



WOODBIDGE PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting was held at Woodbridge School on Thursday 2 November 2017 at 19:00

PRESENT:

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

Tim Passmore (Police & Crime Commissioner), Chris Bland (Chief Finance Officer, OPCC), Greg Songer (Correspondence and Support Service Officer to the PCC)

Suffolk Constabulary

Kerry Cutler (Superintendent, South), Inspector Andy Pursehouse (Locality Inspector Woodbridge).

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER OVERVIEW

The PCC welcomed 9 members of the public to the meeting and made introductions. The PCC spoke briefly about the key elements of his role and current priorities. A copy of his handout will be attached to these notes for the record.

POLICING UPDATE

Inspector Andy Pursehouse spoke about policing in Woodbridge and the local area including resourcing, ASB, Lead Thefts, Speeding, Hollesley Bay sheep attacks and parking.

QUESTIONS ASKED AND SUBJECTS DISCUSSED

BUDGET

- A question was asked regarding the proportion of the budget that is spent on Police HQ in Martlesham. The PCC advised that 80% of the budget is spent on staff and did not believe a shared HQ or Chief Constable with Norfolk would be a viable option. The PCC also discussed the work and analysis undertaken to keep the control room in Suffolk. The PCC also gave details regarding the reviews of other police buildings including the Landmark House sharing facilities and the combined Police and Fire stations. The PCC confirmed reviews are under way of all departments in view of potential savings.
- A question was raised regarding what happens to the money saved by the Constabulary? Are budgets just shrinking or is money being reinvested? The PCC gave details of his campaign for a fairer deal for Suffolk campaign and highlighted the recent meeting with Suffolk MP's to discuss future government funding. The PCC highlighted the work load of Suffolk officers in comparison to other forces who receive a larger proportion of funding than Suffolk. The PCC also stated that there

are no current plans to scrap PCSO's and praised the work carried out by PCSO's within community policing.

VISABILITY

- A question was raised in relation to the perceived lack of police officers 'on the beat' and the impact this is / can have on the local community. Could officers not be allocated at specific times to the local area? Superintendent Cutler advised about the area policing plan and how licence events are reviewed to ensure correct police coverage. Woodbridge does not create the need for an officer to be on the street every night and the deployment of the constabulary resources is based on threat, harm and risk. Superintendent Cutler also detailed the response officers available in emergency situations and the movement of police resource.
- A question was raised in relation to the new shared Police and Fire station in Woodbridge and why it was not open to the public. Superintendent Cutler advised that the decision to close a number of front desk police stations was made after studying foot fall numbers. Public telephones are also available at these locations to enable the public to contact 101 when required. The Superintendent then spoke about other ways that the community can engage with the Constabulary using social media updates and online work. Information was also given on the changes to the police model and how police are accessible in non-traditional ways including work liaising with other forces to combat crime and fraud prevention.

COMMUNITY

- A question was raised enquiring if Special Constables are used in Woodbridge and whether these could be used to assist in community policing. Superintendent Cutler advised there is a pool of Special Constables used to cover policing of all regions of the county. Anti-social behaviour is mapped with problem drug areas to enable patrols to be identified. Officers are moved around to target issues identified by intelligence. Ideally more officers would be available to patrol the streets and meet public expectations but intelligence based work must be used.
- A question was raised about how to improve community policing and communication with local areas. The PCC noted frustrations around the police stations that are closed to the public. The PCC is always encouraging the Constabulary to publicise the good work being done as a lot of this work involves plain clothes officers or behind closed doors investigation. The PCC and Superintendent gave examples of where Roads Policing was used to combat local issues to help emphasise the pool of resource available to community policing.
- A question was raised requesting information on community work the constabulary does within schools. Superintendent Cutler gave details of the dedicated PSCO's who work with schools on initiatives like the 'Crucial Crew' as well as the work undertaken around safeguarding individuals. Details were also given on how the woman in policing group is working to inspire the younger generation. The point was raised that police officers have family within the community they work in so this work is vitally important.
- Details were also given about opportunities to volunteer with the police. The PCC gave details about speed watch groups and other schemes including volunteers on horseback. Inspector Pursehouse emphasised the importance of volunteer work and supported a speed watch group to be set-up for the Woodbridge area.

- A discussion was also had around the use of 101 with emphasis given on reporting incidents to the police to enable the local Safer Neighbourhood Team to review local concerns.

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.
- Superintendent Cutler 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.

OTHER ITEMS

- A question was raised about the recent cycle event that passed through Woodbridge and the policing costs involved. It was confirmed that there was not additional costs to the constabulary to police the event.
- A question was raised about the increase of knife and gun crime in Suffolk. Superintendent Cutler explained whilst reports of knife crime has increased Suffolk levels are still below average. Highlight the work of weapon bins and intelligence based targeting of individuals. It was highlighted that this is not an issue facing local residents of Woodbridge however county wide a number of schemes are in operation to work with engaging and educating the local community on the risk and danger of knife crime.
- Discussions about the road closure at Woods lane took place. It was highlighted that the closure of the road was not a police matter and the Constabulary have protocol in place when the Highways agency close any roads to ensure operational disruption is kept to a minimum.

The PCC thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 20:45