs (1-2-3). In 2007, 87 wards with over 14,000 residents were given an additional three PCSOs therefore becoming teams of 1-2-6.

<sup>9</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2008). June Co-ordination and Policing Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/x-cop/2008/080605/06/>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

- SN officers and PCSOs ‘loaned’ to other wards that required additional support;
- Officers from other Safer teams<sup>11</sup> – Safer Transport teams, Safer Town Centre teams etc – supporting SN teams where particular concerns had arisen;
- SN teams working across ward boundaries to ensure more comprehensive shift coverage.

Amongst the community volunteers there was also recognition that these informal arrangements were in place in their boroughs. At the joint CPEG<sup>12</sup>/SN Panel chair focus group, participants stated some wards shared SN officers when particular crime and ASB concerns needed to be addressed.

At the police panel sessions, the MPA were given further examples of how boroughs had modified ward teams to better suit local need, these included:

- The creation of a borough wide task force of SN PC and PCSOs to support SN teams with specific crime and ASB concerns;
- The reorganisation of neighbouring SN teams whose wards jointly covered a town centre area to ensure the teams were working to one Inspector;
- Utilising PCSOs from quieter wards to support town centre policing; and finally,
- Moving SN resources from less busy wards to busier wards.

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<sup>11</sup> Safer Neighbourhood policing includes Safer Town Centre teams, Safer Transport Teams; Safer Schools Teams and Safer Transport Hub Teams.

<sup>12</sup> Community & Police Engagement Groups (CPEGs) are the primary local groups for delivering the MPA/MPS community and police engagement and consultation programme. They provide the structure to enable local people to regularly consult with their local police, the police authority, key stakeholders in crime and disorder reduction, and each other about strategic policing. CPEGs are intended to be representative of the local population, and more particularly those groups that interact with the police in disproportionate numbers and their activities are not limited to committee work but include active community engagement in neighbourhoods and with local groups.

### ***London Borough of Enfield: an example of a locally agreed variation to the SN ward model***

In Enfield, in the early part of 2008, significant changes were made to the SN team structure to address a series of youth homicides. The youth homicides (none of which were connected, but all of which occurred over a short period of time) occurred in the south east corner of the borough, a hot spot for crime and ASB. The borough had also experienced longstanding concerns with gangs and group offending which were being addressed through a number of partnership tactics.

In partnership with the LA, Enfield Borough Command Unit considered how to respond to the particular needs of the south east corner of the borough. Alongside local operations to tackle gangs and group offending, an amendment of shift patterns was agreed to ensure SN teams were on patrol and available at times that there was most demand. It was also agreed SN resources would be realigned to better meet need.

Upper Edmonton and Edmonton Green each became wards of 1 – 4 - 8 officers. SN officers and PCSO from less demanding wards were extracted to work in these wards. In order to avoid any potential for displacement, the surrounding three wards were also enhanced with additional officers.

To retain the confidence of local people, Enfield police attended a number of public meetings to outline the changes and explain why they needed to take place. Residents were informed that each Enfield ward would continue to retain a dedicated SN presence. Residents living in the wards where extractions had been made were informed they would be provided with additional patrols from the Safer Parks and Safer Estates Team. Whilst some residents and councillors were displeased about the extractions, most understood the broader context and that the adjustments made to some wards would be beneficial for the whole borough.

In the long term, monthly monitoring of all Enfield wards by Enfield police found the extractions had had no detrimental impact. However in the hotspot wards, where the teams had been enhanced, there were significant reductions in crime and ASB. In Upper Edmonton, for example, Total Notifiable Offences<sup>13</sup> (TNOs) were reduced from 2384 offences in October 2007 – September 2008 to 2155 offences in October 2008 – September 2009, a reduction of 9.6%. Police panel participants informed the MPA that reductions such as these in Enfield's most challenging wards had not occurred before.

Finally, it should be noted the initial changes introduced to the SN ward structure in 2008 did not remain in place. However, the MPA were informed by Enfield police respondents that further changes have been made to the SN ward-based structure since 2008 in order to sustain and build on the significant reductions in crime and ASB.

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<sup>13</sup> Total Notifiable offences includes the following major crime categories: Violence against the person; Sexual offences; Robbery; Burglary; Theft & Handling (includes vehicle crime); Fraud & Forgery; Criminal Damage; Drugs and Other Notifiable Offences

When challenged about why these changes had occurred, the MPA were informed the current ward-based structure was too rigid. The rigidity of the current ward-based structure had also resulted in the introduction of multiple 'Safer' teams in some areas. One senior MPS officer stated:

*"We have been in a position where we have safer transport teams, safer neighbourhoods, safer schools, safer town centre teams, [this is] ok if you have money, and effectively we have overlaid some of these teams on top [of each other] to cover some of the inefficiencies of the model itself..."*

Whilst these informal variations may have been introduced to address the rigidity of the ward based structure, it is important to keep in mind that at the centre there was always recognition that in order to deliver effective neighbourhood policing, a flexible approach would need to be adopted where necessary. Therefore the informal SN variations, rather than deviating from the mainstream approach, were required to ensure local needs continued to be met.

### **Role of SN teams**

The MPA asked police participants to outline how they saw the role of SN teams. As a prompt, the three key requirements for SN policing<sup>14</sup> as laid out during the implementation phase, were shared with police participants:

1. The consistent presence of dedicated Safer Neighbourhood teams (SNTs) capable of working with the community to establish and maintain control - to be visible, accessible, skilled, knowledgeable and familiar to the community.
2. Intelligence-led identification of community concerns – prompt, effective, targeted action against those concerns.
3. Joint action and problem solving with the community and other local partners to improve the local environment and quality of life within the community.

In considering the above requirements, some police focus group participants stated that whilst they agreed with the above requirements, the remit of SN teams had expanded over the past few years.

Increasingly SN teams were being required to deal with arrest inquiries, TNOs and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) calls. Some stated SN teams had to '*pick up*' the workload of over-stretched response teams. The MPA were also told by police focus group participants that SN teams were often expected to '*fill in*' due to a lack of resilience in some other public sector agencies. Although they recognised it was essential to avoid silo working, these additional requirements distracted SN teams from their core tasks of reassurance, local

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<sup>14</sup> Hobson, K., 2009. *Three Years On – The Delivery of Safer Neighbourhoods Since the Roll-Out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams*. London: Metropolitan Police Service

The National Reassurance Policing Programme evaluation of the eight force areas which took part in the reassurance policing pilots, found that there were three key activities for successful neighbourhood policing. These three key activities have been slightly adapted and adopted by the MPS as the three key requirements for SN policing.

engagement and problem solving. As one stated, *'reassurance is just as important as crime-fighting.'* However some officers and PCSOs felt SN teams had a key role in the delivery of TNO reduction. They suggested all officers needed to be proactive and should avoid working to a prescribed rigid remit.

Some PC and PCSO focus group participants stated the theoretical roles and responsibilities of SN teams were very different from what they had actually experienced working in SN teams. They felt the expansion of the SN team role had resulted in them spending less time with the public and more time responding to calls.

At the SN Inspectors, PC and PCSO focus groups, concerns were expressed about the relationship between SN teams and other policing teams. Some stated response officers did not understand the role of SN teams, *'they think you do nothing.'* One officer suggested that:

*'SN Inspectors have a responsibility to sell SN teams .... the Leadership Academy should be used to sell the value of SN policing.'*

Others stated officers who had not worked with SN teams were unaware that SN teams, and in particular PCSOs, were a valuable source of local information and intelligence. Participants stated that even when available, response officers did not use SN intelligence to inform their work.

