

## Street Wardens: key lessons for sustainability

- This briefing is for those managing and working with Street Warden schemes to improve the liveability of neighbourhoods, who are encouraged to use the information presented to inform their plans to sustain their Warden schemes. The briefing can be read in conjunction with *Successful Street Warden schemes: the stakeholder view* (available online [www.matrixrcl.co.uk](http://www.matrixrcl.co.uk)).
- The National Evaluation of the Street Warden Programme (SWP) has undertaken a comprehensive review of Street Warden schemes and their plans for securing funds and sustaining the scheme. This has identified the following key messages.
- Street Warden schemes are linking their priorities and activities with those of local authority departments, such as environmental management, to increase the likelihood of their services being mainstreamed or ensuring future sustainability.
- Schemes are using their contributions towards best value performance indicator (BVPI) targets set by local authorities, such as those for recycling and removing abandoned cars, as a means to secure funding.
- Street Warden schemes are increasingly identifying themselves as being a valuable part of Neighbourhood Management (NM) initiatives (where this approach is being developed) and are keen to become involved at every level, not least because being involved in NM might allow them access to a wider range of funding.
- Street Warden schemes are seeking a variety of sources of funds to sustain their activities. However, interviews with scheme personnel and stakeholders (including potential funders) warned that the diversity of funding sources might create multiple (and sometimes conflicting) demands on Street Warden schemes.
- Those schemes which are experiencing difficulties in securing funding often cite uncertainty about the future direction of the local council as a reason.
- Schemes that considered securing funding from local businesses felt that the priorities of local business may conflict with those of the Warden scheme.

The National Evaluation of the SWP<sup>1</sup> has identified key lessons for schemes seeking to sustain their activities in the long term. The evaluation team has charted the resources used by the SWP throughout the life of the programme and has examined the views of those running Street Warden schemes and their partner agencies as to how schemes can and should be sustained. This briefing reports our findings to date. It also considers the ability of schemes to 'mainstream' service provision, moving wardens from 'project' status towards the mainstay of local service provision.

This paper considers the development of the SWP; reports key findings from the Street Warden Evaluation (SWE) regarding the changing views of sustainability throughout the lifetime of the programme; describes how schemes are securing sustainable funding and identifies key lessons, good-practice examples, and obstacles to achieving this goal. Finally, we consider how these findings relate to the ability of schemes to become mainstream local service providers.

In this context, 'sustainability' refers to a scheme's ability to secure funding beyond the period funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU). 'Mainstreaming' refers to the extent to which a scheme has become a core service provider.

## The Street Warden Programme (SWP)

The SWP pilot scheme was intended to reduce crime, fear of crime, and anti-social behaviour (ASB), to address environmental problems, and to enhance social inclusion. The NRU allocated £25 million to the programme, and those bidding for funds were required to match their application to the SWP with local funds (£50 million in total). In August 2003, the NRU announced an extension of Street Warden funding for an additional year. Central funding for Street Warden schemes ends in March 2005. The SWP supports 121 Warden schemes in England and Wales, in each of the nine Government Office regions. Schemes were set up by a variety of local organisations, including local authorities, crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) or community safety partnerships, registered social landlords and the Police. At the end of 2003, slightly under half of scheme expenditure was funded by the NRU.

## Moving towards a sustainable future

During the early stages of the SWP, while most scheme managers had begun thinking about the long-term sustainability of their schemes, the extent of concrete planning was limited, with few of those interviewed in the 10 case studies being able to describe in detail what they meant by long-term sustainability beyond some very general ideas for future funding of the schemes.

The main alternative to Street Wardens was perceived to be increasing police resources. Given that the SWP is primarily focused on improving the environmental quality of neighbourhoods, the police may not be the most appropriate alternative.

By March 2003 most Street Warden schemes had been running for one year or longer, however few schemes had secured future funding. Only four scheme managers indicated in a questionnaire survey that they had secured all the necessary resources to sustain their schemes after the end of NRU funding. Two-thirds of scheme managers indicated that they had 'some resources secured and [were] planning to secure more'<sup>2</sup>. Amongst those who had attempted unsuccessfully to secure funding, a lack of time and an uncertainty about the future direction of the council were often cited as reasons hindering progress. Of those that had either secured or were planning to secure funding, there was evidence that Street Warden schemes were looking towards a diverse range of sources.

The most significant sources of funding at this stage were from environmental management and central government grants. The latter was also the largest single source of 'planned' funding. Half of scheme managers who responded to our questionnaire indicated that they were planning to secure funding from the local CDRP, which is more than twice the figure for schemes planning to secure funding from the police<sup>2</sup>. Just fewer than four per cent of schemes had actually secured funding from local businesses with a further one-third intending to do so.

Funding from private businesses was acknowledged by scheme personnel in interviews to be unreliable, and the demands on Street Wardens' time as a result of such funding did not always sit well with the objectives of schemes. By autumn 2003, schemes were conscious that sustainability was one of the most significant issues facing them and were carrying out a range of work to increase their chances of being sustained.

