

Scrutiny Review

Of

Neighbourhood Watch

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Draft Final Report

March 2012

Scrutiny review of Neighbourhood Watch

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Chairman's Foreword



In conducting this review I and my fellow Councillors have had revealed to us a veritable army of volunteers working behind the scenes right across our Borough. That they undertake these activities quietly and much of the time with small recognition is in contrast to the effect they have in helping the Police and Local Authority in preventing and reporting crime and in helping to reduce the fear of crime in our communities. It is of great credit to both Croydon Police and Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association that the numbers of co-ordinators in the borough are increasing. We hope that this trend will continue.

I would like to thank my colleagues Cllrs Cluder and Cromie and Brian Udell, Chairman of Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association (CBNWA), for their hard work and valued input into this review. Also worthy of mention is Ilona Kytomaa our Scrutiny officer who has drawn this report together. I would finally like to thank all those who have contributed and are listed below.

Malcolm Saunders - Secretary of CBNWA
Gerry Isles - Editor of "CroydonEye"
Sarah Gardner - Neighbourhood Watch Manager
Sergeant Guy Osland - Croydon Police
Chief Inspector Caroline Trevithick - Croydon Police
Sergeant Phyllis Rooney - Croydon Police
PCSO Angela Dennis - Croydon Police
Tony Brooks - Director of Public Safety
Pat Reid - PJ's Community Services
Mark Justice - Chief Executive of Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association
Brian Longman - Chairman of Sanderstead Ward Panel
Carolyn Seymour - Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator (Shirley area)
Sylvia Matthews - Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator (Fairfield area)
The 193 co-ordinators who responded to the 2011 Neighbourhood Watch survey

Councillor Jason Cummings
Chairman of the working group

The recommendations of the review

To the Safer Croydon Partnership:

1. That the Police and the council should take every opportunity to build a positive image of Neighbourhood Watch as an instrument for strengthening community spirit in the borough, through such means as community awards, presentations to recognise the achievements of co-ordinators, etc.
2. That an article on Neighbourhood Watch be published on a yearly basis in the private landlords' newsletter to reinforce landlords' awareness of the need for effective crime prevention in privately rented properties and their vicinity
3. The working group would be keen to see the good practice established in a number of wards in Croydon applied across the borough. Therefore, they recommend that police officers who have developed effective joint working arrangements with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators should be given the opportunity to share this good practice with other Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) so that more officers may be encouraged to adopt such working arrangements
4. That the local activity update sheets produced by SNTs should record joint work carried out with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators - this is already the case with some SNTs but not current practice across the borough
5. That the "victim of crime" letters sent by the police and subsequent visits to their recipients should include a mention of the benefits of Neighbourhood Watch, and that police should provide residents with information leaflets provided by the Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association either when providing crime prevention advice or when visiting after a recent burglary
6. That support be given to ward panel chairs to develop the membership and effectiveness of their panel
7. That good practice and challenges relating to Neighbourhood Watch involvement in ward panels should become a regular discussion item at ward panel chairs' meetings
8. That the council should continue to support the annual Neighbourhood Watch conference by offering a conference room such as the Council Chamber and break-out rooms or areas to the association for that purpose at no charge
9. That the council's communications should make effective and judicious use of existing newsletters and bulletins including Your Croydon, e-communications and other media to disseminate publicity regarding Neighbourhood Watch
10. That the activity of Community Watch and Cocoon Watch action plans be monitored on a quarterly basis to assess their effectiveness at addressing the particular needs of the areas they were designed to protect

To the Standards Committee

11. That the Members' Learning and Development Panel should commission the Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association to brief councillors on the work of the association and its co-ordinators, and that ward panel chairs be invited to take part in these events to encourage the development of joint work with co-ordinators

To the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

12. That a synopsis of the final report of the Scrutiny review of Neighbourhood Watch be sent out via the Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association to all co-ordinators, ward panel chairs and SNTs in Croydon to highlight the good practice in the borough and to encourage its take-up

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A few definitions

Neighbourhood Watch (NW)

A neighbourhood watch is an organized group of citizens devoted to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour within a neighborhood.

Neighbourhood and Home Watch (NHW)

An alternative name for a neighbourhood watch.

Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association (CBNWA)

The CBNWA is a charity which represents and provides support to neighbourhood watches in Croydon (see appendix 2 of this report)

Ward Panels

Ward panels are made up of people from local residents' associations, schools, businesses, etc, whose objective is to identify local safety concerns and to establish priorities for policing in the ward area in partnership with local police.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs)

Safer Neighbourhoods teams are small police teams whose objective is to address the safety needs of their specific neighbourhood, in line with policing priorities for that area agreed in partnership with local ward panels.

Croydon Council Police Consultative Group (CCPCG)

This group provides an independent forum for consultation between the community and the police in the London Borough of Croydon. The group discusses aspects of policing which are important to the people of Croydon and questions the police about its strategy and plans for tackling crime. The police use the forum to consult the community and to listen to their concerns about local policing. The police are also able to explain directly to the public the problems that they face in dealing with local policing issues. At their public meetings members of the public are also given an opportunity to raise their individual concerns with senior police officers.

Safer Croydon Partnership (SCP)

The Safer Croydon Partnership (SCP) brings together a broad range of stakeholders with a role to uphold safety in the borough. It was created following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act recognised the added value that partnership working brings to local communities and the better outcomes partner agencies produce by working together at a local level and as such made it a statutory duty.

Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA)

Croydon Voluntary Action is an umbrella organisation which supports, links and provides information services for Croydon's voluntary sector. CVA provides low cost training courses and development support for new groups as well as practical support, as well as spaces available for rent by voluntary organisations. It also facilitates or is active in several partnership bodies.

Introduction

The UK's first Neighbourhood Watch (NW) was set up in 1982 following the success of a similar scheme in Chicago in the United States. Many more schemes followed throughout the UK, and 10 million people are now claimed to be involved.

In Croydon, it is the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Watch manager, who is employed by the police, to recruit and support volunteer co-ordinators. The borough currently has well over 500 co-ordinators, who are given additional support by the Croydon Borough NW Association (CBNWA).

How effective a role does NW play in reducing crime in this borough?

Terms of Reference

1 - Background

This review was formally commissioned by the Community Services and Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee at its meeting on 5 July 2011. It was selected as a topic for a Task and Finish Working Group because it is linked to a number of important current issues:

- Consultation with local communities shows that safety ranks as the top priority for local residents
- There is uncertainty about the impact of budget cuts on all services, including those related to crime reduction
- The objectives of NW mirror the goals of Big Society as neighbourhoods take action to address their local concerns

The membership of the Task and Finish Working Group was as follows:

- Cllr Jason Cummings (Chairman)
- Cllr Justin Cromie
- Cllr Pat Clouder
- Brian Udell, Chairman of CBNWA

2 - Matters considered by the working group

Members considered the following areas:

- NW activity in the borough
- Areas and demographic groups where NW is under-represented
- The challenges of running a NW area in neighbourhoods with high numbers of transient residents
- Young people and NW
- Different NW models
- Funding issues
- Provision of information
- Good practice in running a NW area
- What support NW areas need and receive
- Good practice in reducing crime and the fear of crime through NW areas
- Links between NW, local Safer Neighbourhood Teams and ward panels
- NW links with other local networks
- How the continuity of NW areas can be strengthened

3 - Activities of the working group

The working group obtained their findings through the following means:

- Meetings with stakeholders
- A survey of co-ordinators which yielded 193 responses (a 33% response rate) and useful information for both the CBNWA and the working group (see Appendix 1)
- Working group members attended the annual CBNWA conference, which was attended by 114 co-ordinators, and obtained further information about their activities and concerns
- Examining case studies available from www.neighbourhoodwatch.net/ , the website for the UK NW movement and the UK Neighbourhood Watch Trust (see Appendix 3)
- Examining the priorities and activities of Safer Neighbourhood Teams in Croydon, as set out in www.met.police.uk/teams/croydon/index.php

4 - Key stakeholders

During the course of its work, the working group obtained information from the following stakeholders:

- NW co-ordinators in the borough
- Members of the CBNWA committee
- Chief Inspector Caroline Trevithick, who has responsibility for Safer Neighbourhood Teams in Croydon
- SNT ward panel chairs
- SNT teams
- The council's Public Safety division
- Residents' Associations
- Croydon Voluntary Action (training, funding, links to ethnic groups)
- Victim Support (support and advice needed by vulnerable groups)
- Neighbourhood Care Associations (support and advice needed by vulnerable groups)

5 - Expected outcomes

The working group agreed to make recommendations that would:

- Help to disseminate good practice in running NW areas
- Help increase the establishment of effective NW areas
- Encourage improvements in the links between NW groups and key local agencies, such as the Police, CVA and the council
- Help reduce crime and the fear of crime in the borough

Findings and recommendations of the review

1 - Acquisitive crime and other offences

To ascertain the need for NW in Croydon, the working group examined local crime trends, particularly in the area of acquisitive crime.

The group ascertained that residential burglary had risen from 2,221 offences in 2007/2008 to 2,897 in 2010-2011. The worst affected wards have been Selhurst, West Thornton, Norbury, Thornton Heath and Broad Green. These wards have high numbers of privately rented properties, with a relatively high resident turnover and low social cohesion. While these areas cannot be described as affluent, residents typically own gold jewellery, IT equipment such as blackberries and lap tops, which are light, transportable, easy to sell, and constitute the bulk of reported stolen property.

235 properties were burgled more than once in 2010-2011, representing 8.2% of burglaries.

23% of properties were unlocked at the time when they were burgled. In many instances, two adjacent properties were burgled one after the other as the offender became familiar with the layout and access points of the properties. Road corners were also found to be particularly vulnerable. As regards the time of burglary, the period between 1pm and 5pm is linked to the highest percentage of break-ins.

The results of the survey of NW co-ordinators, carried out in the run-up to the annual conference of the CBNWA on 12 November 2011, show that the main safety issue for them is burglary (130 responses), followed by motor vehicle theft (122 responses) and anti-social behaviour (71 responses). These concerns bear close similarity to the 2011-2012 priorities set by Croydon's ward panels to their Safer Neighbourhood Teams:

- burglary (18 SNTs)
- motor vehicle crime (15 SNTs)
- anti-social behaviour (22 SNTs - in 17 of these, ASB perpetrated by young people)

To tackle the significant rise in acquisitive crime, the Safer Croydon Partnership are mounting "Operation No Entry", bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to reduce the risk of burglary and apprehend more offenders. An increase in the number of local neighbourhood watches and the creation of Cocoon Watches (see page 17) form part of its action plan.

2 - The spread of neighbourhood watches in Croydon

The number of watches is very much on the rise. Despite possible deterrents such as the practice of police checks on applicants, the number of watches has been rising consistently and stood at 598 as at 31 January 2012. This rise in numbers has been attributed in part to the 8 August 2011 riots. Joint work with relevant agencies in the borough may also be playing a role: Victim Support now have information on how to join, and provide this to victims of recent burglaries when the appropriate opportunity presents itself. Links to other groups whose activities aim to reduce crime may encourage further recruitment.

As shown in Appendix 2 (page 23), southern wards tend to have higher numbers of co-ordinators than northern wards. However, the most successful ward is Shirley, with 85 co-ordinators.

The wards with the lowest NW coverage are Fieldway and New Addington, with 3 and 6 co-ordinators respectively; yet, their burglary rates are some of the lowest in the borough. This may be due in part to the informal "self-policing" of these fairly close communities.

The working group heard that BME representation among co-ordinators was rising, with a third of recruits in October and November 2011 coming from black and minority ethnic communities. Nevertheless, it is still acknowledged to be low. This may be due to the following factors:

- lack of awareness
- language difficulties
- negative perceptions of NW schemes
- the requirement for police checks

Other barriers to the recruitment of co-ordinators, which apply to the public as a whole, include:

- lack of time
- perceived lack of relevance to the community
- fear of reprisals - a trend acknowledged by representatives of the Broad Green SNT, which testified to their co-ordinators' fear of "being found out"
- popular perceptions of NW groups as comprising white middle class "curtain twitchers", as portrayed in Alan Ayckbourn's 2011 play "Neighbourhood Watch".

The working group felt that NW in Croydon would benefit from effective awareness-raising of its benefits and achievements, including a sense of safety and community spirit. This might be done both through informal discussions at community group meetings, or through publicity initiated by the council and the police, such as award ceremonies to recognise the work of co-ordinators, or articles about the activities of NW.

Recommendation 1 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That the Police and the council should take every opportunity to build a positive image of Neighbourhood Watch as an instrument for strengthening community spirit in the borough, through such means as community awards, presentations to recognise the achievements of co-ordinators, etc.

Awareness raising in BME communities might also be more successful if it is done through existing networks, such as the Bangladeshi Welfare Association, black churches, etc., and by highlighting the relevance of NW to these needs of these communities, eg addressing specific local risks (e.g. the theft of gold jewellery) and providing relevant crime prevention advice.

It was observed that improved recruitment of co-ordinators in BME communities may also encourage residents to report crime and reverse the trend of under-reporting in these communities.

It was highlighted above that wards with particularly high levels of burglary have high levels of privately rented property. Feedback from co-ordinators at meetings, the co-ordinators' survey and the Chair of the Broad Green ward panel, show that many private tenants mistakenly consider NW to be irrelevant to them.

In response to this finding, the working group took the opportunity to include an article in the Croydon landlords' newsletter, to be sent out to about 2000 recipients in the run-up to the January 2012 Private Landlords' Conference. The article highlights the relevance of NW for private tenants, who may own coveted property such as gold jewellery, smartphones and laptops, and yet are very unaware of their vulnerability to burglary and

of simple crime prevention measures they can take to protect themselves. However, such messages need to be disseminated repeatedly to gain the attention of landlords and hopefully lead to effective crime prevention.

Recommendation 2 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That an article on Neighbourhood Watch be published on a yearly basis in the private landlords' newsletter to reinforce landlords' awareness of the need for effective crime prevention in privately rented properties and their vicinity

Through discussions with NW co-ordinators, the working group found out that recruitment of co-ordinators could be particularly effective when carried out through a residents' association. Two examples of such good practice are Addiscombe and Shirley Park Residents' Association (ASPRA) and CHASE Residents' Association in Addiscombe. Combining NW with residents' association activities benefits both networks through sharing of publicity, information, venues, volunteers, local events, funding, etc.

3 - Developing the Neighbourhood Watch role

It has been noted that the number of neighbourhood watches has been growing steadily in Croydon. What role do they play in keeping their neighbourhoods safe?

The main task of all co-ordinators is to deliver the CroydonEye newsletter* to the residents on their patch, which comprises an average of fifty properties. The mere fact of carrying out such deliveries helps provide residents with crime prevention advice as well as a sense of reassurance and a link to the police. In addition, the newsletter provides crime prevention tips, warnings of distraction burglary and local scams.