One participant was concerned that all crime and ASB incidents that occurred in a ward, regardless of their nature or severity, were seen to be the responsibility of the SN team. However, many other focus group participants felt it was a reasonable expectation that SN teams should be fully responsible for and coordinate responses to all crime and ASB incidents in their wards.

### ***Role of SN PCSOs and SN sergeants***

A number of comments were made about the role of PCSOs and Sergeants.

The MPA were told by police and community participants, that due to their specific role, PCSOs have the opportunity to develop sustained engagement with communities and build an in-depth knowledge of the areas they patrol. Community volunteers stated PCSOs were easy to converse with. However, it was suggested by some PC and PCSO focus group participants that this was only because the public were aware PCSOs did not have the powers of warranted officers. Their implication being that the public were only frank with PCSOs because they believed PCSOs would be unable to act on any information given to them.

Police panel participants were extremely positive about PCSOs. As one stated, PCSOs were *'good at engaging with the public, were a visible presence and an invaluable tool for intelligence gathering.'* They recognised the public had initially had reservations about PCSOs and the media mockery about plastic police officers had not helped. The MPA were told public perceptions of PCSOs had also been influenced by how they were used by

individual police forces. However, an increased understanding of their role had resulted in the public valuing and championing PCSOs.

Police panel participants suggested the introduction of PCSOs has provided the police with additional capability. One said PCSOs had provided *'breathing space'* for police officers who otherwise would have been abstracted from their core tasks.

There was some discussion by participants about whether the public recognised the difference between PCs and PCSOs. Some of the PCSOs who took part in the focus group were adamant that the public and in particular offenders and young people were aware of the difference and exploited it. However, senior MPS officers who took part in the panel sessions concluded the public did not perceive any difference. They suggested that regardless of role, most Londoners simply required a uniformed presence in their communities.

There was also a great deal of commentary about SN Sergeants. Whilst much of this focused on how they could be used more efficiently and effectively in the future (see Chapter Two) their key role in SN teams was championed repeatedly. Many police and community consultees said Sergeants were crucial to delegating and engaging with partners and for taking a lead responsibility for crime and ASB concerns in their wards.

## Conclusion

**In considering the three objectives of the scrutiny (see page 6) alongside the feedback from consultees it can be concluded that:**

- **The SN team remit has expanded since the implementation of SN policing. Participants did not comment on whether the ward structure has aided the delivery of the remit, it was clear the MPS had to reinstate what they require of ward-based SN teams;**
- **SN team allocations are considered in detail in the next chapter of this report. However it is worth noting that the majority of police and community participants spoke positively about the contribution made by SN PCSOs;**
- **A majority of the participants felt the ward based structure was restrictive in some instances. As a result boroughs had introduced informal variations in order to better meet local need. These variations were to be expected. At the implementation stage it was felt the ward structure was the most effective way of delivering SN but it was also recognised that *'simple adherence to ward boundaries may be inappropriate'*<sup>15</sup> and that the approach adopted by the MPS *'would be flexible enough to recognise and accommodate this.'*<sup>16</sup>**

<sup>15</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2008). June Co-ordination and Policing Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/x-cop/2008/080605/06/>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid



## CHAPTER TWO: PARTICIPANTS VIEW ON HOW SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS SHOULD DEVELOP.

This chapter focuses on what participants require of SNs. Findings have been broken down under the following headings:

- Agreed assumptions
- Role of SN teams
- Role of SN Sergeants and SN PCSOs
- The ward-based one size fits all approach

### ***Agreed assumptions***

The MPA consultation highlighted a number of assumptions. Consultees suggested these should inform any proposed changes to SN policing.

1. The SN programme is a *'Met success story'* and has provided the MPS with *'a link back to the community'*. Any changes that are made to the SN model should not be driven by a need to *'reinvent'* but should be about improving local SN delivery. Police participants were not seeking a wholesale change to SN policing but an opportunity to make adjustments where required. As one Borough Commander said:

*'The MPS should build on the success of SN teams to date, not shake them up and start again.'*

2. All planned changes have to be clearly communicated/explained and justified to the public as it is imperative the reassurance and the confidence of Londoners is maintained.
3. All planned changes have to have the support and cooperation of LA partners.
4. Every ward in every London borough needs a SN presence - a mix of local officers, PCs and PCSOs, who have local knowledge.
5. Regardless of any adjustments that are made to the SN ward-based approach, the key focus of SN teams should remain on engaging with local communities and acting on locally agreed priorities.

As stated earlier, a review of SN policing was inevitable. The MPA and MPS had to ensure SN policing was fit for purpose and was continuing to meet the needs of partners and the public. This point was reiterated at various public meetings by the Commissioner and the Chair of the Police Authority.

- The Commissioner stated at the October 2010 London Assembly plenary that following the introduction of SN teams in the Capital seven years ago it was *'right'* to look at the SN policing model. He said the MPS need *'...to make sure that what we have currently got, fits the needs and desires of the public of London.'*<sup>17</sup> He continued,

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<sup>17</sup>London Assembly, 2010. October *London Assembly Plenary* (online), London: London Assembly. Available at <http://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=3650&T=9>

*‘there are people in Local Authorities who have been saying to us, “This model doesn’t work for us anymore in the same way it once did... we would like to see a better recognition of neighbourhoods of postal wards.”’<sup>18</sup> The needs of LA partners could not be overlooked.*

- At the October 2010 Full Authority meeting, the Chair of the MPA stated, *‘we have had requests from Local Authorities who are looking at their own distribution of resources to say, “You cannot sit on something static forever. We should be constantly examining whether we can do this better.”’<sup>19</sup>*

The majority of the police participants were also aware that a review had been inevitable. One said:

*‘It is assumed that the current SN model is “set in stone” however it is not. The current model was always intended to be reviewed.’*

This comment refers back to the early days of the SN implementation. The previous Commissioner Sir Ian Blair’s update at the March 2006 Full Authority committee meeting made it clear a SN review at some point in the future was very likely.

*‘At this stage of development the 624 local authority wards are being used as the basis for defining neighbourhoods. In due course this will be amended in line with clearly defined neighbourhoods. An example is the Crystal Palace SN team which serves one neighbourhood but sits across four borough boundaries.’<sup>20</sup>*

### **Role of SN teams**

A key concern amongst police focus group participants was the lack of clarity regarding the SN team remit. As stated earlier in the report, many participants felt there had been considerable mission creep and SN teams were being asked to focus on issues that fell outside the original SN scope<sup>21</sup>. In order to address this concern, police focus group participants requested the MPS had to ensure SN teams were working to the agreed SN scope. The MPS also had to ensure SN teams had the capacity to focus on this scope.

Based on the feedback from consultees, the MPS must keep in mind the benefits of SN policing and the positive impact their introduction has had to how Londoners perceive local policing. The MPS must also ensure the original intention of neighbourhood policing as outlined by the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP)<sup>22</sup> is not lost.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2010). October Full Authority Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/downloads/committees/mpa/101028-transcript.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2006). March Full Authority Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/mpa/2006/060330/06/>

<sup>21</sup> Hobson, K., 2009. *Three Years On – The Delivery of Safer Neighbourhoods Since the Roll-Out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams*. London: Metropolitan Police Service

<sup>22</sup> The Reassurance Policing Model was developed by the Home Office in 2003. The model aimed to increase reassurance through local presence, reduce fear of crime and promote crime reduction through problem solving. A NRPP pilot was subsequently funded by the Home Office from 2003 – 2006. The MPS response to NRPP was the development of SNs.

