Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey

Crime Summits 2014/15
Summary Report
1. Background

As part of the Surrey Police and Crime Plan, the Police and Crime Commissioner committed, along with other engagement opportunities, to:

‘…hold an annual Police and Crime Summit, together with the Council Leader and Chief Executive, in each Borough and District, where people can come and take part in discussions about police and community safety issues.’

To meet this commitment, officers in the OPCC have arranged a summit to be held in every borough and district in Surrey during 2014/15.

Each summit was carried out in partnership with the local council, usually led by the Community Safety Officer, and the local Neighbourhood Inspector / Borough Commander. Ideas for how to run the summit, the venue and how much involvement local council wanted were different for each summit. This report provides a summary of activity to inform 2015/16 engagement.

2. Overview of Summit Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough / District</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Cost (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelthorne</td>
<td>4 September 2014</td>
<td>Spelthorne Borough Council, Staines-upon-Thames</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>188.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmbridge</td>
<td>18 September 2014</td>
<td>Elmbridge Civic Centre, Esher</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>98.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reigate &amp; Banstead</td>
<td>14 October 2014</td>
<td>Harlequin Theatre, Redhill</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>110.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandridge</td>
<td>4 November 2014</td>
<td>Tandridge District Council, Oxted</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guildford</td>
<td>26 November 2014</td>
<td>University of Surrey, Guildford</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>206.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epsom &amp; Ewell</td>
<td>2 December 2014</td>
<td>Longmead Centre, Epsom</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runnymede</td>
<td>20 January 2015</td>
<td>Hythe Centre, Egham</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>195.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey Heath</td>
<td>12 February 2015</td>
<td>Camberley Theatre, Camberley</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>676.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>26 February 2015</td>
<td>Borough Hall, Godalming</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>263.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>12 March 2015</td>
<td>HG Wells Conference Centre, Woking</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1076.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mole Valley</td>
<td>19 March 2015</td>
<td>Dorking Halls, Dorking</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>845.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>614</strong></td>
<td><strong>3774.42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MM April 2015
General Themes

Each summit had local issues of concern. However, there were a number of themes that applied throughout Surrey as follows:

- Concerns about anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods
- Anti-social use of roads by drivers and cyclists

The Crime Summits in 2014/15 were used as an opportunity to inform and consult with the public on a potential council tax referendum that the Police and Crime Commissioner considered holding on 7 May 2015. In January 2015, the PCC decided to raise the policing precept by 1.99%, thereby eliminating the need for a referendum. However, with a view to potentially holding a referendum in May 2016, the PCC continued with this consultation.

3. Summary of Each Event

3.1 Spelthorne

The Spelthorne Crime Summit took place on 4 September 2014 at Spelthorne Borough Council, Staines-upon-Thames. Approximately 52 members of the public attended, representing a 25.7% reduction in attendance from the Summit in 2013/14. The event included several presentations, including a presentation about the Joint Enforcement Team pilot, and a question and answer session.

The key issues that were raised were:
- The introduction of the Joint Enforcement Team
- The selling of local police stations
- Anti-social behaviour
- Confidence in police
- Police workload

Attendees were requested to provide feedback on the event, and on their views of the PCC’s referendum proposal. Feedback from the event was broadly positive, with many attendees stating that they found the event useful and interesting. Of those who voted in the referendum poll, 72% of attendees voted in favour of an increase, 15% voted against and 32% were undecided. However, 25% of attendees did not provide any feedback.

It was observed that the date of the summit may not have been the best, due to its proximity to the end of the school holidays. In future, the event may benefit from being held later in the month, to allow for wider publicity in the borough.

3.2 Elmbridge

The Elmbridge Crime Summit took place on 18 September 2014 at the Civic Centre, Esher. Approximately 74 members of the public attended, representing a 29.5% decrease in attendance from the previous summit. The event comprised of a number of presentations and a question and answer session.

