



BECCLES PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting was held at the Bear and Bells Public House, Old Market, Beccles NR34 9AP on Wednesday 9th November at 18:30 hrs.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

Sandra Graffham (Communications Manager), Tim Passmore (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Claire Swallow (Deputy Chief Executive).

Suffolk Constabulary

Inspector Richard Hill (Locality Inspector – Beccles) and Gareth Wilson (Chief Constable).

1. POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The PCC welcomed 50 members of the public to the meeting and made introductions. The PCC gave a presentation on the key elements of his role and action taken over the past year. A copy of the presentation slides will be attached to these notes for the record.

2. POLICING UPDATE

- 2.1 Following an overview of the position across the county from the Chief Constable, Inspector Mark Jackson gave a presentation on policing in the Halesworth area; a copy of their slides will also be attached for the record.

3. KEY AREAS OF DISCUSSION

- **SCRAMBLE BIKES** – A member of the audience highlighted the issue of scramble bikes on public footpaths. Insp Jackson said he was aware of the issue and it was being dealt with
- **PCSOS AND MORE VISIBLE POLICING**– Discussion took place regarding police visibility, general resourcing issues and the loss of PCSOs after 6pm. The Chief Constable advised that the shift pattern is an element of the review following the implementation of the Suffolk Local Policing Review being carried out at present. With regard resources, the PCC explained that recruitment for new officers had opened for the first time in two years, very positive news. A further question was

asked about communities funding their own PCSOs – this is a choice for individual communities and can be paid for if additional provision is required.

- **SPECIALS** – Following a question regarding the powers and use of Special Constables, the PCC gave an update on the exceptional commitment of Specials and explained his plans for a campaign to recruit ‘Parish Specials’ to work in their own communities. The PCC referred to his new Police and Crime Plan and his commitment to encourage more Specials and volunteers.
- **101 SERVICE** – Comment about a lack of confidence in the service due to length of time spent waiting for calls to be answered. There has been significant investment in a new Constabulary website to take pressure off the 101 call takers and in new IP Telephony which will be operational next year. Chief Constable also explained that a queue-buster service which calls callers back is also being looked at.
- **CLOSURE OF FRONT DESKS** - Discussion regarding the closure of front desks. The PCC explained that decision had to be made as footfall is low and savings of £0.75m have been made through the closure. The Chief Constable explained that through use of better technology officers can deal with issues away from police buildings.
- **COST OF THE OFFICE OF THE PCC/AMALGAMATION WITH NORFOLK – THE** PCC explained that the cost of the OPCC is less than the cost of the Police Authority which it replaced and he has reduced the cost of his office since taking office in 2012. The Chief Constable explained that Suffolk and Norfolk constabularies collaborate and make considerable savings by working together where appropriate.
- **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH** - A Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator said communication could be better with the Constabulary. The Chief Constable said that the newsletters had been improved in response to concerns to improve links with the community. The Chief Constable explained that there had been an issue about data protection and a letter had been sent out to all NHW co-ordinators to explain the situation.
- **PARKING** – Issue of illegal parking was discussed. The PCC explained that plans are in place to hand over responsibility for parking to the local authority. Chief Constable explained that the police will still be responsible if parking causes a threat to safety.
- **101 SERVICE**– There was a discussion about the length of time people are waiting and a concern that the resourcing of 101 was not appropriate. The Chief Constable advised that he had taken a number of actions to improve the 101 service, such as ensuring the Contact and Control Room (CCR) was fully staffed. He was also introducing an improved telephony and technology within the CCR, which would support more efficient call handling and better communication across call answering and dispatching systems. He reassured people that 999 call answering remained speedy and effective.

- PERFORMANCE STATS – following a question about crime reporting the Chief Constable explained that statistics need context to be understood, so in the new Police and Crime Plan the Constabulary will report exceptions so that performance information will be clearer. Chief Constable explained that some crimes are under-reported such as hate crime and domestic abuse and it is important to remember that an increase in reporting means that people have confidence to report.
- POLICE INVESTIGATION CENTRES (PICs) - Question about where people are taken when they are arrested. Is it efficient to have to take people to a PIC in Gt Yarmouth? Chief Constable explained that central PICs are an efficient and safer option.
- SPEEDING – The issue of speeding was discussed including a request for a 20mph speed limit in the town. The PCC explained that there has been extra investment in roads policing to increase speed enforcement, which includes a four bike motorbike unit and two new speed enforcement vans. The speed limit issue should be referred to the county council.
- LATITUDE FESTIVAL TRAFFIC – A member of the audience referred to the number of cameras set up to monitor traffic during the Latitude Festival and asked whether they could remain in place for speed enforcement. Inspector Hill explained that the cameras were Automatic Number Plate Recognition devices to monitor vehicles attending the event.

The PCC thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 20:35 hrs.