In looking back at the NRPP, it is important to keep in mind that neighbourhood policing teams were introduced to provide reassurance and to reduce crime and disorder by working with the public and partners on locally agreed priorities. SN teams were never meant to be a 'soft alternative'. As the Commissioner stated at the London Assembly plenary:

*'These are the people [SN teams] who have been closing crack houses. These are the hard edge of policing. The mistake has been, in the past, seeing neighbourhood policing as some soft alternative to delivering what is required by the public.'*<sup>23</sup>

However, throughout the scrutiny, some participants, both police and community, primarily focused on the reassurance role of SN teams. However, from the outset the desired outcomes of the Safer Neighbourhoods Programme were crime reduction and reassurance:

- Reduce crime
- Reduce anti-social disorder
- Reduce worry about crime
- Improve public satisfaction<sup>24</sup>

A number of police participants suggested the MPS needed to revisit the balance between reassurance and crime reduction. Whilst the MPS had to retain a SN presence in every ward and continue to build on reassurance, they also needed to acknowledge wards had varying needs and therefore required varying approaches. Police participants suggested some wards required a particular focus on crime reduction whilst others required a focus on visibility and reassurance. Therefore the right balance of engagement versus crime reduction for every ward needed to be considered by the MPS. A few police participants went on to suggest every PC and PCSO, regardless of their role, should be focused on crime reduction and increasing confidence. Confidence was not the sole domain of SN officers and PCSOs and crime reduction was not the sole responsibility of non SN officers and PCSOs.

Whilst SN teams have a stronger reassurance role than response teams they also have a crime reduction role. The Reassurance Policing Programme which resulted in the development of the NRPP linked reducing crime and disorder with increasing public reassurance.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, whilst SN teams working in low crime and low confidence areas may need to have a particular focus on reassurance and visibility, all SN teams regardless of their location have a responsibility to reduce crime and improve reassurance.

**The crime and disorder remit of SN teams must be better promoted by the MPS.**

**The SN team scope must continue to cover the three key requirements for SN policing and meet with the original objectives of the NRPP.**

<sup>23</sup> London Assembly, 2010. October *London Assembly Plenary* (online), London: London Assembly. Available at <http://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=3650&T=9>

<sup>24</sup> Hobson, K., 2009. *Three Years On – The Delivery of Safer Neighbourhoods Since the Roll-Out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams*. London: Metropolitan Police Service

<sup>25</sup> Milie, A. Herrington, V. (n.d) *Reassurance Policing in Practice: Views from the Shop Floor* Wolverhampton: University of Wolverhampton.

At all the police focus group sessions the MPA were told that each Borough Commander should have the autonomy and discretion to determine how the SN resources could be used in his/her borough to better meet demand and need.

*'The police should have more authority at a local level, together with the support of local people, to decide how policing should operate in the borough.'*

However a couple of participants stated that autonomy can also have negative consequences. It can result in territoriality rather than corporacy. One Borough Commander said that when Borough Commanders and senior officers moved on, innovative changes which were markedly different from the existing London wide status quo were unlikely to be continued under the new senior officers.

Whilst many of the police participants emphasised a need for local decision making and flexibility in the delivery of SN policing, they also recognised that boroughs needed to be provided with guidelines and parameters for SN delivery. They suggested the MPS should provide direction in regards to a minimum level of SN provision for every ward/borough. This would help to maintain the confidence of the communities and reassurance in SN policing. It would also help with ensuring continuity when borough commanders and senior SN leads moved on to other boroughs or new roles.

**Local SN teams must have clear guidelines and parameters for SN delivery.**

A number of police panel participants spoke about community engagement in relation to SN policing. They suggested SN teams must have a more effective public communication strategy. They said residents needed to have a better understanding of what SN teams hoped to achieve from their community police engagement. A better understanding would result in an increased take up of community police engagement opportunities.

Police panel participants stated communication materials needed to be accessible and provided in a variety of formats in order to reach a range of different audiences. Accessible and appropriate information can often be just as effective as direct contact. One police panel participants told the MPA that:

- Information can be used to reach everybody, especially those Londoners who do not contact the police;
- Information can have a significant positive impact on confidence in the police;
- The work of the SRAU has found that information can often be most effective where it is most needed. Victims of violent crime in high crime areas and the least confident often want more information about local problems and local policing.<sup>26</sup>

The importance of good internal and external communication/information, especially during a period of planned or proposed changes, was highlighted by the majority of the participants. Many police participants stated the public would understand the need for

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<sup>26</sup> Betsy Stanko, October 2010. *Policing for the People: influencing policing through the public's voice.* [presentation] Metropolitan Police Service: Strategy Research and Analysis Unit

change if they were provided with clear information about why these changes were necessary and what benefits the changes could bring for them. However, there was recognition that understanding did not necessarily equate with acceptance.

The importance of communicating clearly and ensuring Londoners understand what is being communicated, was highlighted repeatedly at a series of MPA/GLA road shows. The road shows provide an opportunity for the public and partners to hear about the MPA/GLA strategic plans for crime and community safety. At every event, questions were asked about the current MPS SN review and SN teams. The events began with either the AC of TP or the then DAC of TP, restating the MPS continual commitment to the neighbourhood policing model. They also explained the purpose of the review was to improve SN delivery and not remove it. However, the majority of the questions focused on a fear of losing local SN teams. The lack of understanding about the remit of the review appeared to indicate that it is not enough to simply provide information to public and partners. The MPS (and the MPA) must also ensure information is understood and that Londoners and partners comprehend the rationale for why changes are being proposed.

Targeted and clear messages will not only win the consent, or at the very least understanding of the public, but are also necessary in securing political buy in. Throughout the evidence gathering, the importance of this was highlighted. The MPA were informed by a police participant that in one borough, officers were faced with opposition by councillors when SN officers and PCSOs were temporarily moved from some wards to provide night time coverage in other wards. Some resistance is inevitable. As one community volunteer stated, no Londoner would willingly offer up their SN teams for abstraction, temporary or permanent. However as the changes in Enfield highlighted, clear communication is vital to building an agreed understanding on why a change would be positive for the borough as a whole. Ongoing communication and monitoring of impact is also necessary. Enfield CPEG Management Board informed the MPA that whilst some ward panel representatives, residents and some councillors were displeased about the changes that were made in the borough, the ongoing contact with police during and after the changes had ensured that confidence ratings were not affected.

**The MPS must enhance their information and communication methods. Accessible and appropriate information provision supports engagement with Londoners and has a positive impact on confidence.**

Finally, community volunteers had a number of suggestions on how SN teams could improve their delivery:

- CPEG respondents were concerned SN teams were weighted down by too many priorities - local, borough and central. They said SN teams should only work to one set of priorities – those set by SN Panels.
- It was imperative community intelligence informed local policing priorities.
- SN PCSOs should focus on engagement and visibility, thereby allowing SN PCs to undertake warranted officer duties.
- SN teams need to use innovative community engagement methods, including new media in order to engage young people in local policing.

- The MPS should move away from centrally prescribed standardised community engagement structures. MPS community engagement work should add value. MPS community engagement work could ‘piggy back’ onto existing Local Authority/council run/third sector engagement activities.
- MPS community engagement work needed to demonstrate outcomes and not just outputs.

In summary feedback from community volunteers indicated that they required SN teams to focus on:

- Visibility;
- Dealing with locally agreed crime and disorder priorities;
- Understanding local crime and disorder concerns.

### ***Role of SN Sergeants and SN PCSOs***

A number of police participants suggested SN Sergeants should act as the ‘sheriffs’ or ‘caretakers’ of their wards with an overall *‘personal and passionate responsibility for their wards.’*

Police respondents also spoke about the supervisory role of Sergeants. They suggested the supervisory arrangements for SN teams should be reviewed. The average supervisory ratio for non SN Sergeants is 1-8, whilst for SN Sergeants it is 1 - 2, which a number of participants felt, was an ineffective use of resources. However, it should be noted that whilst the Sergeant PC ratio in SN teams is 1 - 2, SN Sergeants are also responsible for the three or six PCSOs in their SN teams.

