

Questions for Chief Constable from Panel Members of the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel – 7 October 2021

1. With the lockdown, drug dealers have devised more sophisticated routes to market. Residents are concerned that drug dealing is taking place openly in residential areas which previously was not. What can be done to come down hard and fast on drug dealing in a way that residents can see action?
2. Due to staffing shortages the police have to prioritise which crimes they enforce/investigate. Doesn't that make the law enforcers the law makers?
3. Acknowledging that public finances are tight, RBWM has cut back significantly on its Community Wardens and thus residents are turning to the police as the first port of call. But we're told you're still short staffed. Residents pay a precept as well as national taxes, but the service level is not what the public expect in terms of response times and willingness to tackle law breakers speedily. When will the service match residents' expectations?
4. One of the impacts of the pandemic is that some people are choosing to retire earlier than they originally planned. Do you anticipate that there will be an exodus of experienced staff over the next five years, so that new recruits will only keep police numbers static, not increase them?
5. Given the reduction in community wardens what reassurance can you give to residents of outlying villages that they will see more than just reactive policing.
6. Have you got a robust, quick and effective plan to deal with any protestors who may attempt to block roads or cause other disturbances in the Borough?
7. We have seen recent increase in car theft and attempted thefts around the Royal Borough notably in my ward of Boyn Hill. What are Thames Valley Police doing to combat this especially reference to the rise in keyless car thefts.
8. Anti-Social Behaviour - i.e Motorbike and Car racing late night into the early hours is an issue. What are Thames Valley Police able to plan to deal with this regular occurrence in West Maidenhead.
9. Given the major reduction in PCSOs and now the reduction in Community Wardens, what plans have you to cover the large gap in policing our Neighbourhoods?
10. There have been a number high-profile murders of women by strangers recently. Sarah Everard was murdered by someone whose job it was to protect her; PCSO Julia James was murdered in broad daylight whilst walking her dog; and sisters Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, murdered while celebrating Ms Henry's birthday. Another case in the news recently is still being investigated.

Yet, we know that women are most likely to be murdered by somebody known to them, and the toll of 'domestic' murders grows unabated. Too many women feel unsafe on the streets and in their homes. My questions are:

- What do you plan to do to help women reclaim the streets and parks, and feel safe in their homes?
- Will you be implementing the recommendation of the Zoe Billingham report for the Home Office that violence against women be given a priority akin to counter-terrorism and county lines?
- And why do you think murders of white women often seem to receive much more coverage than those of women of colour?

11. Anecdotally, I am hearing that TVP is losing officers to the Met as they pay more. Is this true and if so, what are you doing to retain officers, including PCSOs?

12. Finally, we are receiving more and more casework around antisocial behaviour and speeding, and this seems to be a particular issue in our more rural wards, where there doesn't seem to be a very visible police presence. At the same time, the number of community wardens in the borough has been reduced by two thirds, and the remaining six are stretched much more thinly. What is your message to residents in the borough who have had enough of antisocial behaviour?

13. Community concern about the use and disposal of Nos Cannisters in both rural and urban communities is on the rise, especially with nightly discovery of large quantities of used canisters scattered around, especially in car parks and similar at the weekend. Whilst we are aware that this is a policing priority and that police have very limited powers around this subject, RBWM are considering a Public Spaces Protection Order to make possession of these items (without a legitimate reason) an offence, giving the council and police the powers to take action against people found in possession of them on the street or in vehicles and the associated ASB. Whilst not creating an expectation that police would mount operations against this issue, it would give them an additional tool in their tool box, when they come across such issues. This has already been implemented in Spelthorne (in Surrey) and there is a perception of displacement of this problem, due to the publicity, into the bordering TVP/RBWM Wards. The public message given by police support for us taking this action, would assist in addressing community concerns.

Would TVP be in support of this proposal?

14. As a community at the extremity of both the Borough and the Force area, Datchet, Wraysbury and Horton Villages are often sighted on Surrey Police's Social media. Whilst this is an excellent tool to engage with their community, it does raise a concern in our area when the Police Force bordering TVP/RBWM, is publicly promoting their activity against their own community's concerns of Nos cannister usage, E scooters, parking enforcement and obstruction/pavement parking. All these issues are of great concern to the

community at the edge of RBWM but these examples of Surrey Police, just across the border, proactively addressing these issues, that all appear to be too low a priority with TVP to justify action, is causing dissent. This in turn further reinforces the perception in the villages, on the borders, that they are not sufficiently policed or that police resources are focused elsewhere, to their detriment.

Can TVP reassure residents where Community concerns fit in local policing priorities and can the use of TVP Social media be increased, to highlight locally the good work being done in these rural communities.