



Community Speedwatch a Police Blueprint

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
What is Community Speedwatch	2
History	2
Why it originally Failed (Police Viewpoint)	3
Group Training	3
Initial Letter Issuing Process.....	3
Disadvantages of this process	3
Police Operations	4
Data Storage	4
Why it originally Failed (Community Viewpoint)	5
Training	5
No Feedback or Police Involvement	5
Operator Fatigue and Demoralisation.....	5
Summary of Issues that made Community Speedwatch ineffective.....	6
Suggested ways of improving the Community Speedwatch initiative	7
Computer Systems	7



Community Speedwatch a Police Blueprint

What is Community Speedwatch

Community Speedwatch is a national initiative where active members of local **communities** join with the support of the Police to monitor the speed of vehicles using speed detection devices. Vehicles exceeding the speed limit are referred to the Police with the aim of educating drivers to reduce their speed.

History

Originally created in the Somerset and Avon Police area in the early 2000's to try to influence local speeding drivers, and to actively involve local communities in the policing of this activity.



Community Speedwatch a Police Blueprint

Why it originally Failed (Police Viewpoint)

The initial problem with Speedwatch is that it caused a significant involvement by Police staff due to the manual nature of the processing.

Group Training

1. Initial training was by an Officer in the use of the devices, Health & Safety and expected behaviour.
2. As Community Speedwatch originally used laser devices i.e. SL700's then all the Operators were required to be trained by an authorised training officer as the device is Home Office approved and requires setup procedures.
3. A significant number of people who were trained never carried out Speedwatch activities, an example is Sussex where in Rother District 250 people were trained to operate devices and comply with Health & Safety but only about 50 ever became active. So the impact of this was that training officer time for about 200 people was wasted hence making training only about 20% effective.

Initial Letter Issuing Process

1. Firstly records were captured by the Community Groups and written down by the operator.
2. These were then transcribed by the group coordinator into an email, this provides an initial point of transcription error where the coordinator could not read the operators writing, hence reducing the accuracy of the process.
3. The email was sent to the Police where it then had to be transcribed by the Police into a local District/Station spreadsheet, a potential second reduction in accuracy.
4. The District/Station staff then had to look up every vehicle on the Police National Computer to see:-
 - a. That the Vehicle Registration Number was valid.
 - b. The Owners name and address for copying into a pre generated word document.
5. This letter would then require manual input to record the offence location, speed etc
6. The letter was then sent by the local District/Station to the owner incurring local costs.

Disadvantages of this process

1. A great deal of manual transposing took place increasing the risk of invalid VRN's being processed and hence increasing complaints made to the Police.
2. Every complaint required significant manual processing such as looking at camera footage to see if the complaint was valid etc, so invalid VRN's are a significant issue.
3. The data was stored on a local District/Station computer system spreadsheet, so that it is impossible to see serial offenders unless they were commuters or local people



Community Speedwatch a Police Blueprint

4. Because the data was local to a District/Station it meant that it was possible for neighbouring Stations/Districts to have issued multiple letters at the same time to an offender which reduced the effectivity of the message, and this also made the Police look inefficient.
5. Each of the letters sent would have been signed by different District/Station officers, again reducing the effectivity of the message.
6. The most significant issue is the amount of time that this process takes up for District/Station staff as at least Officer was involved in the process for each District/Station, with a great deal of time wasting issues.

Police Operations

1. Due to the nature of the Policing process staff are moved between Districts/Stations on a regular basis, so that providing continuity of the contact process between Groups and the Police was very difficult as the process was handled on an individual District/Station basis.
2. Different District Inspectors ran their Districts in different ways with differing views on the Community Speedwatch process, so that one District/Station could be very pro Community Speedwatch and a neighbouring one could be very anti Community Speedwatch. This made the process very intermittent and ineffectual.
3. In general the PCSO that were involved with the groups were also either pro or anti the initiative hence groups may or may not get support.

An example in case was with the Crawley Police station in Sussex where a local PCSO decided to promote Speedwatch locally, and created and involved about 10 groups in the area, a great deal of community involvement took place and a large number of offending vehicles recorded, with the subsequent issuing of letters. Once the PCSO left the station the groups all died within about 6 months due to lack of local support.

Data Storage

1. All data was generally held as a Spreadsheet in a local District or Station, so the data could be accidentally deleted, corrupted or ran into size limitations on the spreadsheet.
2. The data across areas couldn't be easily combined due to the differing spreadsheet formats across Districts.
3. Multiple Offenders across multiple Districts may receive multiple letters each from different Districts, without the Police being aware that they had sent multiple ones.
4. Differing letter messages were not possible without more complex systems, so only one type of letter was issued.
5. Offenders who offended across County boundaries were able to offend with impunity due to the Police systems not being joined up.



