

New Deal for Communities

The National Evaluation

Research Reports

Neighbourhood Wardens: More than the 'Eyes and Ears' of Communities?

Research Report 60

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the NRU/ODPM.

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Neighbourhood Wardens: More than the 'Eyes and Ears' of Communities?

Research Report 60

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report investigates the role of *Neighbourhood Wardens* in the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme. The report draws on case studies of three NDC partnerships: Lambeth (Clapham Park); Walsall (Blakenhall); and Brighton (East Brighton). Research for this report was undertaken between November 2004 and February 2005 with fieldwork undertaken during January 2005.

Definition

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) provides a broad definition of neighbourhood wardens:

Neighbourhood wardens aim to improve the quality of life by providing a uniformed presence in residential areas. Wardens promote community safety, contribute to community development and assist with environmental improvements and housing management. They can help deliver local crime and disorder reduction targets. They are the 'eyes and ears' of the police, local authority and community (NRU 2002, Neighbourhood and Street Wardens' Programme)

Wardens are a key part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. In addition to wardens supported by NDC programmes, the NRU and Home Office have supported three rounds of funding to date: for a National Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme; for Street Wardens; and for Street Crime Wardens.

Functions

Wardens can fulfil a range of key functions through different methods. These include crime prevention (through mobile patrols, identifying design improvements and promoting neighbourhood watches), environmental improvements (through work as resident caretakers, providing information to residents on maintenance services and liaising with agencies), housing management (through checking empty properties and visiting tenants) and community development (through promoting residents' associations, organising activities and consulting with residents over services).

Review of Neighbourhood Warden Projects

Of the 39 NDC partnerships, information on neighbourhood warden projects was collected from 13 which appeared to have the longest established warden projects. The review of 13 projects allowed us to examine the breadth of approaches developed and their scale.

Of the 13 projects reviewed, 12 were directly seeking to address issues of fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. The one exception was a project in Tower Hamlets which had a specific focus on supporting elderly residents. Closely linked to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and fear of crime were resident concerns with 'groups of young people hanging around', 'nuisance caused by young people' and 'environmental crime' (e.g. damage to property through vandalism or graffiti).

Case Studies

The three neighbourhood warden projects selected as case studies differ in terms of their context and the way in which they operate. The main differences which can be drawn are in terms of: ethnic diversity, housing, rationale for the project, staffing and operation.

The impetus for neighbourhood warden projects typically came from residents themselves who wanted visible patrols of the area by people who could address concerns of crime, anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Warden schemes were seen in each case study area as an appropriate response to a range of problems such as ASB, fly tipping and fear of crime. They could also help contribute to key targets such as: raising public confidence; reducing the fear of crime; enhancing visibility in the community; dealing with issues of hard to reach groups.

Partnership

Partnership between agencies and warden projects is a necessary element of warden schemes. Many elements appear to underpin successful partnership working. This stems from a clear rationale for warden projects which is agreed between a range of key stakeholders (NDC team, Police, local authority and housing departments). Warden projects often fill in the gaps, which other agencies cannot address. However, above all, they require a strong community focus and must be seen to be responding to community needs.

Information Management

The process by which wardens report incidents and issues to other agencies is critical to their success. This information can be used for recording outputs but is also the initial step in an information system which connects to relevant agencies. A key element of the wardens' activities is recording incidents and issues in a log book and reporting these to a central coordinating unit.

Managing information was not just about the reporting up from the community to agencies but also reporting back: for example, providing an estimated time and date for action to be taken. Even if the information collected is not prioritised and acted upon, there may be a growing sense that the wardens are not providing anything new.

Community Engagement

Community engagement was found to be a central part of the work of neighbourhood wardens in the three case study areas. However, it was remarked that it was important for wardens not to be spread too thinly. They needed to concentrate on specific groups and areas. These were typically the elderly, young people and BME communities where these were seen to be disadvantaged, vulnerable or excluded in a particular area.

At an operational level it was deemed important in all NDC case study areas that residents have a high degree of trust in the wardens and that they could be approached about a range of issues. In part this could be built over time but it was also important that wardens had the appropriate visibility and legitimacy amongst residents.

Terms of Employment

The conditions of wardens was found to be reasonably similar between the areas, with pay between £13,000 and £18,000 in Walsall and Brighton but higher in Lambeth. The case studies reported that retention of the wardens had been problematic. However, retention rates appeared to be improving as the warden team became more settled.

Wardens typically had induction programmes. The programmes are designed by the NDC partnership and delivered by the project in conjunction with the NDC partnership and key agencies. Induction might last for up to six months and be tied with a probationary period of employment. At this start of the programme this might include work shadowing. Much of the

training for the wardens could be provided in-house and delivered by the NDC, reflecting the need to understand all the activities being run in a particular area. Training could also be given on job relevant skills such as victim support and harassment. However, as part of the professionalisation of neighbourhood wardens, nationally recognised training programmes were now in existence and in some cases these led to NVQ level 2 recognised qualifications.

Conclusion and Key Lessons

Neighbourhood wardens have been the subject of considerable attention by central government departments and the subject for the development of an array of support both within NDC programmes and elsewhere. We found that there is no single model of neighbourhood wardens: they are tailored to meet the needs of local residents, work with different agencies and complement a multitude of other services and activities.

This report finds that the role of wardens in NDC areas has evolved. Many of the early neighbourhood warden projects were primarily concerned with providing a visible presence on the streets of residential areas and playing an 'eyes and ears' role. However, this approach was seen to be passive, did not actively engage residents and failed to support the most vulnerable groups. This role has also been superseded, to some extent, by the introduction of PCSOs.

This report draws key lessons for future projects in the following areas: partnership working; community engagement; support to vulnerable groups; information management and communication; recruitment and retention; training; outputs and outcomes; and sustainability.

1. Introduction

This report investigates the role of *Neighbourhood Wardens* in the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme. Neighbourhood wardens have been the subject of considerable attention by central government departments and the subject for an array of support both within NDC programmes and elsewhere. As a result of this attention there is a rapidly growing policy and research literature on neighbourhood wardens. This report therefore has the following purposes:

- to review policy and research literature in the context of the aims of NDC partnerships
- to provide an overview of the different approaches to neighbourhood warden schemes in NDC partnerships
- to provide case study evidence of the ways neighbourhood wardens are working, their progress to date, and to identify key lessons

The report draws on case studies of three NDC partnerships: Lambeth (Clapham Park); Walsall (Blakenhall); and Brighton (East Brighton). Research for this report was undertaken between November 2004 and February 2005 with fieldwork undertaken during January 2005.

Our review of policy and research literature and fieldwork has shown that neighbourhood wardens can play a number of roles, and that these roles vary from area to area, according to local needs and objectives. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) reflects this breadth of roles in its definition of neighbourhood wardens:

Neighbourhood wardens aim to improve the quality of life by providing a uniformed presence in residential areas. Wardens promote community safety, contribute to community development and assist with environmental improvements and housing management. They can help deliver local crime and disorder reduction targets. They are the 'eyes and ears' of the police, local authority and community (NRU 2002, Neighbourhood and Street Wardens' Programme)

Wardens are a key part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. The NRU and Home Office have supported three rounds of funding to date: for a National Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme; for Street Wardens; and for Street Crime Wardens. Projects under these schemes have typically been developed by local authorities in partnership with the Police and agencies such as housing associations. In some cases these have focused on particular neighbourhoods or elsewhere have focused on particular groups. In some cases local NDC partnerships have developed or enhanced their own neighbourhood wardens projects by working in conjunction with these national schemes. The focus of these schemes has included key neighbourhood renewal policy agendas around: liveability including housing and green space; young people; crime reduction; and public transport.

This report is structured as follows. After a review of policy and research literature and looking at practice across the NDC programme as a whole, we use case studies to focus on the following issues: the linkages between NDC neighbourhood wardens, other schemes and with key agencies; the involvement of communities; the wardens themselves, and their roles, support and needs. As a conclusion, the report draws key lessons for NDC partnerships.

2. Background

Policy

Neighbourhood wardens are a key part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. These were the subject of a Policy Action Team report (PAT 6, published in 1999), which identified four broad sets of issues neighbourhood wardens could address:

- crime and fear of crime
- housing management
- environmental improvements
- community development

The understanding of how neighbourhood wardens can address these issues has developed since 1999 and there have been related policy developments. These include policies around neighbourhood management, the introduction of police community support officers and the emergence of new issues as liveability and community cohesion.

In their role as the 'eyes and ears' of a local area, neighbourhood wardens are intended to provide a direct link between local residents and key agencies, and especially with local authorities, the Police and registered social landlords. The rationale of the wardens is typically twofold: that they will listen to the concerns and issues residents raise and report, and prioritise, these concerns to the relevant agencies. For this rationale to operate effectively requires the wardens to be both visible to residents and approachable, for the wardens to have the skills to listen to the needs and concerns of residents, and filter these where necessary, and for these concerns to be effectively reported to the relevant agencies.

The need and rationale for neighbourhood wardens in NDC areas and other areas is very similar. However, because of the intensity of support being provided in NDC areas, wardens may be expected to connect and engage to a much higher level with local communities and with agencies, not least through the range of projects which NDC partnerships will be supporting.

Support

The national Neighbourhood Wardens programme was launched as a joint DETR/Home Office initiative in 2000 with £18.5 million initially available. Total grant funding for neighbourhood wardens now stands at £91.5 million and runs from 2000/01 to 2005/06. To date 245 schemes have been funded in England and Wales through three programmes (Neighbourhood Wardens, Street Wardens and Street Crime Wardens). In recognition that neighbourhood wardens are still an emergent area of policy, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has established a Neighbourhood Warden Team. This oversees the schemes funded to date and provides a range of support, including:

- **Resource Centres:** these are 'repositories of good practice' and designed to provide practical support and training to existing and future warden schemes. It is also responsible for quality standards and training. A range of guidance and support materials, conference reports, factsheets and neighbourhood warden videos are available
- **Warden Quality Standard:** this is a recognised national standard and is intended to help schemes demonstrate effectiveness and value to the local community, local agencies and to potential funding bodies. The standard is awarded by schemes

completing a self-assessment form which is checked by an external assessor and who may request additional information. The quality standard lasts for two years

- **Warden and Manager Training:** a mix of e-learning, CD-ROM, taught courses and distance learning are provided by Crime Concern and EnCams. The modules have been mapped against the occupational standards for the NVQ level 2 in community wardening
- **E-communities:** an online community forum provides a resource for warden scheme managers and practitioners. It provides an opportunity for good practice to be shared and for the publication of documents of interest. This forum is part of the ODPM's www.ecommunities.odpm.gov.uk

Further information on the support available from the Neighbourhood Warden Team is available at: www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/nmwt/wardens.asp. This support is also available to NDC partnerships.

Functions

Wardens can fulfil a range of key functions through different methods. These are illustrated in the following table

Theme	Function	Methods
Crime Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing levels of crime • Reducing fear of crime • Reducing levels of ASB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile patrols • Foot patrols • Installation of alarms in void properties • Concierge service • CCTV • Design improvements • Promotion of neighbourhood watch
Environmental improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving general state of repair of properties • Proactive tackling of vandalism/repairs • Rapid response to environmental/physical problems • Improving quality of life of the residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident caretakers • Localising cleaning services • Provision of information to residents regarding maintenance services • Liaison with residents to identify environmental/maintenance problems • On-going repairs to relevant properties
Housing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing efficiency of housing maintenance • Increasing demand for housing • Reducing tenancy problems • Reducing numbers of empty properties • Reducing levels of neighbourhood nuisance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking empty properties • Local lettings • Local rent collection • Locally controlled budget for repairs and maintenance • Ongoing liaison with tenants
Community development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting community solidarity • Enhancing informal social control • Increasing levels of employment • Building confidence in local agencies • Promoting intolerance of crime and ASB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of residents' associations • Organisation of events for residents • Organisation of activities for young people • Provision of a newsletter for residents • Consultation with residents over strategy • Provision of employment services and training • Liaison with health services

Source: Adapted from Social Exclusion Unit 1999, PAT6 *Neighbourhood Wardens*

These functions and methods provide a checklist for potential schemes. Our review of the policy and research literature revealed that greatest emphasis was typically placed on crime prevention and using methods such as mobile and foot patrols through which a range of community development tasks could be undertaken. These are reflected in the following critical success factors identified in the PAT 6 report:

- assessing the problems accurately and tailoring schemes to these problems
- support to local residents
- partnership
- communication (links to partnerships)
- qualities of the wardens themselves
- training
- accountability
- inclusiveness

Many of these issues are reflected in the key research studies undertaken to date. These issues also provided a focus for our case studies, and particularly issues of partnership, support to local residents, and the qualities of the wardens themselves, and their training. However, a clear finding from the review of the research and NDC partnerships is that projects have been tailored to local circumstances and to the needs of communities. There is no single model for the functions of neighbourhood wardens and models evolve through time as other initiatives are launched and local circumstances change.

Previous Studies

Neighbourhood wardens have been the subject of considerable attention in evaluative and academic research since the late 1990s. However, prior to the interest in neighbourhood wardens stimulated by the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal there is relatively limited literature. As the PAT6 report acknowledges, most studies were undertaken around specific policy themes such as community safety, environmental improvements or community development. Research into neighbourhood wardens is therefore all relatively recent.

Research undertaken since the late 1990s, which refers to neighbourhood wardens, includes the following, in chronological order:

- Jacobson, J. and Saville, E. (1999) *Neighbourhood Warden Schemes: An Overview* London, Home Office.
- Doran, S. (2003) *Eyes and ears: the role of neighbourhood wardens* (Community Safety practice briefing). NACRO.
- SDDirect (2004) *Research Report 8: Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme Evaluation*.
- SQW Ltd et al. (2004) *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme Pathfinder National Evaluation (Annual Review 2003/04)*. London, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

The report by Jacobson and Seville, published in 1999, highlighted that neighbourhood warden schemes are difficult to evaluate. This is primarily because it is difficult to attribute change to the activity of the wardens alone, because wardens are often part of a wider set of interventions. It is also difficult to measure cost effectiveness because the benefits, in the form of savings, may be accrued elsewhere: for example the reductions in the costs of removing graffiti, reductions in the costs of policing or in identifying preventative actions

(e.g. housing repairs). If wardens are effective there should also be longer-term improvements to key outcomes (e.g. reduction in low demand housing, improvements in quality of life and reductions in fear of crime).

The SDDirect Study, which evaluated the first round of the DETR/Home Office Neighbourhood Wardens Programme, stressed that one of the most distinct elements of neighbourhood wardens is that they are community based. Their advantage lies in their accessibility to people. This allows for information sharing about activities and resources and enabling them to 'listen to problems, worries and news from local residents'. The report also recognises the diversity of schemes, and that this is a strength of the approach taken by central government: local approaches have been allowed to flourish. The report highlights the positive impacts neighbourhood wardens have made on issues such as quality of life, fear of crime, tackling environmental problems and youth anti-social behaviour. The report also stresses that community development is an integral rather than a separate component of the work of wardens. However, the report highlights that the effectiveness of schemes varies and that there are some common features of good schemes. These are outlined in the table below.

Common Features of Successful Neighbourhood Warden Schemes

Tailored and flexible approaches which are responsive to context, and able to respond to lessons as they are learnt. Such schemes demonstrated cultures of learning, where wardens, managers and partner agencies communicated well with one another from the outset.

Involvement of a wide variety of stakeholders in scheme design, including the police, local authority and housing authority staff and residents to ensure that schemes are based on a sound understanding of the problems and shared objectives.

Resident participation, from scheme design, through implementation, and in monitoring and evaluation. Adequate support and a variety of techniques are essential, for example ensuring that residents are active partners in steering groups, maintaining consultation throughout implementation, and resident's participation in monitoring and evaluation.

Active and representative steering groups. These should include key stakeholders and residents, have adequate support to be able to function effectively and meet on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

Consistent scheme management, with attention paid to reducing turnover of managers and staff, and with mechanisms to ensure the smooth running of the scheme in the event of such turnover. Supportive management is highly valued by wardens and is key to maintaining morale and scheme success in terms of impact.

Ability to develop and nurture partnerships which are productive for all partners. Feature of case study schemes with strong partnerships include regular contact, good reporting and feedback systems between partners, information sharing, joint initiatives between partners and grassroots contact.

Ability to maximise wardens' visibility, using their resources effectively, and recognising that visibility is not just a matter of the intensity of patrolling, but of patrolling where and when the warden is likely to be seen and to provide a reassuring presence. Perceived visibility was enhanced by ongoing awareness campaigns, high profile publicised activities and targeted action in some case study schemes.

Targeted approaches. The benefits of these approaches were found to help in supporting the elderly and young people. Such approaches could be applied to other groups, such as BME groups and asylum seekers.

The more successful schemes were found to have a strong community focus, had interested young people and had strong negotiating and mediating skills.