Street Warden schemes planned to solicit funding from a variety of sources, including:

- Communities Against Drugs (CAD) programme;
- Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) or Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF);
- National Lottery;
- parish councils;
- primary care trusts (PCTs);
- third-sector organisations;
- schools; and
- grant-making trusts.

Interviews with scheme personnel and stakeholders, however, warned that the diversity of funding sources might create multiple (and sometimes conflicting) demands on Street Warden schemes. For example, Street Warden schemes feared that accepting funding from a source such as a housing service provider might force them to focus on housing issues at the expense of looking after public streets and space.

The evaluation uncovered evidence of Street Warden schemes linking their priorities with those of the local authority, particularly those which the local authority are required to meet by law. Examples include targets for CDRPs and for recycling. Some interviewees felt that this was a valuable way of increasing the likelihood of their services being mainstreamed or ensuring future sustainability. The perceptions of stakeholders are explored in Matrix Knowledge 'Successful Warden schemes: the stakeholder view'.

## What are Street Warden schemes doing to sustain themselves?

**Reconfiguring service provision:** As wardens act as a link between the community and service delivery agencies, some of the case study areas have begun to consider using wardens as the generic report function for the council, whereby they will be responsible for all of the reporting work undertaken by the various street and highway inspectors currently in existence.

**Good-practice example:** The Hastings Street Wardens have merged with the dog wardens to provide an integrated service, increase scheme coverage, and reduce resident confusion over different uniforms and roles. They work in partnership with the park rangers. The public are able to contact any of the wardens as they all have a role in reporting crime and in providing a reassuring presence. This reduces duplication of effort and maximises the effectiveness of the scheme.

**Working with Neighbourhood Management (NM):** Street Warden schemes are increasingly identifying themselves as being a valuable part of NM initiatives (where this is being developed) and are keen to become involved at every level, not least because the NM boards might allow them access to a wider range of funding.

**Taking on new work and developing partnerships:** Schemes are increasing work with organisations such as local PCTs and the Fire Service to increase the likelihood of these organisations offering some funding in the future. Schemes report some pressure from other agencies to engage in work that is not in their remit and have to ensure their objectives are not compromised while doing work for other agencies.

**Attracting RSLs:** Schemes are increasing their work with housing providers and helping residents to manage their tenancies. Some schemes target particular estates and try to adapt their work to the specific requirements of their residents, offering caretaker-type services to attract Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to provide such services.

**Meeting targets:** Some Street Warden schemes are working to targets such as BVPIs and other floor targets to demonstrate the contribution they are making to strategic priorities and improvement. Other schemes are adapting their existing objectives and plans to ensure they are aligned with those of the local authority, CDRP, and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

**Good practice example:** The Bolsover Community Rangers carry out street inspections whilst on patrol on behalf of the local environmental services department. This contributes significantly to the 900 inspections that have to be completed each year to meet the BVPI target. The scheme also collects data on the number of incidents attended and followed up, contributing to a locally selected local authority target.

**Bidding for funding:** Some schemes are bidding for regeneration funding available at a national and European level. Funding is available from the EU and from sources such as New Deal for Communities; however, those involved with the evaluation acknowledged that a scheme is unlikely to secure long-term funds from such sources. In addition to these funding sources, there is evidence of schemes accessing a variety of sources of funding to supplement their activities; for example, one scheme has applied for local funding to pay for radio advertising and equipment (such as projectors) to use in presentations at schools.

**Accessing specialist resources to secure sustainability:** Some schemes can access personnel trained in completing bids for funding streams through their parent organisation. The case study schemes that have had the most success in securing sustainable funding are those that have access to senior management with good strategic links across the service delivery landscape. These personnel and other resources such as local champions (senior local authority personnel and councillors) are valuable in securing resources. Scheme managers have a key role to play in identifying local champions and securing support for their Warden scheme.

**Changing the scheme size and number of wardens:** Case study areas are concerned that for Warden schemes to be maintained in the long term they needed to be of a sufficient size in terms of the number of wardens employed and the geographical area covered to provide a coherent service for residents.

**Increasing relevance of promotion activities:** Street Warden schemes are increasingly promoting themselves to the public

(to ensure that there is sustained local demand for the scheme), to other departments and agencies (to ensure that there is support within the local service delivery community for the scheme), and to their parent organisations (to ensure there is strategic support for the scheme). Schemes are using a variety of methods to promote their activities such as 'good news' stories in the local press, pamphlets and other printed materials, and face-to-face meetings and presentations.

**Political pressure:** Most schemes have been proactive in enlisting the support of local councillors and MPs, recognising that they can act as champions for the scheme. Political support increases the chance of sustainability by increasing scheme profile, and by pushing the agenda of the wardens within meetings and to people that may not have come into contact with the service at a ground level.

*"The most important person or people that you need to have on your side are the members. Because at the end of the day they're going to be the ones that sit down and decide where the budgets go. Not that you should always pander to their wants but you need to have a good working relationship with your members and the more you forge that relationship, I think the more it helps you when you're coming to sustainability. They need to be able to see that when they contact you, they get prompt service and they get a professional service from you." Scheme Manager*

**Good practice example:** The Manchester City Council Housing scheme was successful in securing funding for a promotional relaunch of the scheme. They produced a series of leaflets and cards that explained the wardens' role and gave contact numbers for the wardens and for other agencies, with instructions on which to contact in the event of different types of incidents. They have also increased visibility through expanding their patrol area and introducing single-warden patrols to maintain high visibility with limited numbers of wardens.