However, the co-ordinators' survey results showed that many co-ordinators willingly take on a range of other tasks:

- encouraging the use of safety measures
- holding meetings with neighbours
- keeping an eye on neighbours' homes while they are away on holiday
- calling on elderly neighbours to make sure they are alright
- attending SNT street briefings
- helping neighbours with their queries and concerns on safety and other issues

Survey results show that the key rewards for many co-ordinators are their 'contacts with neighbours', 'being able to help' and 'community spirit'. This feedback is reassuring, as making NW negative or solely focused on crime can promote fear amongst the vulnerable and be a hindrance in high crime areas where people may be hesitant about joining an anti-crime group due to fear of reprisals.

Discussions with co-ordinators and the results of the survey hint at the fact that a number of volunteers are keen to expand their role, but do not quite know how to go about this, and can feel a little isolated. How can they develop their role further? This is explored in the following sections.

* "CroydonEye" is the newsletter of the Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association. It provides useful telephone numbers, crime prevention advice and information on recent scams and crime trends.

◆ Links between co-ordinators and their Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs)

The sharing of intelligence and crime prevention advice between SNTs and co-ordinators has been acknowledged to be a key ingredient of success in addressing local safety issues. The CBNWA encourages these contacts through the George Hammond award. This is presented annually to the SNT team which has received the highest number of votes from the public for their involvement with Neighbourhood Watch.

Some SNTs already work closely with NW co-ordinators to address local problems. A PCSO in Broad Green works with co-ordinators to leaflet streets about fly-tipping. The Ashburton SNT liaises with NW co-ordinators to communicate messages regarding local motor vehicle crime. In Sanderstead, the SNT has kept co-ordinators up to date about local trading standards issues. In Thornton Heath, the SNT is working with co-ordinators to address anti-social behaviour. In Shirley, co-ordinators belong to an effective communication network, and new issues are discussed with the police at regular meetings. In all these examples, co-ordinators work alongside the police to address current issues, provide crime prevention advice, intelligence, and reassurance.

However, this joint work between co-ordinators and SNTs does not occur across the borough as a whole. Survey results show that while a number of co-ordinators keep in touch with their local SNT through local ward panel meetings or street briefings, many other co-ordinators experience difficulty in contacting their SNTs or receiving answers to their calls and e-mails to them (see page 20).

Recommendation 3 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

The working group would be keen to see the good practice established in a number of wards in Croydon applied across the borough. Therefore, they recommend that police officers who have developed effective joint working arrangements with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators should be given the opportunity to share this good practice with other Safer Neighbourhood Teams so that more officers may be encouraged to adopt such working arrangements

Nearly all SNTs have been tasked with focusing on burglary, motor vehicle crime or anti-social behaviour, or a combination of these, as ward priorities. These echo the very concerns of co-ordinators. However, very few local priority update sheets (which set out action taken by SNTs to address ward priorities) mention joint work with NW, despite the fact that it could increase the effectiveness of policing operations and the messages they wish to convey to local communities.

The local activity update sheet for the Purley SNT notes that 'most (recent) burglary offences have been at insecure properties'. Have efforts been made to publicise this message with existing co-ordinators, or to recruit new ones on affected streets? A number of SNTs' local activity update sheets, (eg Woodside) mention the provision of crime prevention advice: has the help of co-ordinators been enlisted to disseminate the message to a wider public? Local activity update sheets can provide a good resource as examples of good practice in policing. Including joint initiatives with NW can constitute good case studies and encourage more SNTs to involve local co-ordinators in crime prevention.

Recommendation 4 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That the local activity update sheets produced by Safer Neighbourhood Teams should record joint work carried out with Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators - this is already the case with some SNTs but not current practice across the borough

After reporting a burglary, all victims receive a letter and a visit from a local police officer. These could provide a useful opportunity for police to highlight the crime prevention role of NW at a time when the victim may be particularly receptive to suggestions for protecting themselves against future burglary. However, this is not currently regular practice.

Recommendation 5 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That the “victim of crime” letters sent by the police and subsequent visits to their recipients should include a mention of the benefits of Neighbourhood Watch, and that police should provide residents with information leaflets provided by the Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association either when providing crime prevention advice or when visiting after a recent burglary.

Survey responses bear witness to differences in the level of contact between co-ordinators and SNTs: 37% of respondents stated that they had regular contact with their SNTs. 54% left the question unanswered. 17% stated that they had a regular exchange of information and intelligence with their SNTs; 73% left the question unanswered. Through the survey, many co-ordinators stated that they had no contact at all with their SNTs and did not get responses to their calls or e-mails. 47 co-ordinators felt that NW would become more effective if they had better contact with the police. Challenged about the current situation, the Chief Inspector with responsibility for SNTs stated that co-ordinators should be able to obtain answers to their queries within seven days, and should follow up queries if left unanswered for that amount of time.

The working group considered that NW might benefit from better strategic links with the police. It is already represented at the Safer Croydon Partnership. It may, however, also benefit from contacts with senior police officers through attendance at the Croydon Council Police Consultative Group (CCPCG), which is attended by Croydon's Borough Commander and other senior police officers, as long as it continues to operate. The CBNWA plans to publish meeting dates in the CroydonEye bulletin to encourage more co-ordinators to attend.

◆ Links between co-ordinators, SNTs and ward panels

Members of the working group agreed that one simple way of bringing together SNTs and NW co-ordinators would be to involve the latter more proactively in ward panels. These are the only mandatory meetings that SNTs should attend, in the words of Chief Inspector Caroline Trevithick - although it is acknowledged that SNTs also meet with a range of stakeholders and community groups to ensure good communications and improve safety.

According to ward panel constitutions, it is in the chair's gift to decide who to involve in ward panels, but, due to some chairs' lack of experience or self-confidence, SNTs have played a role in encouraging various local stakeholders to take part, eg local businesses, schools, churches, groups and community leaders. For example, the West Thornton SNT has proactively worked to make the ward panel more representative of its community and involved new co-ordinators in this network, to share useful intelligence and shape local priorities which are more in line with current concerns and intelligence. This is not the case in many other panels. There exists an opportunity for all SNTs to proactively invite the co-ordinators working in their ward to attend panel meetings and contribute to their discussions, or to encourage chairs to do so.

The working group obtained information about the activities of ward panels from three of their chairs, as well as from SNTs. They concluded that they have a pivotal role to play in

sharing information with key local stakeholders - including representatives of NW - and shaping appropriate priorities and activities for improving safety in the ward. However, it was acknowledged that some panel chairs do not have the skills or confidence to involve an appropriate range of stakeholders, or to engage them in a meaningful dialogue on local safety concerns. The working group recognised that this represented a need for some form of learning and development.

Ward panel constitutions can constitute a useful tool in this respect. They could be used more proactively to set out and remind their members of their objectives and the community representatives they might involve e.g. representatives of local businesses, community groups, school pupils and teachers, local residents' associations, NW and Safer Croydon Partnership. However, as a result of discussions with a range of stakeholders, the working group agreed that some form of learning and development support might also be required to help some chairs acquire the confidence to run their panel effectively, involve a wider range of stakeholders and focus on addressing and resolving local safety issues.

Recommendation 6 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That support be given to ward panel chairs to develop the membership and effectiveness of their panel

During the course of this review, the police have resumed meeting with ward panel chairs and SNT officers in the borough to discuss local safety issues. Such meetings would also provide a good opportunity for SNT officers and ward panel chairs to share good practice relating to NW involvement in ward panels, discuss any problems encountered and possible opportunities, and improve their partnership work with co-ordinators and the CBNWA.

Recommendation 7 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That good practice and challenges relating to Neighbourhood Watch involvement in ward panels should become a regular discussion item at ward panel chairs' meetings.

