

Great expectations

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Contracted community policing in New Earswick

Adam Crawford, Stuart Lister and David Wall

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Executive summary and key lessons

In 2000, the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust entered into a formal agreement with North Yorkshire Police to purchase an additional level of community policing cover for the village of New Earswick. The stated purpose of the contracted community policing initiative was ‘to contribute to a visible presence in the streets within the community of New Earswick as a means of providing reassurance and a source of security to the public’. New Earswick is neither a high crime area, nor is it an area where there are high levels of social breakdown or neighbourhood disorder. Nevertheless, it reflects the kind of concerns over security and the growing demands for reassurance policing that have become commonplace in many parts of Britain.

At a cost of £25,000 per year, the police time of a designated officer equivalent to 24 hours per week was purchased as part of an initial three-year experiment. This slice of ‘time’ was to be additional to the level of policing provision already available to the village, namely the reactive round-the-clock cover and a limited amount of community policing.

As a result of a number of implementation difficulties, outlined in this report, the initiative failed to meet its stated aims and was subsequently terminated early. Both crime and the fear of crime increased during the implementation of the project and residents’ satisfaction with the local police service declined.

The principal obstacles to success lay in the following.

- The lack of clarity from the outset as to how the resource, namely police time, was to be used and as to the contribution, roles and responsibilities of the different partners.
- The insufficient consideration given to what community policing would comprise and how it might achieve the stated aims of the project, as well as what might support or inhibit different approaches and the conditions most conducive to fostering particular outcomes.

- The ineffective management of residents’ expectations over what the project could realistically deliver.
- The manner in which the designated officer was drawn away from dedicated work within the village to cover for other colleagues or wider emergencies, as operational control remained located within the police.
- The considerable turnover of police staff. Three different community officers filled the designated post and four different police managers oversaw the project’s implementation. Ultimately, this served both to undermine the familiarity of the contracted officer for the residents and the consistency of managerial approach. The very different qualities and skills of the various designated officers exacerbated these difficulties.
- The lack of appropriate formal mechanisms for accounting to the purchasers and beneficiaries for the service provided and the nature of any progress made.

Despite the apparent shortfalls of the initiative, the experience of implementation and the research findings presented in this report offer a number of salient and positive lessons.

Clarifying purpose, objectives and the means for achieving them

- In a contracted community policing project like this, purchasers and providers need to clarify from the outset how the resource – in this case, police time – is to be used.
- There is a need to clarify the manner in which specified activities or techniques are intended to give rise to particular outcomes. In essence, this meant making explicit the practical assumptions as to how and why particular mechanisms might produce specific impacts.

- A lack of clarity as to purpose and method may leave too much discretion to, and hence place too much responsibility on, individual frontline police officers tasked with implementation. This may result in personal traits, characteristics and qualities overly determining the nature of the policing service delivered.

Partnership working

- Agencies entering into partnership arrangements need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different partners and consider the manner in which different organisational cultures, priorities and ways of working may impinge on the development of close or joint working practices.
- Conflict and difference between organisations drawn into partnership work need to be managed in an open and constructive manner, ensuring mutual respect for different types of contributions and the mutual recognition of different interests and values.
- A crucial element in partnership working is ensuring that people and organisations are aware of the limitations of their own and other agencies' contribution, so that they neither try to 'do it all', nor develop unrealistic expectations of what others can deliver.

Managing expectations

- Where there is a limited resource, the aims of the project should likewise be restricted. There are dangers that multiple aims will spread the resource too thinly to have an effect or significant impact and fuel unrealistic expectations.
- Good communication of the aims *and limitations* of such a project to all principal beneficiaries is crucial from the outset (in this case, the residents, housing management staff and other local community organisations).

- Where the public police are involved in the provision of additional policing, there is a responsibility on them to inform residents (or other beneficiaries) of the limits to what they can deliver and to promote support for the realistic aims of the project itself. This entails clarifying precisely what the project will provide as *additional* to normal policing cover.
- Public services, such as policing, delivered within a commercial arrangement may serve to reconfigure relations, renew public assessments of service delivery and thereby accentuate any expectations deficit.
- Managing the expectations of beneficiaries (notably residents) is an integral element in the implementation of any additional form of community policing or security cover. Projects that allow an 'expectations deficit' to develop unchecked are less likely to be viewed as successful.

Long-term implications

- It is important that due consideration is given both to the kind of legacy left by an initially short-term additional policing project and to questions of sustainability beyond the lifetime of an initial project.

Reassurance and community policing

- Where the reassurance of residents is a central element of a community policing project, due consideration should be given to ensuring that the themes of visibility, accessibility and familiarity are all sufficiently addressed in relation to the work and tasks identified, as well as the manner in which these are implemented.
- In the interests of increasing visibility, patrols should be systematically targeted at communal or contested spaces.

- In the appointment of a dedicated officer – where familiarity is a key concern – close consideration needs to be given to the competencies and skills that the officer should possess and the suitability of applicants for the range of tasks identified. In this process, thought should be given to the variety of different audiences with which the individual is expected to interact.
- High rates of staff turnover in the delivery of community-based policing are likely to undermine familiarity, as a cornerstone of reassurance.
- In delivering community policing, there is a need to strike an appropriate balance between the reactive role of officers, in responding to incidents, and their more proactive reassurance and crime preventive roles. Experience suggests that the former, if left unchecked, can come to dominate the latter. Hence, if the public police are to move away from a reactive mode of policing, managers should seek to clarify that ‘non-incident’ time is used productively for problem-solving purposes.
- The implementation of community policing requires police organisations to look to problem-oriented solutions that draw on community capacity and local knowledge rather than rely on the existing bureaucratic remedies available.
- Community policing projects should view the community as a resource and consider the manner in which this might be mobilised to contribute towards projects achieving positive outcomes.

Managerial control and accountability

- Where the managerial control of the contracted police resource remains with the Chief Constable, consideration should be given to clarifying mechanisms and forms of accountability to the purchasers and principal beneficiaries.

Selling/buying policing

- With the ‘private’ purchase of a public resource, such as a police officer, the beneficiaries and purchasers should be aware of the wider operational demands that may be placed on that resource, which serve to draw it away from the locality.
- Police forces need to consider how they can sell a public resource – police time – without either adversely impacting on the wider public policing service or undermining the purchasers’ expectations of control and ownership of the resource as it is pulled into wider public policing demands.
- The provision of additional policing raises normative questions about the equitable distribution of security. This may have adverse implications for those surrounding areas where additional security is absent, and reinforce the idea of policing and security as a commodity available only to those able to purchase it.

Internal impacts

- Small-scale changes to the level of police patrol will largely go unnoticed by residents – even in a relatively confined and geographically bounded place such as New Earswick.
- Projects that seek to implement marginal changes in the level of policing may serve to heighten residents’ expectations without delivering a noticeable difference in the level of patrol presence or policing cover. These expectations may be easily dashed, resulting in increased levels of anxiety.
- The provision of additional security measures may serve to highlight the perception of a crime-related problem and to heighten levels of anxiety, particularly in places with low levels of crime.

The limitations to security and policing as solutions

- The quest for policing or security solutions to local problems of order may fail to tackle more fundamental and structural social issues that may lie behind and inform these problems.
- Simply responding to public demands for greater security and policing through the provision of additional policing and security

hardware may fail to engage with and negotiate the nature of these demands and, in so doing, miss the opportunity to subject them to rational debate and local dialogue.

- Seeking solutions to problems of local order through a policing and security lens alone may serve to exacerbate residents' fears and solidify lines of difference within and between local communities.

1 Introduction

Background

This report documents and evaluates the introduction of an innovative experiment in contracted community policing. Here, a registered social landlord, the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT), entered into a formal agreement with the local police, North Yorkshire Police, to purchase a quantity of additional policing (24 hours per week) dedicated to cover a particular geographic area, namely the village of New Earswick. This was an experimental project in that it:

- acknowledged the housing association's responsibilities towards the security and safety of the residents
- represented an initial foray on the part of the police into the emerging market for selling its services
- drew the two principal organisations into a closer and more formal partnership arrangement, albeit that there had been an established history of joint working.

The policing initiative emerged out of local concerns over community safety and anxieties about fear of crime expressed primarily by residents through the New Earswick residents' forum. Residents' demands for greater visible policing were heightened by a perceived reduction in the police presence within the local area. Yet, New Earswick is neither a high crime area, nor is it an area where there are high levels of other indicators of social breakdown or neighbourhood disorder. In large part, it resembles many rural, semi-rural and suburban communities where fear of crime and concerns over anti-social behaviour are high but not necessarily related directly to the incidence of crime or the risk of victimisation. New Earswick, despite its own particularities, reflects precisely the kind of place where the demand for reassurance policing has become acutely vocal in recent years, but which the police are unable

adequately to meet, given their limited resources and the higher absolute levels of crime and disorder in other areas. This policing initiative, therefore, represented something of a test case for the capacity of the police to provide an additional purchased level of community-based policing together with all the practical and normative issues to which implementation might give rise. This report tells the story of the project's implementation and draws out the broader lessons to be learnt from it.

Research aims and methods

In order to understand the wider policy and practice implications of this initiative, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), the sister organisation to JRHT, funded an evaluation of the project to run throughout its initial three-year duration. The research sought to evaluate the implementation and impact of the policing initiative by drawing together diverse sources of data. These combined baseline and repeat surveys with extensive interviews of key residents and stakeholders within and outside the village, diary logs of the police officers involved, as well as ethnographic observational data. This sought to provide a thick sociological description of the village, its residents and routines as well as the project's implementation processes. Police-recorded crime figures, as well as incident and activities data, supplemented these methods. Questionnaires were sent out to all households in New Earswick in February 2001 and October 2002. The intention was to provide a snapshot of community views, attitudes and experiences of crime, disorder and policing at two periods of time – towards the beginning of the initiative and then towards its termination. It was anticipated that this 'baseline and repeat' method would allow an assessment of any shifts in attitudes and experiences, and the impact of the initiative on any such changes. In all,

548 responses to the first survey and 471 to the second survey were received, a healthy response rate of 46 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Consequently, the surveys represent a reasonably comprehensive audit of nearly one in every two households in New Earswick.¹

National policing trends

Over the last two decades, British policing provision has undergone a significant process of change whereby there has been a gradual reduction in the number of locally tied community police officers. Although resourcing issues condition this trend, wider external pressures on public services have also influenced it. As the processes of increased use of technology and police professionalisation have accelerated, British police forces have been required to restructure along more centralised, specialised and managerial lines. This has served to reduce the number of proactive community officers, not least because organisational imperatives are predominantly drafted in terms of reactive, demand-led performance indicators.

The demand for a visible police presence has continued to rise, faster than the number of available police officers. Furthermore, the demands placed on the police are neither evenly spread nor directly related to prevalence or risk of victimisation. Public demand for policing tends to take one of three forms (Audit Commission, 1996):

- to respond promptly to emergencies and incidents
- to tackle crime
- to put as many officers as possible on foot patrol.

These demands, however, are often competing. Public expectations are frequently unrealistic with regard to the level and form of service that the public police are able to deliver. Hence, meeting

public demands for visible patrols from within existing police resources is proving highly problematic.

National surveys suggest that the public have increasingly lost confidence in the capacity of the public police, notably since the mid-1990s (Mirrlees-Black, 2001). Public satisfaction with the police is lowest with regard to the level of foot patrol. Recent research estimates that police officers spend almost as much time in the police station (43 per cent of their time) as they do on the streets. Furthermore, approximately only 17 per cent of police officer time is actually spent on reassurance patrol (PA Consulting Group, 2001). Most patrolling is not done on foot but conducted from a car, in part as officers are required to respond rapidly to priority incidents and emergencies. Recent research concludes that in order 'to get one more officer permanently out on patrol would require employing an additional five officers' (PA Consulting Group, 2001, p. vii). Consequently, a sizeable 'expectations gap' exists between public demand and the level of policing that the police are able to provide.

The emergence of this policing deficit has fostered a growing market for forms of additional patrolling and security provision, both human and technological. Visible patrolling now constitutes a central element of an emerging market among an array of purchasers and providers, particularly with the dramatic expansion in the form and quantity of commercial security companies.² This new market has provided residential communities and social housing providers with new choices and opportunities concerning the provision of security. It is increasingly recognised by police managers and commentators that the public police are only one part of a more varied and complex assortment of agencies with different policing functions (Blair, 1998). Rather than a monopoly by the police in the provision of security – visible patrol in particular – we stand on the brink of a more complex future in which alliances of public and private agencies and

interests are drawn together in intricate networks of policing. The manner in which the police adapt to this new context, in which their own efforts are only a part of the overall policing of a modern society, constitutes a central dynamic in the future shape of the local governance of crime and security.

One way in which the police have sought to adapt has been to compete within the emerging security market by experimenting with novel forms of service provision, involving financial and contractual arrangements with given 'purchasers'. Recent changes in legislation have enabled the police to generate income by selling aspects of police services including the patrolling function. Section 9 of the Police and Magistrates' Courts Act 1994 (consolidated by s.18 of the Police Act 1996) provides the statutory basis for the police to charge more widely for aspects of service provision. Whereas the police have previously been able to charge for 'special services' – such as the policing of football matches, festivals or concerts – on a local basis (under s.15 of the Police Act 1964), the 1994 Act significantly extends the scope for commercial activity.

The potential of this new-found commercial freedom is being realised by an increasing number of UK police forces, many of whom have appointed 'business development managers' to exploit private finance initiatives. The New Earswick initiative represents one such development that saw North Yorkshire Police dipping their toes into this market to sell additional policing capacity. An intended key element of this purchase was visible patrol.

Reassurance policing and patrol

While additional patrol remains a pre-eminent demand from the public, its effectiveness as a crime prevention strategy has been questioned by research evidence in the US and UK. In Britain, Clarke and Hough's (1984) research suggested that policing strategies of random patrol, despite their popularity, are a relatively ineffective means of

combating crime. They concluded that, on average, a patrol officer in London could expect to pass within 100 yards of a burglary in progress once every eight years and, even then, they would probably not know that a crime was being committed. This conclusion appeared to reinforce earlier American research findings from Kansas and Newark that showed intensified levels of police patrols had no significant impact on crime rates and were scarcely noted by offenders or the general public (Kelling *et al.*, 1974).

Recent research has pointed towards more positive conclusions, showing that the police can reduce crime through patrols where this is intelligence-led and targeted at crime 'hot spots' (Sherman and Weisburd, 1995). In problem-oriented policing, intelligence is used to target risk factors. However, assessments of risk may not accord directly with public anxieties. Nevertheless, research from the US and Britain has shown that, even if patrols have no impact on crime, they can reduce the public's fear of crime and increase confidence in neighbourhood safety, as well as satisfaction with the police (Police Foundation, 1981). As such, patrols may have the potential to enhance community cohesion and capacities of self-policing.

Research reminds us that a visible police presence may have wider benefits than crime reduction and may be more strictly related to providing residents with feelings of reassurance. A recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary report *Open All Hours* usefully defined such reassurance as 'the extent to which individuals perceive that order and security exist within their local environment' (Povey, 2001, p. viii). First, this highlights that security operates at both a subjective and an objective level. In this sense, security is both symbolic and material in that it is concerned simultaneously with perceptions of risk and incidents of harm. Second, it ties questions of order to a sense of place. Third, perceptions of order and security will inevitably be bound to

sentiments of social change. People's concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour, while replete with broader cultural and social references, are located in a sense of locality, people's relations to it and to those with whom they share it.

The Povey report goes on to identify three essential components of reassurance policing: namely *visibility*, *accessibility* and *familiarity*. These are interwoven components of reassurance and constitute a useful thematic framework with which to evaluate community-focused styles of policing. In this report, we draw on each of these themes in assessing the implementation and impact of the New Earswick contracted policing project.

New Earswick village

New Earswick lies on the fringe of York, approximately three miles north of the city centre. The village housing stock is predominantly owned and managed by JRHT. In terms of its national housing stock, New Earswick both culturally and materially is the organisation's most sizeable asset and investment. The village is of mixed housing that demonstrates both systematic and periodic growth. Over half of the houses are pre-war redbrick, semi-detached or terraced, many built in cul-de-sac formations.

Sometimes referred to as the 'Garden Village', New Earswick is known as the philanthropic response of Joseph Rowntree to the poor living conditions of the late Victorian York populous. He began funding the development, New Earswick, in 1902 when 11 houses were built. Since then, the village has undergone a steady and, until recently, relatively consistent expansion. Currently, it comprises approximately 1,150 households with an estimated population of 2,700. Importantly, over the last 15 years, New Earswick has experienced an accelerated rate of growth, such that, since 1985, the number of village properties has increased by almost 50 per cent. Most recently, the 1998 opening of Hartrigg Oaks, a retirement and care

development, further increased the village housing stock as well as the already high proportion of older residents living in the village.³

Over the last decade New Earswick, as a community, has experienced a relatively low crime rate. Most problems have tended to involve low-level minor offences such as vandalism, anti-social behaviour and incivilities. Much of the concern has related to the behaviour of groups of 'nuisance youths' 'hanging around' in public spaces during the evening. This has often been compounded at the weekend, both by underage drinking and the convergence of youths from neighbouring communities. These problems have tended to be very localised, occurring most acutely in the vicinity of the village's common amenities – the shops, swimming pool, library and community hall. Consequently, some residents complained of being frequently intimidated when entering these 'communal spaces'. Thus, fear of crime and disorder, more than crime itself, inspired JRHT to explore ways of responding to residents' anxieties through the provision of supplementary policing.

Changes to housing policies

The role of JRHT as *the* social landlord of New Earswick ensures that its policies significantly influence the social demographic composition of the village. Here, two important processes of change are prominent: first, the quantitative expansion of households and residents⁴ and, second, qualitative changes to the social and economic composition of the village. Importantly, these ongoing changes are occurring within a community that has traditionally been characterised by relative stability with many longstanding residents. These residents demonstrate a considerable degree of intergenerational attachment and personal commitment to New Earswick and place a high level of 'social capital' in the village as a place both to live and die.

