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http://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/9106/

Article

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Scrutinising the appeal of volunteer Community Speedwatch to policing leaders in England and Wales: Resources, Responsivity and Responsibilisation

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Scrutinising the appeal of the Community Speedwatch volunteer programme to policing leaders in England and Wales: Resources, Responsivity and Responsibilisation

Abstract:

This article focuses on 'Community Speedwatch' (CSW) - a particular volunteering approach that has apparently attracted the attention of senior police decision-makers in England and Wales over recent years. It considers the significance of decisions by many Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Chief Constables to embrace CSW as a response to calls from the public for action against speeding motorists. CSW is apparently an option that ticks many boxes in a new era characterised by the increasing democratic accountability of the police. Whilst frequently promoted using the popular language of 'empowerment', 'localism', 'self-help' or 'ownership', and seemingly well-suited to current trends towards the increasing responsibilisation of the public, CSW should not be looked at as a straightforward example of a concerned public gifting their time to a grateful police. Rather than consider the road safety merits of the scheme, this paper views CSW as something of a tool which PCCs and Chief Constables can use to negotiate the often conflicting demands placed upon them in straightened economic circumstances. The paper draws on 22 interviews conducted with PCCs (during their first tenure) and Chief Constables in England and Wales.

Introduction

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 represented the most profound shift in the governance and accountability structures of public policing in England and Wales since the 1964 Police Act (Reiner, 2016). Whereas previous transitional reform of mechanisms to hold the police to account had focused primarily on judicial accountability and the use of force by officers, the establishment of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) marked a shift in emphasis where democratic accountability and the increased visibility and public scrutiny of police policy making took precedence (Murphy et al. 2017). In 41 police force areas in England and Wales elected PCCs[1] have the powers to hire and fire their Chief Constable, they are responsible for developing local crime and policing plans, and set force budgets and spending plans. The 1964 Police Act had introduced the tripartite structure of police accountability – of the Chief Constable, local Police Authority, and the Home Office – and all subsequent revisions had (sometimes subtly) helped extend the centralised influence of the Home Office in defining national priorities and afforded renewed protection to the operational independence of the Chief Constable (Loveday, 2018). However, the effect of the 2011 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, one part of a renewed wider governmental commitment to localism, was to usher in a new landscape of democratic accountability requiring a renegotiation of the relationships between operational police leaders (Chief Constables), elected officials responsible for defining policy (PCCs) and the public as both responsibilised agents of co-production and through voting in officials to shape policing policy.

This article draws on interviews conducted in 2014, two years after the election of the first tranche of PCCs, in 11 out of the 41 force areas in England and Wales that have PCCs. Pairings of Chief Constables and PCCs were interviewed separately about their views on roads policing policies. At a time when the working relationships between the operational police lead and the publicly elected official with a mandate to deliver on their manifesto promises were still in their infancy, the research provided a privileged insight into the dynamics of the development and delivery of policing provision (see Wells 2018).

The focus in this article is specifically upon one topic that was raised unprompted in almost all of the interviews - the role of volunteers within roads policing and specifically the use of Community Speedwatch (CSW) programmes. CSW is a UK-wide initiative whereby local, police-trained volunteers use monitoring equipment to identify speeding motorists, then pass the vehicle details to the police who issue warning/educational letters to the registered keepers[2]. It is, we feel, important to scrutinise how police leaders understand the motivations of volunteers and to interrogate the contribution they feel proactive public participation in policing can make. The sharpening of focus upon roads policing provides clear insight into the capacity of those responsible for the delivery of local policing activities to facilitate - and to conversely restrict - volunteer opportunities in this field. However, in ways that we feel resonate with other areas of police business where there are similar pressures to extend volunteer participation, the analysis of the dynamic interplay between police leaders here helps to understand how relationships between police services and their publics need to be framed within an evolving (democratic) accountability landscape. As we demonstrate, the act of being seen to *engage* volunteers becomes just as significant for police leaders as the *deployment* of volunteers to bolster (or innovate) service provision.

The article firstly contextualises the current increased appetite for police services to engage with volunteers. This discussion illustrates why the role of volunteers within roads policing and the management of unlawful and dangerous behaviours on the roads is so contested. Following a review of the methods used to deliver the research project's ambitions, the focus of the article is a discussion of findings from interviews with PCCs and Chief Constables. This analysis helps to determine the police leaders' assessments of what they consider to be the impact of CSW programmes, and how, why and when they feel citizens should be mobilised to support the operational practices of the public police. To anticipate the article's findings, the police leaders' reflections on CSW not only expose the nuances of the motivations for, and attractions to supporting these projects, but actually promote the need to renew thinking on how relationships between citizen, volunteers and policing need to be framed. For PCCs the deployment of volunteers through CSW initiatives advance their claims that they are engaging with expressed areas of public concern, whilst for Chief Constables the engagement with community-led CSW programmes evidences operational flexibility in working constructively with PCC stakeholders in policing. The landscape that emerges is one of police leaders seeking to position themselves amid blurred operational boundaries, the need to manage populist urges, and a lack of evidence-based policies to draw upon. Within this context the potential role of volunteers needs to be understood as responsibilised citizens delivering policing services. Their altruism determines that 'the volunteer' offers the scope to innovate policing provision in the furtherance of co-produced policing forms (such as CSW). However, the appetite and motivations of police leaders to engage with volunteers, to stimulate and sustain their motivations for volunteering, and to do so in ways that are fair and equitable with the wider public, need to be scrutinised to determine the future prospects for the meaningful integration of volunteers within contemporary policing.