The working group welcomed the news that the police were carrying out some work on the work of ward panels. They were also advised that each SNT had access to the contact details of key stakeholders in their ward - including NW co-ordinators - which could be used for disseminating information to a much wider audience than the ward panel itself. These networks are referred to as Key Individual Networks (KINs) SNTs could also use these networks to draw more participants into ward panels, liaise with NW co-ordinators and encourage them to network with each other, by e-mail or telephone, or face to face.

However, the working group recognised that it would not be possible to involve nearly 600 co-ordinators with their ward panels. A solution was proposed by Chief Inspector Caroline Trevithick in the form of a single point of contact between each SNT and co-ordinators within their wards, which could be a small e-mail group of co-ordinators who were able to represent others in their ward and provide a two way flow of information between residents and their SNTs. The area co-ordinators in Croydon who liaise with a number of watches each, in Shirley, Norbury and South Norwood, could provide a starting point for such an initiative.

◆ Community development

The working group heard that various neighbourhood watches held community events, e.g. in Coulsdon West and Shirley wards among other wards. The case studies available from the national NW website (see Appendix 3) also cite various examples of community activity, such as bulb planting or barbecues. Organising such activities is very much up to the enthusiasm of individual volunteers. However, it would be useful for co-ordinators to hear of successful local initiatives such as community events held in Coulsdon West and Shirley. This information may provide useful information to individuals wishing to hold one in their area and help members of the community to get to know each other, thus improving social cohesion and safety in the area. As emphasised in the national NW website, involvement in neighbourhood watches benefits from having a positive agenda, which both encourages a community spirit and has a tendency to reduce crime. CroydonEye, e-mail networks and co-ordinator networks may help to disseminate such information.

◆ Networking among co-ordinators

Through the co-ordinators' survey and discussions at working group meetings, it became evident that a number of co-ordinators wished to network with each other to exchange ideas and advice and help each other out with distribution, etc. Enthusiastic information sharing at an informal working group meeting with one experienced co-ordinator and a relatively new recruit to NW showed how much useful advice could be shared through such contacts.

The working group ascertained that some co-ordinator networks already existed in Shirley and in Purley. However, most co-ordinators find it difficult to access each other's contact details because of data protection issues. The NW manager's role does involve providing informal support and advice, but the task will become increasingly onerous as co-ordinator numbers keep growing. However, some progress is being made in bringing co-ordinators together to share ideas and experiences:

- At the 12 November 2011 conference, co-ordinators were invited to share their details so that they might liaise with each other informally - 49 co-ordinators put forward their details, which were disseminated on a ward by ward basis shortly after the conference
- Current application forms for prospective NW co-ordinators ask them to specify if they are willing to share their details with other co-ordinators - the NW manager has confirmed that the majority do
- The NW manager's database allows her to send out lists containing the names, e-mail addresses (75% of co-ordinators have one) and telephone numbers of willing co-ordinators on a ward by ward basis - this is something that the NW manager is happy to facilitate
- It was suggested at a working group meeting that co-ordinators might eventually communicate with each other through a social networking site such as Facebook - however, this would require a volunteer to set up such a page, and experienced users to feel confident enough to make regular use of it

Currently, co-ordinators across the borough have a yearly opportunity to share good practice as well as concerns about local issues, and liaise with key stakeholders such as police, Victim Support, etc. through the NW conference. In November 2011, it was attended by approximately a quarter of the Borough's co-ordinators. The working group agreed that this well attended event should continue to be supported by the council, and that it might provide increased opportunities for developing contacts and know-how between neighbouring neighbourhood watches, through some form of discussion forums for co-ordinators from the south, north, centre and east of the borough.

Recommendation 8 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That the council should continue to support the annual Neighbourhood Watch conference by offering a conference room such as the Council Chamber and break-out rooms or areas to the association for that purpose at no charge.

4 - Needs and resources

Discussions with co-ordinators and survey results point to the following needs:

- **Need for funding**

The funding received by the CBNWA is due to be cut significantly in April 2012 when the £15,000 2011-2012 grant from the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund comes to an end. The association's main source of funding will then be the £5,000 per annum grant from the council. Consequently, the association may not be able to fund the provision of weekly crime statistics to co-ordinators from that point. The association has appealed to its membership for assistance with applications for funding and is currently exploring a range of options for reducing its expenditure on the dissemination of newsletters and other outgoings.

- **Need for training**

The offer of training on the co-ordinator role has eagerly been taken up by 53 co-ordinators through the survey. The working group enquired about training given to SNTs on the effective use of Neighbourhood Watches to reduce or tackle crime, and heard that no local training was carried out over and above centralised training programmes.

- **Need for information**

While the findings of the co-ordinators' survey showed very high percentages of respondents felt they knew relevant contact numbers for reporting crime, useful information on crime trends and crime prevention measures, 61 respondents still felt they needed further information to carry out their role effectively.

At the NW conference, the question and answer session showed that co-ordinators' interest in caring for their area stretched further than purely safety concerns, into areas such as rubbish collection, recycling of green waste, etc. They welcomed the contact sheet drawn up by the working group following a suggestion from a co-ordinator in Shirley, and distributed at the conference.

The Internet provides a number of useful websites for co-ordinators with IT skills.

- The Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association website provides useful advice and contact numbers; its "hit rate" as at April 2011 was 144 a month on average
- www.neighbourhoodwatch.net/, the national website for the UK Neighbourhood Watch movement, provides online advice on various aspects of the role and a large number of useful case studies
- In Croydon, co-ordinators living in the Spring Park area have set up their own website, www.springparknw.co.uk which is regularly updated and currently displays information on distraction burglary and the winter 2011 bulletin produced by Croydon Trading Standards
- The contact details of Croydon Safer Neighbourhood Teams can be obtained from http://content.met.police.uk/Page/TeamFinder?scope_id=1257246763788 or by using the key words "Croydon Safer Neighbourhood Teams" in Google.

However, effective use of the above websites by co-ordinators will only take place if they are made aware of these - this can be done either through CroydonEye or other e-mail alerts.

- **Need for publicity**

A number of co-ordinators and contributors to working group meetings felt that there was a need to raise public awareness of neighbourhood watch activity and benefits, many of which are not widely known. For example, many residents may consider getting involved in NW if they become aware that membership of a watch can reduce their insurance premiums. Research has also shown that burglary can be reduced if prospective offenders are faced with **fresh** NW signs on properties and lamp posts, indicating an active watch. Publicity can be all the more effective if disseminated through appropriate channels. The council itself has a key role to play through its various information channels, eg Your Croydon, Safety E-Bulletin, community E-bulletin, private landlords' newsletters (see pages 8 and 10), etc.

Recommendation 9 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That the council's communications should make effective and judicious use of existing newsletters and bulletins including "Your Croydon", e-communications and other media to disseminate publicity regarding Neighbourhood Watch

The working group found out that establishing links with local Residents' Associations (RAs) can also constitute an effective way of publicising NW. Their newsletters or websites can disseminate useful information about local neighbourhood watches and their activities; RA meetings can include agenda items on NW and local safety issues, and both agencies can help each other on local events,

Links with other local groups and agencies (eg local churches, groups such as the Bangladeshi Welfare Association) would be useful in order to share local issues, information and resources, but this avenue still remains largely unexplored.

The working group also explored the possibility of links between NW co-ordinators and their local councillors, who could publicise their achievements and provide advice and encouragement. The working group found out that councillors could overcome data protection issues by contacting their local co-ordinators through simple mailshots disseminated through the NW association. However, such links can only be established through better awareness of the activities of NW among members.