Many police participants also felt it was unnecessary for every London ward to have its own dedicated SN Sergeant. It was suggested that in some parts of London SN Sergeants could be responsible for more than one SN team. However, participants also stated the needs of the ward and its geographical size would need to be taken into account before wards could be clustered and a SN Sergeant assigned to manage the cluster.

Police participants recognised a possible reduction of SN Sergeants could cause public concern. Community volunteers agreed. They said Sergeants were key to the successful delivery of SN policing and a removal of some Sergeants could result in a breakdown of communication in SN teams and failures in the tasking process. Some community volunteers said they felt ‘comforted’ knowing that a Sergeant was in charge.

*‘They hold the team together, know the area well and know how to problem solve.’*

Police panel participants recognised these concerns. They said the public often wanted to speak to officers of more senior rank.

However, some community volunteers agreed with police participants. Whilst they recognised SN teams had to be properly supervised, they did not think it was necessary for every SN team to have its own dedicated Sergeant.

This issue of supervision was explored in more detail at the police panel sessions. Panel participants questioned whether it was necessary for PCs to have constant supervision and speculated whether there was scope for SN PCs to brief themselves and the PCSOs in their teams. The MPA also heard that in other police forces, PCs had 'line management' responsibilities for the PCSOs in their teams. It was suggested the key issues were the credibility of the beat managers rather than what rank these managers were, and ensuring that there was a single point of accountability, regardless of rank, in every ward.

**In regards to the supervisory ratio of Sergeants the MPS should evidence the case for change and demonstrate they have consulted and agreed changes with local stakeholders.**

It should be noted that since the completion of the scrutiny consultation, the MPA has become aware there may be a reduction in SN Sergeants. This issue came up at the January 2011 MPA Full Authority committee meeting. In response to the following question asked by an Authority Member:

*'How many sergeants are there currently in SN teams across London and how many have you budgeted for in the next year?'*

The Acting Commissioner, Tim Godwin, responded:

*'There are currently 639 sergeant posts allocated to Safer Neighbourhood teams. There is an inbuilt vacancy factor of 5% across the pay line which is about churn and personnel changes and that is managed through the TP workforce planning to ensure we fill those posts expeditiously. The planning assumption for the Safer Neighbourhood teams ...is that there will be a reduction in supervision costs over the three-year budget period and this is being considered in the Safer Neighbourhood review...'*

In regards to how many Sergeants were budgeted for the next year, he stated:

*'The assumption we put into the budget is for a reduction of 100 in 2011/12 and in 2012/13 at the moment, which is yet to be finalised, the budgeting assumption is a reduction of a further 200...<sup>27</sup>'*

In moving forward, the MPS will need to demonstrate that their proposed reductions to SN Sergeants have adherence to the MPA scrutiny principles.

Some PCSO focus group participants felt it would be useful to promote the role of PCSOs so that the public had a better understanding of what they could expect of them. However, others feared that promoting PCSOs could be detrimental, as it *'would lead to [an] increased knowledge of the limited powers of the PCSO.'*

### ***The ward-based one size fits all approach***

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<sup>27</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority (2011). January Full Authority [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/downloads/committees/mpa/110127-transcript.pdf>

Throughout the scrutiny, one particular word was often used by participants - flexibility. Many of the police participants suggested the MPS had to have a more flexible approach to SN delivery. As stated earlier, this request rather than being contentious fits into the original business case for SN policing.

Many police participants felt the same SN team resources were not required in every ward. As one police participant stated:

*'Some low crime wards that have 1-2-6 coverage do not need it, while some smaller yet busier wards struggle with 1-2-3 coverage.'*

A number of police focus groups participants questioned the one size fits all approach to SN delivery. They speculated on whether every London ward needed to have the same level of resources. One officer stated, *'One size fits all? It doesn't! It's embarrassing.'* Another said, *'SN teams in busy town centres are always busy, however, teams located in suburban areas are not as busy as nothing happens.'* However, a majority of police focus group participants also urged that the current one size fits all approach should not be replaced with another one size fits all model.

Police focus group participants also suggested it was imperative to look at the mix within the teams and questioned whether it was necessary for every ward to have the same number of PCs and PCSOs. A few police participants recommended that the composition of each SN team should be dependent on the need of each ward. Therefore a high crime ward could be allocated more SN PCs in order to focus on crime reduction and enforcement. Less challenging wards could be allocated with more PCSOs to provide visibility, retain reassurance and build on engagement.

Advice outlined in the neighbourhood policing report produced for ACPO in 2006<sup>28</sup> corresponds with the observations made by these police consultees. It states, *'neighbourhood policing approaches should reflect local conditions and be flexible, responsive and adaptable. The size and composition of ...neighbourhood teams should vary according to local need and resources, but must be such that they support local priorities being dealt with effectively.'*

**In regards to the composition of SN teams the MPS should evidence the case for change and demonstrate they have consulted and agreed changes with local stakeholders.**

Police panel participants also felt flexibility was necessary. One stated:

*'If all wards were the same in terms of crime level and/or need, it would be acceptable to have the same level of service provision in each ward.'*

Some panel participants suggested an intelligence and assessment led approach to SN policing. The MPA were told the MPS one size fits all approach was not reflected across the country. Many other police forces had undertaken area assessments before implementing

<sup>28</sup> National Centre for Policing Excellence, 2006, *Practice advice on professionalising the business of neighbourhood policing*, Bedfordshire: Oppline



neighbourhood policing in order to determine where and how teams would be deployed. However, there was also recognition that having a one size fits all approach to neighbourhood policing had prevented a 'postcode lottery.'

There was some discussion at the October 2010 MPA Full Authority meeting about the one size fits all approach. One MPA member stated:

*'The principle behind SN teams was that this would be seen, in the spirit of fairness, as providing an equal resources in every part of London and within every part of every borough'<sup>29</sup>.*

In response, the Commissioner stated:

*'It is a real debate that we have to have, and the MPA has to have, what is the fair distribution of assets? What is the fair way forward? And can we maintain reassurance whilst doing even better against local crimes?'<sup>30</sup>,*

During this scrutiny and the previous SN scoping study there was a great deal of discussion about what was considered a fair distribution of SN assets. During the scrutiny two differing viewpoints emerged.

- 1) A fair distribution of SN assets was one that provided an equal allocation of resources across all 624 wards;
- 2) A fair distribution of SN assets was one that took into account the needs of each individual ward, its population and geographical size, and allocated resources accordingly.

However, despite the differing viewpoints there was consensus amongst the majority of police and community participants about two key issues:

1. The allocation of SN resources in every London borough had to be agreed locally and in partnership with local people and partners.
2. Every London ward needed a dedicated SN presence.

Community volunteers provided more nuanced responses regarding the one size fits all approach to SN policing. Whilst some said they would be unhappy/reluctant to see changes to their SN teams, they had suggestions on how SN policing could be enhanced in their boroughs. They suggested it was just as essential to have consistency and continuity in SN teams as well as locally agreed levels of SN resources for each ward. One summed it up well saying that, 'communities often built up good relationships with their SN teams and ...notice when extractions occur or officers move on.'

