



BRANDON PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting was held at Brandon House Hotel on Tuesday 7 November at 19:00

PRESENT:

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

Tim Passmore (Police & Crime Commissioner), Sandra Graffham (Communications Manager, OPCC), Vanessa Scott (Policy Officer, OPCC)

Suffolk Constabulary

Kim Warner (Superintendent, West), Inspector Mark Shipton (Locality Inspector Mildenhall).

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER OVERVIEW

The PCC welcomed 17 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

Supt Warner gave an overview of the strategic operational context the force is operating within in the West of Suffolk. This was followed by an update from Inspector Shipton on local policing matters in Brandon. A copy of the handout is available for the record.

QUESTIONS ASKED AND SUBJECTS DISCUSSED

Mental Health:

The audience expressed some sympathy toward the police regarding the lack of resources and services to support people displaying mental health issues. There was awareness that the police are sometimes inappropriately called upon to support people with mental health issues. Supt Warner reassured the audience that the force is working with partners to address mental health concerns such as the nurse in the Contact and Control Room/triage car. Inspector Shipton explained instances where the police work effectively with agencies such as housing services, to provide sustainable solutions. The PCC advised on the importance of partnership working but, given the challenges for policing, was frustrated that the police often ended up being a 'catch all' for issues which should be the responsibility of other agencies.

Police Community Support Officers:

A member of the public asked whether Suffolk would also be removing its PCSOs (like Norfolk). The PCC advised that PCSO numbers had been reduced when the force had introduced its new policing model in 2015 but there was no intention at this point to remove PCSOs, but there would have to be tough choices given the financial constraints.

People suggested they would prefer Police Constables rather than PCSOs (because PCs could patrol and take action, at night). Supt Warner explained the changed role of PCSOs, the reduction in their numbers and their use as SPOCs on a variety of issues. He explained that, in setting up the new policing model, it had been important to challenge the *value* of using resources to simply patrol. It was important that PC and PCSO resources were being used to respond to demand.

The Orchard:

There were concerns expressed by members of the audience about Anti-Social Behaviour/drug dealing at the Orchard. A member of the public explained that in order to get evidence, members of the public had filmed transactions and called into 101. Inspector Shipton advised that the police were aware of the local issues and there had been some reduction in incidents in that area.

Drug dealing:

Several concerns about drug dealing were expressed and there was a view that even where callers have evidence, their experience is that 101/Control room colleagues refuse to take the information. People expressed frustration that the police service was not more receptive to receiving community intelligence and that, when information is accepted, 'they feel' nothing happens with the information provided.

Supt Warner encouraged people to continue to report issues as it might not be obvious to the public but reports (which might be quite separate in nature) can build into a useful intelligence picture across the area. Supt Warner advised that there is a lot of proactive work which goes on in the area relating to tackling drugs. He could easily show several examples of criminal activity in relation to drugs which have been prosecuted but, of course, the public would not necessarily be aware of this activity.

Theft/stolen property/trespass:

A group of people explained that they had had ongoing problems with people trespassing on their property and stealing. One lady spoke of making several crime reports. The view was that the public was not getting a good service from 101 or the police response, despite allegedly having evidence of where stolen goods were being taken. There was also a public concern that people needed to defend themselves because they felt unsafe.

Supt Warner advised that the public should not take matters into their own hands and encouraged them to keep reporting issues to the police. If the matter was not an emergency they should continue to call 101 or alternatively they could make the local Safer Neighbourhood Team aware via e-mail (the e-mail was on the handout).

Horseback Volunteers:

A horseback volunteer expressed concern about the scheme, that despite the training and vetting, volunteers had no more power or responsibility than any member of the public who could phone 101. She felt that the co-ordination of the scheme, including who was patrolling in which areas at what times, could be improved. The PCC thanked her for her comments and advised that her concerns would be raised with the team who administers the scheme. Superintendent Warner advised that the police use volunteers in a variety of ways including through the Special Constabulary, where people could be trained with police powers, and could volunteer regular hours.

The PCC thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 21:05