This could be improved through the commissioning of briefings on the work of NW by the Members Learning and Development Panel. The working group also felt that local ward panel chairs should be invited to such events to strengthen links between them, NW and local councillors, to many of whom safety issues constitute an important part of their case work.

Recommendation 11 to the Standards Committee

That the Members' Learning and Development Panel should commission the Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association to brief councillors on the work of the association and its co-ordinators, and that ward panel chairs be invited to take part in these events to encourage the development of joint work with co-ordinators

- **Other needs**

A range of other needs were highlighted in the course of the review. In particular, the co-ordinators' messaging system being used in Shirley requires IT skills (which are becoming more common place, although many still don't use the web, social networking sites, or even e-mail), venues for meetings, photo-copying facilities, etc. Some co-ordinators obtain such resources from their local residents' association, or through fund-raising at community events. Schools or churches may offer venues for meetings and businesses may sponsor or fund certain activities, such as publicity.

However, if NW co-ordinators cannot obtain such support through local networks, they may have recourse to Croydon Voluntary Action, which offers training (often at little or no cost) on a variety of different skills as well as information on up-and-coming funding streams. Information on these resources is regularly disseminated through e-bulletins to a wide range of groups in the borough.

5 - Adapting Neighbourhood Watch to other contexts

The working group heard of a range of alternatives to the traditional NW model, designed to cater for the needs of specific communities.

Community Watch

The working group heard about the creation of this pilot scheme by the West Thornton SNT in February 2011. As there appeared to be unwillingness to becoming involved in a traditional neighbourhood watch in the area, a system was set up in which crime and anti-social behaviour could be reported at various points (shops, GP surgeries, etc.) and then shared with the local SNT. Spurred on by the August riots, 89 premises have now signed up to join this scheme, and useful intelligence has already been obtained.

Cocoon Watch

This initiative, which is included in the Safer Croydon Partnership's "Operation No Entry" action plan, will entail setting up and nurturing a watch in a very small area of less than 10 properties, which has been particularly vulnerable to burglary. Recruitment is planned for a number of sites in the north of the borough.

Recommendation 10 to the Safer Croydon Partnership:

That the activity of Community Watch and Cocoon Watch action plans be monitored on a quarterly basis to assess their effectiveness at addressing the particular needs of the areas they were designed to protect..

School Watch

The participation of young people in NW was discussed by the working group, as this age group is particularly vulnerable to theft, particularly mobile phone theft, as well as anti-social behaviour. Young people under 18 are not currently permitted to become co-ordinators. However, young people can assist in delivering newsletters, and in being given a role in informal community activities. Croydon's NW Manager explained that, while co-ordinators in Croydon were required to be at least eighteen years old, young people below this age could set up informal watches in their schools, looking out for each other and sharing advice. A simple example of such good practice is the practice of registering mobile phones at www.immobilise.com and keeping a record of one's mobile phone International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number so that the phone can be blocked if stolen. In addition, the working group heard that young people are already given a role in some local ward panels, discussing local issues with the panel and reporting back to their school on discussions held and decisions made.

Pathfinders

While not identical to NW, Pathfinder projects bear some resemblance to it as they too involve local residents in crime prevention. Croydon's first "Pathfinder" project, established in New Addington, aims to smooth the path between residents and local agencies such as the Fire Brigade, Police and the council through Neighbourhood Agreements setting out how residents and service providers will work together to help each other to make the community a safer, cleaner and better place. The working party were advised that, while promising, this approach could be very resource-intensive, particularly in the early stages of a new project. It will be useful to ascertain which approach is best suited to different areas of the borough.

6 - Conclusions

This review has revealed that while NW and its activities are unknown to many residents, it involves a very large - and growing - number of committed co-ordinators in the borough. In the course of this brief Scrutiny review, they have demonstrated their dedication to this work through their high attendance at conference, very high number of responses to the co-ordinators' survey, and the community spirit expressed through both of these.

However, NW faces a number of challenges. A number of volunteers have expressed a sense of isolation, and getting to know neighbouring co-ordinators has been hampered by data protection issues. In addition, as a result of current funding cuts, resources to run the local neighbourhood watch association are being reduced significantly, and its committee is working very hard to identify resources for its future activities.

A key need expressed by co-ordinators and the association, is better co-ordination with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams and ward panels, to exchange intelligence, disseminate effective crime prevention advice and reduce crime, and better awareness of the potential advantages of NW in areas with high burglary rates in Croydon. To this end, the working group hopes that the dissemination of the findings and recommendations of this review can raise awareness of this initiative and encourage ward panels, Safety Neighbourhood Teams, community groups and NW to work together more closely in future.

Recommendation 12 to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee:

That a synopsis of the final report of the Scrutiny review of Neighbourhood Watch be sent out via the Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association to all co-ordinators, ward panel chairs and Safer neighbourhood Teams in Croydon to highlight the good practice in the borough and to encourage its take-up.

Results of the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators' Questionnaire

The one page survey was sent out to co-ordinators along with their invitation to the annual Neighbourhood Watch conference. 193 responses were received - representing 33.34% of Croydon's NW co-ordinators.

1 - Support and information provided to co-ordinators

By and large, most co-ordinators felt they had enough information on relevant contact numbers, information on local crime trends and measures they could take to help prevent crime in their area:

Do you have sufficient information on...	YES	NO	BLANK
Appropriate contact numbers?	175	14	4
Local crime trends and scams?	187	6	0
Measures to take to help prevent crime?	158	33	1

120 respondents (62%) felt well supported and adequately trained as a co-ordinator. 53 co-ordinators put their names down for future training on the questionnaire.

2 - Key safety issues

Co-ordinators were asked how likely they were to become victims of crime. The answers are set out in the table below.

LIKELY TO BE A VICTIM OF CRIME?	
LIKELY	14
POSSIBLY	123
UNLIKELY	54
BLANK	2
TOTAL	193

Co-ordinators were also asked what types of crime were a local concern. In response,

- 130 co-ordinators felt that burglary was a local concern
- 122 co-ordinators felt that vehicle theft was a local concern
- 71 co-ordinators felt that anti-social behaviour was a local concern
- 61 co-ordinators felt that rogue traders were a local concern

Other issues mentioned were school children's rowdy behaviour and the theft of copper and lead.

3 - Contact with co-ordinators' local Safer Neighbourhood Teams

36.79% of respondents stated that they had regular contact with their SNTs. 53.89% left the question unanswered.

17.10% stated that they had a regular exchange of information and intelligence with their SNTs. 73.06% left the question unanswered.

A large number of co-ordinators added comments in the free field, showing a wide range of experience. These are set out in Appendix 1.