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<sup>29</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2010). October Full Authority Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/downloads/committees/mpa/101028-transcript.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2010). October Full Authority Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/downloads/committees/mpa/101028-transcript.pdf>

Whilst participants, including some community volunteers, speculated about the ward-based approach, the main bone of contention was not that SN teams were coterminous to political ward boundaries but that an equal level of resources had been given to every ward. Very few participants suggested that the MPS needed to introduce a wholesale change from a ward structure to area or neighbourhood specific one. Indeed, the importance of retaining a SN *'footprint'* or presence in every London ward was highlighted by many police participants and all community volunteers. However, many participants also suggested the SN presence for every ward could not be a one size fits all approach and had to be devised with the size and need of each ward in mind. Their feedback echoes the ACPO report (2006) referred to earlier.

A SN presence in every ward is not only essential in maintaining Londoners confidence in SN policing but will also help to sustain the relationships that have developed between SN teams and local people. Each ward must have its own dedicated named individuals who have local knowledge and intelligence. This is vital to building and sustaining community engagement with residents and also helps to support the problem solving process and partnership working.

Whilst no wholesale change to the ward approach was suggested by participants, one of the perceived difficulties with the current SN ward structure was that Londoners did not necessarily identify the areas/communities/neighbourhoods<sup>31</sup> they lived in by the political ward structure. As one officer in a focus group put it, *'Londoners don't know what ward they are in, and criminals don't either!'* Extensive SN research undertaken by the SRAU over the last seven years has also found that *'local peoples ...idea of neighbourhoods encompass a wider geographical area, unlike the police and local services.'*<sup>32</sup>

The ward-based roll out, whilst providing a comprehensive coverage, had also created anomalies. In some instances town centres fall across multiple ward boundaries, resulting in a number of SN policing teams having a shared responsibility for the town centre.

This issue was raised at the 28 October 2010 meeting of the MPA Full Authority and at the London Assembly plenary meeting on the 10 November 2010. At the plenary session one London Assembly member stated that in some parts of London ward boundaries can result in one high street becoming the responsibility of two SN teams. This has resulted in SN teams setting up informal working relationships to ensure there is a joined up response. In reply to this comment, the Commissioner stated that anomalies such as this were the reason why the MPS SN review was necessary.

The rigidity of the ward structure and the potential problems that this rigidity can cause was also highlighted at the 28 October 2010 Full Authority meeting. The then Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) for TP stated, *'Where five wards come together in a town centre there can be confusion about who is responsible for specific issues.'*<sup>33</sup> In response, the Chair of the

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<sup>31</sup> Different participants used different terms to describe a locally defined recognised area. As there was little consensus on an agreed term, all the terms used by participants have been noted here for reference.

<sup>32</sup> Betsy Stanko, October 2010. *Policing for the People: influencing policing through the public's voice.* [presentation] Metropolitan Police Service: Strategy Research and Analysis Unit

<sup>33</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2010). October Full Authority Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/mpa/2006/060330/06/>

Police Authority stated *'there is an issue in some areas about what [SN] structure we have created.'* In some areas of London multiple 'Safer' teams are working alongside each other in the same geographical location. He said it was essential the MPA and MPS looked at: how these resources could be used more effectively; how teams were working together; and, whether it was feasible for one senior officer to have responsibility for all the various teams.

**Where multiple 'Safer' teams are working alongside each other, the following principles must apply:**

**Working together – all 'Safer' teams must be aware of each other's priorities and must work together where team priorities align;**

**Governance – all 'Safer' teams should be tasked by and be accountable to one senior officer;**

**Coordination – one team should have overall responsibility for coordinating activities in the ward/area.**

Some police focus groups participants suggested 'places' or 'neighbourhoods' were preferable to the ward structure as they were easier for people to identify with. In pursuing what they meant by place or neighbourhoods, examples were given of LA which provided services based on how residents defined their local areas. In one borough, health partners had explored how far local people were willing to travel to access health services and had used this information to define six natural areas in the borough. In another borough, the LA had divided the borough into eight specific community areas and delivered their services accordingly.

A number of police panel participants also speculated on whether there was a more productive way of defining areas/communities/neighbourhoods than the current ward model. As part of the MPS SN review consultation, Borough Commanders were asked to talk to residents about *'natural neighbourhoods'*<sup>34</sup>. Residents were shown maps and asked to identify the area they saw as being part of their neighbourhood. The primary purpose for asking Londoners to identify their natural neighbourhoods was to improve how SN teams engage with residents. However, police participants suggested this activity will also have a secondary benefit, as it would provide the MPS with a better understanding of how SN policing could be delivered.

**In regards to variations to the ward structure the MPS should evidence the case for change and demonstrate they have consulted and agreed changes with local stakeholders.**

A few police participants suggested clustering or *'brigading'* smaller or quieter wards together under one Sergeant. It was suggested that brigaded wards could be supported by the introduction of borough wide problem solving teams. This approach has been adopted in Enfield. A borough wide SN tasking team is available to support SN teams where necessary.

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<sup>34</sup> The natural neighbourhoods idea is based on a recognition that people often see their neighbourhood boundaries very differently to police and council boundaries.

Police participants suggested that Londoners would accept clustering as it would result in an enhanced SN provision. Residents would be provided with a larger SN team and receive more comprehensive coverage. However some community participants expressed concerns that clustering could lead to a loss of local knowledge and a recognisable police officer.

**In regards to clustering or brigading of wards the MPS should evidence the case for change and demonstrate they have consulted and agreed changes with local stakeholders.**

## Conclusion

In considering the three objectives of the scrutiny (see page 6) alongside the feedback from consultees it can be concluded that:

- The MPS must ensure that SN teams are working to the three key requirements for SN policing. There appeared to be a mixed understanding amongst participants about the role of SN teams, with some participants appearing to simply focus on the reassurance aspect without acknowledging the key role SN teams play in crime reduction and problem solving. It is clear from the SN survey work undertaken by SRAU that SN policing has made a difference in confidence and how Londoners perceive their local police provision. Therefore whilst reassurance must remain a key aspect of the SN team remit, reassurance is also linked to reducing crime and disorder. Therefore the crime reduction role of SN teams should be better understood and promoted both internally and externally.
- Feedback from participants highlighted that the core issue was not whether the allocations of 1 – 2 – 3 and 1 - 2 – 6 helped to deliver the SN remit, but whether this level of resources was required in every ward. They also speculated whether it was appropriate to have a one size fits all approach to the composition of the teams. Whilst police and community participants recognised the need for a SN presence in every ward, police participants were keen for the MPS to explore an approach that took into account the needs of the ward, its population and geographical size.
- There was much debate about the ward based approach adopted by the MPS. However, it is important to recognise that the ward based approach is working in many London boroughs and this approach has resulted in an equitable distribution of SN resources. A wholesale revision would be unnecessary and excessive. Nevertheless where there are anomalies – such as town centres – it is equally important that SN teams along with partners and residents have the opportunity to explore whether there is a more effective approach than the ward-based one.

## CHAPTER THREE: ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS POLICING

Whilst the focus of the SN scrutiny was to consider whether the ward-based model is still the best method of delivering SN policing in the Capital, participants also used the consultation sessions as an opportunity to speak about related issues. The following chapter looks at:

- SN panels
- Role of partners in SN delivery
- Centralism versus Localism
- Support provided by the central SN unit

### ***SN panels***

During the police focus group sessions the MPA were informed that whilst it was essential for SN teams to engage with local residents they should have the flexibility to determine the most effective engagement methods to use. They stated that monthly or bi monthly panel meetings were not suitable for all residents. They explained that ward panels did not necessarily reflect the local population and often consisted of the ‘usual suspects.’ Police participants said it was of concern that they did not hear from those they most needed to hear from. However police panel participants and some community volunteers recognised Londoners are only likely to engage with the police when they needed to. They also said many Londoners only require information about what is being done in their areas and may not be interested in taking part in community police engagement. Therefore the ‘usual suspects’, who are often much criticised by agencies that undertake community engagement are crucial, as they are willing to take part in long term community police engagement.