The processes of change experienced in New Earswick are tied to much wider developments in national UK housing policy. First, in order to access Housing Corporation grants and also to avoid the voluntary purchase of outlying land by the local authority, JRHT – like many other social registered landlords – has been compelled to expand the development of the village. Second, the Housing Act 1988 set a framework for housing associations to replace local authorities as the main providers of social housing.

In 1994, JRHT signed up to the York Housing list, a needs-based register comprising York City Council and several other social housing providers. This gave rise to a perception among some longstanding residents that it had forfeited control over incoming tenants. This view was most often expressed in relation to the perceived limitations of required vetting procedures, as the following two survey returns indicate:

The worst thing JRHT did was merge their housing waiting list with City of York Council, it was then that troublesome families set about destroying what was once a clean, safe, decent place to live.

(Resident of between ten and 20 years)

New Earswick has, in the past, prided itself as being a better place to live than some areas around York. To reside in the 'Garden Village' was a great privilege for the early residents and the standards set by those people were passed on to children of the village who are now old themselves but perpetuate the 'rules of privilege'. These older residents are the true backbone of Joseph Rowntree's dream of a qualitative living experience and still provide input towards the general well being of the community through various organisations. Now, however, largely due to the Housing Trust's failure to effect a proper vetting policy to prospective new tenants, the standard of people living in New Earswick has deteriorated contributing to many of the behaviour problems one sees today.

(Resident of over 20 years)

The realities of the lettings policy and its impact on the community are, however, more complex than these views suggest, and JRHT retains considerable control over lettings. Though a number of local authority nomination rights were granted, recently JRHT has introduced housing strategies that attempt to maintain a 'mixed balance' of residents within the village. Examples include the policy to sell every second house available for tenancy and the community lettings policy, which gives priority to applicants based on a criterion of community contribution rather than social need. Clearly, though, the broad move to a more needs-based letting policy constituted a definable rupture with bygone strategies when the prescribed vetting criteria functioned in a more exclusive rather than inclusive manner.

These changes should be understood as part of a broader, structural transition whereby the UK housing market has become increasingly polarised, with low-income households ever more concentrated within a residual social rented sector (Page, 1993, p. 26). In this context, the economically less advantaged, and particularly those dependent on welfare, increasingly have found themselves residing within housing association estates. New Earswick, to a certain extent, has become caught up in these wider structural processes.

In responses to our surveys, a number of residents frequently articulated their understanding of these changes in terms of the recent arrival of 'single-parent' and 'problem' families, and tended to associate negative implications with their presence. Related to this, the issue of child density has become a particular concern for JRHT and, according to our survey findings, a sizeable number of residents. During the mid-1990s, many village residents were alarmed by the arrival of a relatively high number of new families that had an above-average number of young children. This demographic change appears to have accentuated many of the social concerns among established residents. The increased number

of children has brought with it not only youthful behaviour, potentially perceived as disorderly or problematic by older residents, but also other elements of intergenerational conflict, particularly in relation to communal or contested space.

Local policing coverage

North Yorkshire Police force is divided into three Basic Command Units. York policing district, which along with Selby forms the Central Area, is coterminous with the spatial boundaries of York unitary authority. Throughout the life of the initiative, operational policing responsibility for the York district was devolved to two geographically based command structures, comprising four local policing areas.⁵ The policing area in which New Earswick was embedded had a resident population of approximately 60,000 and contained a mixture of high-crime urban and low-crime rural communities, as well as two large retail parks. Throughout the initiative, an establishment of between 30 and 35 police constables, and five sergeants served the area. This was divided into four reactive beats overlaid by five community areas, each with a designated community officer.

The withdrawal of community officers has been particularly marked across the largely rural force area of North Yorkshire. During the 1970s and 1980s, the policing of the semi-rural areas of north York was structured such that officers were assigned and dedicated to geographic areas, based around local communities. Though officers had recourse to a satellite station, many simply operated in a parochial manner from village police houses. This was the case in New Earswick, where,

between 1974 and 1996, the same resident community police officer was retained. Significantly, in the five years since this officer left the post, five different officers have been assigned to the New Earswick community role.

Across the York policing district, the gradual withdrawal of community police officers resulted from a process whereby community areas were amalgamated. Therefore, the remaining community officers increasingly became stretched both in terms of population and area coverage. Between 1995 and 2002, the York area experienced a halving in the number of community police officers from 36 to approximately 18. For New Earswick, this was a three-stage process (see Table 1).

The contracted policing initiative that commenced in summer 2000 sought to reverse this process of withdrawal. The designated officer was contracted to spend 24 hours per working week on New Earswick duties. For the remaining 16 hours, the officer was tasked to share, with a colleague, the community policing duties for Huntington, a larger neighbouring area with a population of approximately 9,000. The intention, therefore, was for the contracted officer to manage and allocate duty time between the two communities (population total approximately 11,700) on a 60/40 time-split basis.

Contracted community policing

The stated purpose of the project was ‘to contribute to a visible presence in the streets within the community of New Earswick as a means of providing reassurance and a source of security to the public’.

Table 1 Growth in coverage of the New Earswick community police officer

Dates	Areas of community police officer	Population
1974–94	New Earswick only	2,165
1994–98	New Earswick and Huntington	11,500
1998–2000	New Earswick, Haxby and Wiggington	17,500

Box 1 Project aims

- Provide a designated community police officer for New Earswick.
- Contribute towards the enhancement of the quality of life for residents of New Earswick.
- Reduce 'fear of crime' in the community.
- Strengthen existing links between the parties.

The essence of the contract for additional community policing was that JRHT purchased police 'time' equivalent to 24 hours per week at a cost of £25,000 per year, for an initial three-year period. This time was to be additional to any local operational manpower deployed in the locality, namely the reactive round-the-clock cover and a limited amount of community policing. To gain some understanding of this, the evaluation attempted to undertake an assessment of the *extra* service hours provided by the project. The three New Earswick community officers, operational since 1998, all suggested that, before the introduction of the initiative, the village received between six and eight hours' service per week, although they found this extremely difficult to quantify adequately or substantiate rigorously. We might therefore surmise that somewhere in the region of 16 to 18 additional police hours per week were actually being purchased.

This rudimentary assessment of time is important because it sheds light on the degree of change – in terms of additional policing provision – instigated by the contractual arrangement. Any such clinical judgement of additional time is, however, perhaps somewhat problematic, not least because each of the officers who participated in the project claimed to have spent more than the contractually required amount of time on New Earswick duties. This counting exercise is obscured

further in that the precise definition of what constituted 'duty time' in relation to New Earswick's contracted hours was the subject of considerable debate.

The contract specified that 'all operational and deployment decisions will rest with the police, and the designated police constable will be solely accountable to the police at all times'. Police managers were keen to emphasise that the designated officer(s), as a police employee with wider public functions, remained a police-managed resource. However, for the purposes of good communication, regular liaison meetings were to be held between the designated police constable and staff of JRHT. The explicit aims of these meetings were to:

- review priorities and actions taken by the police
- review operations in the village
- exchange information.

The contract thus constituted the formal framework within which the initiative was established.

Box 2 Project developments: a brief chronology

In July 2000, the contracted community policing initiative began with the appointment of the existing police officer with responsibility for the larger area within which the village was embedded. A Police Consultative Group (PCG) was established with a remit to inform the overall project and act as a regular feedback mechanism between the partnership and the community. The PCG comprised members of JRHT, North Yorkshire Police, the local Parish Council and was chaired by a member of the residents' forum.

(continued overleaf)

Within two weeks of the project's commencement, the first officer issued notice of his intention to take a long-term career break. The post was internally advertised across the force. In September 2000, a second officer was moved into the village to provide temporary cover following the first officer's departure. A month later, this officer was appointed to the contracted post. Shortly thereafter, serious flooding throughout the York and Selby area led to multiple abstractions from normal policing duties, including the contracted officer.

For a period towards the end of 2000, the officer was restricted to low-level office-based duties through sickness and then was absent for six weeks on sick leave. As no contingency plan for periods of sickness had been anticipated, New Earswick was left with no dedicated community cover during this period. It was decided not to be in the interests of the project to introduce short-term cover in the shape of another new and unfamiliar officer to the community role.

The Great Heck train crash, in March 2001, led to a high level of abstractions from local policing duties. The contracted officer was diverted from community responsibilities to provide reactive cover for abstracted colleagues. Soon thereafter, the local police commander, who established the project, was promoted and moved out of the New Earswick policing area to a neighbouring area.

By May 2001, amid growing concern over the second officer's perceived lack of enthusiasm towards the project, the new police commander decided to replace this officer with a third contracted officer, a constable of 28 years' experience. During the summer

(continued)

months, the police commander, writing in a local community publication, attempted to instil 'more realistic' expectations about the project's aims, processes and outcomes among residents. At the same time, members of the residents' forum began to discuss the possible introduction of private security patrols and JRHT agreed to fund CCTV cameras within the village.

JRHT opened new offices within New Earswick with suitable space for the community officer to start and end his shift so as to increase the officer's accessibility to residents. In the event, this happened only rarely.

In the autumn of 2001, sickness levels within the New Earswick's local policing area were consistently high. This led to the community officer being routinely required to cover reactive policing duties. In December 2001, a community police officer working in the neighbouring areas was absent on sick leave for a six-week period. Consequently, the New Earswick officer was forced to pick up a significant volume of his colleague's (non-New Earswick) workload.

In early 2002, the local police commander departed on long-term sick leave and was temporarily replaced. The incoming commander learned about the project's implementation difficulties and vowed to attempt to resolve them. However, in April 2002, JRHT decided to provide the Chief Constable with six months' cancellation notification.

Unconnected, but occurring almost simultaneously, funding was secured, by the residents' forum, from a devolved local authority ward budget to fund private

(continued)

security patrols within the village. These patrols commenced in July 2002. The company (Mayfair Security) was already providing patrols to a significant number of other council wards throughout York. In September 2002, CCTV cameras in two 'hot-spot' locations where youths commonly gathered became operational. In November 2002, the New Earswick contracted policing project officially ended.

Approximately 18 months after the contracted policing initiative began, JRHT conceded that the project had not lived up to expectations and exercised the option to terminate it almost a year earlier than originally anticipated. The initiative, initially scheduled to continue for three years, therefore lasted only two years. As a consequence, the New Earswick project joins a long and illustrious list of community-based crime prevention initiatives whose high hopes and great expectations have been undone by broad notions of implementation failure (Hope and Murphy, 1983; Rosenbaum, 1988; Bennett, 1990).

As elsewhere, there is much to learn from the analysis of the social and organisational dynamics that inhibit or undermine, as well as facilitate, implementation. The following chapter outlines a number of salient issues that led to the early termination of the initiative. In this respect, it provides a qualitative analysis that attempts to unravel the nature and extent of the project's perceived implementation failure. In so doing, this report seeks to draw out 'good-practice' lessons that may prove valuable for future projects.

Innovative developments by their nature frequently provide both considerable challenges to those implementing them and constructive insights brought about by learning through practice. Consequently, the road taken often involves a steep and sometimes problematic learning curve for participating agencies. Given this project's experimental nature, JRHT and North Yorkshire Police both recognised that it carried considerable potential pitfalls. Despite the difficulties experienced during the implementation process, the two partner organisations have continued to work closely together beyond the life of the project in responding constructively to the lessons learnt.

2 Implementation issues

In this chapter, we focus on some of the implementation lessons arising from the contracted policing initiative, before going on to explore the impact of the project on crime and the local community.

Great expectations

Initially, much enthusiasm and optimism greeted the announcement of the contracted community policing initiative. By the time of the baseline survey, a few months into the initiative, 90 per cent of respondents declared an awareness of the dedicated community officer, although only 60 per cent were aware that JRHT had chosen to fund the position. Some 84 per cent of respondents confirmed that they had received or read information about the project, primarily from the monthly parish bulletin. Most respondents (88 per cent) indicated that they had found this information to be useful.

The launch of the project stimulated a variety of expectations among residents, both in relation to the quantity and quality of policing, as well as the anticipated impacts on crime, disorder and the quality of life within the village. The initial baseline survey sought to identify residents' primary expectations for the project, by asking them the extent to which they believed that the project would meet a number of aims. Table 2 shows that a large proportion of respondents had considerable outcome-oriented expectations, with between a third and just under a half suggesting that the project would significantly help to meet various aims.

When asked to indicate the most important of these potential benefits, crime prevention was overwhelmingly singled out (58 per cent), followed by a reduction in fear of crime (10 per cent) (see Figure 1). Beyond these structured survey questions, qualitative interviews with a range of residents revealed an array of hopes and aspirations for the initiative. Generally, these resonated with the belief that the project would result in significant increases in resident reassurance through greater levels of police visibility, accessibility and familiarity.

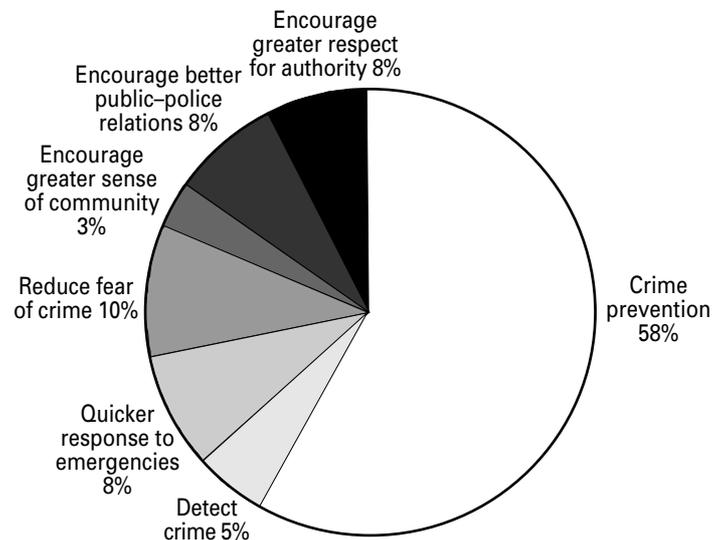
These findings highlight the inherent capacity of a supplementary policing initiative to stimulate considerably raised expectations among residents in relation to what it might achieve. In New Earswick, some of these expectations extended far beyond the narrower stated aims of the project. Interestingly, 8 per cent of respondents viewed a 'quicker response to emergencies' as the most important potential benefit and 87 per cent expected the project to impact either significantly or in part on this (see Table 2). Yet, as the additional resource was intended for *community* policing purposes, improving *reactive* response times was never an intended outcome.

Given the deep-rooted emotional and affective feelings that security and quests for order can excite, investments in novel forms of policing carry with them a capacity to raise false or over-inflated expectations. This is particularly true given the aforementioned 'expectations gap' in policing generally. The search for security simultaneously

Table 2 Residents' outcome expectations (%)

To what extent will the project help ...	Significantly	In part	Not at all
Prevent crime	42	50	8
Detect crimes that have been committed	34	53	12
Encourage a quicker response to emergencies	41	46	13
Reduce the fear of crime	42	45	14
Encourage a greater sense of community	35	46	19
Encourage better police–community relations	46	47	7
Encourage greater respect for authority	35	43	22

Figure 1 The most important expected benefits from the project (%)



speaks to our anxieties while whispering to our hopes. As such, it can feed unrealistic expectations. The fact that nearly four-fifths of residents surveyed (78 per cent) thought that the initiative would at least in part encourage greater respect for authority and an even larger number (81 per cent) thought that it would encourage a greater sense of community, reflects this capacity (see Table 2). More broadly, some residents felt that the initiative would serve to resolve deep-rooted and often subjectively framed public problems such as ‘eradicating the village’s drug problem’ and ‘removing the nuisance youth problem’.

Some expectations were evidently informed by a limited appreciation of the challenges confronting modern policing. Images of community policing all too easily evoke nostalgic understandings of policing, order and community (Johnston, 1997). In New Earswick, the intention to foster a dedicated village bobby for many longstanding residents evoked a vision of the past when the local community police officer was a stable and familiar presence, living in the village and remaining in the role for almost 20 years. This was a powerful image for the community policing initiative to struggle with, and one to which it was likely to lose out.

Forged around a sense of place, residents’ beliefs commonly focused on a juxtaposition of the past and present, or what the village was and what it is ‘in danger of becoming’ (Loader *et al.*, 1998, p. 389). Moreover, within New Earswick, such assessments are particularly pronounced because of the powerful resonance of its philanthropic social history and the high proportion of elderly, longstanding residents, many of who sustain intergenerational attachments to the village. Such residents appear to hold particularly strong emotional connections and ideological associations with the community. These attachments often provoked a heightened sense of anxiety over social change, often expressed as ‘narratives of decline’ (Loader *et al.*, 1998, p. 393). In this way, personal and collective insecurities, articulated through the sentiment of fear of crime, may be moulded by broader anxieties than crime itself.

While it is true that New Earswick had experienced a stable community policing ‘golden age’ within the living memory of many residents, this reality was often shaped by a rose-tinted image of the past against which contemporary talk of decline was contrasted. One longstanding resident injected a sense of realism:

People in New Earswick exaggerate the problems in the village, it's an average area within York ... Communities always see 14–15 year olds hanging around as a 'problem'. It was the same here 20 years ago.

Nevertheless, the capacity of additional policing initiatives to fuel both realistic and unrealistic expectations imposes a responsibility on those tasked with implementation to seek to manage appropriately the scope of community expectations. This involves informing the community fully about the initiative, its aims and its limitations, and also engaging in a debate with residents about what they might realistically expect. Where the public police are involved in the provision of additional policing, there is a specific responsibility on them to inform residents and other beneficiaries of the limits to what they can deliver and to promote support for the realistic aims of the project itself. Specifically, this entails clarifying precisely what the project will provide as *additional* to normal policing cover.