The key issues that were raised were:
- Young people and anti-social behaviour
- Collaboration with Sussex Police
- PCSOs
- Housing
- Anti-social driving / cycling
- Referendum on council tax precept
Attendee feedback was broadly positive, with residents stating that they found the event useful and informative. Of those who voted, 59% were in favour of an increase, 39% were against an increase and 2% were undecided. However, approximately 20% of attendees did not provide feedback.

Elmbridge Borough Council hold an annual community safety event in June, which is usually held in partnership with a number of other agencies, including Surrey Police. In 2013/14, the OPCC’s Crime Summit was held alongside this event. However, due to staffing issues, in 2014/15 these events were held separately. This resulted in representatives from both Surrey Police and Elmbridge Borough Council having to give two separate presentations at very similar events. In 2015/16, these events will come back together, which will likely see an increase in attendance by the public.

3.3 Reigate and Banstead

The Reigate and Banstead Crime Summit took place on 14 October 2014 at the Harlequin Theatre, Redhill. Around 40 members of the public attended, representing a 33.3% decrease in attendance from the previous year. The event comprised a number of presentations, including information about the Joint Enforcement Team pilot, and a question and answer session.

The key issues that were raised were:
- Joint Enforcement Team pilot
- Safety of police officers
- PCSOs
- Referendum on council tax precept

Attendee feedback was broadly positive, although a few attendees were disappointed with the size of the presentations on screen and the public address system. However, attendees seemed impressed with the work of the Joint Enforcement Team. Of those who voted in the referendum poll, 78% were in favour of an increase, 9% were against an increase and 13% were undecided. However, 16% did not provide any feedback.

The previous Crime Summit in Reigate and Banstead was held in June, which may have affected attendance.

3.4 Tandridge Crime Summit

The Tandridge Crime Summit took place on 4 November 2014 at Tandridge District Council, Oxted. Around 75 members of the public and councillors attended the event, representing a 6.25% decrease in attendance from the previous year. The summit was held as a part of the Tandridge District Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, and comprised a number of presentations, followed by a question and answer session. In the first instance, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were invited to ask questions first, followed by other councillors, and finally members of the public.

The key issues that were raised were:
- Referendum on council tax precept
- Young people
- Female genital mutilation
- Mental health issues

Feedback from the event was generally positive, however a few members of the public mentioned that they struggled to see the presentations due to the size of the screens in the council chamber, and the distance at which the public were seated. A number of residents also mentioned that they were disappointed as they did not have the opportunity to ask questions to the extent they would
have liked. Of those who voted in the referendum poll, 50% voted in favour of an increase, 44% voted against an increase and 6% were undecided.

As the event was held in conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it was noted that the inclusion of members of the public felt like an afterthought. Questions from councillors were prioritised over questions from the public, and members of the public were seated in an overflow room, as this was primarily viewed as a council meeting. Following the meeting, a number of councillors suggested that the meetings be held separately in future to avoid these issues, and to allow the public to play a bigger part in the event.

3.5 Guildford

The Guildford Crime Summit took place on 26 November 2014 at the University of Surrey, Guildford. Around 72 members of the public attended, representing a 17.2% decrease in attendance. The event comprised of a number of presentations, followed by a question and answer session. As the event was held in partnership with the University of Surrey, they gave a short presentation about the university to attendees.

The key issues that were raised were:
- Anti-social driving
- Crime against students
- Referendum on council tax precept

Feedback from the event was broadly positive, and many attendees were happy to see the event held at the university. Of those who voted in the referendum poll, 73% were in favour of the increase, 12% were against and 15% were undecided. However, 28% did not provide feedback.

Attendees to the Guildford Crime Summit represented the most diverse audience, with a number of BME and student attendees. To increase this further, Crime Summits could be marketed to those studying relevant subjects (e.g. politics, sociology, criminology), along with non-student residents of Guildford, to ensure a more representative audience.

3.6 Epsom and Ewell

The Epsom and Ewell Crime Summit took place on 2 December 2014 at the Longmead Centre, Epsom, following on from a Community Safety Partnership meeting. 24 members of the public attended, representing a 46.7% decrease in attendance from the previous year.