Some of the Borough Commanders who took part in the focus group sessions stated it would be more useful to piggyback onto existing community engagement structures. They suggested that as Residents and Tenant Associations and council meetings in their boroughs attracted more diverse groups, and SN teams should utilise these existing structures.

Police focus groups participants also spoke about young people and how they could be more effectively involved in local policing. They recognised young people preferred to engage on the internet and through social networking sites and suggested the MPS should make better use of new media. However, there was also recognition that the most effective engagement occurs through informal day to day contact. It was felt the police should be ‘engaging with a purpose’ whether this is through formalised engagement methods or through informal street based face to face encounters. As one participant put it the ‘*public need to know what the police are doing and why.*’

There was also recognition amongst the police panel participants that a varied range of community engagement approaches were required to meet the diverse needs of Londoners. Communication and engagement needed to be tailored to meet the needs of any given

audience. Police participants stated a one size fits all approach to communication and information sharing did not work. They said it was difficult to engage with residents living in high crime areas. Research undertaken by the SRAU supports this assumption. They found that some people, for example, Londoners living in high crime areas and council housing, are more likely to see crime and disorder. However these groups are less likely to report to the police, will have lower levels of social cohesion and are more likely to take precautions to prevent victimisation, for examples carrying weapons.<sup>35</sup> The work of the SRAU has highlighted that information provision can be most effective when it is targeted at where it is most needed. This was also recognised by some police participants. They said the police needed to concentrate their communication and consultation on high crime areas.

Community volunteers also accepted it was often difficult to get particular sections of Londoners, such as the Black and Minority Ethnic communities involved in community police engagement opportunities. Their suggestion was that ward panels should be provided with demographic breakdowns of their wards so that SN teams could identify and then specifically recruit underrepresented groups.

A number of the police focus group participants stated SN panels needed clearer guidance on what was expected of them. They required terms of reference and good practice guides identifying examples of effective problem solving. Many participants made particular mention of the status of SN panel meetings, speculating on whether panel meetings should be open or closed. The consensus was that all SN panel meetings should be open to the public.

Concerns were also expressed about the role of councillors and LA partners on SN panels. Many police focus group participants stated it was imperative LA partners were involved in panels. Often issues that are prioritised by SN panel are not the responsibility of the police and LA involvement in SN panels would ensure that non police matters could be redirected to the relevant LA partners.

Community volunteers were also particularly vocal about the role of councillors and LA partners on SN panels. They agreed it was essential the role of the councillor on SN panels was defined as, in their experience, councillors were often unhappy about decisions made by SN panels. They suggested councillors should only be there to advise, not to dictate their own personal agenda or use the meetings for constituency business.

Community volunteers agreed with police participants that it was imperative LA partners were represented on SN Panels. They needed to be present to pick up and address non police related matters. They suggested SN panel membership should also include non statutory agencies and in particular those working with young people, such as youth workers.

Many of the police focus group participants expressed concerns about the SN panel priority setting process. They stated SN panels prioritised uncritical low impact concerns. Some

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<sup>35</sup> Betsy Stanko, October 2010. *Policing for the People: influencing policing through the public's voice*. [presentation] Metropolitan Police Service: Strategy Research and Analysis Unit

police focus groups participants also expressed concerns about Sergeants who directed their ward panels to prioritise issues they were personally interested in.

Whilst it was accepted that SN teams could not dictate the priority setting process, PCs and PCSOs were puzzled that SN panels did not set priorities based on need. However, one Borough Commander recognised SN panels could *'only be as good as the briefing packs and information they received.'* This issue was picked up in the police panel sessions. Panel participants said that both SN panels and CPEGs needed access to the right information so that they were able to see the 'bigger picture.' They were confident that community volunteers would identify emerging issues if they were supplied with the data and contextual information. One police panel respondent referred to a recent ward panel meeting where the ward priorities had not included burglary, which was a particular problem in that ward at that time. He met with the SN panel chairs, provided them with data and contextual information and as a result burglary was included as a ward priority.

However, whilst community volunteers agreed with police participants that there was a need to provide SN panels with good quality consistent information, they were equally adamant that the priority setting process should remain the responsibility of the SN panel and should not be influenced or hijacked by local SN teams, partner agencies or councillors. They also expressed concerns that borough and central targets were influencing the ward priority setting process.

Police focus group participants suggested the MPS needed to revisit all of its engagement mechanisms. They felt that the community police engagement landscape was cluttered and that it would be useful to streamline the various community groups and panels.

Community volunteer's considerations regarding community engagement are summarised below:

- The expectations of SN panel members have changed in the last seven years. SN panels have an increasing sense of 'ownership' and expect SN officers and PCSOs to listen to their concerns and answer their questions.
- SN panels felt they had the ability to see the broader picture. An opinion which was not shared by the police participants.
- Not all existing police engagement methods are successful or effective. Members of the Enfield CPEG Management Board – which includes SN panel chairs from across the borough – said mobile police units, were a waste of resources as they were not utilised by the wider public.
- Some CPEG respondents suggested SN teams could use existing community groups and questioned the need for ward panels.
- CPEG respondents felt there needed to be better links between SN teams, SN Panels and CPEGs. Some CPEG respondents felt certain crime and policing issues could not be dealt with at a ward level and CPEGs were better placed to raise issues directly with Borough Commanders and other senior officers. Other CPEG respondents stated that whilst the MPA required CPEGs to involve SN panels in their community engagement work; this was not always possible as some SN panel chairs were not interested at working at this level.



A number of suggestions were made by community volunteers about how the MPS could improve community police engagement:

- SN panels and SN teams should make better use of KIN survey data.
- SN teams should not simply rely on the public coming to them but should also visit Londoners in their own environments. They suggested SN officers and PCSOs visit crèches, businesses and schools in partnership with Safer Schools Officers.
- Local schools should be involved in the priority setting process. Young people could identify their policing priorities as part of the Personal Health and Social Education lessons. Having received young peoples priorities, SN teams should routinely inform schools how the information young people have provided has been used to make their local areas safer.
- SN panel meetings should be open to the public.
- SN panels needed to be reflective of the ward's communities.
- In identifying members for SN panels, individuals with the most appropriate skills should be sought or training should be provided so all SN panels are able to effectively deliver to the agreed terms of reference.
- SN panel chairs should be effectively supported by SN teams so that 'single issue' or non inclusive members do not dominate panel meetings.

### ***Role of partners in SN delivery***

The earlier MPA scoping study into SN primarily focused on what partners required of SN policing. See <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/downloads/committees/sop/100701-09-appendix01.pdf> Partnership working was not therefore a primary focus of the scrutiny. However, a few comments were made by police participants which have been summarised below:

- Police focus group respondents had mixed views about partnership working. Some felt that partnership working had been successful and had tackled issues that are not usually prioritised. Others felt that not all partners were proactive and according to one SN Inspector, partnership working in his experience meant that, '*the police would do it.*' It was generally felt that the police often take on partnership responsibilities because they '*move quickly*'.
- Police panel participants however, tended to be more positive about partnership working. They stated partnership working was crucial to effective crime reduction.
- Many police focus group participants stated that partners did not work at a ward level like SN teams. However, no comments were made about what impact this had.
- One borough commander stated in his opinion, it had been an error to implement SN policing without the buy in of local partners as the success of the neighbourhood policing approach is reliant on a tripartite relationship between the police, partners and the public.
- A wealth of examples was given of effective partnership working. This included examples of LA funding PCs, PCSOs, Park Teams, Estate Teams and providing administrative support. A number of Borough Commanders were concerned about the impact of Comprehensive Spending Review on LA budgets and whether grants

for jointly funded police officers and PCSOs etc would be cut. It was also suggested the budget cuts could result in SN policing becoming increasingly reliant on partnership working and the participation of local people.