Managing community expectations

Public services, such as policing, delivered within a commercial arrangement may serve to reconfigure relations, renew public assessments of service delivery and thereby accentuate any 'expectations deficit'. Therefore, managing the expectations of beneficiaries (notably residents), with a view to dispelling such misunderstandings at the outset, is an integral element in the implementation of any additional form of community policing or security cover. Ultimately, projects that allow an 'expectations deficit' to develop unchecked are less likely to be viewed in a successful light.

Furthermore, there are dangers that too many aims will spread the resource too thinly to have a visible or significant impact. In New Earswick, the initiative's lack of clarity regarding aims and strategies of implementation (to which we return below) served to foster raised expectations.

The divergent demands placed on the designated officer(s) raise questions over whether the amount of time purchased was sufficient to register a significant impact. Regardless of implementation obstacles, the 'dosage' or intensity of the intervention may in fact have been too small-scale to deliver the desired outcomes. This suggests that, where there is a limited resource, the aims of a project should likewise be restricted.

It appears that, while the New Earswick initiative was a genuine response by JRHT to residents' demands, there was little engagement with residents' sentiments, their appropriateness and how these might be responded to in practice. Simply reacting to public demands for greater security and policing through the provision of (more) security hardware and policing cover may fail to engage with and negotiate the nature of these demands. In so doing, the opportunity to subject such demands to rational debate and local dialogue may be missed.

Good communication of a project's aims and limitations to all principal beneficiaries and stakeholders is crucial from the outset. In New Earswick, a number of misunderstandings about the project existed. For example, a few residents mistakenly thought that the initiative had purchased 24 hours of community policing time per *day* rather than per *week*! Others thought that the designated officer was dedicated solely to the policing of New Earswick. As the following police manager indicates, the police were aware of these false expectations from the outset, though countering them effectively proved difficult:

I think the public of New Earswick, their expectations are too high. Are they expecting to see [the officer] on the street corner every time they go to the shops? If that's the case, that will not happen. There's got to be an understanding that the time he gives to New Earswick may well not even be in New Earswick. So there's got to be this understanding from the public. People want to see a police officer, they want to be

able to turn on the tap and see a police officer there – and that ain't going to happen.

However, the very purchase of additional *policing as a commodity* arising from a commercial contract seemed unwittingly to transform residents into 'consumers' of a purchased good. For some residents, this novel relationship justified and legitimated their recast expectations that a qualitatively different policing service was being purchased. Significantly, this entailed new expectations regarding the manner in which the police would account for the service provided. It reconfigured the police relationship with residents, altering their status to that of *commercial consumers* with expectations of standards of service delivery much greater than where a public service is normally provided.

Two important elements of the changed relationship were evident, both related directly to misleading notions of ownership. First, many residents believed that the initiative would provide them with greater levels of recourse and accessibility to the officer. It seemed that, when contacting the police, they expected immediate access to the officer because, in the words of one, 'he's *our* community policeman'. This was an issue over which a local police manager displayed some concern:

I think people's expectations, if they ring up and report a crime that the community police officer will come and deal with it, which is not the case. And I think that unfortunately there's an expectation from New Earswick [residents] that because 'we' have got our own paid for police officer, that therefore 'we' should get that level of service.

The second dimension of ownership concerned the way that some residents – or at least residents' groups – felt they might reasonably acquire some form of control over the resource, notably in relation to steering the officer's duty time and activities. As one prominent resident suggested:

What we would have expected was a bit naive maybe, to sit down at a meeting and say, 'right, we've a problem on a Friday night, can you be available for the next five or six Friday nights'? As [the officer] says, he is governed by his police rota. We can't pay for time outside of that rota, and that is something I never thought about. I can see the police point of view, but it's not what I thought it would be, it's not as good as I thought it would be.

Legacy and sustainability

From the outset, the possibility of transferring the cost of the initiative to residents, if the service had been deemed successful after the initial funding period, was mooted within JRHT. However, no formal consensus had been reached as to what would happen at the end of the three-year project. As such, there was no agreed 'exit strategy'. In addition, little consideration had been given to any long-term legacy that the project might produce or how to manage this. In part, this was owing to the fact that it was seen as an experiment with an evaluation attached, which would hopefully provide lessons as to how the initiative could be taken forward thereafter.

Nevertheless, this bold experimental approach failed to confront questions over the kind of legacy to be left by short-term increases in additional policing cover and practical questions of longer-term sustainability. For example, would residents accept a lower threshold of policing if, at the end of the project, the additional service was discontinued? What alternative forms of policing provision might be purchased or provided to replace the policing experiment? All implicitly raised by a contracted policing project, these questions might best be considered and planned for at the earliest opportunity. Yet, in New Earswick, they were rarely confronted until the project had terminated. Given the short-term nature of much community crime prevention funding, these are

precisely the same kinds of questions that many community safety projects have to address.

In responding to residents' demands to provide an additional policing resource, JRHT tacitly recognised both that there was a 'legitimate problem' and that it shared a responsibility for responding to it. Having done so, would it then be feasible for JRHT to walk away from its responsibility at the end of the project? This rhetorical question implies that additional policing and security, particularly where purchased as a commodity, may have a ratcheting effect. The more security and policing provided, the more that may be needed to meet the expectations raised. The fact that a private security firm was contracted to provide additional policing cover and new CCTV cameras were installed, as the project came to an end and in response to residents' demands, merely serves to illustrate the threshold-raising capacity of quests for security.

Turning aspirations into practice

Previous research into community policing highlights one of the main causes of implementation failure to be 'the absence of clearly defined policy objectives' (Gill and Thrasher, 1985, p. 39). Neither the formal contract nor the protocol to the New Earswick community policing project adequately specified concrete aims and objectives, how these might be measured or, more importantly, through what particular strategies or mechanisms they might be delivered in practice. The declared aims – to enhance the quality of life for the residents of New Earswick, to reduce the fear of crime and to strengthen existing links between the parties – were not only broad but also supported with very little guidance as to how these might be pursued.

The fact that the contract clearly stated that 'all operational and deployment decisions' were to remain entirely with the Chief Constable and that the designated officer would be solely accountable

to the police at all times largely denied the purchasers a significant degree of steer over how the intended outcomes might practically be achieved. This left the project, from the outset, in something of a vacuum. In reality, this granted considerable autonomy and responsibility to the individual officer(s) appointed to the role, over how these three broad aims might be met. A police manager alluded to the difficulties created by the absence of a clear implementation strategy:

What do JRHT think they're paying for and what do we think we're providing? And that's never been written down has it? I don't think that was ever properly established. When I took over no one sat me down and said 'right, you've responsibility for New Earswick, these are your goals, this is what's expected of this project, these are our targets at the end of three years, this is what we would like to have achieved'.

The need for clear policy guidance in determining community policing processes, notably where the subject of a contractual arrangement, is particularly acute, as the police organisation is one in which 'discretion increases as one moves down the hierarchy' (Wilson, 1968, p. 7). By leaving the designated officer(s) rigidly within the structures of police managerial control, JRHT was able to exert little formal control over the purchased resource.

Yet, in agreeing to relinquish operational control, JRHT could have been far clearer about precisely how it wished the resource to be used. The appropriate place for this clarification would have been the initial contract itself, or an accompanying service-level agreement. This might, for example, have specified the types of activities to be undertaken at specific times and places or, at least, identified some clear mechanisms for determining such activities. It might also have sought to clarify some appropriate methods of monitoring performance and time accounting. In the event, this clarity was absent. It seems that,

when setting up the project, JRHT preferred to defer the technicalities of implementation to the professional expertise of the police, in the assumption that they knew best how to *do* community policing. By way of contrast, it is highly unlikely that the same approach would have been adopted if a similar contract were arranged with a private security firm, a point accepted by a senior manager within the organisation. In a security marketplace, the purchaser had bought a commodity that it could not own.

The lack of service specification in the initial contract constituted a crucial dynamic in the ensuing implementation process, with a number of deleterious practical effects. First, it served to increase the emphasis placed on the individual personality and style of each officer appointed, leading to wide inconsistencies in approach. Second, it gave free rein to the expectations of the residents and other potential beneficiaries about the additional police resource, its potential implementation strategies and outcomes. In the vacuum that was left, the various local audiences and interests were allowed to believe that they might legitimately expect the officer to respond to the vagaries of their divergent needs. As a consequence, each of the contracted officers reported feeling that the initiative had ‘pulled them around’ in different directions. Third, by default, the lack of contractual clarity meant that many process decisions were taken largely through informal mechanisms, often tensely negotiated between individuals struggling to retain productive partnership relations.

The contracted resource – a dedicated officer

The contract defined the nature of the resource as 24 additional policing hours per week, to be delivered in the form of a ‘designated community police officer for New Earswick’. This specification had a number of implications. By securing the provision of a *named* officer, a degree of continuity

and consistency was anticipated, which in turn, it was hoped, would enable the officer to get to know and understand better the particular needs and problems of the community. Equally, this would give the residents an identifiable officer who they could get to know and feel confident about contacting and to whom they would be prepared to pass relevant and sensitive information. Hence, the aim was to facilitate a problem-oriented approach to community policing by ensuring that the officer could draw on community capacity and local knowledge. Simply put, it would serve to generate a high degree of familiarity between the police and the community. In order to facilitate this, the monthly parish bulletin published a ‘police file’ with an accompanying photograph, written by the officer. A housing manager elaborated on how the issues of consistency and familiarity were viewed as key to the success of the initiative:

We’d like a long-term presence of somebody in the local community. I don’t mean having any old policeman patrolling the streets, I mean somebody who is known locally, who is integrated into the community and is part of the fabric of the community. So the idea is for a long-term posting. Familiarity is an important part of the consistency and visibility. People’s fear of crime, I think, is a fact of not only not seeing a police officer often enough but also not knowing who that police officer is. And it’s not just the argument that the presence itself deters, it’s the person, and the knowledge and the trust in the person that people develop in the local area. So it’s not just somebody just charging in or somebody who is not really known, it is someone who is known, who is a permanent fixture, which I think probably has a number of positive benefits.

The importance attached to this familiarisation process must be seen in the context of the high turnover of police officers that filled the New Earswick community role in the five years prior to the project’s commencement. The consequential lack of consistency and familiarity had been key

features of local policing that the initiative intentionally sought to address. Yet, the resultant fact that three very different officers took over the community policing role during the two-year initiative served to frustrate these aspirations. This unforeseen level of turnover stymied the construction of mutually beneficial, symbiotic relations and went some way towards undermining the initiative's capacity to meet its reassurance objectives. As such, staff turnover in the delivery of community-based policing is likely to undermine familiarity and reduce accessibility, both viewed as cornerstones of reassurance. The fact that each officer adopted very different approaches merely served to emphasise the ruptures each time a new officer commenced in the role. The following comment from a resident is illustrative of this view:

The project could have made progress if it was possible for a successful officer to remain in post for a lengthy period. The constant change of officer has made for a lack of contact and did not allow time for sensible relationships to be made.

Furthermore, linking the purchased resource to a designated officer meant that, when unavailable for duty, the initiative did not seek an immediate replacement. Consequently, whenever the officer(s) took sick leave, holidays, attended training events or specialist postings (two of the three officers retained specialist portfolios), the village did not receive its contracted hours of community policing.

The New Earswick contract, therefore, differed significantly from a number of other examples of contracted policing, whereby the purchasing arrangement is not directly tied to a specific officer but, rather, to a quantum of police time (Crawford *et al.*, forthcoming). While the potential benefits of tying a generic resource to a specific person are apparent and logical, this arrangement equates to something of a high-risk strategy insofar as it closely binds 'assessments of the project' to 'assessments of the officer'. In this way, the

personal attributes of the designated officer became a key variable in the implementation assessments of both the purchaser and the beneficiaries.

The significance of this observation for New Earswick was increased by the style and type of policing that JRHT wished to purchase, i.e. closer partnership working and more 'people-focused' community work. This served inevitably to place considerable accent on the personality of the designated officer. The absence of clear guidelines over the purchased activities and tasks, as well as forms of accounting for the 'additional' time, compounded the 'personalities issue' by giving each of the designated officers significant latitude in regard to what they actually did with their additional New Earswick time. This feature of the initiative was underpinned further by the relatively high degree of individual autonomy and discretion that accompanies community policing. Subsequently, each officer emphasised different elements of community work with varying degrees of personal commitment and, as a consequence, both JRHT and the residents perceived the officers quite differently – an inconsistency that went some way towards disrupting the progress of the partnership initiative.

Differences between the designated officers

The wide array of tasks that fall within the rubric of community policing clearly bear implications for the type of person best suited to the specifications of the role. Here, consideration needs to be given to the variety of different audiences with which the individual is expected to interact. For example, diversionary youth work, presenting to community groups and reassurance activities with older people all demand different sets of skills and competencies. New Earswick, like most other communities, is not a homogeneous entity. Consequently, the multiple demands placed on the officer's time by the various groups within the community emphasise that the role required a

highly skilled and adaptable individual. However, the availability of a suitably qualified police officer with all the desired attributes may be relatively difficult to find.

Initially, when JRHT instigated the purchasing arrangement, it was widely believed that a suitably qualified officer had been appointed. This officer was well received by key stakeholders within the community and liaised closely with local housing managers. Displaying a high degree of commitment, the first officer participated actively within local diversionary youth projects and appeared relatively adept at undertaking reassurance-type work with residents. Shortly after the project's commencement, to widespread disappointment, the first officer left the police force for personal reasons. Importantly, the widely perceived success of the first officer appeared to establish a benchmark of quality that the ensuing designated officers found difficult to match.

Nonetheless, the second officer undertook significant amounts of foot patrol and was deemed to have worked particularly well with younger residents, notably in relation to the provision of weekly football coaching sessions, as the following comments attest:

We never have the same policeman for long. We used to have one [the second officer] all the children knew him by name, he took time to talk to everyone, even played football with kids, then he left.

He was a proper bobby. He looked the part, acted the part, talked to anyone and everyone. Spent time with the youth of the village but didn't try to be their friend. But now we have [a third officer] and I have never seen him walking around the village, you only see him drive through the village. You never felt he had a presence in the village, as you did with [the second officer].

Although the second officer also adopted a problem-focused approach towards young people, which included weekend covert patrols that targeted

under-age drinking, he was less dependable in regard to attending interagency and community meetings. For a combination of personal and professional reasons, the second officer left the post after approximately eight months. As the above quotation suggests, the third officer was perceived as less approachable, lacking the personal commitment to the role of the previous incumbents. Shortly after taking up the role, this officer – who held the post for the longest of the three – developed a poor reputation locally and was viewed by many residents as passively biding away time in the interim to his impending retirement. Whether this was a fair or unfair assumption, the officer was less inclined to develop a consensual approach towards younger residents and largely failed to participate within established diversionary activities. Significantly, levels of officer sickness within the local policing area were at their peak during the time of this officer's placement – a problem that consistently hampered his ability to function appropriately in the community police role.

The appointment of a dedicated officer raises questions as to the appropriate competencies and skills that the officer should possess and the suitability of applicants for the range of tasks identified. In this process, the capacity of officers to interact with the wide variety of different audiences within a given community is important. While there was a tendency among residents, and to a lesser extent JRHT and police managers, to lay the initiative's implementation deficiencies at the door of the individual officers (and the last officer in particular), such assessments ignore the wider systemic difficulties within which the individual officers had to work.

Partnership working and interorganisational relations

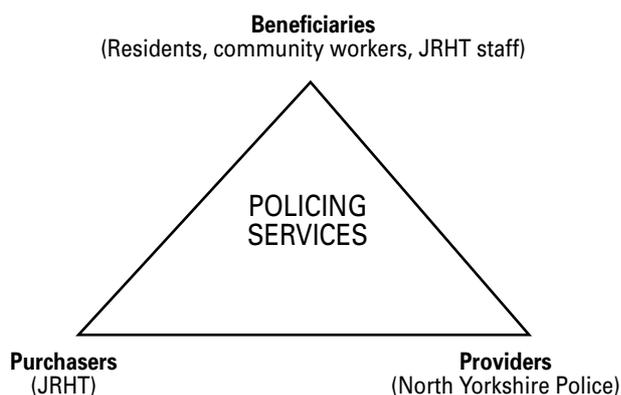
The community policing initiative constituted a formal partnership. This was both a contractual relationship, through the purchase and provision of

a service, and a collective endeavour, through the quest to provide community safety for the village of New Earswick. Talk of partnerships often constructs the parties as equal partners in a collaborative or corporate undertaking and yet frequently fails to differentiate the diverse contribution, capacity and potentially conflicting goals, values and ways of working of the parties (Crawford, 1997).

Throughout the project’s implementation process, differences emerged between what the various parties wanted, their interests, how these might be secured and their relationship and responsibilities to the project as a whole. Like other contracted policing initiatives, this project brought together three different interest groups in a web of relationships. As Figure 2 shows, these can be illustrated in the form of a triangle of different relations to the services at the heart of the partnership. As it focuses on the formal partnership arrangement, Figure 2 does not include a fourth group, namely those people (both residents and non-residents) who become the subjects of policing.

In New Earswick, the residents, while not the direct purchasers, were nevertheless beneficiaries of the ‘good’ of increased policing. This gave them a clear stake in the project, albeit not necessarily a significant voice in its formation. Given that the purchasers wished for the initiative to introduce a resident-focused, less bureaucratic style of

Figure 2 The relational triangle in contracted policing



reassurance policing, the manner in which the police made recourse to residents was always going to be significant to their outcome assessments. Similarly, the extent to which the police were willing to engage in partnership work with housing managers was viewed as equally important.

Agencies entering into partnership arrangements need to consider the manner in which different organisational cultures, priorities and ways of working may impinge on the development of close or joint working practices. In this, the approaches of the purchasing and providing organisations to the partnership appeared to differ markedly. JRHT takes some degree of pride both over levels of consultation and information-sharing processes – organisational characteristics that the police were always unlikely to match or reciprocate to the same extent. A housing manager explained:

JRHT is an organisation that encourages round table discussions. I go to so many meetings that you wouldn't believe, involving people at all different levels. As an organisation people do question, do challenge; they'll challenge directors, they're fair game, that's the culture, people do feel free to question, and it's healthy. We are probably the antitheses of them [the police] in theory, in practice we still are a bit bureaucratic in places. But there probably is quite a gap in how the organisations operate, how they function.