Support to wardens through ongoing, practical training and exposure to other schemes and wardens through study tours and networking events. It is important that wardens feel valued by managers and residents, given the nature of the difficult, demanding and often low paid job.

Source: Adapted from SDDirect (2004), *Research Report 8: Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme Evaluation*, pp. 9-10.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from this section:

- **National Policy:** increasing attention given to the support of neighbourhood warden projects through the national Neighbourhood Wardens programme. This has supported a wide range of locally led projects. These have had different foci depending on local needs and circumstances. Neighbourhood warden projects are seen to help address issues of crime, poor environment, and poor housing and community development
- **Support:** national support for neighbourhood warden projects is available from the Neighbourhood Wardens Team in the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. This has developed practical resources for organisations setting up warden projects, training and online communities
- **Previous Research and Evaluation:** there is a growing body of research and evaluation material. Findings from this work stress that tailored and flexible approaches which are responsive to context have worked best

3. Review across NDC areas

Introduction

This section outlines the scope of neighbourhood wardens schemes across all NDC partnerships but draws specific evidence from a review of project documentation in 13 NDC areas. This section also introduces the case studies and the rationale for, and development of neighbourhood warden projects in Lambeth, Brighton and Walsall NDC areas. The review of the latest NDC Delivery Plans revealed that all made some reference to neighbourhood wardens, although their role varied from providing a foot patrol in some areas, to a concierge service as part of housing projects, to providing support to specific groups, such as the elderly.

Review of Neighbourhood Warden Projects

Of the 39 NDC partnerships, information on neighbourhood warden projects was collected from 13, which appeared to have the longest established warden projects. The review of 13 projects allowed us to examine the breadth of approaches developed and their scale. From this group we selected three case studies.

The review of warden projects in 13 NDC areas focused on the following:

- rationale and scope of the project
- funding and sources
- impacts and outcomes
- linkages and plans for mainstreaming
- community involvement
- the Wardens

The following list provides some key facts about the neighbourhood warden projects.

- **Start date:** eight projects started in 2002/03 with the earliest projects (Manchester) having a pilot phase in 1999. This information was not available on three projects
- **Duration:** five of the projects will run for between two and three years (typically up to 2005/06). However, three projects have earmarked funding for four years, one project for six years and one project for seven years. This information was not available for three projects
- **Mix of funding:** seven projects are receiving between 90-100 percent of their funding from their NDC. Other funding sources included housing associations and local authorities. The Manchester NDC was receiving funding from HMR, ERDF and SRB
- **Number of wardens funded:** there was a wide range in the numbers of wardens (including support staff) funded, from two up to 18. This information was not available on four projects
- **Who manages the wardens:** there was a range of lead organisations including the NDC partnership itself, the Police, a housing association and the local authority

Of the 13 projects reviewed, 12 were directly seeking to address issues of fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. The one exception was a project in Tower Hamlets, which had a specific focus on supporting elderly residents. Closely linked to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and fear of crime were resident concerns with 'groups of young people hanging around', 'nuisance caused by young people' and 'environmental crime' (e.g. damage to property through vandalism or graffiti).

A wide range of output and outcome targets had been set for the neighbourhood warden projects. The overwhelming majority of these related to reducing fear of crime and ASB. However, other thematic output and outcome targets included improving quality of life and environmental quality, reducing low scale criminal activity and enhancing community development (e.g. increasing the numbers involved in decision making). These targets reflect the focus of most of the projects around addressing ASB and fear of crime.

Other targets set related to service improvements (e.g. response times of organisations to respond to reported problems) or to similar targets contained in a Service Level Agreement. For example, in Manchester NDC, targets had been set for times relating to: responding to and reporting back on ASB incidents, securing insecure properties, and completing environmental reports. Achievements recorded in project information were: 16,715 environmental reports, 1,013 graffiti reports and 6,477 rubbish reports. The Manchester NDC had also made steps towards quantifying the number of benefiting properties (e.g. from safety initiatives) and the number of home visits (728). The Manchester project is one of the largest with a team of 18, including 12 wardens, one head warden, one assistant head warden and one youth warden.

At least three of the neighbourhood warden projects had undertaken local evaluations. These had typically involved surveys of local residents or focus groups with local residents to obtain information on the visibility of wardens, their effectiveness and how concerns raised with wardens were responded to.

Other Research by the National NDC Evaluation

Although the research undertaken to date has highlighted the benefits of neighbourhood warden schemes, their role needs to be continually reviewed. The following issues were identified by the Northern Crime Study team in a review of NDC areas:

- **Visibility:** wardens are sometimes not as visible as they think they are. This can be addressed through changes to the uniform, focusing on specific areas or changing shift patterns to key times of day (late afternoon and evening). The aim should be to maximise the possibility that a resident with something to report will come into contact with a warden
- **Enforcement:** there needs to be a delicate balance struck between being distinct from the police yet having some powers to intervene. In some cases this meant ensuring the wardens could work in close conjunction with the Police and PCSOs but in other cases it meant recognising that wardens felt vulnerable by intervening
- **Dependency:** wardens may get 'stuck' in providing low-level support to vulnerable groups. An example of this was found in one NDC where wardens were providing a 'safe home escort service', which involved walking groups such as the elderly home after social activities. Although reassuring to those directly benefiting, this scheme would not assist in lowering overall levels of crime and may serve to highlight vulnerability and fear of crime amongst specific groups

Other issues identified in this research included the need for effective communication, the need for agencies to report back to wardens on progress towards addressing reported issues, and the need for community expectations to do with actual changes and improvements.

Selection of Case Studies

From the long list of the 13 reviewed NDC projects we chose three as case studies. These were selected on the following basis: the inclusion of one London-based NDC; the

selection of both new and better established warden projects; evidence that a local evaluation of the warden projects had been undertaken; and an indication of different approaches being used, with different sponsoring organisations. However, we were also careful not to select a warden project which focuses solely on a specific group (e.g. Tower Hamlets supports a project working solely with the elderly). Our selection was also informed by discussions with the national evaluation partnership contact. Finally, each NDC partnership used as a case study gave agreement for fieldwork to take place and for findings to form the basis of this report.

From the review of neighbourhood warden projects in 13 NDC areas Brighton, Walsall, and Lambeth were selected as case studies. Walsall launched a neighbourhood warden project in 2003, Lambeth in 2002 and Brighton in 2000 with a second phase project in 2003. Profiles of the case studies appear throughout this section.

Blakenhall (Walsall) NDC Case Study Profile

The Blakenhall area lies to the West of Walsall and to the South East of Wolverhampton. It is located within about two miles of Wolverhampton City Centre. The area has a population of approximately 11,900 (2001 Census). 98% of the population is White (2004 MORI Household Survey).

Nearly half (46.4%) of NDC households are owner-occupiers. 41.6% of households rent from the Local Authority and 2.8% from Housing Associations or Registered Social Landlords (2001 Census). 9.3% of households private rent (2001 Census). Housing stock includes blocks of flats, high rise flats and terraced housing.

Blakenhall (Walsall) NDC introduced a Neighbourhood Wardens scheme in 2003 with NDC funding (£517,404.20) guaranteed until 2005. The impetus for the project was to improve the quality of life for people in the area by reducing crime levels and the fear of crime amongst residents. The project is managed by Walsall Housing Regeneration Agency. Within the warden team there is a warden co-ordinator, senior warden, six other wardens and administrative officer. The service runs six days a week. Wardens work in shifts 9am-5pm or 1pm-9pm Monday to Friday and 9am-5pm on Saturdays. Wardens day to day activities include:

- patrolling
- supporting all sectors of the community
- providing "intelligence" to relevant agencies
- building relationships with residents and local businesses
- providing information, for example on local initiatives such as crime prevention
- attending local events and community activities
- developing close links with vulnerable groups
- establishing links to citizen advocacy and mediation services to address issues of neighbourhood disputes
- reporting abandoned cars, faulty street lighting, fly tipping and other common environmental issues to the relevant authority

The three neighbourhood warden projects selected differ in terms of their context and the way in which they operate. The main differences that can be drawn are:

- **Ethnic Diversity:** Walsall and Brighton NDC areas are predominantly White-British (98 percent and 93 percent respectively) while Lambeth has a 45 percent non-British White population
- **Housing:** Nearly half of Walsall's housing is owner occupied, while in Brighton there is a much greater mix of housing tenure and types, although the largest group is local authority controlled. Housing in Lambeth is predominantly in flats with approximately one third being owner occupied

- **Impetus for the Project:** in all cases the impetus for the project has been a mix of local concerns with fear of crime and ASB, environmental quality and community support. The current project in Brighton was preceded by one that started in 1999
- **Staffing and Operation:** each project has between six and nine wardens (including head wardens) alongside support staff (IT and administrative). Walsall's project operates six days a week 9am - 9pm Monday-Friday (on a two shift system) and 9am-5pm on Saturdays. The project in Brighton operates from 10am-6pm Monday-Friday although the wardens do work beyond 6pm when necessary and provide cover for community events at weekends. Lambeth's project operates seven days a week from 7am-11pm. Although Lambeth has the largest number of wardens they are stretched over a much greater shift system

East Brighton NDC Case Study Profile

East Brighton NDC area lies approximately two miles of the City Centre. Two distinct areas - Whitehawk to the South and Moulescoomb to the North - dominate the NDC area. The area has a population of approximately 17,200 (2001 Census). 93% of the population is White (2004 MORI Household Survey).