The key issues that were raised were:
- Council tax
- Anti-social behaviour
- Referendum on council tax precept

Feedback from the event was broadly positive, although many members of the public saw the need for more publicity as the turnout was fairly low. In 2013/14, the Crime Summit was held on a Saturday and attendance was somewhat higher - this may be something to explore in the future. Of those who voted in the referendum poll, 56% voted in favour of the increase and 44% voted against, however, 25% did not provide feedback.

3.7 Runnymede

The Runnymede Crime Summit took place on 20 January 2015 at the Hythe Centre, Egham. The event included a marketplace with stands from a variety of partner organisations, organised by Runnymede Borough Council. 46 members of the public attended, representing a 61.7% decrease in attendance from the previous year. The event comprised of a number of presentations, followed by a question and answer session.
The key issues that were raised were:

- Referendum on council tax precept
- 999 incidents
- Anti-social use of roads
- Burglary

There were a number of issues with the venue, including technical problems with the projector and a miscommunication which meant that there was no tea or coffee available for attendees. These issues aside, feedback from the public was broadly positive. 78% of those who provided feedback voted in favour of a referendum, with 20% voting against and 2% undecided. 11% of attendees did not provide feedback.

This event represents the largest reduction in attendees between 2013/14 and 2014/15. It is possible that the flooding that areas of Runnymede were experiencing in winter 2013/14 may have had a positive impact on attendance, as more residents would have been interested in local policing matters.

### 3.8 Surrey Heath

The Surrey Heath Crime Summit took place on 12 February 2015 at Camberley Theatre. Around 87 members of the public attended, representing an 8.8% increase in attendance from the previous year. The event comprised of a presentation from the Police and Crime Commissioner and Borough Commander, followed by a round-table discussion and question and answer session.

The key issues that were raised were:

- Referendum on council tax precept
- Online fraud
- Drugs

The event was broadly a success, and was the only event in 2014/15 that saw an increase in attendee numbers from the previous event in 2013/14. However, there were a number of issues. Too much time was allocated to the round-table discussions, and attendees seemed to feel upset that they were not invited to feedback directly on what they had discussed. Should round-table discussions be used again, residents must either be given the opportunity to feed back, or they should be told more clearly that the council will review the papers on their tables after the event. Additionally, poor control of the attendees during the question and answer session meant that many residents felt irritated that they weren’t able to ask questions, and were disappointed that the entirety of the question and answer session was taken up by those who wanted to discuss the referendum on council tax. In future, it may be sensible for questions to be limited to no more than thirty seconds, with no opportunity to ask follow up questions, to ensure that more attendees have the opportunity to ask questions.

Otherwise, feedback from residents was broadly positive. Of those who provided feedback, 27% were in favour of a referendum, 24% were against a referendum and 49% were undecided.

### 3.9 Waverley

The Waverley Crime Summit took place on 26 February 2015 at Godalming Borough Hall. Around 26 members of the public attended, representing a 74% decrease in attendance from the previous year. The event comprised of a series of presentations, followed by a question and answer session.

The key issues that were raised were:

- Legal highs
• Collaboration with other forces
• Referendum on council tax precept

The low attendee numbers was very disappointing, as in 2013/14, 100 people turned out to the meeting in Waverley, which was held in Farnham. This may have been down to less interest in policing, as Waverley was hit by flooding around the time of the previous summit. It is essential that in the years to come, other means of advertising the event in Waverley are found. Additionally, a return to Farnham may see an increase in attendee numbers.

Feedback from residents was generally positive, with many attendees stating that they were happy to be engaged with in this way. Of those who provided feedback, 86% voted in favour of a referendum and 14% voted against.

3.10 Woking

The Woking Crime Summit took place on 12 March 2015 at HG Wells Conference Centre, Woking. Around 69 people attended, which represents a 42.5% reduction in attendee numbers compared to 2013/14. The event comprised of a series of presentations, followed by a question and answer session.