Formal partnership liaison occurred at the meeting of the Police Consultative Group, established for the purpose of reporting and reviewing developments. While police managers were willing to contribute fully to partnership discussions and debate, individual frontline officers seemed to find the required cultural shift rather less easy to accommodate. Public meetings and consultation forums, while fundamental to the working culture of JRHT, were not seen as central to the task of policing for the officers on the ground. Various interest groups, including

residents and other local stakeholders, also requested that the officer attend a range of formal and informal partnership forums and community meetings. Each of the three officers struggled to meet these time-consuming demands, a difficulty that required some degree of negotiation between the partners. This led one police manager to query whether the initiative wanted 'a professional meeting attender or a professional policeman'. Not only does this quotation accentuate the divergent perspectives on the officer's time usage and function, it also draws attention to the *degree of fit* between each of the partner's organisational goals. Furthermore, the awkwardness with which such meetings were viewed stemmed in part from the experience of police officers that such encounters would often deteriorate into a host of complaints and demands by residents. One officer expressed this as the equivalent of 'the police getting beaten up'.

Likewise, the contracted officer(s) tended to perceive interactions with housing staff as likely to generate additional work requests and demands. These could be circumvented if the officers remained in the shadows of their own operational workload and complex rota system. A housing officer offered an opinion as to how the partnership might have developed better:

Feedback's very important – communication's absolutely essential and getting back to people. But also ensuring that you become perceived as part of the partner organisations, you know, so it's about being here once a week, having a habit of coming in, talking to the girls on the desk, finding out what's going on, you know, that sort of thing. As opposed to just responding to emergency calls or whatever, it's about developing that relationship with the organisations. And I think there seems to be a gap between the rhetoric and the practice, the conversation you have with the Chief Inspector isn't necessarily relayed down the ranks.

As the partnership proceeded without addressing and resolving such issues, tensions emerged both within and between organisations. These organisational conflicts and differences require managing in an open and constructive manner, in such a way that ensures mutual recognition of the different types of contributions, interests and values of each partner (Crawford, 1998). Yet, the backdrop to the formal partnership was a contractual relationship with its own power imbalances. In some respects, this placed the police on the back foot, as implementing officers felt a form of commercial liability that was entirely alien to their public service conventions.

Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of, and relations between, the different partners is vital to the success of such a collaborative endeavour. Hence, a crucial element in good partnership working is ensuring that people and organisations are aware of the limitations of their own and other agencies' contribution, so that they neither try to 'do it all', nor have unrealistic expectations of what others can deliver.

Accountability and ownership

The delivery of any form of service through a contractual arrangement implicitly establishes a bond of commercial accountability between purchaser and provider. While day-to-day operational management of the New Earswick officer remained with the police, contractual accountability extended beyond to the purchasers and, ultimately, the community. Lacking direct ownership or formal managerial control over the resource, JRHT managers unsurprisingly sought to access indicators of activity that demonstrated value for money. In this, levels of interagency interaction, visible policing activities and positive resident feedback served as tangible measurements of progress and, therefore, discernible cues for reassurance. The fact that much policing activity is inherently low visibility ran against this grain.

Furthermore, the tension that emerged was exacerbated by the absence of any formal mode of time or activity accountancy between the partners.

In part to address this, a multiagency Police Consultative Group was formed from the outset of the initiative. Chaired by a resident, its remit was to review priorities and enable regular feedback and information flow between each of the parties. It was not a *steering* group, as such, nor did it adopt a proactive agenda-setting role.¹ While these partnership meetings received a good level of support from police managers, in practice, they struggled to demonstrate adequately to the purchaser the tangible benefits of their commercial investment. Direct accounting for the designated officer's activities was limited and, when this did formally occur, it was retrospective, explanatory and largely related to crime-management incidents (Marshall, 1965). There was little long-term problem-solving analysis and little feedback of reassurance-type policing activities. This is not to suggest that no such activities took place during the life of the initiative, merely that the processes of measurement and accounting were not made sufficiently explicit.

The resulting tensions underlined the need for action plans and forms of accounting to be clarified at the outset. In addition, they demonstrated the manner in which the purchasing organisation wished to gain some semblance of control over the officer's use of time. This introduced further frictions because of the competing views over JRHT's desire to steer the police resource, despite the contractual agreement that operational and deployment decisions over the officers rested with the police. A police manager articulated the tension that evolved:

I think it's been an issue of 'right, there was a community officer there anyway, it's just someone else is paying for it, isn't it'? And for me there's an issue of ownership and who's paying his wages. Obviously North Yorkshire Police are paying his

wages, but in reality who's paying his wages? And what does Joseph Rowntree expect from this police officer in relation to what service he should provide them as an organisation as well as the community of New Earswick?

Unsurprisingly, these tensions were accentuated where divergent perspectives were identified between the parties. While JRHT personnel sought not to be over-demanding on the resource, the officers themselves lamented the emergence of two separate, and sometimes incompatible, lines of managerial accountability. One of the designated officers explained:

I think that the Trust felt I was answerable to them. Whereas I am not, I'm answerable to my bosses. And I felt sometimes that the Trust thought that they were my bosses. But at the end of the day I'm a police officer and I'm answerable to my bosses and if they tell me to do something then I do it. Whereas the Trust, I will be helpful and I will do what I can to help them but, if they tell me to do something that I can't do, then I would tell them. But I felt like they were sort of, if you want, trying to order me to do things at times.

These observations raise questions about the role and limits of accounting and control, as well as the extent to which they form a requirement within formal partnership initiatives that seek to straddle rigid hierarchical structures. In respect of this, where a close degree of fit between project goals and each partner's organisational goals is evident, then fewer mechanisms of accounting and other forms of informal steer are likely to be necessary. However, within the New Earswick context, partners were unable to compromise sufficiently in relation to the divergence between their different process expectations. This suggests a clear need for mechanisms of contractual accountability to be clarified from the outset, providing key stakeholders with a clear understanding of the activities undertaken, the difficulties in

implementation and the broader role and function of the project and the police therein.

Demands of public policing versus private contract

Previous research has highlighted the manner in which many local partnerships are reliant on processes of *trust* (Crawford, 1997). From the outset of this project, it was agreed that the provision of the contracted amount of time would be a matter of trust between the parties and, as a result, no formal methods of recording or accounting for 'New Earswick time' were established. Consequently, the provision of the 'additional time' was left largely to trust and the capacity of the designated officer(s), and, to a lesser extent, their immediate police supervisors, to manage appropriately. In supplying additional time, however, the deployment of scarce police resources is structured not only by a number of restrictive organisational and bureaucratic constraints but also – crucially – by the statutory responsibility to maintain adequate public policing provision.

Within the implementation process of the New Earswick initiative, a clear tension existed between the broad generic demands of public policing and the narrow parochial demands of the private contract. This tension was accentuated by two context-specific factors. First, in comparison to some neighbouring communities, New Earswick is a relatively low crime area. Hence, as an area, its policing needs are less immediate than other areas where crime rates are both higher and incidents frequently more serious. Second, community policing focused on proactive reassurance is, by necessity, a less pressing organisational priority than reactive 'crime management' policing. As public policing is ultimately 'incident-led', both of these factors served to relegate the importance of the contracted policing within an organisation (namely North Yorkshire Police) whose primary role is the provision of a public service.

Viewed within this context, it is apparent that the competing demands experienced by the local policing area in which New Earswick is embedded severely undermined the initiative by routinely displacing the designated officer(s) from their privately contracted duties. Police supervisors attempted, where possible, not to divert the officer(s), doing so only on a last-resort basis. However, pressures on the service and the relative scarcity of available alternatives made this difficult. In part, this was due to the balance between reactive and community posts within the police service. One of the designated officers explained how those holding community posts were routinely called on to make up the shortfall in reactive policing numbers, so as to assist in the delivery of the organisation's public service priorities by responding promptly to incoming incidents:

What happens is the duties office look at the number of officers on duty on that particular day, if they're short they will bring in the community officers. We were a resource to them basically.

In this way, the acute sickness rates that afflicted the local policing area throughout a considerable part of the initiative served consistently to pull away the designated officer(s) from community duties, as police supervisors grappled to maintain internally stipulated levels of reactive manpower across the wider policing area. A police supervisor explained the difficulties associated with managing these tensions:

New Earswick will actually get a police officer for 24 hours. They actually get more than 24 hours in real terms, but it's that realisation that I have to provide that. And sometimes that does create me a problem because I've got to balance that against other policing needs, and at the moment the staffing levels here are not right and I've got quite a serious sickness problem. And it's going on in the back of your mind that this has to happen.

Wider resourcing issues, therefore, intrinsically impact on the ability of police organisations to ring fence resources to specific duties for a given time period, even when those duties are privately contracted. This finding demonstrates not only the wider imperatives of public service delivery but also that operational police resources (both community and reactive teams) must be viewed in a holistic manner as opposed to strictly independent specialist parts.

This organisational characteristic is indicative of the flexibility that police resources are intrinsically required to retain in order to respond adequately to unforeseeable public incidents or emergencies.² This requirement stands in direct contrast to the rigidity and specificity that private contracts seek to instil in the spatial deployment of operational resources. It is in this context that the maintenance of wider public policing cover interfered with the parochial concerns of the New Earswick residents and JRHT staff who felt they were purchasing a private additional resource.

Unsurprisingly, individuals within JRHT expressed some degree of concern about this matter. This tension was never adequately resolved throughout the life of the project. The following JRHT staff member spelled out the manner in which their expectations were sullied by the requirements of the wider public demands placed on the police:

At the moment certain questions are being raised about how inflexible the police service is and their desire to take our resource off throughout the area right, left and centre and their inability to then substitute. But if they have a hotspot then certainly, in the past, the community bobby was the first one to get pulled out to go to the murder investigation or cover reception. And it's more important now that we're putting our hand in our pocket for the resources that we get value for money. And if they are not able to supply a substitute officer when he's off sick or on holiday then I think that's a big failing. I

understand there are private budget pressures in every organisation now, so I'm being fairly pragmatic about it with them. I understand they don't have bobbies lying about doing nothing these days serving as substitute, but it seems to be a bit of an issue.

Police forces that enter private contractual relations will be increasingly obliged to consider how best to sell a public resource – namely police time – without either adversely impacting on the wider public policing service or undermining the purchaser's expectations of some degree of control and ownership over the resource. Simultaneously, entering private contractual relations with the public police requires beneficiaries and purchasers to be aware of the wider operational demands that may be placed on that resource and occasionally serve to draw it away from the locality in support of mainstream policing activities. One of the designated police officers was frustrated by the tension that he found himself caught up in:

There's pressure, you know. For example, you get told, you get pressure from here to do this something, this crime wave in Huntington, you get the pressure to go there, then you get the pressure from the Trust because they might have had one crime in the last week, 'why haven't you solved this? You're the village policeman, we're paying for you to solve this, why haven't you done it?', and you have to say 'look I'm sorry but I can't'.

The introduction, in April 2001, of a variable, five-band shift system represented a further pressure towards the prioritisation of reactive policing duties. This shift pattern constituted a bureaucratic attempt to time-match peak resources with peak demands through the adoption of 'overlay' shifts. As a reactive policing device, it further eroded the capability of the police to meet the contractual demands of the community policing initiative. One of the police officers explained how the introduction of the shift system adversely impacted on the availability and accessibility of the

designated officer to residents of New Earswick and JRHT staff:

It has become increasingly difficult to do this job under the new shift system. For example, you get two day shifts and then you basically go on to back shifts, you know 5.00 till 3.00 in the morning, then two night shifts and then you are off for four days. So your time to actually get your inquiries done and actually contact people are constricted into these two days. Of those six on, the last two are nights and quite honestly we've come back and the two day shifts were a weekend, so if you're wanting to liaise with Joseph Rowntree School, you could have something like 20 odd days or as long a period as that before you can communicate with somebody or go and take a statement.

The new rota system reconstituted local police resources across five time-based reactive bands (as opposed to the previous four). This spread available resources more thinly and exacerbated the extent to which community officers were pulled into reactive policing slots. Had the initial contract or allied protocols stipulated more precisely how the officer was to use his time, and importantly *when* he was to use that time, then the difficulties that this rearranged shift pattern created for the project might have been foreseen.

The challenges of community policing

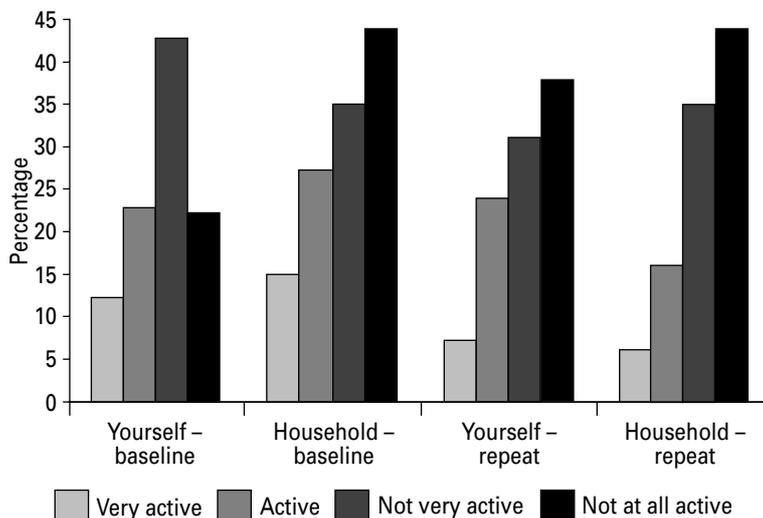
The term 'community policing', as former Chief Constable Kenneth Oxford noted, 'seems to mean all things to all men' (Oxford, 1984, p. 115). Community policing projects, therefore, carry significant potential to generate a mismatch of expectations vis-à-vis the nature of service delivery, particularly in the absence of clarity from the outset. Yet, in its broadest sense, the term suggests a form of partnership between the police and community in a joint endeavour over community safety. This signifies a sharing of the responsibility over policing matters. It is in this context that

community policing is widely viewed as a mechanism that enables communities to better police themselves through the enhancement of informal processes of social control. Within this process, the police role is often portrayed as a proactive facilitating one, working with the community in a problem-solving capacity. Yet, in the New Earswick project, there was little evidence to indicate that residents were to any great extent mobilised as an active policing resource. As such, the involvement and participation of the community in crime prevention and self-regulation remained under-developed. Given the latent capacity of New Earswick as an organised community with reasonably high levels of 'collective efficacy' (see Tables 3 and 4 in Chapter 4), this reflects something of a missed opportunity.

Mobilising the community might have occurred, for example, through greater coordination and liaison work with local neighbourhood watch schemes. Yet the designated officer's involvement both with these schemes and with other residents' forums was at best intermittent. The surveys asked residents who said that either they or a member of their household was a neighbourhood watch member about their level of activity within such schemes. The findings show that, while neighbourhood watch membership remained relatively static over the life of the project, active involvement in schemes actually declined (see Figure 3).

Similarly, the initiative might have sought to encourage greater responsibility for personal and collective security on the part of residents. Crime prevention work and advice in relation to victims, vulnerable groups and vulnerable properties was largely restricted to impersonal communications via the *New Earswick Bulletin* or the occasional group presentation. For example, the crime data show (see Chapter 3) that theft from garden sheds became a significant problem in the village, and this appears to be an area of work where the designated officer(s) might have targeted

Figure 3 Neighbourhood watch membership activity (%)



potentially beneficial crime prevention advice. Community policing projects should be encouraged to view the community as a resource and explore the manner in how best to mobilise community capacity and informal control mechanisms, so as to contribute towards policing and security objectives. This requires police organisations to look to problem-oriented solutions that draw on local knowledge rather than to rely on the existing organisational remedies available.

Nonetheless, in relation to long-term problem-solving approaches, the initiative did institute some positive work with young people in the village. Two of the three officers actively sought to engage with local young people through a variety of leisure activities aimed at diverting them from problematic behaviour. These two officers arranged weekly football coaching sessions, which continued beyond the life of the project even after police participation had been withdrawn. To varying degrees, the officers participated within prominent community leisure schemes, run by JRHT and residents’ groups. Consequently, the project engendered some positive and important work with local young people. This aspect of the project was of some importance, not least because, in the context of crime prevention, young people are often

treated as ‘problematic’. Given the tensions between older and younger people in New Earswick, there remained considerable scope for further work to engage both groups in an attempt to alleviate mutual suspicion and address the reciprocal antagonisms that serve to heighten fear of crime.

The initiative also missed an opportunity to develop useful partnership work between the designated officer and JRHT, notably in relation to the anti-social behaviour of some residents. At the outset, JRHT staff had hoped that the police and housing managers might work closely together by, among other things, undertaking joint visits in order to discuss anti-social behaviour with residents. It was believed that, by working more closely, the two partner organisations would be able to pool their collective expertise and utilise the different levers afforded to housing and policing. As such, they might induce compliance through a partnership enlisting parents and youths in addressing any anti-social behaviour. While a small amount of partnership work was undertaken in this area – for example, on occasion, the designated officer(s) accompanied housing staff on resident visits whereby tenancy warnings were issued – it was neither fully developed nor sustained over the

course of the project. JRHT envisaged that the provision of office space for the (third) designated officer within its premises would help to facilitate this aspect of partnership work. Despite this, little advance was made.

The reactive and demand-led pressures on the officers undermined their capacity to plan for future activities and routinely prevented their scheduled attendance at partnership and community meetings. As such, the New Earswick experience suggests that the reactive role of officers, if left unchecked, can come to dominate proactive crime prevention work.