**Evaluation and consultancy support:** Several schemes have commissioned independent evaluations with a view to providing independent evidence of success to future and current funders.

**Wardens into schools:** Warden schemes that carry out work around community cohesion and in reducing ASB and youth nuisance over the long term have been proactive about being in schools, doing presentations and after-school activities. Some local authorities are experimenting with funding wardens in schools on a permanent basis as a way to reduce vandalism.

## Threats to scheme sustainability

The most recent scheme manager questionnaire (applying to the period April – September 2003) captured information on scheme managers' feelings about sustainability and also allowed the evaluation team to begin to assess schemes' 'readiness' for sustainability. The questionnaire included an index of sustainability issues and asked scheme managers to identify which issues would have the greatest negative impact on their scheme. Figure 1 shows the results of this exercise, where the issue ranked number one was of greatest concern and likely to have the greatest adverse effect on the scheme, and the issue ranked as 12 was thought to cause the least adverse effect on the scheme.

## References

- 1 The National Evaluation of the Street Warden Programme is being conducted on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) by a consortium led by Matrix Research and Consultancy Ltd. which includes Renaisi, MORI and an expert panel.
- 2 Scheme manager questionnaire 2: Total number of responses = 56
- 3 Adapted from Haynes, B. 1999: BMJ; 319:652-653 (11 September)

Sustainability issues	Rank
A key member of staff leaves the scheme	1
There is job insecurity amongst warden staff	2
The scheme does not have access to local funds (e.g. from local businesses)	3
There is job insecurity amongst management staff	4
Wardens feel undervalued	5
Scheme manager feels undervalued	6
The scheme cannot continue to engage with key partners	7
The idea of Street Wardens becomes unpopular at a local level	8
A Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) scheme is set up in or near the scheme area	9
The scheme does not gain the support of local residents	10
There is a change in the political alignment of the local authority (e.g. a change in the major political party)	11
The scheme is 'repositioned' within the managing body (e.g. responsibility for the scheme moves from one department to another)	12

Figure 1: Index of sustainability issues: scheme manager perceptions.

Figure 1 shows that scheme managers felt that staffing and personnel issues were key threats to schemes, alongside a lack of funds and the implications of having problems in continuing to engage with key partners.

The evaluation identified the following key threats to sustainability:

**Retention of staff:** During the period April 2002 – March 2003 some Street Warden scheme managers reported problems with staff retention. The most commonly cited problem affecting these schemes was the introduction of PCSOs, which resulted in staff losses and consequently threatened the long-term viability of the scheme. PCSOs were perceived as a threat because they offered enhanced wages and clear career progression.

**Funding:** Scheme managers stated that time-limited funding was perceived to be a threat and to become increasingly so over time as staff were worrying about the permanency of their position.

**Expansion of scheme area:** The 'coverage' or intensity of the schemes is perceived to be a critical issue that can compromise

## The introduction of PCSOs

The introduction of PCSOs during 2003 had an impact on Street Warden schemes involved in our study. The evaluation team found that those schemes that have felt *least threatened* by the introduction of PCSOs into their area are those that concentrated most of their activities around community cohesion and environmental work, and those that clearly defined roles and responsibilities with the new agency. Research conducted during late 2003 revealed that the initial perceived threat of PCSOs had been overestimated by schemes and that there are some good-practice examples where wardens and PCSOs are working together, particularly where they are both placed under the local authority's community safety function, have joint protocols, and share data.

success and chances of long-term sustainability. Scheme managers were concerned that if they expanded their areas, they would be unable to provide the same level of coverage with the current number of wardens.

**Lack of personnel resources:** Schemes often have limited managerial or administrative resources as they focus on being a visible presence on the streets. As a result, there may be little time or no available personnel to work on funding bids and form the relationships with other agencies and the parent organisation to secure funding.

**Public confusion:** With several different central warden types in existence, the introduction of PCSOs, and the prior existence of police and traffic wardens, there is a danger that the public is confused over who is responsible for what.

**Lack of engagement from partner agencies:** Lack of support and data-sharing protocols with partner agencies can limit the ability of Street Warden schemes to achieve their objectives.

**Limited ability to demonstrate impact:** The evaluation has found that most Street Warden schemes struggle to demonstrate the impact of their work. Few schemes are able to directly collect or supply outcome data relating to all their activities and there are wide-ranging differences in the quality of their performance management frameworks.

## Our approach to the evaluation

The SWE seeks to answer four key questions:

**Should it work?** What is the underlying *theory* or logic model that underpins the SWP to improve the liveability of neighbourhoods?

**Can it work?** How has the SWP been implemented in terms of the operational *processes* employed, and the management and partnership *structures* used?

**Does it work?** What *impact* have Street Wardens had on improving liveability?

**Is it worth it?** How do the *costs* of the SWP compare with the *benefits* to society?<sup>3</sup>

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## Knowledge informing improvement

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