The key issues that were raised were:
• Online fraud
• Police volunteers and Special Constables
• Council tax

Although the feedback from the event was broadly positive, it was frequently observed that panel members struggled to answer questions quickly and succinctly, leading to answers taking around five minutes per question. This severely limited the amount of questions that attendees were able to ask, leading to dissatisfaction. In future, panel members must be encouraged to limit the length of their answers, and suggest that any questions that need a more specific answer should be dealt with at the close of the event.

Of those who provided feedback, 47% voted in favour of a referendum, 26% voted against and 26% were undecided.

3.11 Mole Valley

The Mole Valley Crime Summit took place on 19 March 2015 at Dorking Halls. Around 51 people attended, representing a 40% decrease in attendee numbers compared to 2013/14. The event comprised of a presentation from the Police and Crime Commissioner and a presentation from the Borough Commander, which was then followed by a question and answer session.

The key issues that were raised were:
• Anti-social use of roads
• Referendum on council tax precept
• Rural crime

At this event, the presentations overran by twenty minutes, thereby reducing the time allocated for questions. In future, those who are presenting must be encouraged to keep their presentations within the allocated time, to ensure that the public have ample opportunity to pose any questions that they may have.

Of those who provided feedback, 76% voted in favour of a referendum, 25% voted against and 5% were undecided.
4. Summary

In total, approximately 620 people attended the Summits in 2014/15, with a total cost of £3774.42 - about £6.14 per person attending. Although the cost per attendee has now decreased by 7.5%, there has been a 34.7% reduction in attendance county-wide. This decrease in attendance may be down to a number of factors, the primary of which being that the office of Police and Crime Commissioner is not a new position, and as such there may be a reduced level of interest in the role. As last year, the events were generally attended by older members of the community, or those with specific areas of concern. This once again raises the issue of whether these events are appealing to a wide range of Surrey residents.

With attendee numbers falling in almost every borough and district in the county, measures to increase engagement must be found. One such measure could be webcasting Crime Summits, which would provide an opportunity to engage with members of the community who may not be able to attend a summit in person, and would compliment the OPCC’s live-tweeting. Although this may not be completely practical, as venues would have to have the capability to stream high-quality video, webcasting Crime Summits may provide significantly increased engagement.

As in the previous year, these events work best when partners and keen and engaged, and where there are effective local means of promoting the event. With Surrey having very little in the way of centralised media, active and engaging social media accounts maintained the Safer Neighbourhood Team, local council or local community groups (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch) are a vital means of promoting these events. In areas where these are not in place, promotion becomes more of a challenge.

Giving the public the opportunity to provide feedback on the event was broadly positive, as this gave us a real insight on how we can improve them in the future. However, approximately 31% of attendees county-wide did not provide feedback. It cannot be established as to whether this is because they had no feedback to give, or because they did not have the opportunity to return their form to a member of OPCC or council staff. In future, it may be better to provide other means of providing feedback after the event, or provide an improved means of collecting this feedback.

The Crime Summits seemed to be an effective means of consulting with the public on the idea of holding a referendum on the council tax precept. County-wide, 60% of respondents were in favour of a referendum, 25% were against and 15% were undecided. Although the sample size represents a tiny proportion of the Surrey public, the qualitative data provides a wide range of views that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner would otherwise have little insight into.

A number of attendees did not understand that the meeting was held and run primarily by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and not by Surrey Police. As a result, a number of residents county-wide were disappointed that a huge amount of the focus was on political matters and police funding rather than local policing matters. In future, it may be an idea to make the public more aware of what these meetings will entail so they can make a more informed judgement as to whether they would like to attend or not.

Overall, the OPCC has met the commitment made by the PCC to hold a summit in every borough and district during 2014/15. The PCC and supporting staff will need to consider whether and how this is done during 2015/16, and whether more innovative ways can be used to engage with a wider audience.