

THE ROLE OF SPECIAL CONSTABLES

FROM THE EXTERNAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FOLLOWING THE REVIEW BY THE SPECIAL CONSTABLE WORKING GROUP

Cabinet Member	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio	Community, Commerce and Regeneration
Officer Contact(s)	Nav Johal / Danielle Watson, Administration Directorate
Papers with report	The Role of Special Constables Working Group Final Report

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	To receive the role of Special Constables Working Group's report providing recommendations which seek to build upon the understanding of the role of Special Constables and to highlight the role Special Constables play within the Borough.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	Safer Hillingdon Partnership Plan 2011-2014.
Financial Cost	There are no direct cost implications arising from this report.
Relevant Scrutiny Committee	External Services Scrutiny Committee.
Ward(s) affected	All.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet welcomes the report of the role of Special Constable Working Group and in noting the recommendations of the Working Group report below agrees they will be forwarded onto the Hillingdon Safer Partnership for due consideration:

- 1) Commend the work carried out by Special Constables and acknowledge the important work they do in policing the Borough of Hillingdon. Furthermore, Cabinet note the services provided by Special Constables are as volunteers, whilst the role is the same as a paid Police Officer.
- 2) Supports the Employee Supported Policing scheme by the Metropolitan Police Service and requests that the Head of Metropolitan Special Constable Recruitment and Employer Supported Policing asks that more local businesses in Hillingdon are encouraged to be part to the scheme. Furthermore, that Cabinet notes the additional skills that trained Special Constables bring to their employers.

- 3) Supports this Council's own commitment to BoroughBeat, the Employee Supported Policing Scheme, and recognises the Council employees who give up their time to police the Borough of Hillingdon. That Cabinet requests the Head of HR ensures the scheme is communicated across the whole authority and time off is consistently recorded to recognise the contribution made.
- 4) Agree that the Council Officers liaise with the Council's Communications Team to highlight the role of Special Constables and the invaluable work they do across the Borough. That this vital work of protecting local residents and businesses is highlighted and celebrated in Hillingdon People, local newspapers the Council's own social media.
- 5) Requests the Borough Commander and the Borough's Metropolitan Police Partnerships Inspector ask Hillingdon's MSC Managers to consider the Working Group report in relation to the support and guidance given to MSCs and report back to the Cabinet Member and External Services Scrutiny Committee, where appropriate.

Reasons for recommendations

The reason for this review is to highlighting the work that Special Constables do and the positive effect it has on the community. To improve awareness and the understanding of the role of Special Constables and to look at ways of promoting the role in the Borough and, in-turn, add value to the community. The recommendations are further aimed at building upon the work currently undertaken by Special Constables and the services offered to them.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject some or all of the role of Special Constables Working Group's recommendations.

Scrutiny Committee comments

External Services Scrutiny Committee comments are included in the final report. At the meeting on 10 January 2013 the External Services Scrutiny Committee reviewed and agreed the Special Constables Working Group's Final Report.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

1. A Special Constable is a volunteer who works alongside and offers support to regular Police Officers and have the same powers in law. The duties carried out by a Special Constable are essentially the same as those carried out by any regular Police Officer. Special Constables provide an important visible policing presence in Hillingdon, with nearly 90 assigned to the Borough.
2. Hillingdon Council is a major contributor towards local policing through a) the Employee Supported Policing Scheme (BoroughBeat) where a small number of officers currently have a small allocated time off for Special Constable duties and b) via its direct financial

contribution to the Metropolitan Police for a team of 11 regular Police Officers to work in the Borough.

3. Special Constables play an important role in the longer-term Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) strategy for policing the Borough and help meet the targets of the Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP).
4. This report presents the findings of the Special Constable Working Group, chaired by Councillor Dominic Gilham, established by the External Services Scrutiny Committee to highlight the work that Special Constables do and the positive effect they have on the community.
5. The Working Group's review took place between October and December 2012 and was presented to the External Services Scrutiny Committee on 10 January 2013 for its endorsement before submission to the Cabinet.
6. Direct witness testimony and submitted written evidence was gained from a wide range of relevant sources including:
 - 19 Special Constables / Special Sergeants
 - A special inspector
 - Head of Specials recruitment at the Metropolitan Police Service
 - Hillingdon's Local Specials Manager
 - Community & Police Consultative Forum
 - LBH Community Safety Team
7. The review highlighted areas where further support and advice may be required for Special Constables to carry out the role to their full potential. It also recommends a small number of practical measures to improve the consistency of time-off allocated across the Council, measures to better promote their role and encourage more people from local businesses in Hillingdon to consider signing up.
8. Relevant officers have been contacted and are happy to progress and follow up the recommendations within the report, should they be endorsed. It is advised that they are then considered by the Safer Hillingdon Partnership, as the most appropriate body to take them forward and action.
9. The Committee's report (attached) gives full details of the Working Group's review.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications relating to this report and it is anticipated that any minimal indirect costs will be met from existing resources. Any further development and improvements of these services could have cost implications for the Metropolitan Police, but these would be subject to development of proposals with and further approval.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

The Committee's recommendations will provide a springboard for the Council's partnership with the Police to improve the support offered to those who wish to volunteer as a Special Constable. This in turn will contribute to improvements in residents' satisfaction with how the Borough is improving community safety.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The Committee took evidence from Special Constables, officers and key witnesses as described in the attached report.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations set out above.

Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Article 7.08 of the Council's constitution states that the Cabinet are responsible for taking leadership on partnership working with other organisations and promoting community planning to address local needs.

Relevant Service Groups

The Residents Services Directorate was involved as part of this review.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL