

## **SIPR CONFERENCE SPEECH**

### **MUNICIPAL POLICING**

**Dan Donnelly**

In the short time available I hope to give a very brief insight into Municipal Policing in Scotland and a short update on recent research into Community Wardens in Scotland funded by the Carnegie Trust for Scotland.

What is municipal policing ? Well for our purposes it tends to be a partnership of police and local government and increasingly the private sector. It covers a wide range of functions in addition to crime prevention and public order – it's involved in reducing the fear of crime, reassuring the public and improving community wellbeing.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there has always been a relationship of police, local government and its communities but it was only in the second half of the century that crime became a problem – for example :

In the 8 year period between 1954 and 1962 there was an increase of 94% in housebreakings - the overall crime rate went up by 65% and there was a 100% increase in robbery and violent crime guaranteed to water the eye of any chief constable.

Something had to be done – drastic action was needed – so first to go was Dixon of Dock Green he got the boot !! Beat officers were not delivering the goods ! We introduced police motor cars, better radio systems, new technology and computers. But crime kept rising and politicians and public became impatient. We began to have public order problems and complaints against the police increased significantly.

So it was that in the 1970s and 1980s society realized that some of the fundamentals had been missed for example :

That we are all responsible for crime – not just the police

The police cannot do the job alone we need partners

The main partners must be the public and local government

We also need assistance from the private and voluntary sectors

We cannot do this without finance and support from Government

So began the strategic partnerships with local government; consultation and community liaison; community policing and focused crime prevention.

So this route has now taken us to the present day when we are witnessing a trend towards the enforcement work of sworn police officers being entrusted to locally employed auxiliary wardens and support officers, empowered to tackle low level crime and offences which traditionally, due to lack of resources the police have failed to do. There are many titles and labels for this new army of municipal soldiers - they range from anti-social behaviour and environmental officers, community safety and support officers to community wardens and park rangers. We also have investigative officers, case management officers and statement taking officers – work that was once the sole domain of the police officer.

The private sector also has a major part to play in this changing landscape - particularly in the 'night time economy' with its burgeoning numbers of accredited and licensed stewards who police and monitor the bars, restaurants, dancehalls and discos of most towns and cities – again an area where the police traditionally struggled to maintain a high profile. One upshot to this advancement of municipal policing is the rise of non police agencies reporting offences direct to the Procurator Fiscal and the expansive use of fixed penalties – all missing out the police officer.

Policing at the local level will progressively be done in partnership with other agencies – but the police will not always be the lead agency. And as a result of performance measurement, new technologies, increased scrutiny and inspection, additional local authority powers for policing and crime reduction, and new statutory bodies empowered to monitor policing – a new breed of locally elected members will be in a unique and statutory position to monitor and control policing in their area. This will lead to a growing and strengthening lower tier of municipal policing comprising of a limited number of sworn police officers and a wide variety of auxiliary officers with differing powers and responsibilities.

The most recent of these municipal soldiers is the Community Warden who officially arrived on the scene in 2003

A number of comprehensive evaluations of Wardens have been completed recently and given a wealth of important information. I was involved in a recent study of the Wardens that focused on the views of Wardens as participants. The following are some of the main findings :

- available evidence shows Wardens are a success in their communities
- the public and local councils are supportive of the Warden schemes
- funding of Wardens is the major concern of all involved
- differential salary scales are a concern among many Wardens
- there is evidence of inconsistent training across the Warden schemes
- 50% of Wardens wish extra powers
- Wardens have developed a key role as professional court witnesses
- majority of Wardens support the creation of a national organization
- Wardens are a key link between the community and partner agencies
- Warden implementation problems are similar to those of community policing and lessons can be learned from comparisons.

The research highlights a number of issues worthy of future research in Scotland :-

- An examination of the mix of agents in the emerging model of ‘plural and municipal policing’
- An evaluation of the role of Community Wardens in this new World of ‘plural and municipal policing’
- Consider what powers Wardens should have?
- Assess who Wardens should be accountable to?
- Investigate Wardens’ relationships with Partnership agencies?
- Review the role of the police at the local municipal level?

I flicked through the Glasgow Police Instruction book the other day and had a chuckle at some of the duties of the police up until the 1970s and 1980s for example it was an offence :

- To make and use a slide (ice) in any street
- To fly kites to annoyance and danger of public
- To beat or shake carpets in street or stair
- To cause a female to stand on window sill to clean windows
- Police are refer complaints of non-sweeping of stairs to the Health Department
- Police to check and test manhole covers
- Police to check that cellar flaps, coal plates and trap doors are secure
- Police should remove orange peel and banana skins from footway.

You may laugh but it could have been more onerous as they did’nt have condoms then.

The point I make is that society and the police service have moved on apace and the developing model of municipal policing reflects this. However, there is a need to look at where we are at present and ask where we want to be in the future, as there is little sign of a strategy on the development of Municipal Policing in Scotland. Things just seem to happen in an ad hoc and piecemeal fashion and no one wishes to take on the ‘holy grail’ of localism and parochialism. When it comes to enforcement of the law Scottish citizens

deserve to know where they stand as they travel throughout the 32 council areas - what powers local municipal officers have over them and how to identify these officers. Scotland is a small country and more uniformity is needed, after all we would not accept variation of service from traffic wardens, special constables and police officers – why Wardens. ?