4 - Activities carried out by the co-ordinators

- 189 co-ordinators stated they circulated newsletters and safety alerts
- 76 stated that they encouraged the use of various safety measures
- 40 stated they also held meetings with their neighbours

5 - Most rewarding elements of the work

The most common types of answer were as follows:

- 63 stated they enjoyed the contact with neighbours
- 51 provided no answer
- 22 stated they enjoyed helping their community
- 16 enjoyed getting involved in crime prevention
- 14 enjoyed the community spirit the work created

6 - Greatest difficulties experienced

The most common types of answer were as follows:

- No answer (68 respondents)
- Lack of interest or co-operation from residents (33 respondents)
- No difficulties experienced (23 respondents)
- Difficulties with tasks, such as delivering the newsletter up stairs or hills, or making contact with residents (23 respondents)
- Lack of time (17 respondents)

7 - How to make Neighbourhood Watch more effective

Respondents felt that Neighbourhood Watch would become more effective if:

- Co-ordinators were provided with more information (61 responses)
- Co-ordinators were given training (47 responses)
- Co-ordinators had better police contact (47 responses)

Comments re contact with co-ordinators' local Safer Neighbourhood Teams

76 co-ordinators added comments in the free field, showing a wide range of experience:

'Occasional contact' (8 respondents)

'Very little contact' (13 respondents)

'none' (13 respondents)

'Should be informed of changes in the SNT'

'There used to be regular contact, but this was lost during the last year'

'none recently, but as necessary'

'no contact unless I have to report a crime for a neighbour'

'Irregular contact - Very small neighbourhood watch'

'It would be useful to have some regular meetings'

'Perhaps I don't know who or how to contact them'

'They call in and we also meet up in the street'

'Used to be at the neighbourhood partnership meeting'

'Contact at half-yearly residents' association meeting'

'We meet at Forestdate Forward meetings'

'We meet at CHASE residents' association meetings'

'invite them to RA AGM and socials but they don't attend'

'I am a member of SNT panel'

'I am in contact with SNT panel'

'I attend ward panel meetings and invite SNT to residents' association meetings'

'Request and receive attendance of 2 SNTs to NHW meetings - very important'

'As and when necessary, mainly by e-mail - Varies as team members change'

'E-mails sent to SNTs with photos of law-breaking offences'

'Various e-mails'

'Very helpful our team'

Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association

The Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association (CBNWA) is a self-supporting charity run by a committee of local volunteers. They are responsible for the association's decision-making, management, fund raising and a number of other activities.

The role of the Croydon Borough Neighbourhood Watch Association is:

- To promote Neighbourhood Watch locally
- To obtain funding
- To provide training to new co-ordinators
- To organise the yearly NW conference in Croydon

The service specification agreed with the council's third sector team is as follows:

- To distribute quarterly crime prevention and awareness newsletters through Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators to Croydon residents
- To send out weekly e-mail alerts to Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators and residents who have requested the service.
- To maintain and develop the Croydon Neighbourhood Watch website.
- To recruit, train and supply Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators with the necessary stationery stickers etc.

In 2011, data on performance criteria required by the council was obtained through surveys, sent in hard copy to co-ordinators and collated on Microsoft Excel. In 2012, the committee will be able to choose between collating this data on software such as Excel, or using an online Survey Monkey survey.

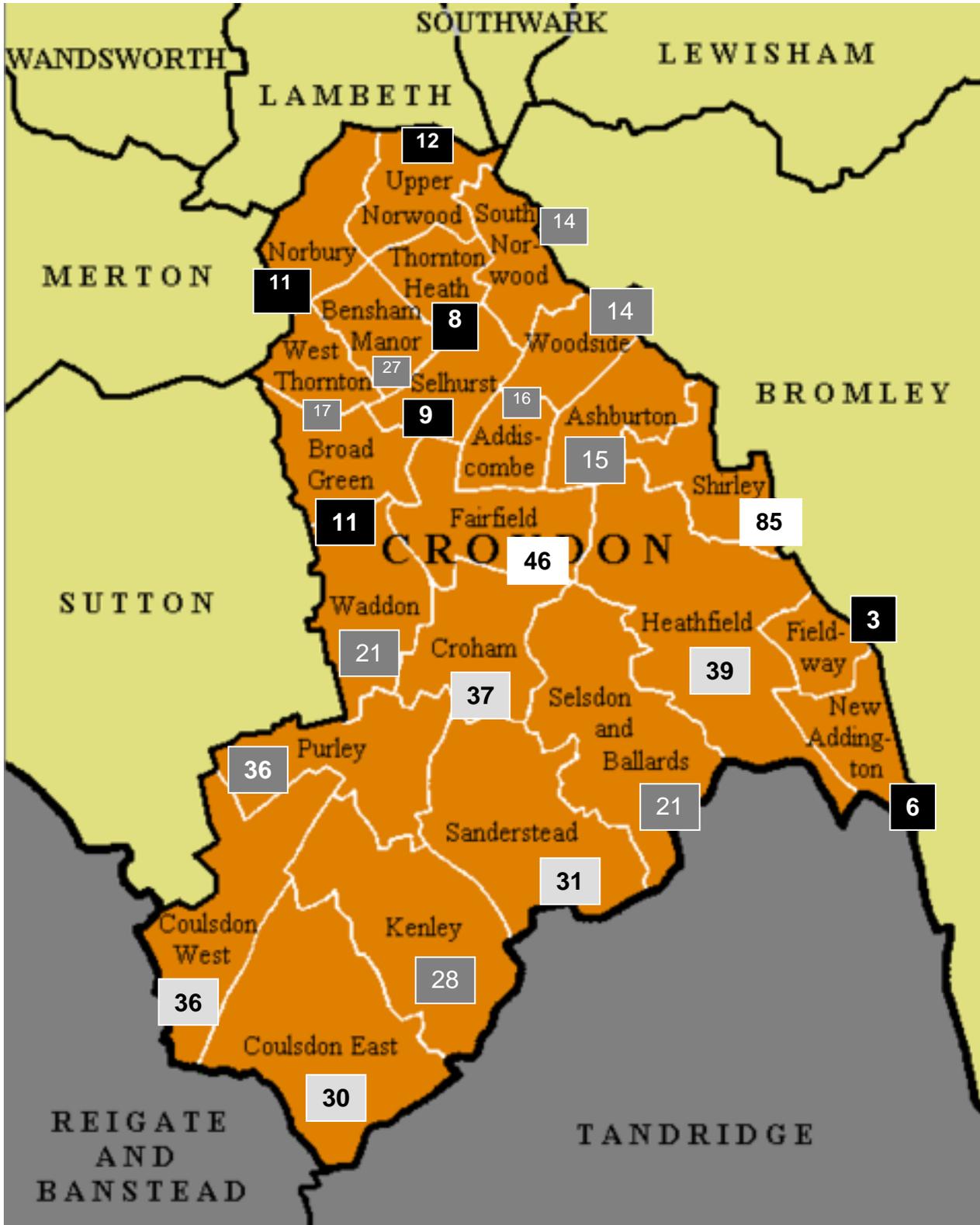
Activities of the CBNWA

Activities to highlight include the following:

