

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

PUBLIC QUESTION RESPONSE

15 September 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Panel have received the following question from Councillor Jonathan Essex (Reigate and Banstead Borough Council) on behalf of a member of the public:

“Just over a year ago the police precept for Surrey increased significantly with a promise of around 100 extra officers. There used to be community policing - but this was replaced with ‘policing in your neighbourhood’ which discontinued much of the local presence of ‘community policing’. Please can you confirm the breakdown and numbers of the new officers in post, over and above the existing and plans for increasing community policing in Surrey going forward.”

The response to this is broken down into two parts. Firstly, the breakdown and numbers of new officers in post. Secondly, the plans for increasing community policing.

In terms of officers in post, the overall numbers of police officers in the last few years are as follows:

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Budgeted Officers	1874	1917	2022
Actual numbers as at 31st March	1882	1928	To be published in 2021

The OPCC tends to work on budgeted numbers as actual numbers can fluctuate on a daily basis, depending on whether there has been a recent intake or how many officers have recently left the organisation. However, the actual numbers are published by the Government as a snapshot in time at the end of March each year, which provides an indication of actual numbers in post.

All newly recruited officers will be posted to neighbourhood teams as their first posting. However, this does not mean that all new funded ‘posts’ are in these teams. There are newly created posts across the organisation according to operational need. The posts been placed into four priority areas:

- Prevention and proactivity – this includes preventative activity and neighbourhood policing - including 22 neighbourhood specialist officers in 2019/20 and 8 in 2020/21 and 11 additional Youth Intervention Officers
- Vulnerability – focussing on people and communities that need more support and assistance - including additional officers working on tackling and investigation Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse
- Understanding and meeting demand – investment to better understand demand and forecast to meet that demand - including officers working in first level contact with victims to resolve cases
- Operational efficiencies and enablers – investing in areas of the business that continue to support the front-line, enable investment and deliver greater efficiencies - including officers working in the Criminal Justice department to build court case files

A more detailed report on workforce planning is provided to this panel meeting.

It is worth noting that the precept has also paid for an increase in operational police staff - including Police Community Support Officers and specialist investigative staff.

In terms of future plans to improve community policing, this is one of the PCC's key three areas for improvement in 2020/21. As such, he asked the Chief Constable earlier in the year as to how this will be achieved by the force. The response was as follows:

“Despite the current pandemic, recruitment of police officers has continued at pace with 181 officers having joined the Force during 2019/2020 with a cohort of 42 recruits due in May 2020. By next month we will have achieved our headcount target, following the 2019/20 precept investment, which will see the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) at establishment thereby allowing recruitment to commence of our new Neighbourhood Specialist Officer posts (22 from 2019/20 precept increase and 8 from 2020/21 precept) and 11 additional Youth Intervention Officers. An internal and external recruitment campaign is in the planning stages with the aim of attracting the very best officers into these positions. This will see many more officers working in their communities on prevention and problem solving activity along with increased engagement with the county's young people.”

RESOLVED:

The Police and Crime Panel noted this response.

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