

PCC 'Have your Say' event – Oxted – 5th February 2013

Q&A

1. As a resident of Felcourt I am concerned about anti-social driving – police presence has no long term effect. We need a speed camera (specified location).

Chief Constable (CC): the police work in partnership with Council colleagues to determine the placing of speed cameras.

Neighbourhood Inspector Angie Austin: I am aware of this issue (described the process that has been carried out regarding the placement of a camera).

PCC: My team will get details at the end of the Q&A session

2: How will the CC cope with the PCC's 6 priorities?

CC: There is a tendency to overcomplicate policing and these priorities fit in with my priorities and targets. Two of the priorities are not directly for the police but the other four fit well. Officers and staff will be aware of the ones that relate to them.

PCC: I will be working together with the CC on these priorities

Will you measure the CC against the priorities?

PCC: The CC will decide how to take each priority forward. Some targets are helpful and the CC will work with her team and with me to come up with some suitable targets.

3: I am happy to pay extra for policing in my council tax. However, PCCs are another layer of bureaucracy that is not needed. How much do you and your office cost?

PCC: My budget is the same as that of the former Police Authority - £1.3m. I am planning to cut the budget to be able to fund some sort of community project.

You are a bureaucrat and we do not need you, the Chief Constable is doing a good job. I would be happier to talk to the police, not the PCC.

PCC: I have been elected to ensure that the CC is doing her job properly. I need staff, I can't deal with 1.2million people on my own. Even organising this meeting I wouldn't have been able to do without my staff.

4: How many people does £1.3m support?

PCC: This covers, amongst others, salaries, organising meetings such as this, cost of buildings

DPCC: The plan is to use some of the money for youth projects

5: There has been some disquiet about the speed of the process of dealing with offenders. Will your aims be undermined if this doesn't improve?

PCC: There is room for improvement in the preparation of defences. I (and the CC) don't have much influence in this area. Surrey Police use effective resolution where appropriate but we need to reduce the number of cases that *fail at court*.

CC: I have concerns that some people are on bail for too long. My Assistant Chief Constable is working on this issue at the moment. More relentless working is required. We need to work with the CPS/Courts on how to speed up the process.

6: What is the point of arresting someone for an offence if there is no independent witness to lead to a charge/court case? (spoke of own experience of where assault case failed as there were no independent witnesses)

PCC: This is a dilemma for the CPS – they look at the chance of conviction. Part of my role is to take the public voice to the CPS and I will be working more closely with the CPS.

7: I was also a victim of assault and because there were no witnesses the case failed.

CC: There is an appeal route through the CPS. (CC offered to speak to those concerned after the Q&A session to get more details of the cases)

8: During your presentation you said that neighbourhood officers are most at risk but they seem to be key to delivering your six priorities. Isn't it your job to fight for these officers?

PCC: People want the response teams to turn up quickly – they are of fundamental importance. Anything after response is negotiable. I am looking to raise the precept to save neighbourhood officers.

I feel I am being blackmailed into giving an extra 8p per week and I feel I am being talked down to. You are giving us an unfair choice of saying that neighbourhood officers can be the lowest priority. You are saying that they can't deliver the priorities.

9: Why can't you lobby Government to get more money as part of the government grant? It would be better than getting us to pay 8p more.

PCC: I am currently working with the Policing Minister Damian Green MP on looking at police funding.

10: What range of contribution do we get from Government?

PCC: We get the lowest contribution in the country. I have raised the issue of having two of the busiest airports in the country on our borders and also having to police the busiest stretch of motorway and the high level of organised cross border crime.

11: It is hard to disagree with the six priorities – whatever budget you say you need you will need to deliver realistically against this budget.

We live in a well off county and we would be happy to pay more if policing was good and we felt safe.

In relation to the comments about the CPS/Courts it would be useful to speak to some magistrates as well. It is how the CPS brings the cases to the court that is the issue – some of them are very poorly prepared.

There has been an increase in the use of cautions – how are cautions being used in Surrey?