Moreover, in delivering community policing, an appropriate balance needs to be struck between problem-solving approaches and reassurance-type work. These two aspects of community policing, at times, may be in tension insofar as they often require divergent activities, at different times, in different places. For example, the pursuit of random foot patrols, deemed central to the initiative by residents and JRHT, may be in tension with police notions of organisational effectiveness (Clarke and Hough, 1984) and does not necessarily facilitate wider problem-solving strategies. Increasing police officer visibility *per se*, in the name of reassurance, may not advance crime prevention objectives. This was recognised by some residents when, in the interests of increasing police visibility, JRHT suggested that the officer might spend a portion of time in the local community hall where residents congregate. Yet, some residents viewed this negatively as unproductive in that it appeared to contribute little to addressing the village's crime problems.

The private purchase of a public good – some broader implications

The provision of additional policing, particularly where purchased from the police, raises normative questions about the equitable distribution of security. As this research identifies, a tension at the

core of contracted policing schemes concerns the fit between inward-looking private or parochial interests and the planned allocation of public policing resources. The experience of New Earswick was one in which the public policing priorities dominated over parochial demands, to the extent that the purchasers felt that they were not receiving the anticipated service.

The other side of this same coin, however, is the potential skewing of local police resources to meet parochial interests, as police managers seek to satisfy the demands of private contracts by juggling available manpower. If contracted policing initiatives are to avoid knock-on adverse impacts on surrounding areas, by drawing finite resources away from them, then it is imperative that genuinely new or additional resources are made available.

The New Earswick initiative reflected these broader normative concerns. While JRHT entered the arrangement in the belief that the purchased resource was to be a wholly additional resource, the time that it takes for police organisations to recruit and train new officers is longer than the lead-in time afforded by this initiative. In short, although an additional resource was introduced to the local policing area, it had to be found internally, from elsewhere *within* the police organisation. While the additional funding provided by this contract arrangement could potentially be used to create an additional future resource, the short-term nature of the agreement seems likely to conspire against this outcome.

In the event, as JRHT was not purchasing a whole new officer, the contracted arrangement had knock-on effects on the wider police organisation. It required police managers to negotiate a fluid resource in a context in which measuring and guaranteeing the additionality of the contracted resource was considerably difficult. However, it warrants noting that the New Earswick initiative occurred against a background of growing overall numbers of serving police officers within North

Yorkshire Police. Nonetheless, concern over the issue of additionality and the potentially detrimental effect of the private contract on nearby police cover led one local town councillor (representing an adjacent area) to voice the following concern:

We would never buy a policeman because we know the impact that it has had elsewhere. You can't buy a policeman unless there is a policeman to buy.

This view was not widely expressed but indicates the manner in which contracted policing initiatives may be received negatively by those who stand outside the area covered by the arrangements. A police supervisor described the manner in which the demands of the private contract at times impinged on the designated officer's ability to meet his other geographically assigned community responsibilities:

I feel that Huntington as a community has lost out because of the bought policing for New Earswick. If you're looking at this as an evaluation and from my honest perspective, and not trying to colour anything from North Yorkshire Police's point of view, Joseph Rowntree's have put up the money, and North Yorkshire Police have provided the officer for New Earswick. But if you look at it pro rata, it's for 24 hours. And [the designated officer] will say he's interested in New Earswick and I'm having a devil's own job to get him interested in Huntington. And it's like in lots of things there's always a loser isn't there? And we've got to try very hard to make sure Huntington aren't the losers, which we're trying to do – you see Huntington's a vast area.

This perspective illustrates the way that contracted policing arrangements can be akin to a tug of war between competing demands. Moreover, the marketisation of security, reflected by contracted policing initiatives, conjures up dystopian images of a society in which the wealthy can afford to protect themselves by purchasing ever more policing, thus displacing crime further onto those people and areas that cannot afford such levels of security (Davis, 1990). This was a view that some officers were sensitive about, as one police manager explained:

I suppose what I'm looking for at the end of this is the people of New Earswick to be able to say we get a quality policing service. But then I've got to balance that against Huntington saying, 'well they're getting a Rolls-Royce and we're getting a Mini'. And so I have to come to terms with that as well. And the other thing I've got to balance against is a number of people are looking at it and saying the rich get what they can afford and the rest of us get a second-class service. So I also have to look at that aspect of it as well, to make sure that what I don't do is provide the Rolls-Royce for one and the Mini for the other.

Nevertheless, there are means by which the police can sell time-based services as a genuinely additional resource, for example, where a purchaser pays for the cost of police overtime. However, the dilemma remains that the provision of such additional services potentially heralds a two-tier system that is not dependent on need but on the ability to pay.

3 Recorded crime in New Earswick

As indicated earlier, the level of recorded crime in New Earswick compares favourably with both the greater York area and the national average. The crime data for New Earswick show that 132 offences were recorded in the 12 months before the policing initiative began (1 October 1999 to 30 September 2000). In the first 12 months of the initiative (1 October 2000 to 30 September 2001), there was a slight reduction to 125 offences, a decrease of 5 per cent. However, during the second year of implementation (1 October 2001 to 30 September 2002), the overall number of recorded crimes rose to 249. This represents an increase of 99 per cent on the previous year (see Figure 4). Given the low absolute numbers of offences in New Earswick, significant subsequent changes inevitably produce considerable percentage fluctuations. Nevertheless, this signifies a substantial rise in recorded crime in the village. To place this in context, whereas in the year before the initiative the total crime in New Earswick represented 11 per cent of crime across the wider beat – York North and Huntington (YNH), by the end of the second year, this had risen to 17.5 per cent.

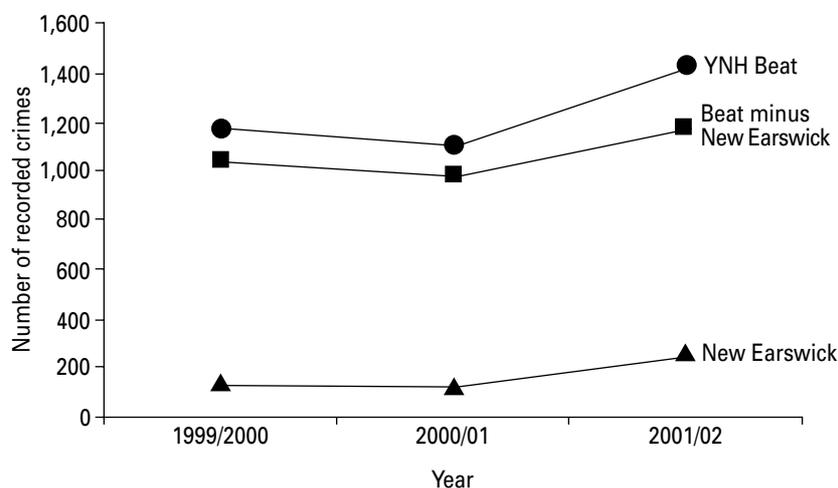
As Figure 4 illustrates, the reduction in the first year of the project followed by an increase in the second year broadly reflects a trend in the rest of

the YNH beat in which the village is located. When the New Earswick data are excluded, the surrounding beat area also experienced a 6 per cent reduction in total crime in 2000/01 followed by a 20 per cent rise in 2001/02. This trend also broadly reflects the picture across York where there was a 5 per cent fall followed by a 30 per cent rise in crime for the two years after the project was introduced. Although these rises in 2001/02 are not as large as in New Earswick, they are nevertheless significant increases.

This compares with the general trend across England and Wales where the recorded crime rate across the country increased by 9 per cent in the 12 months to September 2002.¹ According to the British Crime Survey (BCS) findings (Povey *et al.*, 2003), the national context of crime rates in the period covered by the scheme saw a slight decline and flattening in the overall numbers of crimes. The BCS records a 7 per cent fall in the number of crimes in 2001 as compared with 2000. The fall in all household crime was statistically significant (down 10 per cent on the year earlier); however, the fall in all personal crime was not (down 2 per cent).

Once the recorded crime data are broken down into quarterly figures, we can see that, in New Earswick, the total number of offences declined in the second half of 2000 in the initial months of the

Figure 4 Total number of recorded crimes by year in New Earswick and surrounding areas (12-monthly periods, 1 October to 30 September)



contracted community policing initiative (Figure 5). This may be an indicator of early successes, particularly as, during the same period, crime increased across the rest of the wider NYH beat (see Figure 6). It is, however, worth noting that, given the tight geographic focus of these data and the relatively infrequent occurrences of incidents of crime in New Earswick, a certain degree of 'natural' or 'random' fluctuation is inevitable. After this initial decline, the picture that emerges from Figure 5 suggests that, despite fluctuations, there is a gradual upward trend throughout the rest of the implementation period.

Figure 6 highlights the quarterly pattern of crime across the wider beat within which the village is located. The general picture here, despite some considerable peaks and troughs, is slightly more consistent.

Figure 7 shows annual variations by types of crime. Of particular note, first, is the number of recorded incidents of criminal damage in New Earswick, which declined by over a quarter at the end of the first year of implementation and then returned to its pre-initiative level by the end of the second year. Second, in the first year, there were slight reductions in the numbers of burglaries from

Figure 5 Quarterly total number of recorded offences in New Earswick

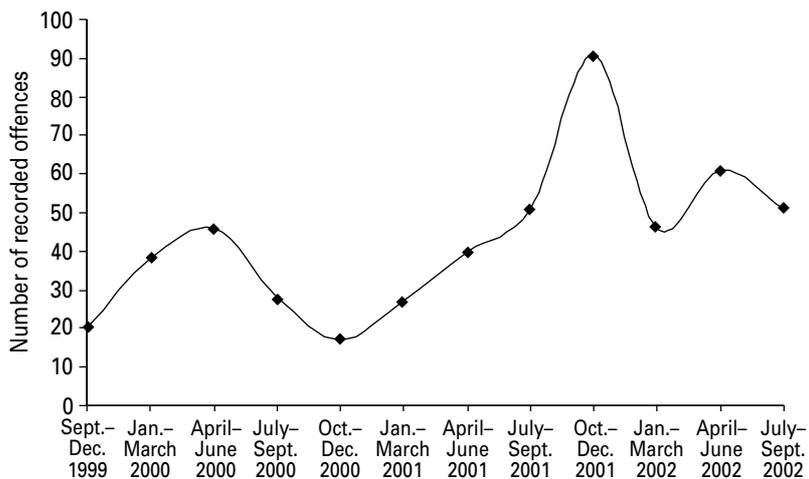
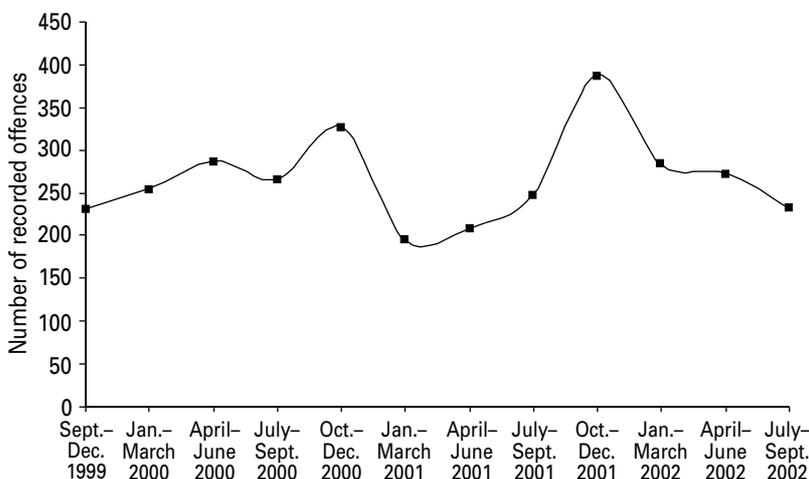


Figure 6 Quarterly number of recorded offences in YNH beat minus New Earswick

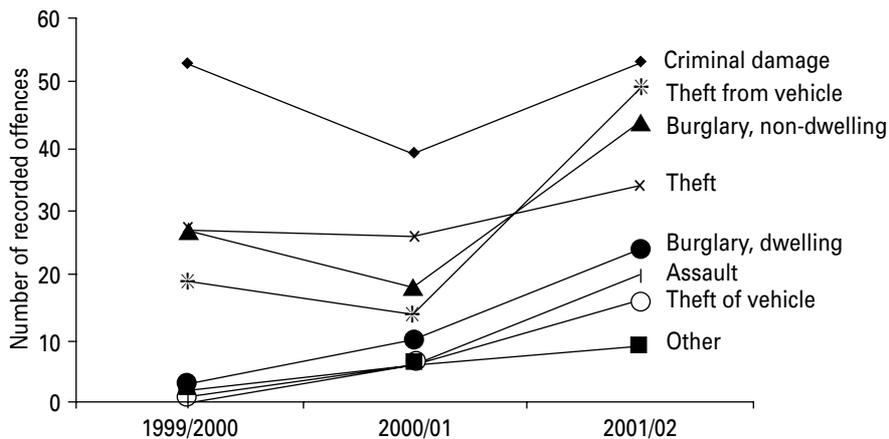


non-dwellings and thefts from vehicles. Third, the steepest rises in crime in the second year of the initiative were in relation to burglaries from sheds and outhouses (non-dwellings) and thefts from vehicles. Fourth, over the two years, there has been a smaller, but steady rise in the number of domestic burglaries, theft of vehicles and assaults.

In conclusion, the small reduction in crime in New Earswick during the latter part of 2000 may indeed provide some indication that the policing initiative was beginning to impact positively on local crime, particularly with regard to incidents of criminal damage and burglaries from non-dwellings. However, the fact that the quarterly data indicate similar patterns of peaks and troughs in

crime numbers across York during the same period does suggest that, while the impact of the community policing initiative should not be discounted, New Earswick was also influenced by broader crime trends beyond the village. Police commanders indicated that the growth of drug markets across the wider York district had a particularly important bearing on this upturn in recorded crime levels. The increase in crime experienced in New Earswick in the second year of implementation, while considerable in percentage terms, still leaves the village a relatively low crime area. Furthermore, the main increases came in the form of less serious crimes.

Figure 7 Variations in types of recorded crime in New Earswick (12-monthly periods, 1 October to 30 September)



4 Impact on the community

The baseline and repeat surveys of New Earswick residents, conducted some 20 months apart towards the beginning and end of the community policing initiative, show that the village has a very stable and socially cohesive population. Four-fifths (80 per cent) of respondents had been in residence for over 20 years and fewer than a third had lived there for less than five years. Nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) said that they had close friends or relatives, outside those sharing their household, living in New Earswick. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73 per cent) claimed to know most or all of their neighbours.

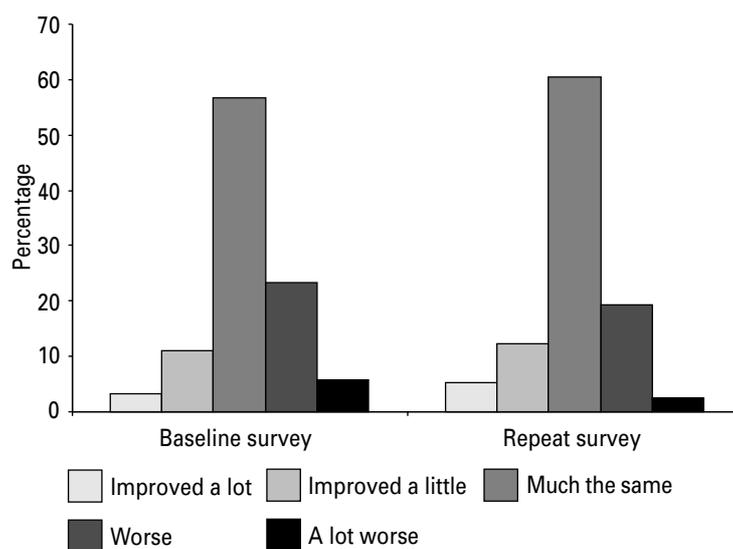
Views about New Earswick as a place to live

Respondents were asked a range of questions to elicit their views of life in New Earswick, the nature of social relations in the village and the local issues that concern them. What emerges from the findings of both surveys is a high level of consistency in the responses, suggesting that residents thought that New Earswick, by and large, had not much changed as a place to live. Over two-thirds considered it a

good (or very good) place to live whereas about a quarter viewed it as a mixed area. Only a very small percentage (2–3 per cent) identified it as a bad place to live. This response pattern was fairly consistent over both surveys. However, a slightly larger percentage of respondents in the second survey (18 per cent) thought that the area had improved over the previous two years than had done so 20 months earlier (14 per cent). Similarly, the number who thought that the area had got worse decreased from 29 to 22 per cent (see Figure 8).

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their perceptions of social relations within the village that sought information about levels of mutual trust and the willingness of neighbours to intervene for the common good under a range of prescribed scenarios. The first set of questions sought to measure levels of informal social control (see Table 3). The responses varied according to circumstances, yet remained remarkably consistent across both surveys, clearly illustrating that respondents were much more likely to intervene than not and that their interventions would be for the communal good as well as for their own.

Figure 8 The extent to which the area has changed over the last two years (%)^a



^a 2001, $n = 468$; 2002, $n = 434$. NB Unless stated, the findings exclude non-responses and 'don't know' categories.

Respondents were then presented with a second set of questions that addressed social cohesion and trust by asking them how strongly they agreed with a range of statements about the neighbourhood (see Table 4, please note the last two questions are reverse measures). Again, there was little noteworthy change in responses between the two surveys, suggesting no meaningful decline in, or disruption to, the community's sense of order. The responses demonstrate an overall high level of social cohesion.

What emerges from the data in Tables 3 and 4 is a picture of a community that contains a reasonably high level of 'collective efficacy', defined as 'the linkage of mutual trust and the willingness to intervene for the common good' (Sampson *et al.*, 1997, p. 919).¹ Residential stability is likely to foster this quality, reflecting the ability of groups to realise common values and to regulate their members according to desired principles.

Respondents were then asked the extent to which certain issues constituted a problem in New Earswick. The three most problematic issues were identified as rowdy/disrespectful young people (38–34 per cent), vandalism/graffiti (35–26 per cent) and drugs (32–24 per cent) (see Figure 9). While these findings demonstrate a considerable level of consistency across the two surveys, the number of people who identified issues, such as rowdy youths, vandalism, drugs and crime generally, as a big problem declined noticeably in the repeat survey.