Over half of the NDC households live in social rented housing: 44.4% from the Local Authority and a further 9% from Housing Associations or Registered Social Landlords (2001 Census). Just over a third (36%) of households are owner occupiers and 10.7% private rent (2001 Census). Housing stock generally spans across four estates built in the 1920s, 30s, 60s and 90s including flats and family housing.

East Brighton NDC has been running a Neighbourhood Wardens since 2000. The impetus for the project was to tackle ASB and petty crime, and reduce fear of crime in the area, and make it a better place to live. Key partners include Sussex Police and Brighton and Hove council's housing department. Funding for phase two of the project is £774,612 (100% from the NDC) from 2003 until 2006. Within the neighbourhood warden team there is a warden manager, team leader, four other wardens and administrative officer. The service runs Monday-Friday 10am-6pm. Wardens day to day activities include:

- supporting vulnerable and isolated residents
- advocacy on residents behalf
- linking in with local community groups
- building and maintaining relationships with residents, residents organisations, services, and agencies
- attending local events and community activities
- signposting residents to services/agencies
- patrolling
- reporting environmental problems

The recent introduction of PCSOs, who have a patrolling and enforcement role, has enabled wardens to focus on the support needs of residents.

Rationale for Wardens

The impetus for neighbourhood wardens came from residents themselves who wanted visible patrols of the area by people who could address concerns of crime, anti-social behaviour and vandalism. As a respondent in Brighton NDC reported: *the NDC and residents were very keen on having wardens on the estates*. The wardens project in Brighton NDC was one of the first to be funded. As a resident in the area commented:

There was a lot vandalism, petty crime, ASB, high fear of crime. There was a definite need perceived by residents to tackle the problems. The NDC came up with the idea

of neighbourhood wardens to help tackle the issues and residents perceived a need for such kind of support.

However, the NDCs learnt from practice elsewhere and arranged visits to other warden projects across the country. As one of the residents involved in these visits from Brighton NDC commented:

We visited different schemes across the country and were able to take ideas to develop a scheme for eb4u [the East Brighton NDC]. Some schemes had good ideas. We were also able to contribute to the development of the scheme through our own personal experiences too.

The Walsall NDC case study also shows that warden projects can build on existing activity. Its warden project emerged from the development of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy. However, instead of the Police leading the project, the NDC contracted the Walsall Housing Regeneration Agency (WHRA). WHRA had a track record in managing warden schemes across the local authority district since 1998.

Survey work at the outset of the Lambeth NDC highlighted the significant numbers of 'vulnerable groups' (e.g. elderly) who had concerns with fear of crime and were generally scared to go out after dark. As elsewhere, the Lambeth wardens project is overseen by a steering group which brings together the relevant agencies (Police, NDC, local authority) to ensure that the wardens project is providing an additional service to the area and is integrated with the work of mainstream agencies. The steering group is now part of the neighbourhood management structures for the NDC. The wardens have their own premises, based in a converted shop on the Clapham Park estate.

Warden schemes were seen in each case study area as an appropriate response to a range of problems such as ASB, fly tipping and fear of crime. They could also help contribute to key targets such as: raising public confidence; reducing the fear of crime; enhancing visibility in the community; dealing with issues of hard to reach groups.

Clapham Park (Lambeth) NDC Case Study Profile

The Clapham Park area lies to the South East of Clapham Common in South London. The area has a population of approximately 7,100 (2001 Census). Just under half (45%) of the population is non-White British. The main non-White group is Black or Black British making up 32% of the population (2004 MORI Household Survey).

Over half (52.1%) of NDC households live in social rented housing: 47.6% rent from the Local Authority and 4.5% from Housing Associations or Registered Social Landlords (2001 Census). Just under a third (31.1%) of households are owner occupiers and 16.8% of households private rent (2001 Census). Over 90% of housing stock in the NDC area is made up of flats including high density blocks built in the 1920s and lower density blocks built in the 1950s.

Clapham Park (Lambeth) NDC introduced a Neighbourhood Wardens scheme in October 2002 to run until October 2005. Total funding for the project is £1,482,620 (with 92% of funding from the NDC). The impetus for the project was to reduce crime and the fear of crime, increase the reporting of issues and improve the local environment. There are two teams of four wardens, including a team leader. There is one warden supervisor and one administrative officer. Two police constables are also funded by the project. The service runs seven days a week 7am-11pm. Wardens work in shifts, and their day-to-day activities include:

- patrolling
- identifying and reporting problems on the estates such as repairs, abandoned cars, graffiti, vandalism, fly tipping
- acting as gatekeepers for reporting areas of concern in relation to other service provision
- working with community groups, individuals and businesses
- visiting groups who are deemed vulnerable

The experience of Brighton NDC, where the wardens project is now in its second phase, demonstrates the need for sufficient flexibility for schemes to evolve. As a respondent in Brighton NDC commented:

The wardens felt more one on one work with residents would be a better use of their time. We didn't want enforcement powers. A main part of the warden's role now is to visit residents e.g. new tenants, people suffering harassment, victims of crime, vulnerable people. A big part of this role is signposting residents, advocating on resident's behalf. People can refer themselves and agencies also make referrals.

In Brighton the focus has shifted from addressing environmental issues to providing support for residents. In some respects this has been a subtle shift. It has also meant ensuring that the wardens are distinct from the Police, and communicating their different role to local residents. More support has also come from the Police, for example with the introduction of PCSOs, which has freed up the wardens to provide more localised support.

Both Brighton and Walsall have commissioned evaluations of their warden schemes, either as part of a mid-project review or to develop a further phase of the project. Both reports highlighted areas for improvement, such as ensuring visibility of the wardens amongst residents and in ensuring their different role to the Police was properly communicated. A more fundamental comment raised by local evaluations has been their management: the Walsall evaluation found that a much stronger style of 'hands on management' was required to ensure that wardens were given clearer tasks and duties and these were closely aligned to key objectives and local issues (e.g. targeting support on particular hot spots). Given the rapid development of other local initiatives in response to national policies (e.g. PCSOs) it is important that the work of neighbourhood wardens is reviewed to ensure that they are providing additional benefits to their neighbourhoods.

Household Survey Evidence

The following table shows some key findings from the 2002 and 2004 MORI NDC Household Surveys. As neighbourhood warden projects were launched between 2002/2003 it is highly unlikely that they will have had sufficient time to make a significant impact on these indicators. The figures are therefore presented to provide some contextual information in each of the three areas.