The role of volunteers within policing

There are, it seems, three motivations for increasing the participation of volunteers in the shaping and delivery of policing policy and practice. The challenging economic climate faced by a number of police forces globally mean volunteers are a resource of labour and expertise that can be usefully deployed to supplement and bolster capacity (Dobrin and Wolf, 2016). At a time when the need for police forces to maintain legitimacy and accountability has never been better understood, the public are an audience to be engaged and a community whose trust needs to be won - and enhancing opportunities for active community participation supports this (Slanksy, 2008). Thirdly, as part of the growing awareness of the limits of the public police to control crime effectively, police volunteers serve to expand and innovate current policing forms, providing scope to increase the levels and visibility of service to communities, and in forging new lines of communication between police services and their publics (Ren et al., 2006). Whilst the deployment of volunteers within policing models is far from a recent development - policing models on both sides of the Atlantic and elsewhere have used volunteers since their inception - the challenges of operating within tight fiscal budgets and to deliver across an increasing array of tasks and crime problems is stimulating the current interest in mobilising support from members of the public.

In England and Wales, the Special Constabulary Act of 1831 authorised the duties of volunteer police officers. This was only a short time after the 1829 Metropolitan Police Act that formalised a model of policing that many modern policing systems are predicated on. In jurisdictions like Australia, Canada,

the Caribbean and the United States, that can trace their origins back to this model, it is now possible to identify how non-sworn volunteers in policing, police volunteers and part-time staff with some or all of the authority of full-time officers, are deployed to compliment professional public police services (Crawford and Lister, 2004, p. viii). In a small but evolving body of literature in both the UK and US there is growing evidence of the increasingly diverse, innovative and formalised ways volunteers are being deployed. Dobrin and Wolf (2016) highlight how in the US volunteers are utilised to supplement full-time staff for special events and emergencies, but also for participation in specialised roles as marine, narcotics, warrant and dedicated community policing forms. Millie (2018) explores how the introduction of police powers for volunteers under the Police and Crime Act 2017 has impacted upon community policing capabilities in the UK context.

But equally as significant for a public sector turning to volunteers to fulfil roles and "stretch tight budgets" (Wolf, Pepper and Dobrin, 2016: 91) has been a wider narrative (particularly characteristic of the UK and US) of individual empowerment, 'active citizenship', and responsibilisation (Garland, 1996:452). Here the emphasis has been on stimulating public cooperation in preventing and investigating crime where, as a report by HM Inspectorate of Policing (2010:11) outlined, "individuals and communities must mobilise their defences by re-establishing acceptable rules of behaviour for those in public spaces or impacting on their neighbours". Whilst, the report continued, the police and partner agencies have roles to play, efforts to respond to incivilities "must involve doing it with the people on the receiving end of this behaviour" (ibid). Informally, a self-interested form of responsibilisation has seen individuals go beyond the state to purchase protection and security services (see Loader et al. 2014). More formally, responsibilisation has centred upon the 'co-production' of policing forms to more meaningfully renegotiate responsibility for responding to incivility between police services and citizens (Faulkner and Burnett, 2012). One ambition is the development of more dynamic forms of accountability and representation that 'reconnect' the police to their publics, engineering more holistic inputs when shaping operational policing practice and priories (Lister, 2013: 240). The devolving of traditional policing tasks and powers to individuals, groups and bodies beyond the professional police is another ambition.

As a consequence, the active participation of citizens in policing currently appears to be taking a variety of forms, and at an increasing rate (Bullock, 2017). Members of the public have the power to elect police leaders, to judge their performance, and - through structures designed to enrich democratic accountability - 'engage in exchange with service providers' (Bullock and Leeney, 2013:200). Volunteers work alongside full-time officers in fulfilling established operational tasks whilst those self-motivated to take on greater ownership and involvement in local issues specific to their area are engaged in policing forms that actually innovate service provision. It is within this latter group that we need to understand the development of CSW initiatives – used extensively in the UK, US and Canada – and scrutinise the roles of police leaders in facilitating active participatory citizenship in policing.

CSW programmes enable volunteers to work within their locality to carry out speed checks on their local roads. The police-trained volunteers use monitoring equipment to identify speeding motorists then pass vehicle details to the police who issue warning/educational letters to the registered keepers of those vehicles. Research evidence is limited in terms of the effectiveness of such schemes, but Toy (2012:29) argues a CSW programme "undoubtedly increase[s] community cohesion around the issue of speeding and provides a visible reminder to drivers that speeding is illegal". As an innovative and

responsive form of practice development the volunteer-led nature of CSW *might* be argued to have the potential to "increase public confidence and provide greater resonance in attempts by police agencies to engage with their communities" (Gravelle and Rogers, 2009:1). In the spirit of developing collaborative relationships with partners to tackle problems, the enthusiastic, empowered CSW volunteer (whose efforts and time are freely given for the mutual benefit of themselves and their local policing infrastructure) *could* represent responsibilised co-production in action (Bullock and Leeney, 2013). The manifestation of groups in areas where the police do not see enforcement as a priority – but where community concern about speeding motorists is high – emphasises how the operation of CSW programmes could become an extension to police service provision. The activities of CSW programmes also illustrate that, firstly, in an ideal world, volunteer participation in policing can be *reactive* in helping bolster service provision amidst shrinking resources or to fill skills shortages (Ren et al, 2006). But they might also, (stimulated through discourses of responsibilisation and insecurity around police service capability) be *proactive* where increasingly citizens "take it upon themselves to remedy this by assisting law enforcement or through independent moves to self-help" (Ayling, 2007:84), and (in a break from the top-down responsibilisation process identified by Garland 1996:452[3]) are part of an agenda of responsibilisation that is being driven by the responsibilised.

The peculiarities of roads policing in an evolving accountability landscape

The deployment of volunteers to monitor speeding motorists whose driving behaviours have been viewed *by the public* as a posing threat, harm or risk would suggest that CSW initiatives represent the successful integration of volunteers within policing. One reading of this scenario is therefore that citizens have been suitably mobilised to help co-produce a solution to a local problem and the capacity of the police to identify problematic behaviours has been enriched. An alternative reading is that that same public has responsibilised itself in the absence of what they deem to be sufficient activity by the authorities.

