

The role of Neighbourhood Wardens in light of increased numbers of Police Community Support Officers

Number of new PCSOs

Since the introduction of Police Community Support Officers in 2002, the numbers of officers working in the Horsham District, and their locations, has changed considerably. From November 2019, 100 new PCSOs will be recruited for deployment across Sussex, with each of Horsham's 12 Electoral Divisions having a nominated PCSO as a point of contact.

Horsham Prevention Team will be increasing their PCSOs by six, taking their total number to 15. Whilst recruitment for the new PCSOs takes place, the current PCSOs will be required to cover more than one electoral area to allow those new staff to be trained. Additionally there will be three rural PCSOs based across West Sussex at each of the policing hubs with Adur, Worthing and Horsham's rural officer being based out of Horsham Police Station.

Recruitment will take place during the financial year, with the final intake completing training by Summer 2020. The model will be reviewed after the first six months and may be subject to change, based on demand and severity data.

Two key but differing roles

Whilst Neighbourhood Wardens and PCSOs have similar roles in terms of enforcement powers and community cohesion, there are a number of considerable differences which are important to note and can be seen on the reverse.

Fundamentally, however, it is important to state that Wardens are dedicated to the areas they serve and work to the priorities and shift patterns as agreed with the Parish Councils. Working in their Wards for each hour of their shift, Neighbourhood Wardens are able to get to know local residents and work closely with them on a number of issues including health and wellbeing and social inclusion, as well as deterring anti-social behaviour and crime. Wardens also help to set up local initiatives, attend key meetings and groups, and become features of the local community.

The PCSO role is broader by nature and whilst working to dedicated electoral areas means greater visible policing across the district, they will continue to form part of wider local prevention teams focussing on the most critical issues. Their focus will be on visible policing to prevent crime and disorder taking place, where it does occur ensuring a community based problem-solving approach, and engaging with communities to help people feel safe and protect the vulnerable.

Warden scheme management

Horsham District Council has operated Warden schemes in the District since 2001 with the first scheme being in Ashington, who remain partners to this day. We now have seven warden schemes in the district and employ and manage 14 staff and a supervisor. We require partnership agreements with parish councils to be signed for three year periods.

At present the Warden schemes and their renewal dates are as follows:

Billingshurst, Horsham and Pulborough - April 2020

Southwater and Storrington - April 2021

Ashington and Steyning / Bramber / Upper Beeding - April 2022

Horsham District Council's support associated with the costs of management, training and supervision will continue.

Key differences between Neighbourhood Wardens and PCSOs

	Neighbourhood Wardens	PCSOs
Objectives	<p>Like PCSOs, Wardens aim to improve quality of life by providing an official presence, reassurance, community cohesion and social inclusion, backed up by certain powers.</p> <p>However, Warden priorities, shift patterns and patrols are completely community led and set by the Parish Councils.</p>	<p>PCSOs help to meet objectives in the National Policing Plan. Along with the traditional foot patrol in areas where the community needs police support, PCSOs are equipped to help solve neighbourhood issues, take statements, work with police officers and partners to problem solve in the community.</p> <p>PCSO priorities are determined by threat, harm and risk and an understanding of local concerns helps influence Force priorities.</p>
Operational deployment	<p>In addition to the objectives above, Wardens also help with environmental improvement through reporting and action, offer personalised support to the elderly and vulnerable, assist with youth activities and attend local events.</p>	<p>PCSOs will deploy to their dedicated geographical areas, tackling local issues within the community, increasing community intelligence as well as early resolution of anti-social behaviour and local disputes.</p> <p>They will also support the wider Prevention teams in tackling district priorities.</p>
Location	<p>Wardens are dedicated to their own parish and all activity is undertaken within the parish boundary.</p>	<p>PCSOs cover dedicated electoral areas, split across a number of parishes. They can also be required to work anywhere in West Sussex according to operational need and therefore on occasions there may be more (or less) than one PCSO in a parish.</p>
Management	<p>HDC line manages the Wardens and works closely with the Parish Council to ensure priorities are met.</p>	<p>PCSOs are managed by Sussex Police and work to police priorities.</p>
Powers	<p>Wardens have similar powers to PCSOs, as accredited by the Chief Constable of Sussex Police.</p> <p>Additionally Wardens can access a wide range of local authority powers particularly useful for tackling environmental crimes.</p>	<p>PCSOs have similar powers to accredited Wardens but will work with and alongside Police Officers where it is required.</p>