	East Brighton NDC		Blakenall NDC (Walsall)		Clapham Park NDC (Lambeth)		NDC Aggregate		National
	2002	2004	2002	2004	2002	2004	2002	2004	
<i>Base: All respondents</i>	(503) %	(501) %	(500) %	(500) %	(500) %	(501) %	(1957) 4) %	(1963) 3) %	%
Very/fairly satisfied with area	71	74	62	75	66	72	60	65	86
Neighbours look out for each other	64	72	69	78	52	56	59	62	73
Feel very unsafe outside alone after dark	26	22	39	25	27	20	33	27	13
Litter and rubbish a serious problem	30	28	38	21	34	21	37	33	15
Teenagers hanging around on the streets a serious problem	38	35	38	27	34	34	41	39	18

Source: MORI/NOP NDC Household Survey

Key points which can be drawn from the table are:

- satisfaction with the area increased significantly in Walsall and Lambeth NDC areas
- the indicator of social cohesion ('neighbours look out for each other') improved dramatically in Brighton and Walsall NDC areas but less so in Lambeth, which remains beneath the average for all NDCs
- the perception of safety ('feeling very unsafe outside alone after dark') has improved in each area and significantly in Walsall
- the indicator of environmental quality ('litter and rubbish a serious problem') improved markedly in Lambeth and Walsall
- an indicator of fear of youth crime and nuisance ('teenagers hanging around on the streets a serious problem') improved markedly in Walsall but not in the other two NDC areas

Comparison to all NDC areas and the national average suggests that these NDC areas have improved in absolute and relative terms. However, areas of continuing concern appear to be with social cohesion (in Lambeth NDC area) and possibly with youth nuisance (Brighton and Lambeth NDC areas). In comparison to the national average there are still considerable gaps (except in Walsall NDC for social cohesion). Further information on each case study is shown in the tables below and on the following pages.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from this section:

- neighbourhood warden projects have been funded in many NDC areas. No single model exists. They respond directly to key concerns of residents, such as fear of crime and environmental problems
- neighbourhood warden projects can work in a range of different contexts and be delivered by different agencies. We found that NDC partnerships, the Police, housing organisations and local authorities to be responsible for their delivery
- the role of neighbourhood wardens has evolved. This reflects the following: the emergence of new national policies which have reduced the need for patrolling; the need for wardens to be managed to ensure they focus on community needs; and the need for agencies to be aware of, and supportive of neighbourhood warden projects

In the remaining sections of this report we consider more closely the development and implementation of the projects to date in terms of their links with key agencies, community involvement and the role of the wardens themselves.

4. Linkages and Mainstreaming

Introduction

This section looks at linkages between neighbourhood warden projects and key agencies, both in terms of strategic planning but also in delivery. The section also considers the critical importance of information management in coordinating and delivering neighbourhood warden projects, the possibilities for mainstreaming and the barriers and challenges warden projects face.

Partnerships

All the neighbourhood warden projects have been developed in partnership with different agencies. In Brighton the project is the result of a partnership between the NDC Community Safety Team, Sussex Police and Brighton and Hove City Council Housing Department. This has helped the team of wardens work closely with NDC development workers, for example on environmental clear ups or in supporting resident associations. The wardens in Brighton NDC appear to complement the services provided by the PCSOs and Police: with the wardens focusing their efforts on visiting vulnerable residents, signposting, providing advocacy for residents and reporting environmental problems.

In the day-to-day work of wardens, a whole range of links with other local agencies and services were reported. These included:

- Police
- Local Authority Social Services
- Local Authority Housing
- Local Authority Youth Service
- Local shops
- Local schools
- Sheltered Accommodation schemes
- Youth centres
- Community centres and community events
- Care homes
- Youth groups
- Domestic violence services
- Family centres
- Various NDC projects

As a respondent in Brighton NDC commented:

We do a lot of work with agencies taking and making referrals. We advocate on residents behalf, a go-between for residents & services. The relationship works really well.

However, these links have often taken time to develop. As one respondent in Brighton NDC commented: *the scheme has good relationships with many key agencies which has taken time.*

Partnership between agencies and warden projects is a necessary element of warden schemes. A concern raised in one case study was that NDC theme groups may introduce

an intermediary step between the wardens and agencies. This should not be the case. Where warden projects are successful it is because they become established teams which can forge operational links and relationships with agencies. The NDC theme group may provide a steering group but it should not be seen as a filter or step between the warden teams and agencies. As one respondent in Walsall commented: *the link between wardens and mainstream services needs to be strengthened.*

Having a clear distinction between the roles of different activities and services seems to be crucial, especially between the activities of the Police, PCSOs and wardens. As one respondent in Brighton commented:

Wardens have the capacity to work with residents, e.g. supporting victims of crime, isolated residents, victims of ASB etc. PCSOs have a patrolling role and it was important that roles weren't duplicated but instead complement each other. Neither can work in isolation. Wardens and PCSOs have strong links and work closely on a day-to-day basis. Sharing intelligence is key, communication is key.

Good communication was seen to underpin relations between agencies and the wardens. As a respondent in the Walsall NDC area commented:

To me communication is the most important thing in any organisation. If everybody doesn't know what is going on you are wasting your time. That goes between the wardens and the Police. I think its improved a bit, but when we had that evaluation done the Police did not know what the wardens were doing, where they were working, what shift patterns and so on. Now the wardens report regularly to the Police and they are clear of their shifts and what they are doing. It has improved an awful lot.

Many elements appear to underpin successful partnership working. This stems from a clear rationale for warden projects which is agreed between a range of key stakeholders (NDC team, Police, local authority and housing departments). Warden projects often fill in the gaps, which other agencies cannot address. However, above all, they require a strong community focus and must be seen to be responding to community needs:

The wardens are well networked with the community and local agencies. They attend community meetings, their faces are well known and they are well thought of by the community and agencies. They've built up a great network with agencies and know where to link into.

Much therefore depends on ensuring partnership is successful at different levels, including having the necessary skills to both engage with residents and with agencies.

The warden project in Lambeth NDC has been closely aligned to the NDC's Youth Strategy. Through this strategy a Youth Inclusion Project has been supported to target 'hotspots', and 'flashpoints'. The overall aim of the project is to promote a positive image of young people in the NDC area. The warden project has formed close links with youth inclusion both in terms of ASB-related activities but also in providing support both to young people and to those who feel vulnerable.

Although links have been made with the Youth Inclusion Project in Lambeth, it was reported that links with other services and other front line council services will take more time to develop. In part this has been because the borough council has been reviewing its internal processes and service delivery. This has made it difficult for the warden project to progress. However, concerns were also raised that the wardens may be substitutes for work which was previously undertaken by the Police. There was a concern that the Police needed to do more to engage in the warden project, firstly at a strategic level, as there

needed to be more alignment and coordination of the different activities which were being run in the area (e.g. between Police, PCSOs and neighbourhood wardens).

Information

The process by which wardens report incidents and issues to other agencies is critical to their success. This information can be used for recording outputs but is also the initial step in an information system which connects to relevant agencies. A key element of the wardens' activities is recording incidents and issues in a log book and reporting these to a central coordinating unit. It is the main task of the support staff (often in administrative and IT functions) together with the Head Warden or Project Manager to prioritise incidents and issues and report these to the relevant agencies. This would generally be done on a daily basis - although some incidents may be given a higher profile and be fast tracked: for example, where nuisance or ASB is ongoing or where there may be an immediate health risk (e.g. from fly tipping, discarded needles or an abandoned car). Setting up recording systems to process and manage this information is therefore important.

Output related information which is collected may include the number of home visits, the number of support visits and the number of environmental problems identified. However, some targeting is also important: both in terms of the areas covered and also the groups which are supported. In Brighton each warden has a caseload of vulnerable residents and provides support to these on an ongoing basis.

A key element to managing information was not just the reporting up from the community to agencies but also reporting back: for example, providing an estimated time and date for action to be taken. Even if the information collected is not prioritised and acted upon, there may be a growing sense that the wardens are not providing anything new.

Mainstreaming

A long-term aim of most NDC partnerships was to find ways through which the projects could be mainstreamed. That is, the service provided by the wardens would be supported through mainstream agencies and budgets and not through NDC budgets. This could be through different routes, although increasingly wardens are seen as a component of neighbourhood management. This may mean that they become a service provided by local housing departments or registered social landlords. It was recognised that this approach would be an important way of retaining the distinction between the wardens and the Police and PCSOs.

The sustainability of warden schemes after NDC funding ends was seen to be challenge across the case studies. In Walsall, three options had been identified: integrating the NDC warden project with one run at a district level; maintaining a distinct project; and integrating the warden project with PCSOs but within the existing management structures. However, the final option may increase risks that the roles of wardens and PCSOs become blurred. A risk of the district level approach is that it is harder to focus on local needs.

In Lambeth a borough wide warden partnership group had been formed to look at how a wardens project could be developed across the borough. A key barrier is the access to resources. One proposal is that a registered social landlord take over the scheme following the transfer of local authority housing stock into its control.

Barriers and Challenges

One of the main challenges the case study warden projects faced was in remaining distinct from other services. This can only be addressed in time and relies on good working relations being formed but also in the project having a good reputation for delivery and

adding value to other activities. As a Brighton NDC resident commented: *there was a fear at the beginning that the wardens would be like the Police but that didn't materialise.* As one of the respondents setting up a warden project commented:

Initially we were trying to build relationships with services and some services were more responsive than others. We had no real difficulty with any agencies, groups or residents.

