

MOLE VALLEY CRIME SUMMIT – 3 MARCH 2014 – EVENT REPORT

The Event

The Mole Valley Crime Summit was held at Dorking Halls on 3 March 2014. The event format comprised 2 sessions of presentations with questions and answers and a 'marketplace' of stands around the hall in before, in between and after the sessions.

Overall approximately 85 residents attended, 50 for the first session and 35 for the second session plus around another 15 stakeholders and presenters.

The event was facilitated by the Deputy PCC, Jeff Harris. The PCC, Kevin Hurley, Councillor Chris Townsend, Inspector Andy Rundle and Patrick McCord, Community Safety Manager, presented.

There were stands from Surrey Police, Victim Support, Surrey Police Volunteers, Familyline, the Community Safety Partnership, Trading Standards and Mole Valley District Council.

The event organisation was co-ordinated by the Office of the PCC with support from Inspector Andy Rundle and Patrick McCord.

The event cost a total of approx. £650.

Questions and Themes

There were a wide variety of questions raised by the residents attending. A full report is attached. The questions asked and issues raised included:

- Provision of places of safety for people with mental health and safety needs
- Police Response to burglaries
- The need to improve answering of the 101 calls to Surrey Police
- Fly-tipping and fines given
- PCSO numbers in Mole Valley and future plans
- Plans for a national police force or merged police forces
- Cycling in the area especially around Boxhill
- Noise from motorbikes
- The cost of putting on engagement events
- Policing of rural areas
- Anti-social and dangerous driving
- Individual crime cases of concern (dealt with afterwards by personal discussions)

The neighbourhood inspector and community safety manager were both in attendance so will take forward local issues raised that weren't dealt with during the evening.

Learning Points

Overall feedback from those residents and partners attending as well as those involved in presenting and running the event was very positive. The venue worked well (particularly being in a larger room than initially planned) and attendance was good.

Some points of learning to take into account for future events were:

- Marketing and promotion of the event to start earlier and be wider spread
- Name plates for the panel, particularly if quite a large panel
- Ideally a smaller panel of experts
- More time for questions – one session probably works better than two
- Refreshments / hot-water to be topped up
- Clearer IT arrangements made in advance

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Session 1

Q1: What are we doing about mental health and there being a safe place that isn't custody?

A1. PCC – There has been a real move away from adequate care over the past 20 years and it is a real problem. The Chief Constable and the PCC recently met with health commissioning leaders as we need to do more. Deaths in custody are because people are there, with nowhere else for them to go.

Inspector Rundle – Officers are receiving training and we are working with local providers, who are helping us to develop better relationships with those who are providing help on the ground. Local teams knowing those who may have mental health issues is important to prevent them becoming victims or involved in crime. We see arrest as the last resort.

Comment from the floor – NHS trust covering Surrey and Borders back in 2002 worked to set up a crisis house as alternative to going to acute ward. Police could go and take people to this house as it provides a place of safety, instead of being put in a police cell.

DPCC – we are looking at how all partners are working together on this.

Q2: I've been burgled twice in three weeks, I had chains on doors but they opened them with a bolt cropper. I'm custodian of war veteran medals and these along with other items have been stolen. The police are too slow.

A2. PCC – You have given us the opportunity to see what it's like to be a victim and have precious things taken and thank you for sharing experiences. There are three ways to stop offending

1. Educate and change behaviour
2. Engineering out the problem – such as securing property
3. Enforcement – the detection rate for burglary is improving

There are lots of other parties involved, the CPS, magistrates, judges etc and the culprit of 400 burglaries recently got 12 years

DPCC – urge you to look at immobilise.com which is a free national service to register property.

Q3. People are having issues with 101, it's answered promptly but the transfer takes too long

A3. PCC – 101 is the non-emergency number to call for police. Performance is not as good as it should be, it is improving and the Chief Constable is

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aware. A longer term plan is being looked at, working with the council, fire and police to have a centralised contact function. 101 calls take time and currently we can only afford so many call handlers.

Q4. My question is fly-tipping – how many have you identified in the past year and what sort of fines have been levied?

A4. Mole Valley District Council Chief Executive Yvonne Rees– Environmental health teams are taking it seriously and prosecutions are on-going, working with police. Figure for fines depends on magistrates and crime committed.

PCC – Sentencing Guidelines Council give information on what sentences can be given. Fly-tipping will be part of the joint enforcement project and we will go after proceeds of crime.

Q5. The PCSOs have strong support in rural areas, please indicate your position on PCSOs.

