

**SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 28 NOVEMBER 2024
COMMISSIONER'S QUESTIONS**

Question submitted by Cllr Mike Smith, Runnymede Borough Council

1. **Some residents of the ward that I represent have made me aware of thefts and burglaries that have received a very slow (sometimes several weeks) or no police response, sometimes actually being informed by officers that no one would attend the scene or speak to them on the phone, despite a range of physical, electronic, CCTV and DNA evidence, and eyewitness testimony. My local Borough Commander has nevertheless expressed his sympathy and explained that resources don't allow attendance or personal follow-up at all crimes, which I do understand.**

Can the PCC therefore please explain:

- **The Force's incident-grading policies, how these dictate or influence response times and whether the present policies are seen as fit for purpose.**
- **What improvements are being made in physical attendance at crime scenes, whether further improvements are expected and what the target rate and response times are.**
- **The Force's evidence-gathering policies, especially in relation to less severe crimes such as theft and burglary.**
- **Whether plans are still in place to set up an online portal to enable victims to upload their own CCTV evidence to the Force and how this is progressing if so?**

Response:

The Force has a significant focus on improving response times to Grade 1 and Grade 2 incidents. Following an extensive data led review Surrey Police has approved grading changes that will be implemented on 9 December 2024. These changes have been informed by both internal analysis and comparisons with other forces.

For Grade 1, we have increased the time limit from 15 to 20 minutes, aligning with Sussex Police to reduce confusion for collaborative teams like the Roads Policing Unit. While this change increases the Grade 1 time, we have also raised the performance target to 80%.

For Grade 2, data analysis revealed that the criteria used by other forces for both Grade 2 and Grade 3 deployments were being handled in a single pool in Surrey Police, using just Grade 2. This inflated our Grade 2 pool to contain the wrong volume, content and risk profile compared to other forces. As a result, Surrey has now separated Grade 2 with a new Grade 3, set at 24 hours, which matches Sussex Police and many other forces.

The Grade 2 time range is caveated as 1 to 24 hours, with a target of 80%. To manage the associated risk, there will be a full reassessment of risk at 12 hours by the Force Control Room.

Grade 3 Scheduled Appointment Vehicles were implemented on 14th October. There are daily reviews in place to ensure the option is appropriately used based on THRIVE assessments. 367 appointments were used in the first 28 days, resulting in approximately 80 fewer Grade 2

incidents each week. Following implementation, the average time for attending Grade 2s has dropped to 1hr 46mins from 2hrs 32mins.

Additionally, Surrey is in the process of introducing a new embedded Chief Inspector Silver role within the Control Room to manage and scrutinise deployment timeliness and criticality from the point of report.

With regards to evidence gathering policies, the force, under Our Plan, is committed to following all reasonable lines of enquiry in all investigations. Attending officers are responsible for completing 'Golden Hour' enquiries, ensuring all available evidence is recovered at the earliest opportunity. If a crime does not require officer attendance, it is allocated to the desk-based investigation team (OMU) for progression. It is Force policy that all reports of residential burglary will be attended.

It's worth flagging that Surrey Police has made use of a 'Suspicious Activity Portal' since March 2023, allowing members of the public to upload CCTV of suspicious activity to help Police disrupt or identify those individuals who may have gone on to commit crimes nearby.

The link can be found here: <https://www.surrey.police.uk/police-forces/surrey-police/areas/campaigns/suspicious-activity-portal/>

Questions submitted by Cllr Richard Wilson, Surrey Heath Borough Council:

2. **Retailers in Surrey are suffering from a crime wave of shoplifting. This now often includes assaults on shop-workers. Retailers are overwhelmed and don't have the capacity to report every theft and, even when they have CCTV evidence, in the vast majority of cases the criminal gets away with it. The Panel was recently informed of plans to enable Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to use their DISC systems to report crimes directly into Surrey Police's Niche system. Is this still planned to be available in January 2025? Is it possible to bring it forward to before Christmas, when the crime levels will be highest in shops?**

Response:

As outlined at the previous meeting, Surrey Police is currently looking at integration between DISC and their own systems. I am informed that this request is being actively progressed and primarily led by the Digital, Data and Technology Team. Technical specifications are being exchanged and an early estimate for direct integration is January 2025 - although this is subject to there being no significant issues discovered and joint agreement on contact and crime management processes following a report.

The Panel will understand that integration of police and third-party systems must be done carefully, and I believe it is important that the technical process is not rushed.

3. **Multiple criminal groups are systematically committing burglaries in Surrey. They are raiding housing estates on main arterial routes through the county, targeting homes likely to contain gold. A man in his 80s in my borough was recently burgled. His wife is in a nursing home and her gold jewellery was stolen after the house was ransacked. This was an extremely traumatic experience. Are you confident that Surrey Police are supporting victims of burglary sensitively? Are Surrey Police taking all possible steps**

urgently to pursue the organised criminal gangs who are causing such distress to so many residents of Surrey?

Response:

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I'm proud of the proactive approach Surrey Police are taking to tackle burglary and keep residents safe, especially as the darker evenings approach. Initiatives like the #DontFallVictim campaign are crucial in raising awareness of seasonal spikes in burglary and empowering people with practical steps to secure their homes. This work is supported by advice to residents, such as using light timers, locking doors, and keeping valuables out of sight—simple actions that can make a big difference.

Burglary is a deeply personal crime and all those affected can receive support from the Victim and Witness Care Unit, who are in attendance at the Panel meeting on 28 November and can answer more detailed questions about the support on offer.

Whilst Surrey remains a safe county, the force nevertheless remains committed to tackling organised crime and protecting our communities from those who exploit and harm others for personal gain.

The recent conviction of two individuals responsible for a series of organised burglaries across six counties, including Surrey, demonstrates this dedication. These offenders caused over £500,000 worth of loss and damage, targeting homes, businesses, high-value vehicles, and even cash machines in their relentless pursuit of greed.

Questions submitted by Cllr Paul Kennedy, Mole Valley Borough Council:

- 4. One of the Commissioner's key responsibilities is to publish a new Police and Crime Plan for the current term of office 2024-28. The Panel was scheduled to consider a draft of the new Plan at this meeting. Why has the draft been delayed and can the Commissioner provide an update please?**

Response:

I will be publishing my new Police and Crime Plan in accordance with statutory deadlines, but my office is continuing to undertake Focus Groups with stakeholders and collating feedback from the wider public consultation.

As Cllr Kennedy will be aware, the public survey launched in October and is open until December 12 as we wanted to give as much time as possible for the public to give us their views. I therefore took the decision to delay bringing a draft version to the Panel, to ensure the final document accurately reflects the concerns of Surrey residents. As communicated with the Panel, I will be providing members with a draft document for consideration in February 2025.

- 5. Recent requests on behalf of the OPCC for CIL funding in Mole Valley have revealed significant variations and inequality in how ANPR funding has been sourced and allocated by the OPCC across Surrey. Since 2021 how much funding, broken down by borough and district, has been allocated or is currently planned to install ANPR**

cameras from each of the following sources: (a) the Surrey Police/OPCC budget, (b) Surrey County Council (c) national government or agency grants, (d) local funding such as CIL?

Response:

More time is required to provide a response to this question. The OPCC will follow this question up with Cllr Kennedy to clarify the requested information.

6. Same question as 2 for public realm CCTV cameras.

Response:

As above, more time is required to provide a response to this question. The OPCC will follow this question up with Cllr Kennedy to clarify the requested information.