Further complicating this particular scenario is the fact that citizen involvement in road safety policing is contested, especially within the North American and now UK contexts where policing is increasingly electorally accountable. Roads policing potentially unsettles any sense that the police are simply working *for* 'the people', *against* 'criminals'. Where policing has an elected element it poses a challenge in that it constructs the voting population as potential offenders *as well as* potential victims (in a way that most policing does not) (Wells, 2016, 2018). Controversies about the use of automated technology to enforce speed limits are part of the recent history of roads policing that continue to cast a shadow over policy in this area both in the UK (Wells, 2018) and more widely (Fleiter and Watson, 2012).

The uncertainty around the mandate from the public for roads policing is particularly significant in a time of fiscal constraint, where it may appear to be an area that can be cut without too much controversy. Indeed, only one in five members of the general UK public, when polled, apparently consider roads policing to be an appropriate focus for a PCC (IPSOS/MORI, 2012), while other research has suggested that the public rated the job of "control[ling] and supervis[ing] road traffic" 31st out of a list of 37 tasks currently carried out by the police, in terms of its perceived importance (Redshaw *et al.* 1997: 291). In the UK, this particular policing task *has* previously been signalled by the Home Office as a viable area for achieving cuts in expenditure, with its activities "shed or moved to other agencies"

(Millie, 2013: 147) and, furthermore, potentially suffers within a context of a strong national steer for a police focus on 'real crime' (May, 2010), suggesting little protection at this level. Some estimates have suggested that there was, indeed, a 23 percent reduction in traffic police in England and Wales between 2010 and 2014 (BBC News, 2015).

The challenge for police leaders and decision-makers is not only to establish the level of prioritisation they afford tackling speed enforcement, but to establish the extent to which volunteer-led schemes can play a role in responding to speeding motorists. In the UK context, where the complexity of operational arrangements are still coming to terms with the reforms outlined within the 2011 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, these challenges are brought into sharper focus. The democratically elected PCC acts as a conduit between the demands of the electorate and the police service for their particular force area, holding the Chief Constable to account for achieving the aims set out in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, whilst simultaneously accountable to the public themselves as a result of their elected status (Raine and Keasey, 2012). The concept of the PCC, imported from North America, is underpinned by a view of the police as "a business-like service which must be responsive to its consumers and efficient and effective at addressing their concerns" (Turner, 2014: 17), with PCCs responsible for "representing and engaging with all those who live and work in the communities in their force area and identifying their policing needs" (Home Office 2010: 11).

However, research has found that elected representatives (in the form of PCCs) reported that they are becoming increasingly aware of particular kinds of demand, as a result of reaching out to their electorate within their communities, with lower-level 'quality of life' type offences, such as littering and dog fouling, but also parking and speeding, most animating those communities (Wells, 2016). Understandably, when the methodology for accessing 'public opinion' is the meet-and-greet at the local village hall, or the parish council meeting, the picture is different to when the methodology is the public survey (Wells, 2016). Poulter and McKenna (2007), furthermore, suggest that the hostile national media-led coverage of issues like speed cameras may, indeed, have obscured more positive attitudes towards roads policing at a local level. Despite the contentious issues noted above, it has been shown that PCCs have indeed been surprised by the strength of *support for* some roads policing activity in some local areas (Wells, 2016), and have found that it is an area of policing that they are increasingly finding that they have to confront. If, then, citizen demands are likely to be harder to ignore, and if (as suggested above) resourcing for roads policing is going to be harder to find and justify, then the concept of the volunteer is one that *may* appear to offer significant potential to variously accountable public figures.

Methods and Data Collection

The objective of the research was to engage combinations of PCCs and CCs from different areas to obtain their views on the current state and future development of roads policing as a potentially contentious issue. The first elections for PCCs took place in November 2012 with the data used in this study being captured from interviews conducted in the latter half of 2014 as new governance arrangements were still in their infancy. Letters inviting participation in the research were sent to all serving PCCs and Chief Constables in England and Wales[4] and the data used in this paper comes from where pairs of police leaders from 11 force areas (a total of 22 participants) consented to take part

and were interviewed separately[5]. There are, admittedly, self-selection issues here that can compromise the representativeness of the research. However, the sample includes male and female participants. There is a sample of urban and rural police force areas and representation from the three most prominent groups of policing and legal expertise that elected PCCs were drawn from; namely former police officers, former Police Authority members; and other related criminal justice practice experience (Mawby and Smith, 2017: 28). The sample also includes representatives from the three political affiliations elected PCCs were drawn from; namely the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, and PCCs who stood as Independents (ibid:27). Some of the PCCs had appointed their Chief Constable counterpart, whilst other Chief Constables had been in post prior to the 2012 November election[6].

The research adopted an inductive approach with semi-structured interviews allowing participants to share their thoughts on the development of roads policing policy and practice, and of their reflections on new operational governance arrangements. Interviews took place in participants' places of work (in three cases interviews were conducted over the telephone) and lasted between 50 and 90 minutes. All interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis and, through that process, the interest in and reflections on, proactive participation of volunteers through CSW initiatives emerged. Participants were not asked to directly comment on CSW schemes but almost all interviewees spontaneously introduced discussion of CSW projects they had knowledge of or had considered.

In the remainder of the paper we explore how police leaders reflected on the value and capacity of volunteer-led initiatives to bolster service provision and to establish their views on who are – and who are not – deemed eligible partners in the development of co-production relationships with the public. We explore the views of PCCs and Chief Constables[7] in sequence and, in both cases, discuss their views on what they judge the contribution of volunteer CSW programmes to be, and the extent to which the approach mobilises the public to support operational objectives. Though the research is focused explicitly on the involvement of volunteers in policing, there is learning to be generated here around how police leaders – as gatekeepers to shaping the capacity of volunteers to actively contribute to policing practice – interpret and reflect upon the value of modes of active citizenry.

