



Police Community Support Officers

Exit strategy.

1. Introduction.

1.1 The PCSO Project has now been running since September 2002. Progress so far is outlined in a separate evaluation report. There are a number of ongoing issues for the organisation which are highlighted by the imminent promotion of the Project Manager.

1.2 These are outlined below, and a number of recommendations are made in conclusion to ensure completion of each of these matters.

2. Current South Yorkshire Police position.

2.1 South Yorkshire Police is currently employing PCSOs at each District. By March 2004, we will have 63 posts, distributed as follows;

		Barnsley	Doncaster	Rotherham	Sheff Sth	Sheff Cent	Sheff Nth
Posts	Supervisors	4	1	1	1	1	1
	PCSOs	24	6	6	6	6	6
Actual	Supervisors	4	1	1	1	1	1
	PCSOs	22	6	5	6*	6	6

*Includes 2 part time staff leaving a partial vacancy.

2.1.1 Three vacancies remain unfilled. One vacancy exists due to the part time posts at Sheffield South, one to a candidate withdrawing and one which could not be filled with a suitable applicant. These will be addressed in due course (please see para 3.1 below).

2.2 The additional 3 Supervisors and 18 PCSO staff at Barnsley are funded through a £2.7m partnership agreement with Barnsley District Council which expires in March 2006. Extension of this funding is subject to successful evaluation.

2.3 Of the remainder, 14 staff are funded by the Home Office under Phase 1 of the PCSO pilot. This funding is on a decreasing incremental scale, and covers 75% of wage and on-costs for 2004/5 and 50% for 2005/6.

2.4 The final tranche of staff are seconded Traffic Wardens. Senior Command Team decided (on the basis of a report from the project manager and Supt Tony Thompson) in June 2003 to take advantage of the situation created by the decriminalisation of parking enforcement in the County. This gave the option of 20 PCSO posts being filled by existing staff. Their salaries are paid mainly from the existing Traffic Warden budget, but 50% of the difference between their band B salaries as Traffic Wardens and the band C salary as PCSOs is paid by the Home Office. This proportion is constant until March 2006.

2.5 All Home Office funding is to cease in April 2006. The 42 Home Office funded posts will continue to be paid for from monies currently allocated to Traffic Wardens. The Traffic Warden role will be fully decriminalised by April 2005 and this represents a prudent and timely opportunity to provide long-term certainty for the PCSO posts.

2.6 Each of the Districts has appointed a nominated line manager for their PCSO team. Other officers variously have daily responsibility for tasking and deployment, which takes place in line with NIM guidelines. The nominated roles/staff are;

Barnsley	LPT Inspectors	Insp Tim Innes and Insp Mark Spooner
Doncaster	Community Safety Insp	Insp Colin Lomas
Rotherham	Community Safety Insp	Insp Steve Lavin
Sheff South	Community Safety Insp	Insp Richard Dove
Sheff Central	Community Safety Insp	Insp Pat Casserly
Sheff North	Community Safety Insp	Insp Bob Pitt

2.7 The initial team format has been retained from the pilot in all cases. However, local factors may begin to place demands for fragmentation to provide dedicated staff in particular locations such as Edlington.

2.8 With the move to Districts, the Project is effectively at an end, and the Project Manager has now been promoted. This leaves a number of issues for the future which are outlined below.

3. Foundations for the future

3.1 Recruitment and training

3.1.1 A number of PCSOs join with or will develop plans to move on, and vacancies will arise on a regular basis. It is important that a system is in place to fill these swiftly to maintain the efficiency of the individual teams. However there are two major factors affecting this process.

3.1.2 Both selection and training need to be planned ahead of time to make the necessary staff available. This will require a considerable element of forward planning on the part of District Personnel managers. The next available training course could be run in January 2005. The long lead-in period to accommodate advertising, notice periods, security reference and medical checks means that feasibly a recruitment advert could be placed in September 2004 to fill any vacancies which arise in the meantime.

3.1.3 Firstly, the basic training is a 3 week course rather than the usual support staff induction of one day. In order to justify the abstraction of training staff at least 6 staff need to be trained at any one time. Plans are ongoing to mainstream PCSO training into the Training Centre timetable. At present, we have 3 trainers from Barnsley who have delivered or assisted with delivery of the 3 week course. Three of the District Training Officers have also delivered parts of a shorter course which was laid on for seconded Traffic Warden personnel.

It is debatable whether any of these staff would be available to train future courses. Performance Development Dept. are working on plans to mainstream the training by early 2005.

Recommendation; PDD continue to work towards mainstreaming PCSO and Supervisor training by January 2005.

3.1.4 Secondly, current staff were selected using a purpose-built assessment-centre type process (see para 3.1.5) mirroring the National Police Recruitment test. If fairness is to be applied, any further external staff should be selected using the same criteria. The process is labour-intensive and costly and again needs to be run for a number of candidates. One day would be a minimum bearing in mind the preparation required for role players and assessors. This would allow 6 or 7 candidates to be seen. The addition of a second panel of interviewers allows this to be doubled. We have seen pass rates of roughly 50% from the 4 selection processes we have run, giving a rough guide to a vacancy/candidate ratio. The need for economy of scale linked to the need for numbers of staff to be trained together means that it is not practicable for individual Districts to address staff shortfalls separately.

Recommendation: That vacancies are not advertised by individual Districts but rather on a biannual basis by HQ Personnel and Recruitment.

3.1.5 The recruitment process was written to address the need for PCSOs to confront people in potentially adversarial situations. The interactive scenarios feature aspects from the National Competency Framework role profile such as team-working, effective communication, confidence and intelligence-gathering. While the process has proved extremely robust, the scenarios have been widely used now, and their integrity may be doubtful. Consideration should be given to developing a pool of scenarios or obtaining Centrex permission to use old ones from the SEARCH process. This would have the added advantage of the significant validation process to which they have been subjected.

The same would apply to the identification test video, which will need changing regularly.

Probationer Training Dept would be the natural home for these developments.

Recommendation: That assessment centres continue to be the vehicle for selecting further PCSO staff.

Recommendation: An appropriate department is identified to take responsibility for updating necessary materials to support the assessment centre process.

3.2 Finance

3.2.1 Helen Haigh, Finance Officer for HQ Community Safety, will continue to oversee the Phase 1 and 2 Home Office funding until 2006 in line with current project strategy, at which time it will be absorbed into mainstream finances.

3.3 Future Powers

3.3.1 The detention power is still being evaluated by HMIC but it is expected that this will also be rolled out nationally in 2004. Training for this module will be provided locally by DTOs.

3.3.2 Fixed Penalty Notices for Disorder (FPNs) are due to be rolled out across the Force in April. CJAD are providing a distance learning package on the Intranet for all staff.

3.3.3 The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 is starting to come into force and contains provisions specifically aimed at PCSOs. It is important that these new powers are trained adequately. A package should be put together either as a self-study or as a training package for DTOs to pass on.

Recommendation; Performance Development Department should give consideration to provision of a suitable training package for ASBA powers.

3.4 Home Office Evaluation

3.4.1 A report covering all aspects of the first phase of the project has been submitted to the Home Office (March 2004).

3.4.2 Ongoing evaluation will be necessary for Phase 2. This falls within the remit of CDD who will be responsible for any future evaluation.

Recommendation; That CDD put in place measures to enable an evaluation of Phase 2 to be undertaken between Nov2004/Jan 2005.

3.5 Home Office Monitoring

3.5.1 A monthly monitoring form is required by the Home Office to inform the Reassurance unit of current numbers of PCSOs and the origin of their funding. HQ Personnel officers with access to ORACLE will take responsibility for this.

3.6 Project Clerk

3.6.1 Laura Canetti was successful in obtaining a full-time post in Fingerprint Dept and left at Xmas. The role was largely redundant and this will pose no difficulty to the Project.

3.7 Redundancy/redeployment

3.7.1 Funding for the original 14 posts from the Home Office ceases in April 2006. At this point the PCSO budget will be mainstreamed. There is no reason to suppose at this stage that there is any threat to the project which would result in termination. If this were to happen, HQ Personnel would deal with issues using appropriate processes.

3.8 Websites

3.8.1 Responsibility for updating the Force web site has been taken over by Dave Foster in CDD. The Supervisors Forum will review content of the PCSO portion of the site at frequent intervals and update it accordingly.

3.8.2 An Intranet site was set up during the initial phase, but this has been discontinued while the District roll-out was completed. The Supervisors' forum will also assess the need for, and content of, this site and liaise with PS Foster.

3.9 Equipment

3.9.1 All of the equipment that was paid for by the Home Office in the set-up phase has been divided between the six District teams.

3.9.2 A water cooler which was taken on a 2 year contract at Albion House has been taken over by Best Value, who will meet the ongoing costs.

4 Recommendations

	<u>Owner</u>
<u>Recommendation 1</u> ; PDD continue to work towards mainstreaming PCSO and Supervisor training by January 2005.	Performance Development
<u>Recommendation 2</u> ; That vacancies are not advertised by individual Districts but rather on a biannual basis by HQ Personnel and Recruitment.	HQ Personnel
<u>Recommendation 3</u> ; That assessment centres continue to be the vehicle for selecting further PCSO staff.	HQ Personnel
<u>Recommendation 4</u> ; An appropriate Dept. takes responsibility for updating necessary materials to support the assessment centre process.	HQ Personnel/Recruiting
<u>Recommendation 5</u> ; Consideration be given to provision of a suitable training package for ASBA powers.	CJAD Policy Unit
<u>Recommendation 6</u> ; That CDD put in place measures to enable an evaluation of Phase 2 to be undertaken between Nov2004/Jan 2005.	Corporate Development Dept

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