As Figure 9 indicates, noisy neighbours was the only issue that led to an increase in the percentage of respondents who identified it as a big problem in the repeat survey. In sum, the data suggest that residents' perceptions about New Earswick as a place to live had slightly improved over the period of the initiative.

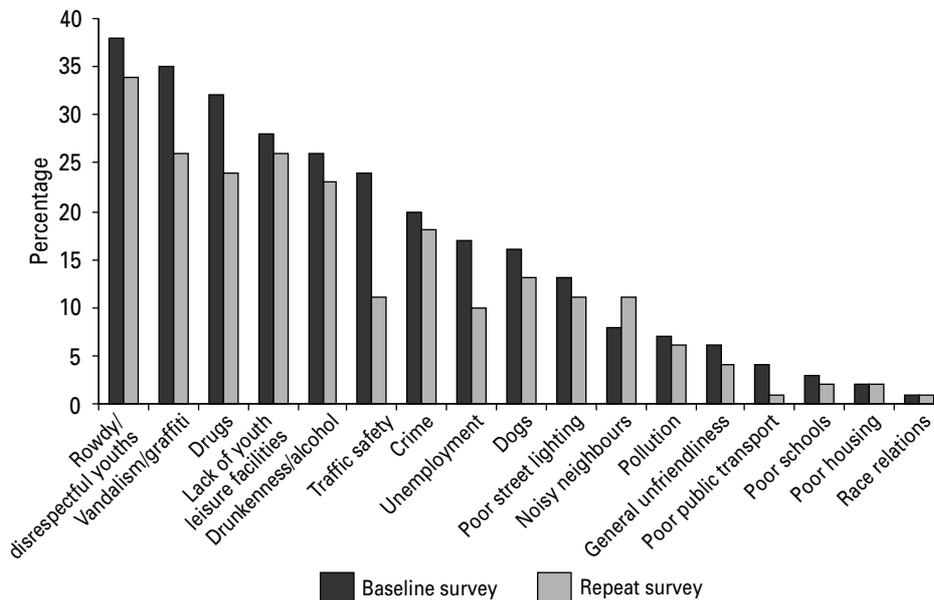
Table 3 Informal social control in New Earswick (%) – baseline data in brackets

The likelihood neighbours could be counted on to intervene if they noticed ...	Likely	Neither	Unlikely	<i>n</i> =
Children skipping school and hanging around on a street corner	(30) 30	(23) 23	(45) 48	(463) 394
Children spray painting graffiti on a local building	(67) 69	(9) 10	(23) 21	(491) 413
Children showing disrespect to an adult	(52) 50	(20) 17	(28) 29	(488) 411
A fight broke out in front of their house	(56) 56	(15) 12	(29) 32	(479) 411
The hospital closest to their home was threatened with closure	(87) 84	(6) 9	(7) 7	(468) 412

Table 4 Social cohesion and trust in New Earswick (%) – baseline data in brackets

Extent to which respondents agree/disagree with the following statements	Agree	Neither	Disagree	<i>n</i> =
People around here are willing to help their neighbours	(74) 76	(19) 17	(7) 7	(513) 437
This is a close-knit neighbourhood	(40) 42	(35) 36	(25) 23	(503) 429
People in this neighbourhood can be trusted	(58) 60	(27) 29	(15) 11	(477) 417
People in this neighbourhood generally do not get along with each other	(11) 12	(23) 22	(66) 66	(477) 429
People in this neighbourhood do not share the same values	(33) 31	(34) 31	(33) 38	(443) 398

Figure 9 The extent to which local issues are perceived as a big problem in New Earswick (%)



Perceptions of crime and fear of crime

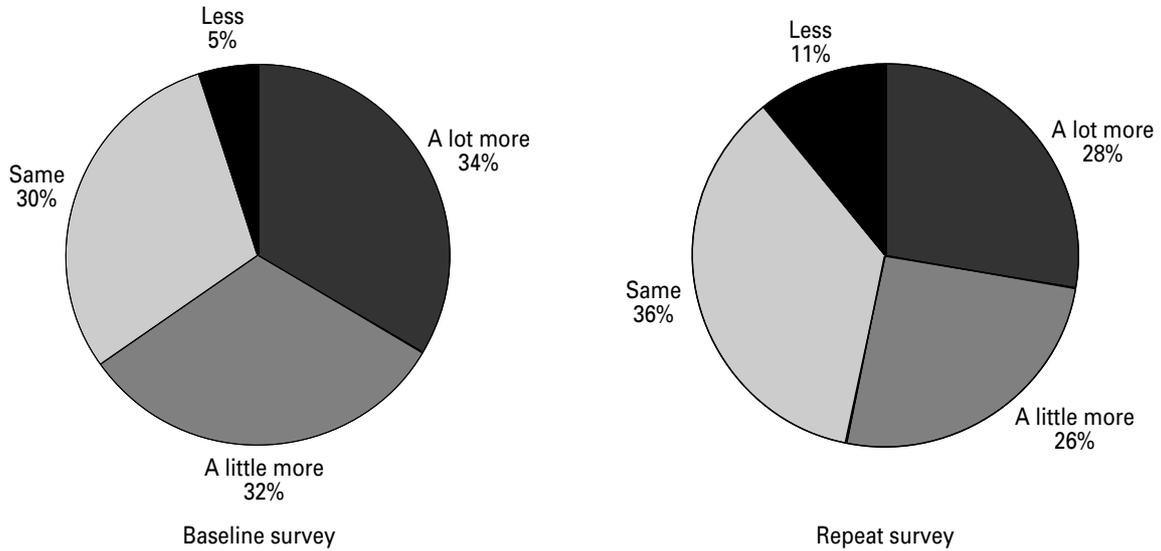
Respondents were asked to what extent they felt that the level of crime had changed in New Earswick over the preceding two years (Figure 10). A smaller number of respondents in the repeat survey (54 per cent) felt that crime had risen than in the baseline survey 20 months previously (66 per cent). This finding presents something of a paradox, as recorded crime in New Earswick, noted earlier, increased significantly during the year prior to the second survey, whereas it had been stable, or declining, in the period before the first survey. Hence, residents’ perceptions of crime in New Earswick appear to be out of step with recorded crime levels.

However, when placed within a wider national context, respondents perceived the level of crime across the country to be increasing more dramatically (see Figure 11). Whereas the number of respondents who thought that crime had risen a lot in New Earswick declined across the two surveys, the number who perceived crime to be escalating a lot across the country increased a little.

When respondents were asked a series of questions about their perceptions of safety and fear of crime, both in New Earswick and in nearby areas (see Figures 12 and 13), they generally expressed slightly less fear when in New Earswick as opposed to other local areas. This would appear to represent a recognition on the part of residents that New Earswick is a relatively safe place.

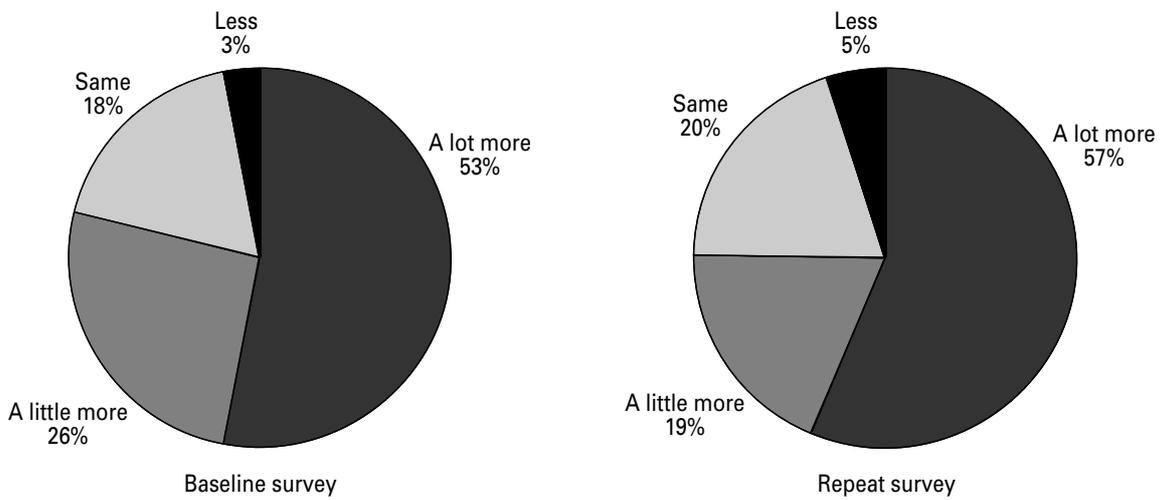
During the life of the project, the percentage of respondents who felt unsafe while in New Earswick increased slightly from 37 to 43 per cent. The proportion of those who felt unsafe outside New Earswick also increased, but by a smaller percentage change, from 50 to 53 per cent. These increases are unlikely to have been tempered by the community policing initiative because, in the repeat survey, only 22 per cent of residents claimed to feel safer as a result of the project, while 73 per cent felt no safer and 5 per cent felt less safe. Indeed, these responses showed a drop in perceived safety since the baseline survey, when 35 per cent claimed to feel safer as a result of the project and 63 per cent no safer and 4 per cent less safe.

Figure 10 Perceptions of changes in the level of crime in New Earswick (%)



Note: Percentages may total more than 100 because of rounding up.

Figure 11 Perceptions of changes in the level of crime across the country (%)



Note: Percentages may total more than 100 because of rounding up.

Figure 12 Fear of crime when out alone after dark in New Earswick (%)

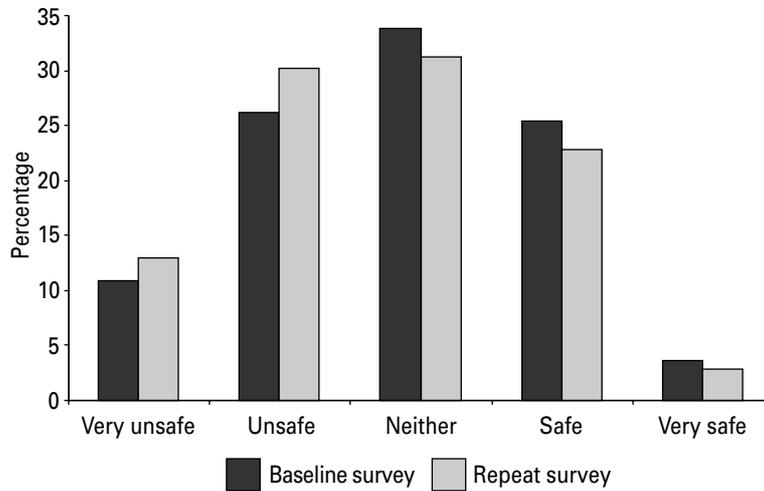
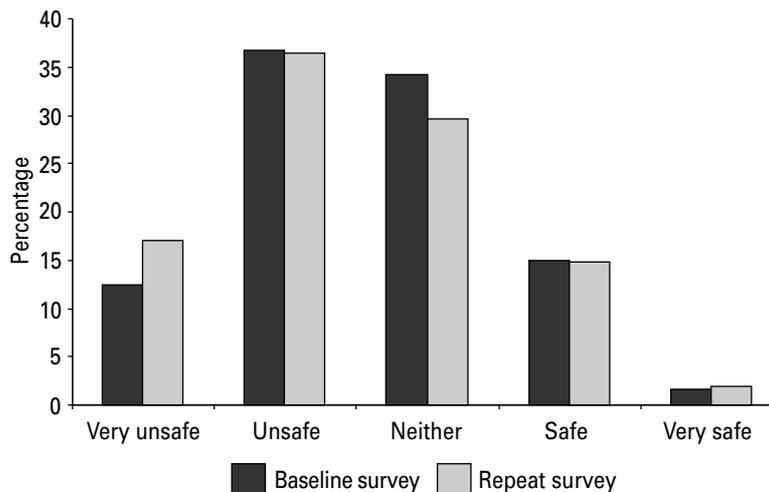


Figure 13 Fear of crime when out alone after dark outside New Earswick (%)



Crime prevention

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their crime prevention measures, in relation both to activity and hardware. Table 5 sets out how often respondents engage in certain activities or behaviour patterns as a precaution against crime. Responses illustrate a significant minority of respondents regularly engage in crime-avoidance behaviour. This pattern changed only very slightly over the period of the two surveys. There was only a small increase in the number of people regularly avoiding (always or often) going out after dark (from 30 to 35 per cent), certain areas in New

Earswick (from 23 to 27 per cent) or certain areas beyond New Earswick (from 26 to 31 per cent).

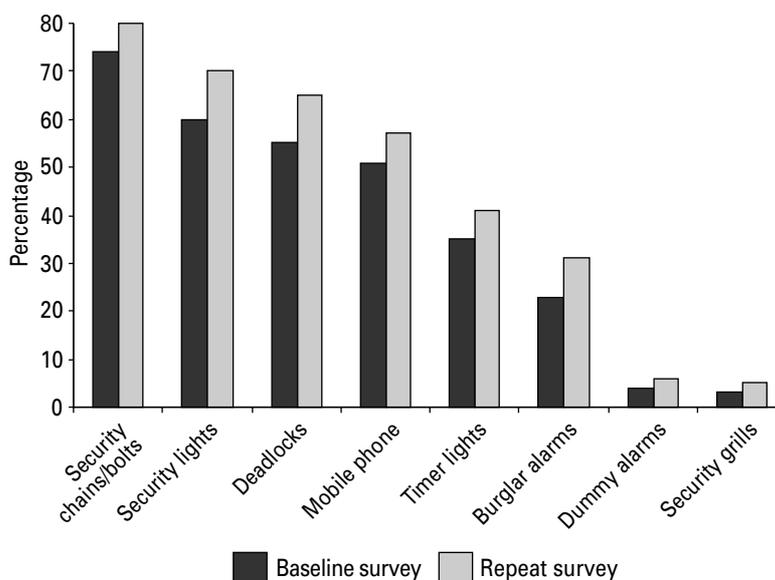
The relatively low levels of avoidance behaviours are contrasted against respondents’ use of crime prevention hardware. The findings show that, during the period between the two surveys, residents became more security conscious with a slightly greater percentage indicating the use or possession of certain measures as security devices (see Figure 14). This trend may be influenced as much by wider pressures from insurance companies, public awareness campaigns and other crime prevention initiatives as it was by the contracted policing initiative.

Table 5 Crime prevention and avoidance behaviour (%) – baseline data in brackets

Simply as a precaution against crime how often do you ...	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Use a car or taxi rather than walk	(20) 23	(22) 20	(30) 30	(28) 27
Go out with someone else rather than alone	(16) 15	(16) 22	(35) 32	(33) 31
Avoid walking near certain types of people	(13) 13	(12) 16	(52) 51	(24) 20
Avoid going out after dark	(13) 16	(17) 19	(25) 27	(45) 38
Avoid certain areas in New Earswick	(11) 13	(12) 14	(30) 32	(46) 41
Avoid certain areas beyond New Earswick	(10) 13	(16) 19	(42) 43	(32) 25
Avoid public transport	(9) 9	(6) 9	(20) 21	(65) 62

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding up/down.

Figure 14 Those who use or have the following as a security measure (%)



Local policing

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their feelings towards the service provided by the police. When asked whether the police had a good understanding of the problems in the local area, 51 per cent responded positively (as against 63 per cent in the first survey) and 49 per cent negatively (as against 37 per cent in the first survey). Residents were also asked about their level of confidence in the police to cope with local crime problems (see Figure 15).

Figure 15 shows that overall confidence in the police declined during the two surveys, from 56 per

cent of respondents to the first survey declaring full or some confidence in the police to 45 per cent in the second survey.

As levels of confidence in the police appear to have declined slightly during the survey periods, so the percentage of respondents satisfied with the local police has similarly declined. Figure 16 shows that, while the percentage of respondents expressing ‘no change’ in levels of satisfaction remained the same (39 per cent), the percentage who felt satisfied decreased from 31 to 22 per cent. Further, the percentage expressing dissatisfaction increased from 30 to 40 per cent.

Figure 15 Local confidence in North Yorkshire Police to cope with local crime (%)

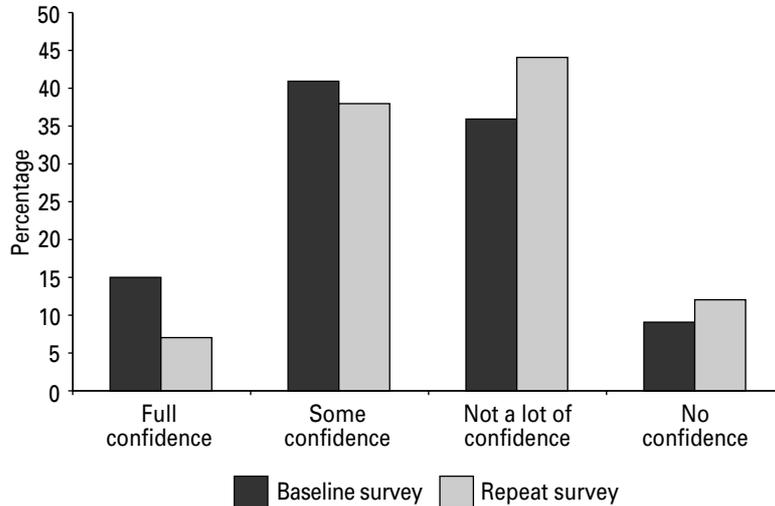
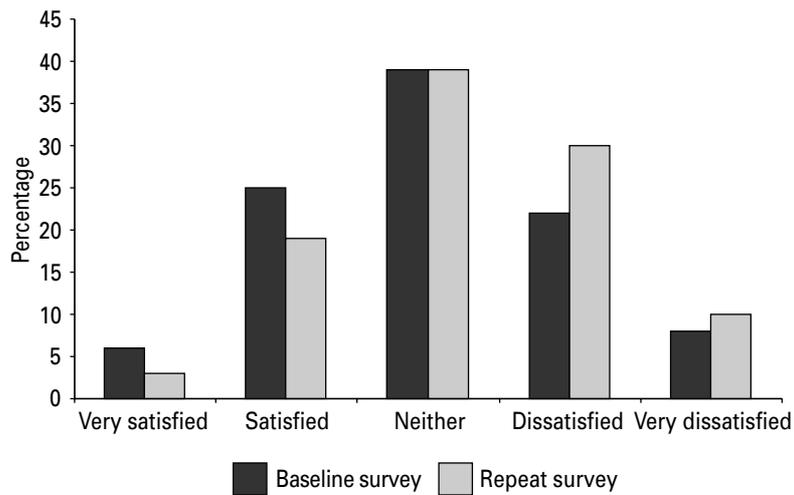


Figure 16 The level of satisfaction with the policing of New Earswick (%)



Reassurance

Providing reassurance and a sense of security to the residents of New Earswick constituted a central aim of the policing initiative. Box 3 outlines some of the survey findings with regard to residents’ experiences of, and contact with, the initiative. The fact that the majority of residents (60 per cent) had not seen the designated officer in the previous year indicates that the additional allocation of police time to the village had little impact on levels of visibility among residents. This suggests that actual increases in ‘visibility’ generated by foot patrols, both to

purchasers and more saliently residents, may be limited unless of a significant quantity. Moreover, it implies that projects seeking to implement marginal changes in the level of patrol may serve to heighten residents’ expectations without delivering a noticeable difference in the level of patrol presence.