A concern for Brighton NDC throughout both phases of its warden projects has been to ensure that it engages with BME households, and that it be seen to be providing an equal service across different groups. This concern was echoed in the other case studies.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from this section:

- effective partnership working between the NDC team, agencies and the warden projects is a prerequisite to success. Without commitments from agencies to work with the wardens, to share information, and to ensure services are coordinated, warden projects can be severely hamstrung. Key agencies to involve include the Police, local authorities (from social services to environmental health) and registered social landlords
- warden projects also need to form strong working relations with other activities and organisations on the ground. These may include community centres, youth projects and women's refuges but also include schools and relevant NDC funded projects. Project managers and head wardens are normally responsible for brokering these relations
- information management is a vital component of the work of warden projects. Although there are pressures to maximise the visual presence of wardens on the streets, it is also necessary to ensure that there is sufficient back-up and support services
- there appears to be only limited progress on mainstreaming the warden projects. However, this is more likely to happen where strong partnership links have already been established and where it can be demonstrated that the wardens are contributing to the achievement of objectives across agencies

5. Community Engagement

Introduction

This section looks at the involvement of residents and local communities in warden projects. It looks at the approaches which have been used to engage residents at the outset of projects, how awareness of the wardens can be increased, both amongst agencies and residents, and what appears to work in community engagement.

Engagement

Community engagement, as distinct from community involvement or development, was found to be a central part of the work of neighbourhood wardens in the three case study areas. The distinction is important because community involvement implies the active participation of the community in an activity and community development the building of capacity in the community whereas engagement relates specifically to how the warden project works so support local residents. It was commented in Brighton NDC that:

Community engagement is what the wardens are about, they are there for the residents. We're there even more for residents now with support visits. The role has definitely changed for the better and away from things such as litter picks.

The increased community engagement role came about quite organically. We were being asked by agencies to visit vulnerable residents which they didn't have the time or funds to do. We saw the need for support. We get lots of referrals from the local authority housing department.

Our support role has helped us gain the trust and respect of many residents. Before there was quite a negative view of the wardens.

However, head wardens and managers of warden projects also remarked that it was important for wardens not to be spread too thinly. They needed to concentrate on specific groups and areas. These were typically the elderly, young people and BME communities where these were seen to be disadvantaged, vulnerable or excluded in a particular area.

Perhaps more so than other NDC projects, local residents had been actively involved in warden projects from their inception. This often stemmed from concerns being voiced around fear of crime, vandalism or ASB. In Lambeth this had involved the following:

- identifying priorities for the neighbourhood wardens work
- tailoring the service so that it meets local needs and designs
- generating interest in and support for the scheme
- raising the profile of services and interest potential applicants for the jobs being created

Steering group members in Lambeth organised public meetings, addressed community forums at local community centres specifically to discuss wardens. Local magazines, distributed door-to-door throughout the area, promoted issues and the consultation process. Questionnaires, asking about priorities for the neighbourhood wardens helped gauge public opinion. 500 people in total were consulted directly and 250 residents completed questionnaires.

A similar approach was used in Walsall with surveys of local residents being undertaken. Within the Blakenhall area community events were also organised and input from tenant associations was also sought. However, some concerns were raised about public

consultation events: there was risk that they attract a small number of individuals who do not necessarily reflect the interests of the wider community.

In Brighton NDC it was also commented that the community (through events, feedback meetings and more day-to-day activities of the NDC) had been actively consulted about the development of warden projects. Moreover, once the wardens were in post they became the eyes and ears of the community:

The wardens have links with the community all the time and they are held in high regard.

Involvement was seen to take both formal and informal routes. In the first phases of projects this may be through formal consultation exercises and through resident membership of the NDC Board and key thematic groups. Once established, wardens have provided a new resource to NDC Partnerships and other agencies to engage communities. In Brighton, this had been through the following approaches:

- wardens' presence in the streets, visibility, residents approaching wardens
- wardens supporting community groups, residents' associations (mainly attending when asked to and providing information, taking questions, providing updates), local clubs (e.g. luncheon clubs, practical support such as driving a bus, washing up). Wardens were both invited and approached by groups
- work with schools and youth clubs

As the head warden in Brighton commented: *community engagement is a major part of the wardens role, e.g. home visits, support visits. The number of visits has increased in phase 2. In phase 1 not a lot of residents spoke to wardens.* All the NDCs commented that the work of wardens was not just about patrolling the area and that this did not lead to much involvement or reporting of issues. Rather, the approaches now emerging involved home visits, going to community meetings and following-up on initial reports. Approaches used to engage residents include:

- newsletters
- linking with community groups and clubs
- presence on the streets
- home visits, support visits
- resident surveys
- working with schools

Although there was considerable attention paid to the visibility of wardens on the streets (making sure they were visible through their uniforms), working through community groups and regular meetings of people was seen to provide a range of benefits. As a respondent in Brighton commented:

It's very important for us to be visible, it's important to patrol and be seen out on the streets. However, we engage with a lot more residents through linking in to community groups, e.g. where 20 people might attend a meeting, they can filter information to the community, whereas patrolling on a wet day you might only talk to two people briefly.

Awareness

In the case studies we asked whether residents and agencies were aware of the role of wardens as distinct from the Police or the Local Authority. A response from Brighton NDC was that:

The wardens are seen as having a good neighbouring role. Residents do understand the limitations of the wardens role. They are seen as separate from the police. Residents want both the enforcement role of the police and support of residents.

Although this is partly due to having clearly defined operational roles for wardens and PCSOs, it is also due to good communication. For example, in the Brighton NDC this has been through:

Publicity and adverts in the paper have outlined the wardens role, what the service is about which has helped residents understand what the wardens do. We also go and talk to agencies and explain the role of the wardens. This also helps build up the referral process...we used to get asked a lot what the role of the wardens was but that doesn't really happen now.

Part of the reason for this success has also been the concerted efforts of the warden team to communicate to agencies and local residents as to what the role of the wardens is.

In Lambeth the following mechanisms were used to increase the awareness of the project:

- running articles in the local press and locally delivered periodical magazines (the local newsletter Parklife and the local housing office publication), seeking feedback on the service and providing dedicated documentation on the scheme
- continued contact between steering group members and the local community
- wardens themselves forge links with the community and agencies in the area and as such feedback their experiences regularly
- an annual review of the scheme is undertaken which ensures a degree of transparency in terms of how the scheme is developed

A concern in Walsall NDC was around the lack of visibility of the Police and the wardens. It was felt that this could be addressed through improved communications between the NDC resident (Patch) representatives, the housing agency and the wardens scheme project manager.

At an operational level it was deemed important in all NDC case study areas that residents have a high degree of trust in the wardens and that they could be approached about a range of issues. In part this could be built over time but it was also important that wardens had the appropriate visibility and legitimacy amongst residents.

What works in Community Engagement

The case studies show that community engagement requires different approaches suggesting that 'off the peg' solutions would not work. In Brighton, for example, there had been a programme of activities to engage young people. This included the following:

- supporting a number of youth groups and projects such as after school clubs
- ten week warden buddy scheme working with children mainly through primary schools and referrals. There are 1 ½ hours sessions each week teaching about the role of the wardens, the effects of crime, looking at the victims point of view, environmental

issues, reporting problems, involvement in environmental clean ups, linking in with the NDC healthy living team looking on nutrition. One scheme was run in 2004 and another is planned for 2005

It was commented that:

The warden's work with young people seems to be working really well. The warden buddies project is very encouraging. It gives young people the opportunity to learn about what wardens do, educate about the environment, be involved in clean-ups, restorative work...it's great that young people are engaged as they aren't always seen as a valuable part of the community.

Working through young people and schools was seen to have a number of beneficial knock-on effects. At one level it provided a means to engage young people in the NDC and listen to their issues. However, there was also a sense that it was a means of communicating to their parents as well.

Lambeth had focused the work of the wardens on particular groups. This included:

- **Young people:** A dedicated Warden coaches and plays football with local young people once a week is part of an Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) diversionary activity. This involves around 20-30 young people per week. Wardens work with NDC Youth Workers arranging a five-a-side football tournament for young people across the NDC area. As a result of local residents concerns about a lack of provision for very young people during the holidays, wardens organised a 'Playout' Scheme to work with local young children. Regular contact is made with local Primary School at the beginning and end of the school day
- **BME Communities:** One of the Wardens is learning Spanish in order to be able to engage with Spanish and Portuguese communities residing in the area
- **Tenants and Residents:** Wardens assist people in establishing their own residents and tenants association on one estate. The estate is a focal point for social problems with drug use and prostitution and the association is a vehicle for lobbying the council about tackling crime and other issues
- **Vulnerable Groups:** Two of the female Wardens have been involved with assisting sex workers develop and publish a guide which helps support agencies (Police and Social Services) provide them and their families with support

Underpinning the work in Lambeth is ensuring that there is a high degree of visibility. Local surveys indicate that the majority of people in the area are aware of the wardens' presence and what their role is. There seems to be a substantial amount of support and confidence with regard the wardens' work.