- It was suggested more could be done to ensure a joined up approach from the police and LA partners. One suggestion was that police meetings could be aligned with LA meetings.
- Police panel participants stated that whilst the police were becoming increasingly effective at identifying priorities, they needed to improve problem solving, and intelligence and information sharing with partners.

### ***Centralism versus Localism***

A few comments were made by police participants about the tension between a centralised and a localised approach. Police focus group participants stated that whilst the coalition are focused on the 'Big Society', the MPS appeared to be centralising service provision. One borough commander said it would be useful to centralise some services, such as custody, but most police focus group respondents felt Borough Commanders should have the flexibility and discretion at a borough level regarding resource allocation and service delivery. However, it was highlighted at the police panel sessions that other police forces had centralised some functions, such as child abuse and domestic violence, and this had resulted in an improved police response to these issues.

### ***Support provided by the central SN unit***

Participants used the scrutiny as an opportunity to outline what support they required from the central SN unit.

- The responsibilities of SN teams should be communicated widely, both internally and externally.
- The central SN unit should allow Borough Command Units to manage SN delivery based on local need. However, they should also devise guidelines/parameters/ground rules for minimum SN team delivery.
- A number of comments were made about the EPIC<sup>36</sup> process. Many police focus group participants felt EPIC was not a useful tool, one referred to it as '*meaningless.*' It was felt EPIC was time-consuming and therefore prevented SN officers and PCSOs from patrolling. '*SN team time would be better spent policing than submitting data for central monitoring.*' Some officers felt EPIC had not provided any benefits at a borough level. It was therefore suggested that SN teams should be measured against their priorities and on their problem solving.

It should be noted that EPIC is no longer being used by SN teams. SN teams have been informed a new performance measure is to be introduced. The new performance measure will consider outcomes rather than outputs.

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36 Enforcement, Prevention, Intelligence, and Communication or EPIC enables activities (outputs) undertaken by SN teams to be tracked to relevant outcome areas. Examples of the types of activity tracked by EPIC are: the number of pre-planned meetings held; public attendance at meetings; number of street briefings held; number of intelligence reports submitted; number of ASB letters sent; ASB home visits conducted; Acceptable Behaviour Contracts obtained; and arrests made.

Finally, individual suggestions on how SN policing could be improved included the following:

- The MPS needs to look at the Total Place concept in order to assess how services, including SN policing, could be better aligned with LA service provision;
- SN teams should work more closely with other policing teams and response officers, within, and where, appropriate across borough boundaries.
- Response officers should routinely forward information and intelligence to SN teams.
- A collective problem solving approach and an end to end response should be given to all victims and witnesses of crime. There should be a seamless exchange of information and intelligence from the initial investigation by non SN officers to the final follow up visits by SN officers or PCSOs.
- There are limited incentives for officers, who wish to progress their careers, to stay in SN teams and therefore the role of SN officers and PCSOs should be specialised.
- The borough commander role should also be specialised.
- There is a lack of a proper induction or handover for new officers joining SN teams. Officers joining SN teams may have a theoretical understanding of what SN policing will involve but they should also be provided with an induction to their wards.
- The bureaucracy and paperwork expected of SN teams should be reduced.
- Whilst there was some debate in panel sessions about the need to revisit the MPS Resource Allocation Formula (RAF), a couple of police participants suggested a focus on numbers was incorrect and that it would be more useful to consider how Borough Commanders utilise the officers they are provided through RAF. As one police participant stated, *'Talent and leadership are [just as] important, as well as numbers.'*

## **Conclusion**

**The issues discussed in this chapter are not directly relevant to the scope of the SN scrutiny. However, the mix of opinion in regards to SN panels indicates that it may be timely for the MPS to consider whether SN panels are fulfilling their remit. In moving forward, the MPS must ensure that their SN community engagement methods are flexible enough to meet the needs of the local area.**

## APPENDIX ONE: ALTERNATE VIEWS

In developing the terms of reference for the MPA scrutiny, the intention had been to build a consensus view on ways forward. However this has not been possible. Whilst all scrutiny panel members agree with the principles expounded in our recommendation, some of us<sup>37</sup> have alternative views. These are outlined below:

- We have differing views as to the necessity and advisability of making changes to the current SN ward-based structure.
- We do not want to see a drop in any SN team to below the minimum 1 – 2 - 3 model. Currently Safer Neighbourhood teams operate with a minimum 1-2-3 coverage, with additional resources in larger wards. We note that police participants in this scrutiny suggested that the '*MPS should provide direction in regards to a minimum level of SN provision for every ward/borough*'. They also recognised that this model had prevented a postcode lottery (p20).
- Community volunteers were not asked specifically about the minimum allocation of SN resource<sup>38</sup>.
- Throughout the scrutiny process there were differing views from police participants and others as to what should be the minimum allocation of SN resource in each ward, ranging from one named officer only to maintaining current allocations. We await MPS views on this issue when they report back to the MPA with their findings from their own review.
- We have not been persuaded by any evidence to date to suggest that the minimum allocation of 1-2-3 should be changed.
- Finally we have concerns about whether there will be adequate supervision of SN teams and monitoring of effectiveness if SN Sergeant numbers are drastically reduced.

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<sup>37</sup> Joanne McCartney, Jennette Arnold and John Biggs

<sup>38</sup> During their focus group session community volunteers were given four questions to consider. One of these questions which would have allowed for a debate on the minimum allocation of SN resources was as follows: '*Currently every ward in London receives the same Safer Neighbourhoods provision. If the MPS were to introduce Safer Neighbourhoods policing in London today, how do you think they should go about implementing the Safer Neighbourhoods initiative?*'

## APPENDIX TWO: DESK BASED RESEARCH

A desk based research exercise was undertaken during the scrutiny period. The purpose of this desk based research was twofold. Firstly it was used as an opportunity to gather information about why SN policing was introduced, its original remit and what impact if any it has had on policing in London. Secondly it was used as a benchmark to compare and contrast with what the MPA were learning throughout the scrutiny period.

There was a great deal of information gathered during the desk based research process. The only information that has been listed below is that which is primarily connected to the scrutiny objectives. The following subjects are covered:

- What is purpose of Safer Neighbourhood policing?
- Why was Safer Neighbourhood policing (or neighbourhood policing) introduced?
- The positive impact of SN policing in the Capital
- What is the role of SN teams?
- What is the role of Police Community Support Officers?
- What is the role of SN panels

### ***What is purpose of Safer Neighbourhood (or neighbourhood) policing?***

- There are three critical requirements to neighbourhood policing?
  1. To provide a consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams
  2. To undertake intelligence led identification and effective targeted action to community concerns
  3. To undertake joint action/problem solving with community and other local partners<sup>39</sup>
- SN policing is described as a *'truly local policing style: local people working with local police and partners...'*<sup>40</sup>
- It is also described as an *'organisational strategy ... to solve problems of crime and disorder, and improve neighbourhood conditions and feelings of security.'*<sup>41</sup>
- Finally, SN policing, is about *'delivering the right people, at the right places and in the right numbers, in order to create neighbourhoods that are safe and feel safe.'*<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> National Policing Improvement Agency (n.d) *Local Policing and Confidence* [online] London: Policing Policy and Practice Directorate/ National Policing Improvement Agency (n.d) Available at <http://cfnp.npia.police.uk/lrg/localpolicingandconfidence.pdf> (Accessed date September 2010)