However, the data also show that a small number of residents had a considerably higher level of contact with the community police officer and had seen him regularly (at least once a month). This reinforces the point that a policing initiative can have a differential impact on diverse groups

Box 3 Reassurance policing*Visibility*

- 40 per cent of respondents had seen the community police officer in the previous year.
- One in ten residents had seen the police officer on average at least once a month.

Familiarity

- Some 21 per cent of residents had spoken to the community police officer in the previous year.
- 2 per cent had spoken to the officer on average at least once a month.

Accessibility

- Whereas 6 per cent found the police officer to be more accessible, 17 per cent felt he was less accessible as a result of the initiative.
- While 16 per cent felt more likely to contact the police, 10 per cent felt less likely to do so.
- Over three-fifths (63 per cent) of residents had had no contact with the community police officer. This is a similar figure to the number of residents from the first survey who had had no contact with the community police officer at the beginning of the initiative (62 per cent).

within a community, some having reasonably high levels of contact with and others never seeing the officer concerned. According to the British Crime Survey (Povey *et al.*, 2003), on average, 55 per cent of the public have only one or more 'contacts' with the police in a given year, regardless of whether this is their local community police officer.

The New Earswick experience suggests that, where the reassurance of residents is a central element of a community policing project, due consideration should be given to ensuring that the themes of visibility, familiarity and accessibility are

all sufficiently addressed in relation to the work and tasks identified.

Meeting expectations

The repeat survey sought to measure respondents' views of the success of the community policing initiative against the initial expectations (see Table 6), which, as indicated, were raised considerably by the project itself. The responses show the extent to which the project was subsequently unable to meet these expectations.

The large number of residents who were uncertain about the success of the project may largely be explained by the fact that many had never seen (or in some cases never heard of) the community police officer. This lack of impact is itself an indicator of weak implementation. Despite the large number of uncertain residents, nearly a third felt that the initiative had been unsuccessful in reducing fear of crime – one of its primary aims. Furthermore, across all the aims, the number of residents who felt that the initiative was unsuccessful considerably outnumbered those who considered it to have been successful. This produces a 'net unsuccessfulness score', as set out in Figure 17, whereby the percentage of residents who considered the project a success in meeting various aims has been subtracted from those who said it was unsuccessful.

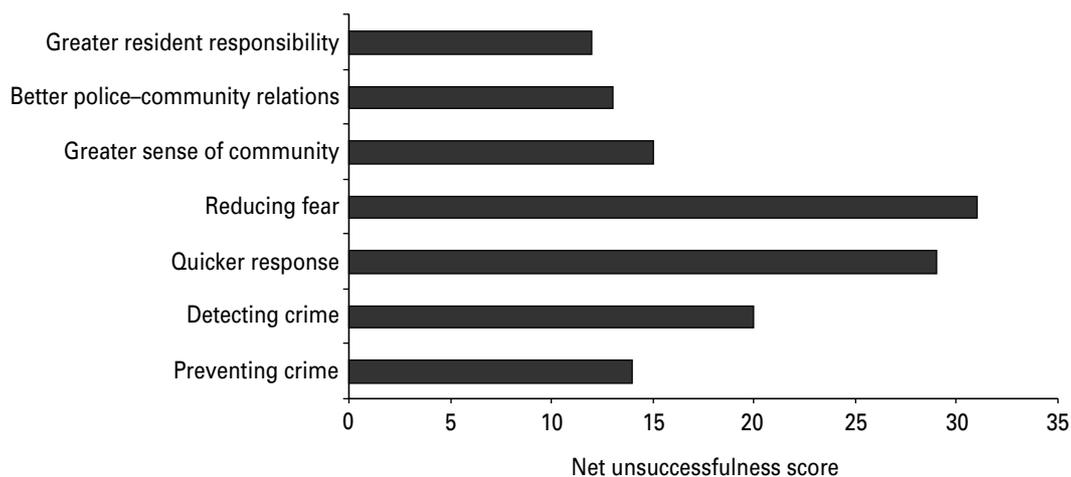
Residents were then asked about their views on the extent to which the project was worthwhile. The responses were evenly split into three groups – just over a third (34 per cent) thought that it was worthwhile and just under a third (30 per cent) that it was not worthwhile, while a further third (35 per cent) were uncertain. It should be noted that, in all the questions about the community policing initiative, between a quarter and over a third of respondents felt unable to make a judgement responding 'don't know'. This suggests that, for them, the initiative had a limited impact, of either a positive or negative kind.

Great expectations

Table 6 Success of the community policing project against expectations (%)

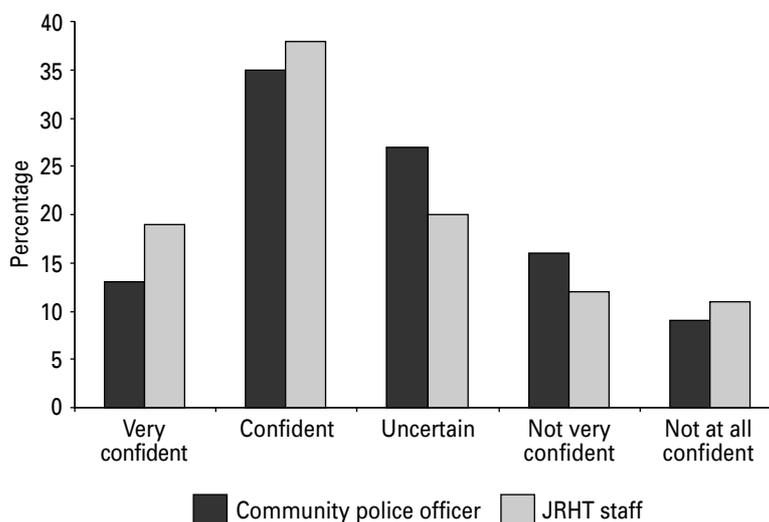
	Very successful	Successful	Uncertain	Unsuccessful	Very unsuccessful
Preventing crime	0	15	56	23	6
Detecting crimes	0	12	56	25	7
Encouraging a quicker response to emergencies	1	10	51	28	12
Reducing the fear of crime	1	13	41	35	10
Encouraging a greater sense of community	0	19	47	26	8
Encouraging better police–community relations	1	24	37	29	9
Encouraging greater respect for authority	0	11	38	39	13
Encouraging greater resident responsibility for crime and safety	1	19	48	23	9

Figure 17 Residents' views on the project's success in meeting various aims (%)



Since the project began, 27 per cent of residents believed the police to be doing a better job in dealing with crime while 10 per cent thought they were doing a worse job and 63 per cent perceived no change. Nevertheless, 49 per cent felt confident in passing on information about local crime or anti-social activities to the community police officer as against 25 per cent who did not (27 per cent were uncertain). This compares less favourably, however, with the percentage of residents who would have felt more confident passing on information about local crime and anti-social behaviour to JRHT staff (see Figure 18).

Residents were then asked how strongly they agreed with a series of statements about the influence of the policing project on safety, crime and policing (see Table 7). A third (33 per cent) felt that they had a better understanding of the demands on the local police as a result of the project, although a fifth (16 per cent) disagreed with this statement. Interestingly, four-fifths of residents (80 per cent) said that it had increased their desire for a greater level of visible patrolling in New Earswick, more than half of whom strongly agreed. This reinforces the point that such initiatives may serve to raise expectations and fuel demand for greater levels of security.

Figure 18 Confidence in passing on information on local crime and anti-social behaviour to the community police officer and JRHT staff (%)**Table 7 Impact of community policing project on residents' views (%)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Increased confidence in local police to provide a safe environment	3	20	47	23	7
Increased understanding of the demands on the local police	4	29	47	16	5
Increased confidence in the JRHT to provide a safe environment	6	33	40	16	5
Increased concerns over safety and security	6	29	46	16	4
Increased desire for greater level of visible patrolling in New Earswick	44	35	14	5	2

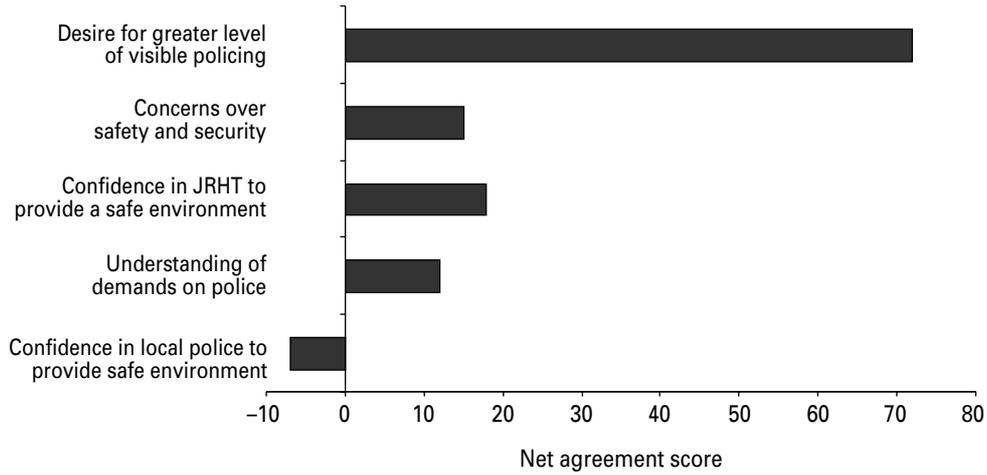
Note: Percentages may have been rounded up/down.

If the percentage of residents who disagreed with the statements in Table 7 as a result of the policing initiative are subtracted from the percentage who agreed with them, a 'net agreement score' is derived. As Figure 19 denotes, the only negative 'agreement' score relates to the impact of the initiative on residents' confidence in their local police to provide a safe environment (-7 per cent). This reinforces the point that unmet expectations over policing, once raised, may ultimately serve to damage confidence in the police.

Visibility

Residents who responded to the survey were strongly of the view that the project had not produced higher levels of visible policing. Virtually none of the residents disagreed that there were not enough police officers on the streets of New Earswick (less than 1 per cent). A third of residents (34 per cent) agreed that the police do not care enough about the area, which represents a sizeable increase on those who had agreed to the same question in the baseline survey at the beginning of the initiative (22 per cent).

Figure 19 Impact of community policing project on residents' views (%)



A number of the survey questions about the community policing project were open-ended and many residents reiterated that they had never seen the community police officer. ‘What community police officer?’ was a common refrain by some respondents when asked to elaborate on the community policing project. The extracts in Box 4 are representative of a sizeable number of responses.

Box 4 Residents' views on visibility of the contracted officers

After a high-profile start, policing has become invisible again. Some success with youths, especially with football on Monday evenings. Too many changes in community police officers.

What is the community policing system and where should I look to find one (or them)?

I have never seen this community policeman at all!

I have only seen a policeman once in ten years and that was outside the fish and chip shop five years ago.

It was a complete waste of time and money. It appeared that no extra resources were made available.

A number of residents with reasonably long memories of the village and its policing juxtaposed the lack of visibility of the community policing initiative against their view of previous levels of police cover:

Having never seen or spoken to our community policeman – we have no idea what he/she looks like or is called, we can't really comment! When we first came to the village, our local policeman was very well known, very much around and about, he knew all local kids by name, he was always contactable, even off duty, and always available to speak to whenever the occasion arose.

This recollection of the past, when the officer was perceived to be visible, accessible and familiar, became a very difficult barometer against which to judge the present community policing initiative. Nevertheless, whether real or tinged with nostalgia, this image of the village's golden age of community policing was a very influential reference point:

Going back about 12–15 years we had a local PC who lived in New Earswick ... there was hardly a day went by that you did not meet him. He was always cycling around the village, especially at night, and I think that is better than CCTV cameras. He knew all the local vandals, troublemakers and had a good understanding with them. I strongly think that a PC in uniform is a

great deterrent to young people thinking of breaking the law, especially when 'he' could 'pop-up' at any time. Let's have another 'bobby' walking/cycling around Earswick.

For some residents, the community policing initiative had raised their expectations, only for these to be left unmet by the fact that they had not seen the community police officer:

Although this has increased my desire for a policing patrol, I have never seen a helmeted policeman on foot in New Earswick.

I feel that the idea and intention of Joseph Rowntree Foundation was to be commended, [however] it has been a complete waste of money. Being an NHW [Neighbourhood Watch] co-ordinator all I requested was an occasional walk around (in uniform) the village to not only show the youth of his presence, but very important that the aged residents in the village could gain a bit of assurance. I walk my dog around the village at least three times a day and not once have I seen any community policeman. I am pleased to have lived long enough to witness a miracle, such as the last community policeman stated that we would see even less of him now that Mayfair Security are operating in the village. To sum up: it seems the more we pay in rates, we get even less service.

This sense of 'good intentions gone awry', particularly because of the incapacity of the police to deliver the expected service, was expanded on by another resident:

Aims were laudable – but the Police were not geared for this. Three different officers in the period ... We didn't get the 'extra' time we paid for and there was no effective way to monitor (prove) this; there was a total lack of communication and I know of nothing (other than the kids' football) that changed from our 'normal' allocation ... This initiative has shown little about the effect of having a real community police officer – but a great deal about the structure and lack of flexibility in the Police Force!

Other residents felt that the initiative may have resulted in a reduced police commitment to the village:

Will this scheme make the local police force even less interested in the village? Conversation heard at bus stop/shops: 'Oh look – a police car – they must be lost!'

The New Earswick experience suggests that small-scale changes to the level of patrol presence may well go unnoticed by residents, even in a relatively confined and geographically bounded village. In order to reassure residents and 'make a difference' in terms of visibility, accessibility and familiarity, relatively substantial increases in patrol presence may be needed. Some residents explicitly recognised this, commenting that the community police officer was:

... not doing enough hours to be seen in the village, 26 hours a week is not enough. Crime is done in the other part of the week, day and night. So more hours are needed for this project to work better.

Residents were then asked a series of questions about their views on policing and security in the village. The responses to the questions have been set out in Figures 20 and 21 in the form of a 'net agreement score'; this denotes the percentage of residents who agreed that certain sentiments had increased as a result of the policing initiative less the percentage who disagreed.

Unsurprisingly, 87 per cent of residents agreed that there are not enough police on the streets of New Earswick. Four-fifths of residents (80 per cent) agreed that more CCTV cameras were needed in public places of the village. Of concern to the local police is that nearly one in five respondents (39 per cent) agreed that the police do not care enough about New Earswick. Worryingly, just over a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) no longer expected the police to protect their safety, albeit that the net agreement score in relation to this statement was -29 per cent.

Figure 20 Views on policing and security in New Earswick (%)

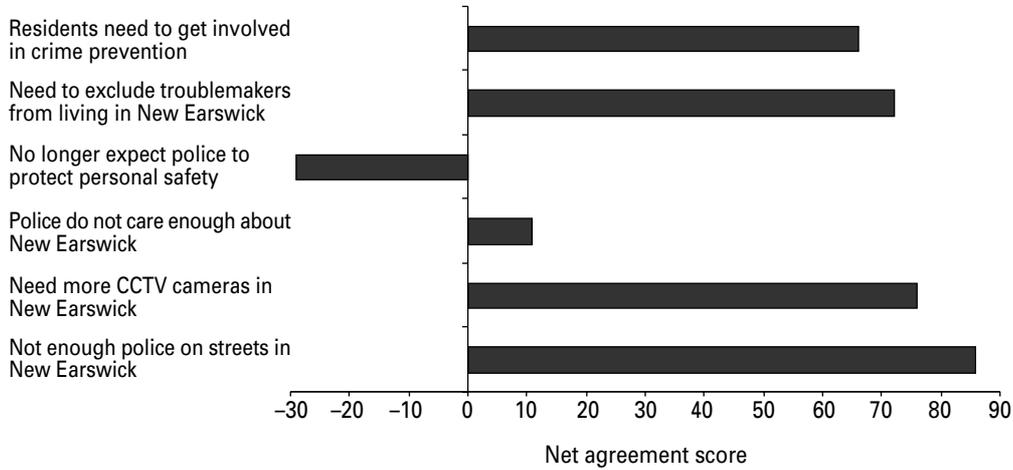
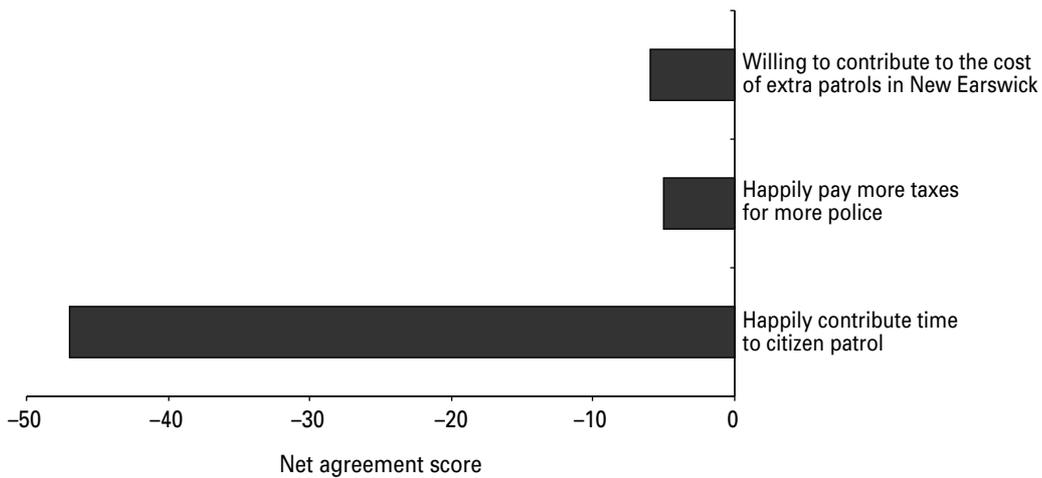


Figure 21 Views on policing and security in New Earswick (%)



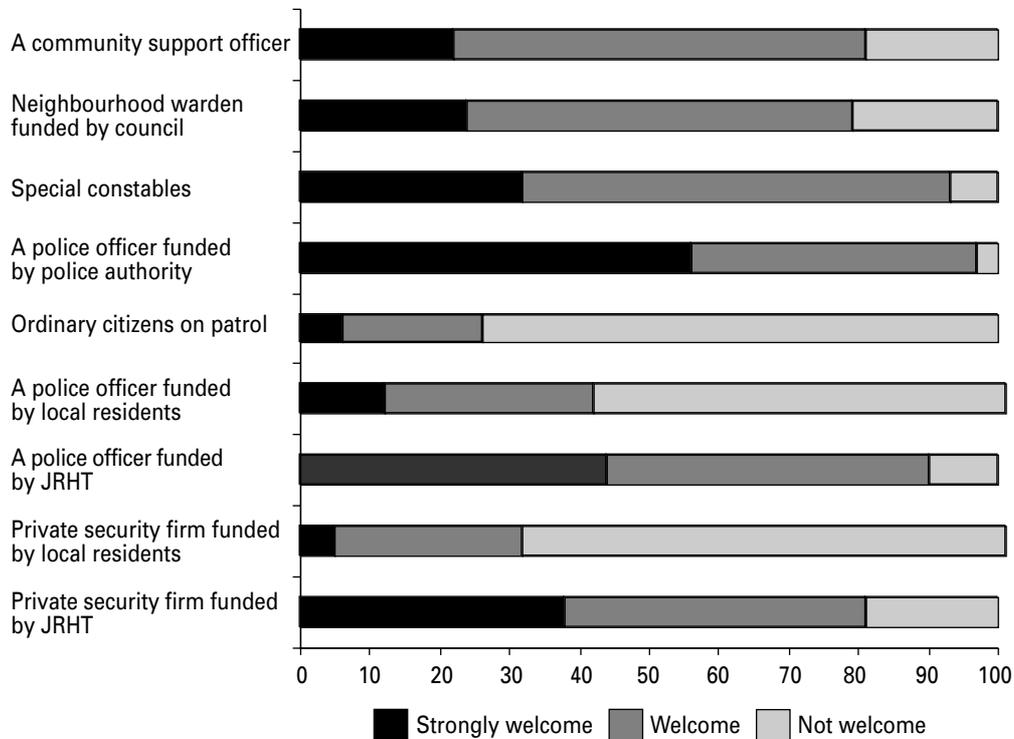
Yet, a certain ambivalence in relation to residents assuming more responsibility for community safety was evident. While 72 per cent of respondents acknowledged that residents should get more actively involved in local crime prevention, the majority (63 per cent) were not willing to contribute time to local citizen patrols of the area. Whereas 43 per cent were happy to pay more taxes for more local police, 38 per cent were not. More directly, 35 per cent were willing to contribute to the cost of extra patrols in New Earswick, as against 41 per cent who were not.

This raises questions about the appropriateness of who provides the policing service and how this

is funded. With this in mind, the survey sought to explore the openness of residents to different possible forms of patrolling presence in the village and diverse potential funding arrangements (see Figure 22).

Unsurprisingly, a police officer funded by the police authority was the preferred option, welcomed by 97 per cent of respondents (of whom 56 per cent strongly welcomed this option). Surprisingly, given the experience of the policing project, nearly half (44 per cent) of residents strongly welcomed a police officer funded by JRHT, an option welcomed by 90 per cent overall. A private security firm funded by JRHT was

Figure 22 Views on different forms of patrol (%)



welcomed by 81 per cent of residents (of whom 38 per cent strongly welcomed this option). Special constables were seen as an acceptable model by 93 per cent of residents (of whom 32 per cent strongly welcomed this option). Neighbourhood wardens and community support officers received similar levels of acceptance with four-fifths of residents (79 per cent) welcoming them (they were strongly welcomed by 24 and 22 per cent respectively). However, three-quarters of residents (74 per cent) did not welcome the idea of ordinary citizens on patrol. Finally, residents were not keen on any forms of direct funding by residents of police or private security (59 and 69 per cent did not welcome these respectively).

Other forms of security

Partly as a result of the early termination of the community policing project, two other security-related developments were introduced into the village in the latter part of 2002, both designed to

reassure residents, address their fear of crime and deter disorderly and anti-social behaviour. These measures were the installation of CCTV cameras in two selected locations within the village and the introduction of private security 'rangers' patrolling the village.

CCTV cameras in the village

In September 2002, CCTV cameras were introduced to the village, at two locations where youths were known to congregate and, at times, intimidate other residents. The first CCTV camera, located on the corner of the main road near the village shops, is a revolving camera on a high mast and capable of zoom focus by remote control. The second has a cluster of four fixed-position cameras that survey a known 'hot spot' for young drinkers in a secluded area between the library and the swimming pool.

The second survey, distributed early in the life of these CCTV cameras, found some considerable support for their introduction. Some 85 per cent of residents were aware of the recent introduction of

Great expectations

CCTV cameras in the village and the vast majority (92 per cent) welcomed them (only 2 per cent did not). Some residents described this as a regrettable, but necessary, development:

Unfortunately in this day and age CCTV cameras seem to be a necessary evil, no one can welcome such an intrusion to public liberty but like the police they act as a visible deterrent.

There were slightly more mixed feelings about whether their introduction made residents feel safer. Over half of respondents (57 per cent) felt safer in the immediate areas where the cameras are located, while just under half (46 per cent) felt safer across the village as a whole. A number of residents suggested that the CCTV located opposite the shops had reduced the problem of young people 'hanging around' in that area. There was, however, some considerable concern expressed that the cameras might merely displace problems to other areas within the village:

The CCTV cameras have certainly reduced the vandalism around the shop areas, but then the youths just go elsewhere.

They only increase safety in that particular area, but then the problem is moved to an area where no CCTV is.

Since the cameras went up at the front of the shops the yobs all gather at the side and behind them (which is where I live). Since then the trouble at the back of the shops has doubled.

Private security patrols

Partly as a consequence of the early termination of the policing contract, New Earswick residents successfully applied for local authority ward funding to purchase two hours per night of private security patrols. These 'community ranger' patrols operate from single-manned marked vehicles with an internal video surveillance camera. The vehicles patrol twice nightly (in the early and late evening)

in the vicinity of the main thoroughfares of the village and other 'hot-spot' locations. Residents are also provided with a freephone telephone number for a call-out response.

The patrols began in July 2002, only a few months before the second survey was conducted; and just over half of respondents (54 per cent) were aware of their introduction, although the patrols had been in operation for only a short period of time. Some residents did not feel in a position yet to comment on the effectiveness of this new security initiative, preferring to reserve their judgement. Some felt that they had received insufficient information about the patrols, as the following resident suggests:

Are they merely mobile CCTV or do they contact the police in emergencies? We haven't been given a really in-depth background to them. I've only seen them on Haxby Road [the main through road] and driving over the field behind the swimming pool.

However, over two-thirds (69 per cent) of respondents welcomed their introduction (whereas only 6 per cent did not) and a third (35 per cent) claimed to feel safer as a consequence. One resident elaborated further:

They are highly visible and make regular patrols (at different times). As I live alone and work a three shift system they are a comfort, i.e. I know they are around.

A small number of residents who had seen the private security patrols and were aware of their working patterns had some observations about their deployment:

It is early days but their visible presence is a reassurance. It would be good to see them walking around buildings rather than just driving around and seeing from the road.

Others commented that the private security officers seemed unwilling to get out of their vehicles to intervene:

From what I've seen they have not got the patrols working well, because just riding around the village in certain areas without stopping to see if there are problems. So round the Folk Hall, library and swimming pool area it takes them two minutes then back on the main road. Doesn't seem to be a very effective job.

A few residents were concerned about the possible displacement of problems from the main roads to other areas within the village:

I think this is a good idea as long as they patrol the whole village, and not just the troubled area. Otherwise this will push the crime to the outer edges of the village.

Some residents trusted less in private security officers than in the police; others felt that their introduction was a sad reflection of the state of public policing generally and the failure of the community policing project specifically:

It is a sorry state of affairs when private security has to be introduced, it really is the job of the police to patrol, and ensure the safety of residents. Lack of funding, restrictions of budgets, government funding are to blame, 'police' should be doing their job.

Interestingly, it seems as though the purchase of public policing had not only raised expectations of what the police should deliver in the context of a commercial relationship, but also introduced residents to the very idea of policing as a commodity.

Perceived causes of disorder problems

A number of residents in different ways expressed views about the appropriateness of focusing on police and security solutions to the issues facing the village. Some felt that addressing the problems in New Earswick from a policing perspective was akin to dealing with symptoms and not causes. Some residents identified the disorder problems of a minority of young people as a consequence of poor parenting:

Policing should start with the parents, kids from around six years of age are allowed to hang around street corners and the shops until all hours sometimes as late as midnight. We should be dealing with the root cause, not the by-product, if the parents do not control their kids then they should themselves be dealt with.

More than three-quarters of survey respondents (78 per cent) agreed with the 'need to exclude the troublemakers from living in New Earswick', a recurring theme throughout the research. As suggested previously, a number of residents felt strongly that the cause of the disorder problems in the village stemmed from changes to JRHT's housing allocation policies:

It is the responsibility of JRHT to ensure that troublemakers are not imported into New Earswick. They are too even-handed with troublesome families ... Eviction or prosecution is always a more certain way to stop bad behaviour.

The problem does not rest entirely with the police and security measures. The policy of the JRHT over the allocation has a part in the overall picture which requires attention. The need for a correctly balanced policy of allocation is important.

Two years ago I felt reasonably safe living in this village, I no longer do. It would appear more families with social problems chiefly behavioural have become tenants, I blame JRHT and not the police for what is occurring. The management of the Trust no longer care about the type of resident they admit into this village.

From the above, it seems that there is a need to address and engage with the perceived problems identified by residents about a minority of troublesome youths within the village. Otherwise there is a danger that offering policing and security solutions may harden attitudes and perceptions, as well as exacerbate residents' fears and encourage greater intolerance.

5 Conclusions

The research clearly suggests that, before implementing community-based crime prevention and reassurance policing programmes, much consideration needs to be given to the mechanisms that are assumed to bring about change, as well as to an understanding of the conditions most conducive to fostering that change. In essence, this means theorising the transformative potential of interventions, or, at least, making explicit the assumptions as to how and why a particular mechanism might produce specific outcomes.

Hence, if a contracted community policing initiative is premised on an assumption that increased police visibility, familiarity and accessibility will produce greater reassurance, this overt theorisation allows implementers and evaluators to pose appropriate questions to guide both processes of implementation and evaluation. For example, where should patrolling be targeted so as to maximise visibility? How much increased patrol presence might be required for it to be noticed? What non-patrol activities (such as attending meetings or engaging with certain residents' security needs) might maximise visibility? What are the constraints and benefits of familiarity? How might familiarity be enhanced? How should greater accessibility be facilitated without congesting the resources such that they are unable to pursue proactive functions? As communities are made of different audiences and interest groups, with regard to whom should accessibility be prioritised? Accessibility may need to be encouraged among particularly hard-to-reach groups as against those more organised and vocal groups or individuals.

- *Visibility*: the research suggests that small-scale changes to the level of patrol presence will largely go unnoticed by residents, even in a relatively confined and geographically bounded place such as New Earswick. Projects that seek to implement marginal changes in the level of policing may serve to heighten residents'

expectations without delivering a noticeable difference in the level of patrol presence or policing cover. These expectations may easily be dashed, resulting in increased levels of anxiety.

- *Familiarity*: familiarity on the part of police officers, or any other policing personnel, with the people and places being policed is important in order that they understand and respond appropriately to local problems. Local knowledge, combined with the capacity to draw on local resources are key elements in community-based policing initiatives. Familiarity is a means of tapping local knowledge and capacity. Reinforcing familiarity can enhance locally grounded, problem-oriented solutions. And, yet, there is an ambiguity within familiarity, in that, the more attached to the community, or segments of it, policing agents are, the less likely they are to hold the required 'detached stance', which constitutes a central value in establishing policing neutrality, equity and legitimacy.
- *Accessibility*: the ability to demand a particular service usually skews distribution away from need, as the loudest voices with the largest influence will normally succeed in accessing policing in response to their anxieties. The experience from this research is that some of the officers were more accessible than others. Some officers considered this to be a more or less relevant aspect of their role. Furthermore, some officers were more accessible to different groups among the residents of the village. In part, this related to the different personal skills and occupational experiences that different officers were able to draw on, notably with regard to communication skills. One officer, for example, was particularly good at presenting at meetings and in interacting with the older population, while another officer was good at working and communicating with younger people.

This research suggests that programme designers need to substantiate and clarify, from the outset, the mechanisms to be deployed and the underlying conjectures or hypotheses about their relations to anticipated outcomes. Lack of clarity can foster unrealistic expectations.

Crime and fear of crime as the focus for community interventions raise a number of dangers. First, the provision of additional security measures and additional policing cover may serve to heighten levels of anxiety, particularly in places with low levels of crime. Expectations with regard to security, once raised, become hard to lower. The quest for security may not only be elusive, but also give rise to novel demands.

Second, the association of insecurity with disorder means that crime-related initiatives have the capacity to stigmatise people and localities. The purchase of additional policing cover may suggest a place to be disorderly both to its inhabitants and outsiders. But it can serve to remind people that there is a perceived problem to which policing is the preferred solution. Publicity can exacerbate this perception. Yet, while this was not necessarily the

case in New Earswick, with its history of relatively low levels of crime, publicity may serve to compound perceptions, particularly where places have already developed reputations for higher than normal levels of crime or disorder.

Third, given the capacity of both crime and policing to excite fears and anxieties, they may not automatically be the most appropriate vehicles in isolation around which to organise open, tolerant and inclusive communities. The quest for policing or security solutions to local problems of order may in fact fail to tackle the more fundamental and structural social issues that often lie behind and inform these problems. Simply responding to public demands for greater security and policing through the provision of more security hardware and policing cover may also fail to engage with and negotiate the nature of these demands and, in so doing, miss the opportunity to subject them to rational debate and local dialogue. Furthermore, seeking solutions to problems of local order through a policing lens alone may serve to exacerbate residents' fears and solidify lines of difference within and between local communities.

Notes

Chapter 1

- 1 Over half of all respondents to the second survey said that they personally remembered having completed the first survey and only 17 per cent said that they knew that the first survey had not been returned by anyone in the household. This suggests a high level of consistency of the respondent population across the two surveys, implying a strong degree of 'internal validity' with regard to comparisons between the surveys.
- 2 According to the British Security Industry Authority (2001), the turnover in the field of staffed security services (excluding in-house security) was estimated to be £1,678 million in 2001. There are an estimated 2,000 staffed security companies, employing an estimated 125,000 security officers. Most of these are employed in the retail sector but the market for residential patrols is one of considerable future growth.
- 3 The 1991 census indicates that 42.7 per cent of New Earswick properties housed one or more persons of pensionable age. This compares to the York average of 35 per cent.
- 4 The 1991 census indicated the population to be 2,161. We estimate this to have risen to approximately 2,700 (an estimated increase over the last ten years of 25 per cent). In terms of ethnicity, the 1991 census indicated that over 99 per cent of residents were white. Our survey findings suggest this ethnic balance remained much the same in 2002.
- 5 In April 2001, this devolved policing structure was abandoned and recentralised. This organisational restructuring was in part motivated by recognition of the difficulties in maintaining an appropriate balance between reactive and community resources within the existing police structures.

Chapter 2

- 1 This reflects findings from research into Police Consultative Groups around the country (Morgan and Corbett, 1989).
- 2 During the life of the project, this was dramatically illustrated by two major incidents that occurred in the police area in which New Earswick is located. The York and Selby floods of 2000 and the Great Heck train crash of 2001 both drew on massive amounts of police resources over the short term. This disturbed the planned allocation of resources across the local and wider policing area with a significant and detrimental impact on the capability of the police to meet their obligations under the New Earswick contract, as the designated officer was pulled away from the village.

Chapter 3

- 1 This period witnessed notable changes in police recording practices as a result of the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard. After accounting for these, Home Office sources suggest that the real increase is estimated to be 2 per cent (Povey *et al.*, 2003, p. 1).

Chapter 4

- 1 In their study of residents in Chicago, Sampson *et al.* (1997) found that rates of violence were lower in urban neighbourhoods characterised by 'collective efficacy'. They found that, in those neighbourhoods scoring high on 'collective efficacy', crime rates were 40 per cent below those in lower scoring ones. They went on to suggest that the impact of 'collective efficacy' is enhanced if it articulates with the efforts of crime control agencies. Intervention, they conclude, should focus on those social and economic factors that foster the development of 'collective efficacy'.

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