PCCs and the appeal of CSW

The 'effectiveness' of CSW programmes

When PCCs raised the subject of CSW they did so in broadly positive terms, although the reasons for their positivity varied. Underpinning many of the endorsements was the sense that they were increasingly aware of concern for 'low level' offences in their communities:

> [E]verywhere I go from parking, parking on the pavement, speeding, lorries exceeding the limit, antisocial driving, it's everywhere you go. It's on everybody's mind. (PCC7)

> [with the public] I use a pyramid. At the top are armed robberies, assault, CSE[8], human trafficking. They won't affect anybody sat in the audience. When you get down the bottom of the pyramid; parking, dog poo, litter, stuff like speeding, they all start nodding. It's quality of life, but in policing terms, low level. (PCC6)

The methods adopted by PCCs for identifying exactly what concerns their communities have are, as argued elsewhere (Wells, 2016), likely to mean that such issues are foregrounded by the public when

PCCs consult on their priorities; but many admitted that they were surprised at the strength of feeling about 'quality of life' (PCC10) issues. With the prioritisation of speeding traffic by many citizens, PCCs were faced with the need to devise a response that most had not identified as a concern whilst campaigning, or when devising their first Police and Crime Plans, and therefore had not anticipated having to confront[9]. As such, they were dealing with a responsibilised public that had not been deliberately persuaded (Garland, 1996) to contribute to attempting to solve this issue.

What was clear from the way that PCCs spoke about CSW was that they saw it as a potentially 'effective' response to persistent pressure to take action against speeding motorists, operating with a very specific definition of what effectiveness was:

> The [Director of the Safer Roads Partnership said] "We've tried this in the past. Don't like it." We said, "It doesn't matter what you don't like. The people want Community Speedwatch". I think it does work. The local community, they're feeling empowered. They'd been allowed to do something about that particular problem and a lot of people, these people who regularly complain, are really interested. (APCC2)

APCC2 clearly had a different idea of what 'works' means compared to their Safer Roads Partnership (who presumably had been looking for evidence of reduced speeds and/or numbers of people 'Killed or Seriously Injured' (KSIs) in road crashes at locations where CSW was in operation). To the APCC, 'effectiveness' was measured in terms of CSW's ability to enable them to respond to a group that continually demanded a response from them, an opportunity to 'empower' a community with the capacity to do 'something' in response to their concerns:

> We think that [CSW] will add to the confidence of people within certain communities. It's great, empowering them, because they love it, and it's giving them ownership, isn't it?...They've been allowed to do something about that particular problem.. (APCC2)

> Community Speed Watch is good – it's good for public support and it's visible. (PCC11)

PCC3, similarly, foregrounded the way in which CSW enabled them to enable others, with the *action* itself (rather than any *outcomes*) the measure of success. The actual potential deterrent activity of motorists receiving a warning letter is, if anything, downplayed compared to the value placed on the community action that generates those letters:

> It absolutely works…because it's all giving the community some power, isn't it, to take action themselves? (PCC3)

Again, no mention is made of reducing injuries or even speeds, and thus his measure of success is not dependent on actually reducing the threat that motivates those people in the first place. Rather it is a *feeling* of empowerment that they are seeking to provide to volunteers, perhaps assuming that that in itself will ameliorate feelings of unsafety, or at least quieten the fearful voices for a time. For others, CSW offered the opportunity for PCCs to display effectiveness in responding to those individuals who had spontaneously responsibilised in relation to this issue – who had decided "Well, let's do something for ourselves, not always be reliant on other people" (PCC1). In this sense CSW functions as resource-light, effective (in some senses) response that a PCC can reach for in order to respond when a response is demanded.

Responsibilising the public, mobilising the community

In the following section, PCCs allude to the existence of two types of concerned public – those that were expecting to hand over their problems to the state and have them solved, and those that were asking to be involved in the 'co-production' of a solution with authority (Bullock and Leeney, 2013). The latter group, as PCC7 illustrates, were those that would generate more sympathy:

> They've all got concerns. Within that group you've got the people who just complain, complain and complain. [But] you've got some people who really want to do something about it and they're the smaller group who are really analytical about, they understand, they're trying to say, "Look, we need to do something about this area". They want to engage with an organisation who will take them seriously because they really passionately believe it, there's going to be a problem here and they're normally right. (PCC7)

Apparently, the reconnection of police and public is about more than the police understanding what animates their communities, otherwise those that PCC7 observes 'just complain, complain and complain' would be seen, unproblematically, as consumers exercising their right to provide customer feedback to a market provider. Clearly, in this case, citizen involvement in identifying, arguing for, *and* delivering a response is also required as part of the 'shaping' of local policing that underpins the PCC model. However, given the discrepancy (identified above) between what some PCCs believed signified an 'effective' intervention, and what members of the public may have been looking for in terms of effectiveness, it is entirely possible that not all partners are necessarily hoping to 'co-produce' the same thing. For a PCC concerned with giving communities a sense of 'empowerment' and 'ownership', CSW may appear an attractive route to the co-production of a sense of *democratic accountability*, whereas for the volunteers involved it may be that what was sought was the co-production of *order* (Ren et al, 2006:465). Research with CSW volunteers would be needed to explore the extent to which this was a) true and b) problematic.

Further complicating the idea of active citizens co-producing solutions, was the fact that some PCCs were clearly concerned that those that shouted the loudest did not automatically get given the policing attention they demanded – even if they were prepared to provide those 'solutions' themselves. The idea that a volunteer co-producer needed to have the mandate of his or her wider community was a recurring theme of conversations with PCCs on this topic. Whilst PCC7 (above) clearly welcomed the fact that some of their electorate were willing to volunteer to be part of the response to the issues they raised (and indeed saw them as the ones that understood how things have to be approached 'these days'), for others, volunteering could be problematic:

> We have a very active Speedwatch – I think there is one area that has been very, very, active! And that would be a good example of where one specific group can sometimes - there's been a question of whether they have lost their mandate from the wider community. (PCC3)

In this sense, Leach's (2006) concern that much volunteer activity "lack[ed] accountability to the community [and] most members [were] self-selected rather than elected" (2006:4, cited in Ayling, 2007) was also one that could be levelled at CSW. Attempts at understanding what 'the community'

wants and needs have always been beset by concerns that it is the loudest voices and the usual suspects that are the ones that manage to push their agenda most successfully (Skogan, 2003; Goodin and Dryzek, 2006); but in this case the notion of a mandate to represent seems to be even more pertinent, with some elected PCCs concerned that when they acted (or empowered others to act) they were acting in a way that was endorsed by the majority of the community and not just by those that made their presence most known:

> It's very easy to sit around and moan, but you're making people work to do a Community Speedwatch, go around knocking on doors and getting a petition signed…they deliver all that then that really does show commitment and it's obviously an issue that that community cares about. (PCC1)

Here the 'need' for CSW is understood, not in terms of data about vehicle speeds, but in terms of demand, and the evidence that it will 'work' is understood in terms of being able to show that enough people want it for the PCC to feel confident in their mandate to act[10]. As indicated above, roads policing is an issue where a community may well be divided and therefore PCC1 asks the volunteers to go out and prove their own mandate. PCC1 even has a percentage in mind[11] (their 'model') that, if exceeded, demonstrated sufficient popular support for them to act:

> Four hundred and fourteen houses, but 414 thousand cars go up and down that road a year. Don't they have a say too? Who has the say on road safety in an area, the people who live there? Because their children walk that road, or is the people who drive it? Well arguably it's both. So I don't think you'll ever get a perfect model, but my model is quite a good one because it does screen it down and it does make the residents work. (PCC1)

Whilst PCC1 saw a distinction between residents and motorists, many PCCs had become aware that most offenders were in fact locals (and therefore residents, motorists *and* voters), and raised this as a particular concern:

> The other thing about speeding is that when you actually start to enforce in these areas where people complain, you find that 60% or 70% of the people you report for the offence are from that village that are complaining. (APCC2)

> When you do do the enforcement you find that it is people who live in the village that are speeding. So that's an interesting… do they want enforcement? Well I won't be pejorative about that, it isn't just external people going from A to Z, it is people tootling between E and F in an area are speeding also. (CE5)

Rather than, as Leach suggests, volunteer patrols operating to exclude the 'different' or minorities (Leach, 2006, cited in Ayling, 2007), here they potentially pit equals within communities against each other – and PCCs cannot assume (as they may do in relation to other offences) that the volunteers are likely to be voters and their 'criminal' targets are not. PCCs are therefore facing a similar dilemma to that routinely associated with community policing, both being influenced by a new localism that problematically assumes a single community whose shared wishes can be represented and responded to. Whilst the less audible voices in previous attempts to reconnect the police and the public might have been reassuringly disenfranchised (for example 'troublesome' youth below voting age, or rehoused offenders unlikely to be exercising their democratic right to vote), here there is less of a

power imbalance between the speeding motorist and the concerned volunteer, further presenting a representational challenge for PCCs. The fact that CSW offers a response, demonstrates responsivity, empowers and enables - but does not actually punish anyone in the vast majority of cases - cannot, therefore, be ruled out as part of its appeal for a PCC balancing potentially conflicting demands for in/action.

Despite some potentially tricky issues around mandate, then, the use of volunteers who are motivated by a local concern means that CSW is, in many senses, a logical response for PCCs. Volunteers from particular communities, who feel they have particular problems, are likely to respond well to a localised intervention. This also suits a PCC well, who may be reluctant to implement whole-force policies about roads policing, given its apparent sensitivity (Wells, 2018) and given that it may not have been an issue that they had personally chosen to foreground. CSW is a response that can be topically applied to meet specific local needs, and (importantly) can be topically absent where there appears to be no, or insufficient demand, and where there is no-one prepared to volunteer to co-produce a solution. This inequitable distribution of resources would be potentially problematic if those resources were coming from the police or PCC budget, but this issue is sidestepped when volunteers are used. Whilst not without some investment, they require much less resource than deploying paid police employees (see Bullock 2017, Millie 2018). So, whilst PCCs agreed that demand for action against quality of life issues was pretty much ubiquitous, they were able to avoid taking expensive or potentially unpopular action at force level because of the very particular nature and use of the CSW opportunity.

As argued elsewhere (Wells, 2015) the dividing line between strategic direction and operational decision making was most likely to be tested where issues of democratic accountability were at stake, and CSW allows a PCC to appear to be 'doing something' without being seen to interfere with operational policing by committing substantial resources that belong to the Chief Constable.

Chief Constables and the appeal of CSW

The 'effectiveness' of CSW programmes

A common assumption of the use of volunteers to carry out roles associated with policing is that they are effectively 'picking up the slack' where the police are no longer able or willing to perform certain roles, and that their existence means that "[m]oney, time and energy are saved" (Ayling, 2007: 84). In this interpretation of the volunteer role, it would be clear to see why CSW was attractive to Chief Constables faced with higher demands and less resources and, indeed, for some, this was what apparently motivated their support for the scheme:

> Community Speedwatch, for example - just one element of roads policing, of course - has grown up as a result of communities absolutely wanting to do something about something they perceive as a problem, and we do not have the resources to be able to do it. (CC1)

> I think it's a really complex narrative behind it, but certainly it is not uncommon to go to a public meeting and they say, "You're not doing enough about...". That's why you see the rise of voluntary Speedwatches" (CC3)

For CC3, CSW volunteers were, indeed, 'gap filling', but it was not clear that, despite this, their contribution provided "extra physical resources, reducing pressure on front line services [so] that police officers can be freed up to return to frontline duties" (Gravelle and Rogers, 2009:4). In other words, it was not clear that they filled a gap that the police acknowledged was theirs to fill. Whilst CC1 was happy to admit that there were insufficient resources to provide the service being demanded, it was not clear that this was something that *would* have been provided even in more affluent circumstances. CSW's existence however could be described as a "force multiplier" (Ayling, 2007) in that it produced a net increase in the policing activity present within a society. So, although it is not clear that monitoring local vehicle speeds was something "that the police would ideally do if not for a lack of manpower or other resources" (ibid: 73), it is clear that the police were nonetheless on the receiving end of multiple calls to take action and that this necessitated some kind of response. Whilst the shift towards community policing has ensured that this is nothing particularly new, what was clearly adding to the challenge was the fact that calls for a response from the police could also now come via the PCC (to whom the Chief was, of course, accountable):

> When [the PCC] gets pressure from them or pressure from councillors saying "why aren't you enforcing a 20mph speed limit, or why have tickets gone down by 2,000 on last year?", that's when it pops up. (CC5)

> [The PCC] sees [themselves] as the voice of the public. If the public are saying "I'm fed up with the speeding here" [they] will tell me. I don't mean to be critical, [they] will respond to the public's demands as well as have an overall sort of strategic view. (CC3)

As Bullock and Leeney (2013) note, a challenge of community policing approaches, and a challenge of the accountability model represented by the PCC, is that "residents prioritize the 'quality of life' issues which…are not necessarily priorities for the police service as an organization" (p 204-5) and would not necessarily have been ones that the police would have actively sought to responsibilise the public to address. However, a response of some sort *is* required, both because of the accountability relationship between PCC and Chief, but also because of the need to police with consent. As Jackson and Bradford (2009) note, it makes absolute sense for a Chief Constable to devote effort to changing perceptions and reducing fear, which may be more consequential in terms of police legitimacy than 'actual' decreases in offending and/or danger. This necessitates a careful balance in the context of declining levels of resource:

> We try to balance community concern against confidence and satisfaction in policing generally, with our deployment methodology. But the truth is we can't deploy as much as people want, because we haven't got the numbers, because we still have to deal with 24/7 policing, because those officers are being used to do general policing (as opposed to purely roads policing) more so than ever. (CC1)

What is absent from these quotes, just as it is from those of PCCs, is a sense that CSW is deployed because it reduces the vehicle speeds that caused concern in the first place. Whilst it is, admittedly, particularly difficult to measure the effectiveness of CSW in these terms (see Hewson, 2008) it does not appear that Chief Constables were particularly looking for that kind of evidence when deciding if CSW was an appropriate response. Certainly, none offered KSI ('Killed or Seriously Injured') data, or similar, in support of their use of the scheme, and were more likely to reference community concern, public satisfaction or pressure from the PCC as motivations. As in the following example, Chief

Constables foregrounded similar benefits to those identified by PCCs with behaviour change being a possible secondary effect of a CSW programme:

> It just does what it needs to do. Which is a bit of self-help and people like to do that. Plus there's a bit of awareness raising with the community and hopefully a few people getting to know and change their own behaviours. (CC2)

For this Chief it is the *activity itself* that has value, not the potential for CSW to gap-fill. The potential for 'doing something' is clearly hoped to appease the volunteers, whilst the Chief is only 'hopeful' that 'a few' people may change their actual behaviour. In other cases, CSW deployment was deliberately designed to demonstrate to concerned communities that, although they thought they had a speeding problem, they actually did not. As such, it may have been hoped that fear (and demand) would be reduced as a consequence of this being demonstrated to them:

> People's perception isn't always a reality. You might think this person coming towards you, "Oh, definitely speeding," and actually isn't. So they're able to go back to the communities and say, "Well, they've been out X number of times and… really, they've only found one or two, and actually, that was John from the next village". So it has that effect of actually education in its own right as well. (CC1)

However, in this case – and for CC10 below - having, or not having 'a problem', was defined by whether or not any law was being broken, rather than by whether or not people were feeling (or indeed actually were) unsafe.

> There is a tension if you like, between the perception issue, and the actuality of what is happening there, which is that there aren't road crashes there and there isn't empirically evidenced problem. (CC10)

This is understandable given that it is the police who are being called on to act, and given that the law is the basis of their operations; but it represents only one possible understanding of the issue. For CC1, again, CSW was therefore equivalent of "offering antibiotics for a cold":

> Sometimes what you think will do something, won't, and that's why the police need to go much more evidence-based with their approach to anything. Community Speedwatch would be the example, saying, "Do you know what? Have the antibiotics then, but do it yourself, and see if it has any effect," and then, of course, people thinking, "Well, no, it doesn't". (CC1)

Whilst a Chief Constable might be reassured by speed monitoring results that show that relatively few drivers are exceeding a speed limit, it could well be that residents are not concerned with limits themselves but are reporting a more generalised sense of unsafety. Drivers driving below the limit may still feel threatening to pedestrians and residents and their technical relationship to a rather arbitrary limit might not be the point. Here, then Chief Constables, PCCs and CSW volunteers may disagree about whether in fact there is a problem to be solved and, indeed, whether CSW is any kind of solution.