<sup>40</sup> Metropolitan Police Service, 2009, *Safer Neighbourhoods frequently asked questions*. [online] Available at <http://www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods/faq.htm> (Accessed date September 2010)

<sup>41</sup> National Policing Improvement Agency (n.d) *Local Policing and Confidence* [online] London: Policing Policy and Practice Directorate/ National Policing Improvement Agency (n.d) Available at <http://cfnp.npia.police.uk/lrg/localpolicingandconfidence.pdf> (Accessed date September 2010)

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*

### ***Why was Safer Neighbourhood policing (or neighbourhood policing) introduced?***<sup>43</sup>

- Crime rates have been falling since the mid-1990s. However, there is a lag in perception with many people believing that crime is on the increase. This gap in perception has been dubbed the *reassurance gap*; in simple terms, if crime is going down, then the public need to be reassured that the police are doing their job. Concurrent to this was a growing recognition that a fear of crime was too high and public confidence in policing too low.
- Reassurance policing (RP) was seen as a means to address these concerns.
- According to the British Society of Criminology prior to the introduction of neighbourhood policing, there had been an increasing focus on volume crimes - such as domestic burglary and street crime. This emphasis on number counting resulted in community-oriented policing and lower level disorder/anti-social behaviour problems falling down the order of priority.
- British Society of Criminology suggests this may have done more harm than good to community relations and public confidence in policing and that the balance between a performance culture and community policing needed to be redressed.
- Whilst policy makers were growingly increased with this reassurance gap, there was also an increasing public awareness of lower level disorder. As a result the political agenda began to place a greater emphasis on tackling the new 'evil' of anti-social behaviour.
- In October 2003 the Home Office funded National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) was launched with pilot sites located in eight police force areas – including the MPS.
- The reassurance model used by the NRPP had the dual focus of providing public reassurance and reducing crime and disorder. For the NRPP, reducing crime and disorder and increasing public reassurance were intrinsically linked, the aim being to identify the crimes or disorders for an area that acted as key 'signals' detrimentally affecting the way the public viewed the area.
- The NRPP evaluation of the pilot areas highlighted three key activities for successful Neighbourhood Policing, namely:
  1. the consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams capable of working in the community to establish and maintain control;
  2. intelligence-led identification of community concerns with prompt, effective, targeted action against those concerns; and
  3. joint action and problem solving with the community and other local partners, improving the local environment and quality of life.These have been adapted slightly and adopted by the MPS to become the three key requirements for SN policing.

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<sup>43</sup> Millie, A. Herrington, V (n.d) *Reassurance Policing in Practice: Views from the Shop Floor*, British Society of Criminology, pp 1-16

### ***The positive impact of SN policing in the Capital***

Since the inception of the SN policing in London the MPS Strategy and Research Unit (SRAU) has undertaken research into the public perceptions and the impact of SN policing in the Capital. Some examples of impact are listed below:

- At the initial stages of the rollout, wards with SN teams were compared to non SN wards. The work undertaken by the SRAU found that irrespective of demographic differences and area effects, individuals living in SN wards were<sup>44</sup>:
- More satisfied with the way their neighbourhood was policed than those living in non SN team areas;
- More likely to feel that anti social behaviour had improved or stayed the same over the past two years than residents in non SN wards
- More likely to feel that crime levels had remained the same or gone down in the last two years
- More likely to feel informed about local policing activities and expect to see improvements in the way their neighbourhood was policed over the next year
- More likely to see a visible policing presence more often than non SN residents

A report on the SRAU seven year study into SN is in the process of being produced. In their presentation to the MPA scrutiny<sup>45</sup>, the MPA learnt that

- Londoners feel better informed about local policing. Data from the Public Attitude Survey indicates that the *'how well informed'* question rose from 40% in 2006 (the SN roll out was completed at the end of 2006) to 66% in 2010.
- The visibility measure has also increased. The *'how often do you see the police patrolling on foot or bicycle in your local area'* measure has increased from 41% of respondents in 2005/06 to 59% of respondents in 2010/11.
- Public confidence was at 66% in 2010. This has risen from 56% in 2006, indicating that more people believe the police are doing a *'good job'* in their local areas.

The SRAU conclude that their extensive SN research indicates that neighbourhood policing has made a difference to Londoners.

### ***What is the role of SN teams?***

SN teams are required to undertake the following<sup>46</sup>:

- To work in partnership with the community to prevent and reduce ASB, crime and the fear of crime, within their neighbourhood.

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<sup>44</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2006). September Full Authority Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/mpa/2006/060928/07/>

<sup>45</sup> Betsy Stanko, October 2010. *Policing for the People: influencing policing through the public's voice*. [presentation] Metropolitan Police Service: Strategy Research and Analysis Unit

<sup>46</sup> Metropolitan Police Service, 2006. *Work allocation for 'Safer Neighbourhood' Teams*. [in-house briefing] 31 March 2006. London: Metropolitan Police Service

- To develop an in depth knowledge of all sections of the community within their neighbourhood.
- To improve community reassurance and confidence in the MPS and their partners within their neighbourhood.
- To engage and activate communities to ensure with partners that local priorities are decided and auctioned.
- To employ a problem solving approach to effectively address problems within their neighbourhood/ward and engage the community and partners in the resolution.
- To gather intelligence, disrupt activities and arrest persons residing in their neighbourhoods/wards who are identified as Prolific and Priority Offenders.

### ***What is the role of Police Community Support Officers?<sup>47</sup>***

The role of the SN PCSO is to:

- maintain a visible presence in neighbourhoods;
  - provide a familiar and accessible police service;
  - identify local concerns through community engagement;
  - deal with minor acts of anti social behaviour and quality of life issues;
  - gather information and intelligence in support of the service objectives; and
  - provide a valuable supporting role to their police colleagues.
- According to a June 2005 MPA report, PCSOs have become a valuable asset in bringing policing issues closer to the community.

### ***What is the role of SN panels<sup>48</sup>***

- In order to ensure that the work of SN team is focused on resolving local people's crime and disorder concerns, each team needs to involve local people in the priority setting process.
- This involves setting up a SN panel. This panel should be made up of local people whose role is to assess the local concerns, identified through community engagement and analysis, and establish priorities for policing in the SN area. The panel will be expected to give direction and local advice to the SN teams, although the guidance recognises that some of the priorities identified will require partners to take a lead.
- The panel should be made up of local people who live and or work in the area or are involved in charitable work or business and have a close connection with the area.
- The guidance states that every effort should be made to ensure that people are recruited from all six diversity strands.
- The guidance states that the ideal size of the group should be no more than 12 people.

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<sup>47</sup> Metropolitan Police Authority, (2005). June Community Engagement Committee [online] London: Metropolitan Police Authority. Available at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/committees/x-ce/2005/050616/12/>

<sup>48</sup> Metropolitan Police Service, 2009. *Guidance on setting up and maintaining neighbourhood panels*. [in-house briefing] September 2009. London: Metropolitan Police Service



- The purpose of the neighbourhood panel is to agree a realistic and achievable course of action to address the issues raised by the community. The panel is expected to assess the information collected by the police and other sources and consider how to prioritise the community concerns. Three tasks for action should be agreed, with feedback being given at the next meeting.
- SN Panels are expected to follow the seven stage community engagement model:
  1. Research the local neighbourhood
  2. Engage with the local community
  3. Identify public preferences for action
  4. Investigate and analyse public preferences
  5. Identify Priorities for action
  6. Plan and act
  7. Review.

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