



**Lancashire
Constabulary**
police and communities together

REPORT TO: STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING

DATE: Tuesday 24th March 2015

AGENDA ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: Combined Watch Schemes

Watch schemes are recognised as one of the original volunteer crime prevention movements across the country. The most prominent scheme across the country is Neighbourhood Watch where there is both a formal national structure, with established regional and force level association.

Central to the crime prevention is community engagement and volunteer activism, where at the most basic level, groups of neighbours come together to form schemes in a bid to reduce crime and make their community a safer place to live. Traditionally, the concept is supported and coordinated by local associations and key partners such as the police, local authorities and Community Safety Partnership (CSP) representatives.

Whilst the aims of watch schemes are fairly uniform, their activity has diversified to include a wider remit of community matters, such as rural watch. To date, there are a wide variety of watch schemes in operation, all underpinned by the same ethos; the empowerment of local communities.

Lancashire Constabulary over the years has supported a number of watch schemes and for a number of years has had a service level agreement with the Lancashire neighbourhood Watch forum.

There are currently six neighbourhood watch coordinators, two per BCU, that currently facilitate almost 1500 Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, covering over 50,000 properties. Their role is to administer, recruit, support and service existing schemes in their areas. Governance is supplied at force level through the wider Citizens in Policing board.

In addition, a number of other watch schemes have been introduced, ranging from things such as Business and Shop Watch through to Rural, Canals, Caravans and Churches. The

Watch Scheme participants register through the In The Know (ITK) messaging system to receive specific local information.

In February 2015 a review of NHW and associated watch schemes was commenced in order to better understand the role of watch schemes in the light of the changes facing the Constabulary. It is imperative to understand what effective engagement and social action is and how, as a result, we support and signpost within our communities.

Business areas such as digital engagement, the introduction of the 'In The Know' (ITK) system, early action and the adoption of a 'one team' approach have necessitated this work, to better inform our decision making on watch schemes.

Background Papers

None

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