Responsibilising the public, mobilising the community

Whilst, as shown above, many Chiefs were supportive of CSW and promoted its use (for whatever ends), some expressed concerns about the use of volunteers in this way. Many of these concerns seem to have been motivated by the perception that, whilst the responsibilisation was welcome it was welcome only up to a point – and that this point was appropriately defined by authorities such as the police:

> A group of people, when I first arrived, said "Welcome to the force, it's always nice to meet a new Chief – can you give us some money because we want night vision goggles?" And they are continually using a lot of resource in the constabulary complaining that they are not allowed to work in plain clothes, hide behind fences… Stingers have been mentioned. (CC5)

As such, police use of CSW has to tread a fairly careful path between encouraging individuals to see themselves as voluntary partners in co-producing policing, and seeing them "slide into vigilantism" (Ayling, 2007:89). For the group referenced above, it seems clear that the gesture of speed monitoring equipment has been deemed insufficient, and the responsibilised group members are now demanding that they be equipped to tackle the issue that they feel the police (by allowing them to form a CSW group) have seemingly admitted exists. At the heart of this dilemma is the issue, alluded to above, of the relative expectations of the different individuals for whom CSW may be seen as 'doing something'. In this example – and that below - different understandings of what an effective outcome is are at the root of conflict between the police and the community, and the potential seen in CSW by Chiefs and PCCs does not appear to align with what some group members are looking to get out of it.

> This particular community was one of those that instigated [CSW] before it became force policy. At the minute they are reluctant to continue with it because they feel that they are not being supported with "hard enforcement" – my phrase not theirs'. (CC10)

Whilst short-term reductions in demand for police action, or short-term 'empowerment' of individuals may be achievable through the use of CSW, it is not clear that, longer-term, volunteers will continue to feel satisfied with the opportunities for empowerment that they have been permitted and whether their activity will continue to contribute to addressing their felt sense of insecurity. Ren et al (2006) have suggested that it was originally thought volunteers were distrustful of government, and volunteer groups formed "when citizens believed that government was not providing adequate law enforcement" (p469). They suggest, however, that this has been challenged more recently and that "in general, volunteers tend to support the idea of police-community partnership and believe that citizen participation can help local police agencies control social disorder and improve the quality of life in their neighbourhood" (ibid, p469). Whether volunteers are motivated by support for, or lack of confidence in, the police is likely to be key in whether CSW continues to be seen as a 'good enough' response to the problem, or whether problems, like those experienced in area 5 (above), become more frequent. Ren et al. also found that "[t]he likelihood of being a volunteer was dramatically increased if the respondents held favourable attitudes toward local police" (2006: 574); but it is possible that this finding relates to being a volunteer who makes themselves *generally available* to the police. In the case of a CSW volunteer, it seems more likely that motivation comes from a sense of *specific threat*, and a feeling of unmet need, which may make *some* such volunteers more prone to vigilantism. As another Chief suggested, not all volunteers are felt to have the 'correct' motivations and it is important to check (much like a PCC might check out a potential volunteer's mandate) that they are in it for the right reasons before allowing them to be empowered:

> We've started rural speed watch, where we've trained and equipped communities to use radar guns. Can't prosecute on the back of that but they have to pass a test. We can't just give them out willy-nilly. We do a bit of monitoring first…there has to be a degree of vetting around the individuals because we don't want to turn it into a personal vendetta. (CC2)

As such, volunteers appear to be being selected for responsibilisation by Chiefs, just as they are required to demonstrate suitability for responsibilisation as far as PCCs are concerned. The experience of vigilante tendencies in area 5 (see earlier quote), and the concerns raised in relation to vendettas in area 2 (see above), also demonstrate how apparent resource savings associated with using volunteer labour should not be taken for granted. As Ayling (2007:92) observes, the "gift" of citizens' proactive participation in co-produced policing forms (like CSW) necessitates "thoughtful and time-consuming shepherding" if it is to genuinely free up officer capacity (it not being clear that officers would have been doing that work in the first place).

Other concerns voiced by Chief Constables centred less on the potential over-confidence of the volunteers, but on their vulnerability:

> I didn't know if I liked the idea of Community Speedwatch, I'll be honest, purely because I knew, from being a Police Officer, that out of everything that can raise tempers, it is speeding, and I didn't really want to put members of the public in that place….It has split villages without a doubt. Half a village wants it, and part of the village doesn't. (CC1)

At least one Chief Constable could therefore see the potential for conflict between divided communities and (as above) naturally understood the issue of primarily *local* motorists being identified in terms of order, rather than in terms of mandate (as the PCCs had). What this highlights is that CSW does differ from other types of volunteering in support of the police in that it is more *exposed* than (for example) Crimestoppers or Neighbourhood Watch. CSW volunteers are directly 'linked in' to police disciplinary activity, and are readily identifiable to those that they are seeking to see disciplined – who are, it seems clear, often members of those same communities. Indeed, in their work on police volunteering, Gravelle and Rogers specifically identify speeding as a contentious and divisive issue, on the basis of a newspaper article about a "road safety war" where residents set speed "traps" for their neighbours (Doughty, quoted in Gravelle and Rogers, 2009).

Therefore whilst Chief Constables were broadly supportive of CSW as an opportunity to respond to public (and PCC) concerns, some also acknowledged that volunteers were not always, or necessarily, an unproblematic policing alternative. Volunteer activity was not the 'right thing' for everyone, nor was it always harmonious in terms of either police/community or intra-community relationships, particularly when a roads policing issue was at its heart.

Discussion and conclusions

The existence of CSW is, to some extent, a logical consequence of moves towards community and neighbourhood policing, in a context of reduced resources, amidst a narrative of responsibiliation, active citizenship and co-production, and at a time of increased concern with the accountability of policing. Analysis of its deployment by key policing figures reveals, however, that its use serves particularly the needs of those who offer (or withhold) the chance to volunteer – to be responsibilised

- and that its continued appeal will depend on whether it continues to be seen as a solution to a policing problem for *all* concerned.

For PCCs, the appeal of CSW, and of the volunteers that are involved, is that it offers a way of addressing a set of community concerns that PCCs have 'discovered' (i.e. been told that something must be done about) as a result of being more visible in their communities. By offering a CSW scheme a PCC can appear to value community concerns (without committing significant resources) by permitting responsbilisation in specific circumstances. The voluntary nature of the scheme means that other areas cannot complain about inequitable resource distribution (because the community gives the resource rather than taking it), whilst the 'advisory' nature of the actual response means that a significant section of the community who may not support this particular roads policing activity is not alienated. It is therefore a useful resource for responding where a single, unified, consumer voice on a subject cannot be heard.