PCC: The six priorities are aspirations and we will be working with partners to collectively make things better.

There are some constraints on how much I, as PCC, can ask people to pay for their precept – I can only increase it by 1.99% - if I go above this then I would trigger a referendum which would be costly to administer

I will work closely with criminal justice partners – the CC currently has regular meetings with the Criminal Justice service and judicial service – I will aim to do the same

CC: I would like to dispose of some myths around cautions. The reasons for issuing cautions could be if it is a first offence/low level offence or if the CPS has recommended a caution. There has been a case reported recently where the offender had been issued a caution as we had taken a number of other offences into consideration (TICs). I want to be clear that we don't do this to 'cook the books', we are gathering intelligence from an offender so that, for example, when they are released from prison/custody we know what methods they may use carry out offences.

12: You said that you will be setting up some local policing boards – how and why are you doing this and is there a cost? Will it be publicised in local newspapers?

PCC: I will involve the Chief Executive and Leader from each Council – it will be a way to feed important local views to me and the CC. It will form a collective view of how to make things better in Surrey. It will be publicised in various ways as I want to be as visible as possible.

CC: Just to be clear that if you have any policing issues then you should be contacting your local neighbourhood team (Inspector Angie Austin). The PCC is not the first point of contact it should be the neighbourhood team.

13: Police don't respond to assault/burglaries in the 'real world'.

PCC: We need to refine processes and improve things, as does the CC. I want to reduce the bureaucratic burden on the CC with just these 6 priorities

CC: There is work taking place in the Force on how to allocate resources to meet demand. We have a new system of scheduling appointments with an officer. We will ask you when will be most convenient for them to visit you rather than giving you a time that may not be convenient.

14: I welcome your plans on tackling cross border criminality. It is sad that there are no police stations anymore but I am pleased that you have put a halt on the sales of the remaining stations.

PCC: The old police stations are expensive to maintain and were also used infrequently which has an effect on the revenue budget. The decision made to co-locate with Council colleagues has been a good one and has increased partnership working. I want to make sure that we get best value from our assets which is why I have stopped the remaining sales. This is not to say that they will be reopened as a police station though.

15: Can police make an input into the maintenance of our roads e.g. potholes?

PCC: Road accidents are a key priority. This issue should be raised at local policing boards to be fed back to councils.

CC: Potholes are a council issue. Police will raise the issue of safety

16: Rural crime is treated as low level crime by Surrey Police e.g. stolen pick-up trucks, stolen quad bikes. Local officers need to work closely with the community as we often know who the offenders are.

PCC: All officers should take a firm and resolute approach to all crime and relentlessly pursue those that flout the law.

CC: Rural crime is a number 1 priority for the Lingfield area.

Insp. Angie Austin: This is a high priority for the area of Tandridge and there is a lot of work going on (spoke about a number of specific issues)

17: There are gypsy and traveller issues in the Nutfield Marsh area. There is no police presence. The residents are being bullied and intimidated by the travellers.

PCC: I am disappointed to hear this. I will look into this matter with the CC.

CC: We will deal with this issue.

18: Does your role include looking at police budgets and back office?

PCC: Yes, I will be looking at this with the CC including IT, police buildings, sharing traffic costs and cross border working

19: How does the Deputy PCC work – does he deputise in your absence?

PCC: I deal politically up to central Government and the Deputy PCC's portfolio deals with the partnership working

20: I am concerned about the zero tolerance approach – does this mean that we were tolerating others in the past? Will we tolerate those that haven't been listed as part of this priority?

PCC: Explained that zero tolerance means not walking by and ignoring something. It means stopping and doing something about it. It encompasses everything, not just the examples give as part of the priority.

21: What are the figures around proceeds from seizures of crime?

PCC: 18% comes back to policing but I want to enter into negotiation with the CPS/Courts to try to get the police a bigger slice

22: Magistrates have guidelines to work by. The incompetence lies with the CPS – some cases have to be dismissed because they are so poorly presented. I welcome the support of the PCC to work with the CPS.