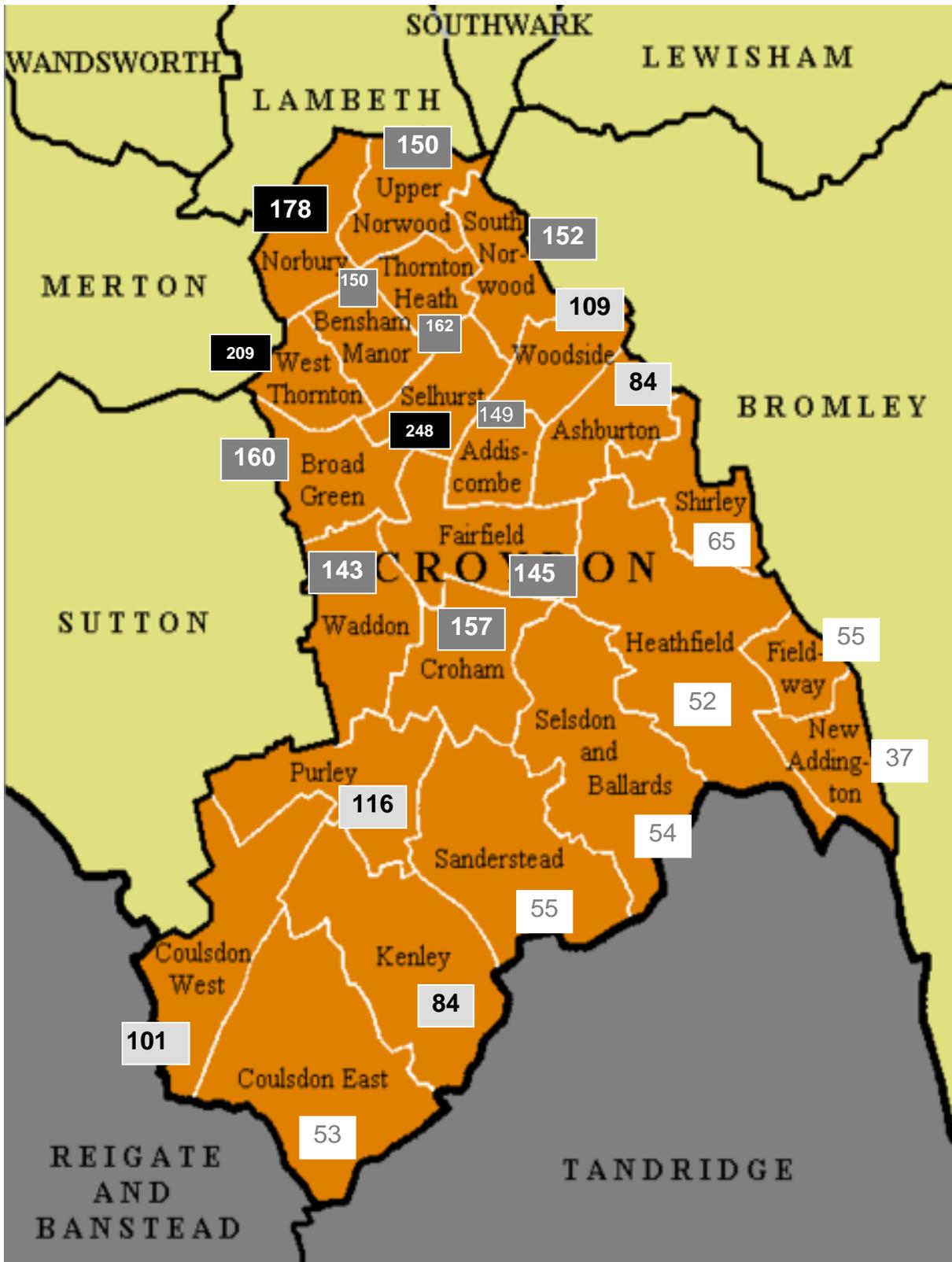
- The committee produced a booklet, which was financed with "Grassroots" funding and published in 2010, setting out the ways in which SNT and CBNWA could assist each other.
- The "CroydonEye" newsletter is written, produced and distributed by a small team from their homes.
- Since 2010, the new Chairman has initiated a series of "awareness" sessions for new co-ordinators: it gives them a chance to find out what the association does, what it would like co-ordinators to do, and how to do it; these sessions effectively provide informal training and also give co-ordinators a chance to network. Many of Croydon's longstanding co-ordinators have now taken the opportunity to sign up and another 60 co-ordinators have requested to attend future sessions, which the association hopes to complete by 31st March.

Ward maps showing the number of NW co-ordinators in Croydon (July 2011) and burglaries (April 2010 – March 2011)

The maps below show the number of NW co-ordinators in each ward, and the burglary figures for 2010-2011 broken down by ward. The number of **co-ordinators** is lowest in the north and east of the borough. The number of **burglaries** is highest in the north, but lowest in the east.



Ward map showing burglaries in Croydon April 2010 – March 2011



Case studies from www.neighbourhoodwatch.net/, the Website for the UK Neighbourhood Watch movement

This appendix provides a few examples of good practice in England. They highlight various groups' success at addressing the following issues:

- The need for regular communication using a variety of media, including websites and social networking sites
- The value of social events to strengthen community spirit
- Viewing safety as one element of "quality of life" issues
- Involving young people
- Forging a working relationship with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams
- Establishing links to other networks in the area, such as residents' associations
- Involving people with different skills levels

LOCATION	INITIATIVES	LEARNING POINTS
<p>Chippenham, Wiltshire</p>	<p>A recently appointed Community Area Coordinator (CAC) took thoroughgoing steps to revitalise Neighbourhood Watch in the area, with new groups formed, dormant groups reactivated and the sense of community spirit and safety heightened.</p> <p>The CAC emphasises that Street Coordinators are free to decide exactly what they do with their group and how active they want to be, which encourages a sense of ownership and autonomy and enables groups to be responsive to particular local issues. Consequently there is diversity in the types and level of NHW activity between groups.</p> <p>In addition to her activities in supporting NHW groups, the CAC has worked to establish a presence and enhanced credibility for NHW in Chippenham. For example, since taking on her role she was able to secure an invitation to the Mayor of Chippenham's annual meeting for civic groups and voluntary organisations which NHW had not attended previously. In addition, she is keen to involve younger people in NHW and has made contact with schools.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the visibility of Neighbourhood Watch to generate interest and make residents feel safer. Provide stickers and apply for street signs. Coordinators have identification badges and wear a T-shirt with both the NHW and Wiltshire Police logo. 2. It is vital to establish relations with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and maintain regular contact. Umbrella groups should provide new NHW coordinators with relevant contact details or introduce them personally if possible. 3. Regular communication with NHW coordinators from the umbrella group will ensure they feel included and supported, even if it is only via e-mail. Providing an initial welcome pack helps to make coordinators feel 'part of something'. 4. Individual NHW groups should be kept relatively small so they are manageable for coordinators. 5. An umbrella organisation should provide ideas for activities, but not be prescriptive. Allowing groups to take shape themselves is empowering, encourages a sense of autonomy and allows groups to respond to local needs.

Streetly, Walsall	<p>This community oriented group has found numerous innovative ways to engage the young through activities such as barbecues, and delegating responsibility for running certain activities to young people, and has been recognised as a 'best practice tool for the community' by the Association of Chief Police Officers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is important to give the local community a 'voice', especially young people.
South Manchester	<p>Peel Estate consists of 306 privately owned homes located in the South Manchester suburb of Wythenshawe. The estate suffered a high rate of burglary and anti-social behavior, which led a number of residents to establish a new Home Watch scheme.</p> <p>The local coordinators provide a means of cascading information through the estate, a system that has been used to forewarn residents about the presence of suspected criminals in the proximity of their properties. This 'early warning system' has resulted in at least one arrest and several incidents where criminals have been scared off, adding value by increasing the levels of interest that neighbours take in each other and helping to build local community awareness of, and resilience to, crime.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeing crime prevention and community safety in the context of wider issues affecting quality of life can help engage more people and partners as well as creating greater opportunities to have an impact. 2. 'Quick win' projects such as environmental improvement schemes (woodland clearance and bulb planting) can help build momentum and enthusiasm, getting people actively involved and encouraging them to believe in the group, themselves and their communities. They also offer a practical context to engage partners, creating a sense of shared achievement that benefits relationships. 3. Communication is a key to maintaining momentum and ensuring inclusive approaches. By distributing meeting notes throughout the estate, everyone can know what is happening and have the opportunity to contribute. 4. Identify key local people who can contribute in a positive way and give them an appropriate channel to do so. This should harness their enthusiasm and utilise their skills.
Greater Manchester area	<p>St Peter's Home Watch tries to respond to crime incidents and support crime prevention measures. This has included direct youth engagement, engagement around 'respect and self-respect' and increasing communication about crime prevention activities taking place on a community level. Local councillors who are also Home Watch coordinators help create a virtuous 'communication loop' from the Home Watch to policy-makers, feeding the outcomes back to the local group. Because of its strong networks and inclusive approach, the group has been able to act as a gatekeeper for other organisations coming into the area for the first time. For example, this is said to have been greatly beneficial to its work as part of the PACT (Partners And Communities Together) Network in Tameside. The Home Watch group has been able to offer support and essential local knowledge, making the efforts of these organisations more effective and thereby directly and indirectly reducing crime and the perceptions of crime in the area.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The move away from a strict definition of who is a 'member' of the Home Watch and who is not, created a more inclusive approach which has helped the group to thrive. 2. Through partnership work St Peter's Home Watch has been able to engage traditionally hard to reach groups, including young people and black and minority ethnic (BME) populations.

<p>Sovereign Park (outskirts of York)</p>	<p>A new group on a relatively new estate, its measures in curbing anti-social behaviour and strengthening community spirit have been so effective that City of York council is set to adopt the estate faster than it has ever adopted any other. Since the development was completed the problems have involved young people gathering at the children's play area and in the bin sheds. Younger children have consequently been unable to use the play area and residents living nearby have been disturbed by noise and foul language. Ad hoc conversations between residents led to a realisation that they had common concerns. A meeting in a nearby pub helped forge relationships and led to the preparation and submission of a petition to the council requesting adoption of the estate (in terms of taking responsibility for its roads and other public spaces).</p> <p>Residents have purchased a padlock for the play area and take turns to lock it at night. They have also organised a community bulb planting day for the area.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get to know your Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) and involve them in everything you do. They can offer direct practical help but also provide access to other support and information and their endorsement lends credibility to communications with official bodies, not least the police and the council. 2. Identify people willing and able to take on relevant responsibilities, but make sure that new people are always welcome (avoid becoming a clique). Identify what skills are available amongst members of the community and make best use of them. Similarly, harness the enthusiasm of members – it can become infectious. 3. Keep residents regularly informed and sustain momentum, not least by approaching new residents to inform them/get them involved. Adopt multiple means of communication (meetings, leaflets, notice board, website etc.) in order to both generate and sustain momentum amongst the community, with the use of ICT particularly effective in disseminating information quickly and cheaply. 4. If possible/relevant, get the developers of a new estate involved and taking responsibility for their actions. 5. Undertake succession planning, such that systems are in place to sustain activities regardless of changes in personnel.
<p>Wandsworth</p>	<p>The division coordinates the numerous Neighbourhood Watch groups in Wandsworth, a low crime area, where it has stayed relevant by widening its remit to create a pool of people able to help out with emergencies such as fires.</p> <p>Some NHW coordinators (currently 84) have been designated 'Emergency Volunteers', and have participated in training sessions and presentations from organisations including the Counter Terrorist Branch, the London Fire Brigade on fire safety and domestic flooding and the NHS on dealing with flu pandemics</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular contact is key to sustaining interest in Neighbourhood Watch - i.e. between NHW coordinators and umbrella groups, and between NHW coordinators and their members. 2. Take a holistic approach to NHW activity in order to maintain interest. Social events help to build a sense of community and are key to a successful group.. 3. Ensure NHW is not too negative or solely focused on crime as this can promote fear amongst the vulnerable. It can also be a hindrance in high crime areas where people may be hesitant about joining an anti-crime group due to fear of reprisals. 4. When setting up a new group, utilise an existing tenant group/resident association if possible, encouraging this group to incorporate NHW activities into their existing programme. This is an excellent way of establishing groups in high crime areas and in sheltered accommodation. 5. Make contact with neighbouring NHW groups in order to share information and good practice. In Wandsworth the Community Support Officers are seeking to establish a more structured NHW, with the intention that coordinators from each ward will meet regularly

<p>London NW2</p>	<p>The group has tackled environmental crime, burglary and anti-social behaviour head on while also taking creative and successful steps to engage the diverse local community and beautify the area.</p> <p>Social activities are also seen as important for generating and sustaining interest and events have included pub quizzes, an Easter egg hunt, and a community event. The group rents an allotment which is available for all local residents to use. The group will be encouraging young people to get involved with the allotment and have designed a programme of work which will contribute towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award.</p> <p>The local area is culturally diverse and the group has proactively tried to engage with residents from minority ethnic groups. For example, information on the notice boards and newsletter is translated into Polish and as a result the group has a good number of Polish members. In addition, the group is exploring the idea of holding one of their open meetings in the local mosque.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good relations with the police Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) and local councillors are key. Police support will mean you are better placed to access funding opportunities and councillors can act as an advocate for you within the local authority. 2. Aesthetic improvements such as hanging baskets get residents communicating with each other as they create a starting point for informal conversations in the street. Where improvements are installed a small plaque will enable residents to see what you've achieved. 3. Door knocking is vital for getting to know residents. If you can build a rapport with residents they will be more likely to inform you of crime and anti-social behaviour. 4. Utilise a number of means of communication. A community notice board is excellent for establishing a local presence, maintaining contact with people and making a group seem more official. 5. Be confident in seeking out opportunities. Apply for funding where it is available and enlist the support of local businesses. <p>Residents feel that the group's greatest benefit has been in creating a sense of community spirit.</p>
<p>Woldingham, Surrey</p>	<p>Woldingham comprises mainly large houses set well back from the street in fairly long roads and with no street lighting. Its residents therefore feel rather vulnerable to burglary/theft, cold callers and rogue traders. Over the past 10 years or so, there had been a number of suggestions that there would be merit in establishing a Neighbourhood and Home Watch (NHW) scheme, but there was insufficient interest to get anything going. However, in 2004, residents began to voice concerns about rising levels of crime and their overall security. These concerns were subsequently discussed at meetings of the main village organisations, and led to the establishment of a NW in the area.</p> <p>Interestingly, the approach adopted runs counter to national guidelines, which suggest that each Road Coordinator ought to have a direct link to the police. However, residents were clear that their model was better suited their needs, with a single Group Coordinator supported by a network of more local coordinators.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arouse commitment and passion amongst local residents. This will demonstrate to a variety of organisations the extent and depth of feeling in respect of issues of concern and bring forward volunteers to support the operation of the group. 2. Take the national Neighbourhood Watch guidelines and, if needs be, adapt them to local circumstances. Flexibility is key to ensuring that a NHW scheme works for the people it is intending to benefit. 3. Identify a leader with the skills, dedication and time required to ensure a NHW scheme operates effectively. 4. Establish a positive working relationship with the police. A relationship built on mutual respect and understanding is more likely to deliver positive results than one where both sides are at loggerheads.

Eaglesfield Park area of Greenwich, South East London	<p>Formed to deal with anti-social behaviour, the group has been vigorous in engaging local businesses and young people, reporting to the police and founding a problem-solving group with the council.</p> <p>The group adopts a 'zero tolerance' approach to anti-social behaviour and has addressed it through a variety of means including keeping incident logs and providing them to the police and council. The group also founded a local 'problem-solving' group led by Greenwich Council which has produced tangible results.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A group will not survive without regular communication with residents. Maintain visibility through communicating using a variety of means. Face-to-face contact is particularly important e.g. when dropping off newsletters knock and say hello.2. A website is low cost once set up and enables crime messages to be shared quickly via e-alerts. It can also open up communications with neighbouring groups and enable everyone to observe trends beyond Neighbourhood Watch group boundaries.3. Social events are very important for sustaining interest and building a sense of community. Give people constant encouragement and importantly, thank them. The Eaglesfield Park group runs an annual community event and thank you events for coordinators and stakeholders.4. Be confident in approaching stakeholders and do not be afraid to approach those at a high level. Exploit opportunities to work with local businesses, who may sponsor your newsletter, for example, or lend you facilities for meetings.
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