For Chief Constables, CSW may be a relatively resource-light option that allows the Chief to acknowledge their own accountability to what the PCC now sees as a priority. It also allows a police force to appear responsive and engaged with its communities in a more direct way, and in doing so may contribute to public satisfaction levels. What is not clear is at which point, any of the real term reductions in offending, harm, or both, envisaged by Garland (1996:452) as an outcome of responsibilisation are achieved. The future of CSW may therefore depend on the length of time it continues to serve the various needs of those involved and for them to continue to believe that it represents a legitimate method of 'doing something', and a legitimate outlet for responsibilisation.

Both PCCs and Chief Constables were concerned that those they empowered to become volunteers were the 'right' people, and as such there are hurdles to navigate before a gift of time is accepted; but the idea of who should be entrusted with responsibility differed depending on whether those empowering volunteers by allowing them to volunteer were primarily concerned with upholding the law or representing the people. CSW volunteers - and potentially other volunteers too - help PCCs and Chief Constables navigate challenging times when budgets are limited and demands are often competing. However, the success of CSW (however success is measured) is predicated on the availability of 'good' volunteers, who are not just 'complainers' (CC5, PCC7, APCC2), but willing to take action - who take instructions and respect limitations placed upon them. The ideal volunteer in this context, then, is the volunteer who is mobilised by fear, but has accepted that resources are scarce, has internalised the need for self-help, is willingly responsibilised, but is prepared to be empowered to the extent that the authorities are prepared to sanction, and to go no further.

This particular study therefore further demonstrates how complex it can be to responsibilise the public and that is it is not always a case of "persuad[ing] them to act appropriately" (Garland, 1996: 452). As has been observed in other contexts, responsibilisation is by no means a simple alternative to a state-driven response but requires significant 'steering' (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992), not least in relation to the management of both the volunteers and their expectations.

Ayling (2007) has suggested that a range of benefits can be associated with the 'gift' of volunteer time, including "a greater degree of self-regulation exercised by citizens, improved policing as a result of greater communication between police and citizens and the creation of social capital within communities which itself may bring about a fall in crime rates" (p74). Yet none of these outcomes seem to be the ones that are predominantly driving PCC or Chief Constable support of CSW. Whilst

these were no doubt welcome corollary effects of the use of CSW, their support seemed more apparently motivated by hopes about what it would achieve in terms of community satisfaction and accountability when more resource-intensive options were unavailable. CSW is perhaps, therefore, another type of 'gift' – that of an opportunity to co-produce the democratic accountability of the PCC and the legitimacy and accountability of the Chief Constable's force by letting everyone involved demonstrate that they are 'doing something'.

But the sense of doing something, even doing something good, is not a sound enough basis to govern the meaningful integration of volunteers within policing. That requires a greater and more mechanised system of public participation. Reiner (2016) has questioned whether the capacity to vote in elected officials is heralding the dawn of a more socially democratic system of policing. Raine (2015) has highlighted the multiple audiences the office of the PCC are subject to and need to satisfy, whilst Mawby and Smith (2017) question, having explored electoral voting patterns, how more answerable to the public the PCC model is compared to its predecessor.

This article has looked, in a more nuanced fashion, into the example of CSW to tease out the routine complexities that govern the operation of democratic accountability. What the analysis shows is how differently the publicly elected official and the operational lead, view the scheme and the public's role within its delivery. In this sense, CSW may act not as a "force multiplier" (Ayling, 2007) but appeal more for its apparent potential to act as a "democratic accountability multiplier". As such, its attraction to policing leaders seems to come via its ability to assist in the co-production of democratic accountability rather than, as the volunteers themselves might have envisaged, in the co-production of order itself.

This discussion hints at the need to reframe how the police, the state and public engage with regards to voluntarism. More specifically it makes us question whether individuals will continue to volunteer to co-produce if they do not feel that their motives are mirrored in the motives of their policing leaders (plural). CSW is a resource-light, empowering intervention that can be topically applied (and topically absent), and offers the potential to endear some parts of the community without alienating others. However, if volunteers do not ultimately see their efforts being rewarded by tangible improvements in safety (or at least feelings of safety) then time may mitigate against initiatives like CSW.

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[1] In the Metropolitan Police and City of London Police Force areas (covering London), and for Greater Manchester Police an elected mayor assumes this responsibility.

[2] In some areas there is theoretically the potential to escalate the response to include prosecution but, to date no scheme appears to have been escalated to this degree, and schemes continue to be, basically, advisory.

[3] Garland's (1996:452-4) description of the responsibilisation strategy contains numerous verbs that demonstrate how he envisages the process as being entirely driven by the state's agenda. For example the state as the catalyst 'seeks', 'identifies', 'stimulates', and 'persuades'.

[4] Where an elected Mayor fulfils the equivalent PCC role the Mayor was approached for interview.

[5] In three cases, a nominated deputy was interviewed for either the Chief Constable ('DCC' or 'ACC') or PCC ('APCC'). One Chief Executive (CE) for a PCC also stepped in at the last minute when the PCC was called away on other business.

[6] Under the terms of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, PCCs appoint Chief Constables, and can dismiss them if necessary.

[7] Participants are identified as either Chief Constable (CC) or Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) with a reference to (for example) CC3 and PCC3 indicating the two representatives of force area 3

[8] Child Sexual Exploitation

[9] See the analysis of manifestos and Police and Crime Plans presented in Wells, 2016a

[10] It is worth noting that, in this case, (and in light of the discussions above and below) it does appear that the volunteers are the ones driving the Community Speedwatch agenda, rather than it being proffered to them as a potential solution.

[11] Not disclosed here for reasons of anonymity.