



SUDBURY PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting was held at All Saints Parish Church Hall on 20 September at 7pm.

PRESENT:

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

Tim Passmore (Police & Crime Commissioner), Sandra Graffham (Communications Manager) and Liz Hollingworth (Business Administration and Policy Officer).

Suffolk Constabulary

Chief Inspector David Giles, Inspector Danny Cooper, Kelly Cole (Volunteer Police Cadet Co-ordinator) and 2 Police Cadets (Sudbury Unit).

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER OVERVIEW

The PCC welcomed 25 members of the public to the meeting and made introductions. The PCC spoke briefly about the key elements of his role and current priorities.

POLICING UPDATE

Inspector Danny Cooper spoke about policing in Sudbury and the local area; a copy of his handout is available for the record.

QUESTIONS ASKED AND SUBJECTS DISCUSSED

101 SERVICE

- There was a discussion about the length of time callers to the non-emergency '101' were kept waiting, despite reassurances last year that improvements were being made. The PCC apologised for the delay to full implementation of the new technology – which will help - and explained that the contractor had experienced some compatibility issues with old technology. Extensive testing was taking place to ensure the new system was robust.
- Inspector Cooper confirmed that crime reports made through the online facility were passed on to be investigated. The PCC said that he would evaluate whether the online reporting system was efficient and ensure it was promoted adequately as an alternative to 101.
- Inspector Cooper encouraged the public to report crimes and incidents to the police so they could gather intelligence and build a picture of evidence (for example in cases where there was suspicious activity or evidence of drug dealing). It was also possible to report to the SNT by email or through Crimestoppers. In an emergency always dial 999.

DRUGS

- Concern was expressed about the increase in 'lower class' drug dealing and taking and the potential impact on the reputation of Sudbury as a place to live and invest in. Inspector Cooper said that "Class A" drugs were a priority for Suffolk Constabulary and addressed through the proactive 'Operation Velocity'. A member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team had been specifically tasked to look at the use of cannabis in Sudbury and would work with the council and other agencies to address Anti-Social Behaviour. The PCC said that his Crime and Disorder Reduction Grants were used to provide young people with diversionary activities for example through the Porch Project in Great Cornard.
- A member of the public asked whether the police were aware that there was a problem with drug dealing and consumption on school sites and, if so, how were they addressing this. Inspector Cooper said that the police relied on schools to report drug offences on their premises. This meant a school would have to accept there was a problem and work with the police to address the issue. Inspector Cooper said he would ask the SNT PCSO lead on young people to look into the matter and suggested that parents should also enquire as to the action schools themselves were taking.

STRIP SEARCH

- A member of the public asked what steps were being taken to improve the proportion of strip searches that resulted in a 'find' so that fewer innocent people were subject to this procedure which could result in the perception of victimisation and resentment against the police.
- Chief Inspector David Giles explained that strip searches were carried out in accordance with the Safer Detention doctrine and would be based on the Custody Sergeant's judgement, based on the safety of the detainee and their history as well as to recover evidence.
- The PCC said that progress with Stop and Search had been made through liaison with community groups and said that he would continue to monitor Constabulary improvements including how they might be able to improve strip search outcomes.

CITIZENS IN POLICING

- A member of the public asked whether Special Constables could be used to proactively address a number of low level crimes and anti-social behaviour in Long Melford. The PCC said that this might be an area where the proposed "Citizens in Policing" could be trialled and said he would liaise with the Constabulary on this.
- Inspector Cooper said that he would ensure the Constabulary Streetwatch co-ordinator would follow up the new membership enquiry.

LOST PROPERTY

- A member of the local Streetwatch group asked what people should do with lost property now that the police did not accept it. Inspector Cooper said that the law required individuals to take reasonable steps to find the owner of the property and said that local social media groups were increasingly used for this. The PCC said that 98% of lost

property handed in to the police was never claimed and there had been a cost to storing and managing property which was no longer sustainable.

- The PCC said that, based on evidence of limited usage most police 'front counters' had been closed, saving £750k a year. Three police stations were still open for public access at Lowestoft, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. Inspector Cooper said that the public were still able to make an appointment to see a member of the Sudbury SNT.

TRAVELLING COMMUNITY

- A member of the public asked what progress had been made on short stay sites for Travellers so that illegal encampments could be more swiftly dealt with. The PCC said that police powers were limited unless crimes had been committed and the civil process meant the landowner had to take action where there was an illegal encampment. However there should be approved temporary sites for travellers within a reasonable distance but currently there were no sites within the Babergh district. The PCC said that Public Sector Leaders in Suffolk had agreed to make progress on the issue and each district was considering sites to put forward for consideration. He said that members of the public should continue to press their counsellors for progress on the new sites.

ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGNS

- A number of questions were raised about speeding, anti-social behaviour by cyclists and road-worthiness of vehicles. The PCC said that extra resource had been put into roads policing. The Road Casualty Team were patrolling on motorbikes to help with enforcement and surplus money from speed awareness courses was reinvested in road safety schemes.
- Chief Inspector Giles confirmed that campaigns and days of actions were still undertaken to address road safety issues including speeding, drink and drug driving, using mobile phones and wearing seatbelts. The Constabulary also undertook vehicle safety inspections. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) was used to provide more intelligence about vehicles on Suffolk's roads and links to criminal activity. *Note: Operation 'Close Pass', mentioned by a member of the public at the meeting, is running in Suffolk week commencing 2 October 2017.*

The PCC thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.