Community Speedwatch a Police Blueprint

Why it originally Failed (Community Viewpoint)

Speedwatch is a Police/Community initiative, so that contact between the two parties is extremely important to the effectiveness and longevity of the Group.

Training

1. Initial group training was always limited by the Police Trainer's availability, so not available at times that the operators were available hence putting off volunteers.
2. Training was the start of the process, so that Operators didn't know what was expected until the training session took place, then a high percentage of volunteers 80% decided that after the initial training that they were really not interested in the initiative.
3. The procedures initially used, required individual training by Police Officers.

No Feedback or Police Involvement

1. The initial process of capturing the data did not involve any feed back to the Groups hence Groups became despondent, not knowing if they were wasting time recording vehicles that may or may not get letters issued, this created very short lived Groups, with high Operator turnover(fatigue).
2. As the only contact with the Police was the local Officer, when they moved on, a group with good contact with the Police may have got a new uninterested Officer, which would again meant the group lost momentum.

Operator Fatigue and Demoralisation

1. Groups in general are driven by the enthusiasm of their Coordinator, but if Volunteers cannot see that standing outside in the cold and rain recording vehicles is having a real effect then a high proportion drop out from the group.
2. In General most volunteers will help a group for a year or two with only the most dedicated remaining for longer.



Community Speedwatch a Police Blueprint

Summary of Issues that made Community Speedwatch ineffective

1. Parochial Police viewpoint – Not in my Manor
2. No Coordination across a county
3. No Coordination across county boundaries
4. Lack of Volunteer pre joining information
5. Manual Training
6. Speedwatch Policy that limited device usage
7. Lack of feedback of observations to groups
8. Lack of single police contact for groups
9. Manual recording systems involving large numbers of staff
10. Potential large number of transposition errors creating large numbers of complaints
11. No pre validation of VRN's so all vehicle records had to be manually checked
12. Manual issuing of letters
13. Effectiveness only driven by keen local officers
14. Ineffective, potentially corrupted and disjointed spreadsheet systems
15. Letter sending dependent on local District Inspectors supporting speedwatch



Community Speedwatch a Police Blueprint

Suggested ways of improving the Community Speedwatch initiative

1. Create a County wide Public Speedwatch Policy
To ensure that all Officers, Groups, Press and interested parties understand what it is they should do and how it will work, including reporting flowcharts, contacts, rules for devices etc
2. Operate Community Speedwatch at County level
Meaning that all Groups across all Districts Operate within the same constraints with or without local Officer participation
3. Create a Community Speedwatch Tzar for the County
A Police Officer/Volunteer should be made the one main contact for all Group and Police communications and made responsible, and given authority for the effective deployment of Speedwatch across the County.
4. Create a backup Tzar who works with the Tzar and is responsible in the event of the Tzar being unwell, retiring etc
5. Funding for Community Speedwatch must be in place
Funding must cover as a minimum officer's salaries, officer's travelling expenses, devices if provided to groups, signs, brochures, letter issuing costs, annual conference etc
6. Authority should be given to the Tzar to spend and control the County Speedwatch Budget.
7. The Tzar should be responsible for the Updating and re-publishing of the Speedwatch Policy, and the procedures to make Speedwatch Effective.
8. An annual County Coordinator conference should be held to allow groups to talk to each other about their experiences, to explain new procedures, praise outstanding groups, speed related presentations by relevant Officers or court officials etc.

Computer Systems

1. All details of what Community Speedwatch is and what is required from volunteers must be available via an online site.
2. Initial basic training in Police expectations and Health and Safety must be online, to weed out those who are not able to agree or who cannot understand what is required. This will also help remove people who are only transiently interested in the process, and who will be the first to drop out from the Groups, hence reducing wasted training time.
3. Devices must be simple to Operate and training should be devolved to the Group Coordinators to reduce Police involvement.
4. VRN's should be pre validated via DVLA before letter sending to reduce the wasted time looking up Vehicle details from invalid VRN's.
5. VRN's without MOT or Tax should be reported automatically to the relevant parties.
6. Feedback of the accuracy of the vehicle recording should be provided back to the groups as soon as possible to ensure continued interest by the group.



Community Speedwatch a Police Blueprint

7. Multiple letter types should be in use, to allow for the escalation of the message in the letter caused by multiple offences and excessive speeds.
8. Cross county offences should be included in the overall count of speeder records.
9. All Group Coordinators must be provided with an email address that the County Tsar and Backup Tzar use (e.g. speedwatch@kent.pnn.police.uk), all communications with groups should be responded to in a timely way.
10. Multiple Group and Police roles are required with differing permissions to data access.
11. All personal data for both Police and Groups must be encoded or encrypted.
12. Groups should get instant feedback on DVLA validity and letter sending status, to ensure they are kept informed.