It was also recognised that engagement did not happen immediately. One challenge in Brighton NDC was to engage people in North Moulscroomb where close family networks and extended families had lived in the area for years and were seen as difficult to engage.

We are proactive in trying to engage people in the scheme but we can't force them to engage, it's their choice. We can provide them with the facts about the scheme and see what happens.

However, there was a sense that the wardens were succeeding: *families feel very supported and like the fact that they are actually listened to.*

In Lambeth NDC it was recognised that there are still barriers to be overcome and that some things would remain difficult. One issue was due to the complexity of the NDC

scheme and although wardens were seen as the most visible activity, there was some uncertainty for some as to how it all fitted together. Some concerns were also raised over the management process: there was a sense in Lambeth that it was unclear how some issues were prioritised, although it was also recognised that choices did need to be made and day-to-day issues were very much the responsibility of the warden team to address.

In Walsall a key emphasis for the project in the future was in improving the publicity and communications of the wardens role both to agencies and residents. This was seen to be important in breaking down some barriers between the wardens project and some parts of the NDC area. It was commented that for this happen requires a strong lead from the NDC and from the project steering group.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from this section:

- resident involvement in warden projects should be integral to the inception, design and delivery of activities. In the design of the project, it is important to consult through different approaches (meetings and surveys), to engage resident directors in this process and to begin to consider awareness raising
- foot patrols contribute to a passive awareness of warden projects. However, for greater awareness and actual involvement in the projects to be developed, wardens needed to engage through different forums. These include working with community groups and visits to schools
- the managers of warden projects need to balance raising awareness of wardens across the area and focusing support on the needs of particular groups and areas. This requires choices on the part of groups overseeing warden projects
- there was evidence of intensive work in some NDCs to engage particular communities. This typically included young people and vulnerable elderly groups. An example in Brighton was of a warden buddying initiative where a warden ran a series of community sessions for local young people. This was seen as a means of raising awareness of community issues and of the wardens scheme, of reducing ASB but also in engaging young people in other projects (e.g. environmental schemes)
- engagement and involvement was also seen to take time, but that wardens can provide an effective mechanism for engaging some hard-to-reach communities
- although warden projects do provide a means of community engagement and involvement, this should not be their responsibility alone. The focus of wardens should primarily remain one of listening to the community and reporting incidents and issues, working alongside community development projects

6. The Wardens

Introduction

This section looks at role of wardens themselves. The fieldwork for the research involved interviews with project managers, head wardens and with the wardens themselves. These interviews provide an indication of the day-to-day work of wardens. This section considers the following issues: the terms of employment of wardens, their role and responsibilities, how they complement PCSOs, the training they receive, and some indication of the previous experience and qualifications of the wardens.

Terms of Employment

The conditions of wardens was found to be reasonably similar between the areas, with pay between £13,000 and £18,000 in Walsall and Brighton but higher in Lambeth. The case studies reported that retention of the wardens had been problematic. However, retention rates appeared to be improving as the warden team became more settled. It was also noted that the larger warden initiatives allowed for some mobility between roles and for promotion (e.g. to head warden). One of the head wardens interviewed commented: *I think wardens get a lot of job satisfaction, I did when I was a warden, they are out and about all the time meeting people.* However, for many the job was perceived to be a stepping stone, particularly when the pay may not reflect local costs of living. In general wardens preferred playing a community support role than identifying and reporting problems: this had given them more engagement with local people.

The neighbourhood warden project in Lambeth did not report recruitment problems. This was because pay rates were better than for similar jobs. However, there was reasonably high turnover of staff, with only three of the original eight recruits remaining, The main reasons given for retention problems were seen to be the lack of direction the job may have: something which may be due to the short-term project based funding for the scheme. As in Brighton, recruits to the Lambeth project also saw it as a stepping stone to other things.

Role

The following box provides an overview of the job description of Brighton's Neighbourhood Wardens:

Neighbourhood Wardens in eb4u (Brighton): Job Description

- initial point of contact for residents in eb4u area
- regular support visits to vulnerable residents, provide emotional & practical support, refer on to other agencies, advocate
- visit vulnerable & isolated residents, helps access services & groups
- help resolve neighbour conflicts
- visit all new residents, provide welcome pack
- organise & participate in drop-in surgeries at community venues
- meet regularly with local community groups, act as link between community & local service providers, support events
- regular patrols, provide visible presence – proactively deter crime, residents feel safer, decrease fear of crime
- report environmental problems

- build & maintain relationships with residents, residents organisations, services, agencies, mutual understanding of roles, services work together
- produce casework notes and daily reports, record action taken
- attend and contribute to team meetings, training & supervision sessions and conferences to maintain up-to-date knowledge

Some of the day-to-day work of the wardens in Brighton is outlined in the following box.

Neighbourhood Wardens in eb4u (Brighton): Day-to-Day Tasks

- support visits
- patrolling, normally in pairs
- involved with community groups, both get invited to go along and also ask to go, generally tell about role of warden, and up-date residents on issues, field questions etc
- support a number of youth groups and projects, after school clubs
- community clear ups with residents
- delivering smart water initiative (property marking kits). Hopefully this should decrease burglaries and more people get their belongings back

Key aspects of the wardens role in Brighton was to be visible in the area (through patrolling), making referrals to agencies and receiving referrals, reporting fly tipping, undertaking visits with staff involved in other projects or from other agencies, attending and supporting community groups, welcoming new tenants and advocating on their behalf. The success of some projects was also seen to be linked to the work of the wardens.

In Brighton, the wardens fill out daily worksheets which are inputted into a database. Worksheets are filled in at the start or the end of the day. The worksheets indicate the type of task undertaken, for instance a home visit or reporting environmental problems. Wardens are also given a caseload of vulnerable residents to visit. One of the roles of teamleader is to monitor caseloads and to manage debriefings on a regular basis (e.g. every three-four weeks).

The job description wardens were given was seen to provide the parameters for their work. However, the evidence from the Brighton case study indicates that it has evolved quite significantly:

The role of the wardens has developed quite organically. Wardens have had a lot of power in defining their role. The neighbourhood wardens management group also had an input into the role of the wardens.

The day-to-day activities of the wardens in Lambeth were similar to those in Brighton, including:

- high visibility patrols of the area including stairwells in blocks of flats, roads, estate roads, garage areas, shopping parades, play areas etc
- identify and report problems on the estates such as repairs required to communal areas, broken glass and litter in open areas, abandoned cars, graffiti, vandalism, dumped rubbish, fly tipping and gangs of youths which are likely to threaten social disorder
- acting as gatekeepers for reporting areas of concern in relation to other service provision

- working with community groups, individuals and businesses and providing a presence in areas where particular problems are identified
- provide visiting service to groups who are deemed vulnerable - elderly and families with young children

A view expressed by one warden was that a lot depended on the approach and initiative taken by the individual wardens. The minimum involvement was just having a visible presence in the area. However, this approach was seen to be limited and wardens need to be encouraged to have a more active role.

The roles and responsibilities of the wardens in Walsall NDC were similar to those in Lambeth and Brighton. Wardens also worked alongside other projects in the area: these may include initiatives with young people, administering a budget to fit shed alarms and consulting groups to find out what might work in making the area safer. The wardens in Walsall NDC had a clear commitment to work with vulnerable groups, including supporting those in social care or in providing odd jobs for elderly residents (e.g. fixing a gate). However, their main activities were in working across the main service areas, for example in the identifying environmental problems, improving living conditions and housing, as well as targeting 'hot spots' where crime may occur.

Complementarity with PCSOs

Ensuring that PCSOs and wardens had complementary roles was seen to be very important. In Brighton NDC the role of the Police was enforcement, while the PCSOs had some limited powers. The wardens role was primarily to provide direct support to the most vulnerable residents. PCSOs were typically found to have taken over the patrolling role of wardens. As one respondent in Brighton commented: wardens are able to channel into other agencies in a number of ways. The wardens scheme has responded to the needs of the area.

Some wardens also commented that they did not wish to possess additional powers, this was not their job and they were not paid to take on these responsibilities. Although wardens receive training in some aspects of community safety, this does not extend as far as PCSOs.

Training

In Brighton warden goes through an induction programme. The programme is designed by the NDC partnership and is delivered by the warden team leader. For the first month new wardens shadow an existing warden. Much of the training for the wardens is in-house and delivered by the NDC, reflecting the need to understand all the activities being run in a particular area. Training was also given on job relevant skills such as victim support and harassment. The training offered by Neighbourhood Management Team in the ODPM was also drawn upon although it was felt that this needed to be complemented locally.

Training is also available from the community safety team in Brighton alongside specialist training in areas such as: racial awareness; domestic violence; lone working; and risk assessment. A structured work programme is set out for the first six months of employment, which is the warden's probation period. Two wardens in Brighton NDC commented:

We are constantly being trained and we learn from each other in the team, we all have different strengths that complement each other.

The support role we now have has meant a lot of specific training a lot within the community safety team, e.g. from the domestic violence co-ordinator.

The training used in Lambeth draws on the programme used by 15 of the 32 London Boroughs who have wardens. This is a course recognised by the Neighbourhood Warden Team. The course runs for five days with training tailored to requirements. The project also drew on a Jobcentre Plus course. Other specific areas in which the wardens in Lambeth received training included:

- interpersonal skills
- equal opportunities and Community race relations
- communications, including using a two-way radio
- legal framework of wardens, including classification of offences, civilian powers (e.g. citizen powers of arrest), information about the criminal justice system and the Crime and Disorder Act (2000)
- evidence gathering and crime of scene preservation
- first aid
- conflict management: dealing with aggression
- observational skills
- customer care
- administrative procedures: including the promotion of written reports which may be used as witness statements
- victim support and witness protection
- familiarising with local areas
- information on partners and support services, such as Neighbourhood Watch, Victim Support Service

Much of this training was provided through a tailored induction programme.

The wardens in Walsall received four weeks full time training that is delivered by different agencies. The training covers similar areas to those outlined above, although there is also a work shadowing element. By being placed with different agencies, including the last week with the Police, the wardens gained first hand experience of different working environments and the roles of different agencies. The wardens also received IT and communication skills training. Wardens were encouraged to gain professional qualifications, for example through taking the NVQ Level 2 Community Wardens course.

Who are the Wardens?

The interviews undertaken in the case study areas also explored the background and previous experience of the wardens. One issue faced in the NDC areas was whether to recruit locally, from the NDC area, or from further afield. There were problems of employing people from the area as they 'were never off duty': other residents often knocked on their door wanting to report something. It was also found to be important that wardens had experience of working with people and in a job that had a customer focus:

I think it's very important that wardens have a customer service background as they are in constant contact with the public and they need to have a good knowledge of the particular area they are working in. A regeneration background is also useful and community involvement experience.

I saw the advert and thought it looked like a great opportunity doing exactly wanted I wanted to do working with the public and getting paid to meet people and walk around!

Other relevant experience in being a warden included: knowing the area, having good communication skills; having relevant qualifications (in some cases in social work or social policy); experience of work in regeneration or relevant agencies (e.g. the Police); and having experience of working with people.

In Lambeth and Walsall the backgrounds of the wardens were broadly similar although qualifications levels and previous experience tended to be lower. Previous jobs had ranged from security work and care services. Some wardens see the work as a way of entering the Police.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from this section:

- the recruitment of wardens had not posed significant problems although retention rates were relatively low. Many saw the job as a stepping stone to other jobs. In part this reflected the salary levels which were relatively low, and less than PCSOs for example. In some cases wardens could see opportunities within the project for progression and promotion. A key barrier to improving retention rates may be the short-term funding associated the neighbourhood warden projects. If longer contracts were offered, or the projects appeared longer term, retention may improve
- wardens had a range of roles and were given different levels of responsibility. In general, there had been a shift away from patrolling to community support work. This was seen to give the wardens a more active role and their support was typically linked either to other NDC projects or to specific groups (e.g. elderly, young people). One issue raised was that wardens needed to be proactive to work well
- wardens do not have the same powers or training as PCSOs. Their roles are and should be seen as complementary. This was happening in each of the case studies with wardens working to support individual people and groups with PCSOs undertaking patrol work and typically working unsocial hours
- the wardens had received extensive training and in different ways. In some cases this was full-time (for four weeks), through residential courses, or was made up of shorter locally tailored courses. It was not possible to judge the merits of each approach. However, some comments emerged: it was important for wardens to be given training in communications, first aid, and their powers. It was also necessary for wardens to receive induction into the work of different agencies, for example through short-term placements, and finally, wardens should shadow other wardens or officers at the start of their work
- the wardens were found to have different backgrounds. Most were motivated by wanting to work with people, to help a community and to gain experience for a career in regeneration, community development or crime prevention. There were seen to be benefits in recruiting wardens from outside the NDC area as there had been cases of the wardens being approached by other residents outside work hours in their own homes

7. Conclusion and Key Lessons

Neighbourhood wardens have been the subject of considerable attention by central government departments and the subject for the development of an array of support both within NDC programmes and elsewhere. From a review of recent research findings and from our study of NDCs we have found that there is no single model of neighbourhood wardens: they are tailored to meet the needs of local residents, work with different agencies and complement a multitude of other services and activities.

This report finds that the role of wardens in NDC areas has evolved. Many of the early neighbourhood warden projects were primarily concerned with providing a visible presence on the streets of residential areas and playing an 'eyes and ears' role. However, this approach was seen to be passive, did not actively engage residents and failed to support the most vulnerable groups. This role has also been superseded, to some extent, by the introduction of PCSOs.

The following are the key lessons which can be drawn from this research:

- **Partnership Working:** partnership between the NDC team, agencies and the warden projects is a prerequisite of success. Partnership working should begin at the design stage of initiatives and be followed through to implementation. Successful projects relied on the sharing of information between organisations, with clear processes developed as to how this would be undertaken. However, it was also important that each partner had a clearly defined role and overlaps between activities, such as between PCSOs and the wardens, was minimised
- **Community Engagement:** Warden projects also need to form strong working relations with other activities and organisations on the ground. These may include community centres, youth projects and women's refuges but also include schools and relevant NDC funded projects. Project managers and head wardens are normally responsible for brokering these relations
- **Support to Vulnerable Groups:** There was evidence that warden projects could be effective in engaging particular communities, such as young people, vulnerable elderly groups and members of isolated BME communities. However, caution needs to be shown to ensure that tailored support for particular communities does not reinforce barriers (actual or based on perceptual) faced by communities (e.g. fear of crime)
- **Information Management and Communication:** Information management was found to be a vital component of the work of warden projects. Although there are pressures to maximise the visual presence of wardens on the streets, it is also necessary to ensure that there is sufficient back-up and support services. The research found that considerable thought should be given to information and communication. This should include: the filtering and prioritisation of reported issues; the reporting of issues to agencies; and mechanisms for feeding back to residents, either as a group through a newsletter or to specific households and individuals. In some cases service level agreements had been signed with agencies to support these processes
- **Recruitment and Retention:** The recruitment of wardens had not posed significant problems although retention rates were relatively low. Many saw the job as a stepping stone to other jobs. However, some also thought that with greater training opportunities now available that retention may improve. Moreover, some saw the possibility for the professionalisation of neighbourhood wardens with it gaining greater prominence as a possible career path. This is reflected in a barrier to improving retention rates may be the short-term funding associated with the neighbourhood warden projects. If longer contracts were offered, or the projects appeared longer term, retention may improve

- **Training:** The wardens had received extensive training and in different ways. In some cases this was full-time (for four weeks), through residential courses, or was made up of shorter locally tailored courses. Key aspects of training were around communications, first aid, and clarity as to their powers. It was important that wardens received induction into the work of different agencies, for example through short placements
- **Outputs and Outcomes:** it is difficult to attribute changes in outcomes to neighbourhood wardens. Those studied appeared to be meeting their short-term output targets (e.g. house visits and reports logged). However, the rationale for wardens is often to contribute indirectly to outcomes (e.g. through reducing the costs of crime or environmental clean-up) or to help services be better targeted. This can make securing continued support for schemes difficult, although evaluative evidence of success could to some extent be secured through conducting local surveys
- **Sustainability:** the role of neighbourhood wardens is one which is evolving, in relation to changing local needs and the existence of other initiatives. The case studies revealed that there was likely to be a continuing need for neighbourhood wardens beyond their current funding. However, it was as yet unclear as to how this might be supported: most NDCs were looking to secure support from appropriate agencies (local authority, Police and housing agencies) although had yet to secure long term financial commitment