A5. PCC - PCSOs provide a very valuable visible service for the public. However, we have got to save £30m. We've heard of burglary, serious road offences and there is terrorism, drug offences, child exploitation and a huge number of things police need to do and they need powers to arrest and enforce. PCSOs cost quite a lot and a balancing act is needed to meet what the public need. We are reducing PCSOs, but increasing police constables. The enforcement project will also give more visible presence.

Councillor Chris Townsend – If we do reduce PCSOs we need the ability to give powers of enforcement. Welcome the view of increasing police constables, but PCSOs also valuable.

Councillor Margaret Cooksey – I'm in favour of PCSOs, they feed information to PCs, they can't arrest but neither can council officers working alongside them. I challenge the commissioner to look at costs of his own office.

PCC – we should leave political point scoring out of tonight.

Q6. If I had to choose PC or PCSOs I'd choose PC. You say a £30m saving and the wage bill is £200m, but what's the total budget? We will really start to make savings when we have a national force, what's the position on this?

A6. The total budget is £207m - £185m is committed to the wage bill. It's a good point, it's ridiculous to have 43 forces. Scotland has gone from 8 forces to 1. We have 43 Chief Constables and 43 Police and Crime Commissioners. The public is paying for police officers and the only way to maintain is to do away with PCCs and Chief Constables and I urge at every opportunity Surrey to be amalgamated with Sussex.

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Comment from floor: A PCSO today was the first on the scene at a shoplifting in Waitrose. They had to wait for a PC to arrest, but they were there first.

DPCC – In an ideal world we would have both, but...

Session 2

Q1. My question is in three parts - I'd like to thank the neighbourhood policing team in West Humble for the excellent co-operation and communication from them. I have concerns over cycling safety, there are narrow lanes and there is impatience on both sides. The 27th Wiggle Sportif event will bring up to 1400 cyclists, encouraged to go downhill as fast as possible and the same is planned in September. Anti-social motorbike noise is a blight on a Sunday. Understand police don't like pursuing motorbikes as its dangerous but at Boxhill it's a particular problem.

A1. PCC - Noted by the team cycling issues and motorbike noise.

Q2. It's a polished presentation and is it largely a PR exercise? Balanced against budget cuts, how do we make choices from what we want?

A2. PCC - It is a democracy, you pay, this is a vehicle for telling us what you think and it important to hear about cycling, motorbikes etc

Councillor Chris Townsend – We have to know what our local residents think and weave this into a programme to keep Mole Valley safe.

Q3. I'd like to thank Inspector Rundle for work in rural areas. Can we guarantee they don't get forgotten, especially at weekends as we haven't seen them so much at weekends?

A3. Inspector Rundle – We will continue to prioritise rural areas but on a Friday and Saturday night the majority of our resources are skewed towards town centre violent crime but rural officers are still maintaining a presence. We have a calendar of significant events e.g. Wiggle and will have officers deployed to deal with rural issues, we will not let it drop off the agenda.

PCC – The theft of high value agricultural machinery and burglary dwelling by organised criminals is being targeted by a special crime unit, using covert methods.

Q4. Looking at the £30m saving, will we not cut local services for example visits by police to parish councils? Cycling is an issue – walking on footpaths is unpleasant and dangerous especially when with children. Is there anything being done? At an event in the summer a girl of 14 was attacked. Friends didn't support and it was reported as a no crime, it wasn't fairly dealt with.

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A4. PCC - We can't guarantee no reduction. When I see 1 in 5 people have to wait longer than 15 minutes for an emergency police response, it's not good enough. I'm a realist, the budget is reducing, I can make no promises. Cycling – the enforcement project, working with council colleagues, is to do more against anti-social behaviour. Regarding the girl attacked, I can't go into specifics but the Chief Constable has taken a very victim focused approach. Surrey is looking closely at no-crime policy. Surrey Police is learning the lessons in terms of victim care and there is no room for complacency.

Q5. Serious road traffic collisions are occurring when a car following another car is travelling too close. There should be a two second gap between you driving and the car in front. What can be done to publicise this 2 second gap, an advert in newspapers?

A5. Councillor Chris Townsend – on the M6 there are chevrons telling you to keep 2 clear which appears to work

Q6. Policing annual road closures for cycling, does this apply to budget cuts?

A6. PCC – there are certain events we can cross-charge i.e. football matches, legislation is less clear but we are looking in to it.

Councillor Chris Townsend – There are many unregistered events that we are not aware of.

Q7. I reported a blackmail issue and it got family into trouble. It doesn't seem to matter what I do, police want to arrest me.

A7. PCC - I can't go into specifics. I think people should get a courteous and professional service. I'm supportive of people speaking up, balanced with personal safety.