

Response from Furzedown Safer Neighbourhood Team Ward Panel

I write on behalf of the Residents' Panel of the Furzedown ward Safer Neighbourhood Police Team.

We wish to express our serious concerns about the practical impacts of the proposals in the plan on safer neighbourhood policing. We believe that these are held not only by members of the ward panel, but much more widely by local residents, who feel that the previous model of SNT policing has worked well, delivering a strong visible, and locally rooted policing presence.

It is our understanding that under the new local policing model, the number of officers ringfenced to each ward will be limited to one police officer and one PCSO, supervised by a named Sergeant shared between several wards. Other neighbourhood policing resources will be flexed across clusters of wards known as Local Policing Areas. In addition, we note that although we are told that there will be more officers in total in neighbourhood teams, their responsibilities will also be greater.

We believe that by allowing more officers to be flexed across wards, neighbourhood policing will become less accountable and responsive to local communities. With fewer officers linked to particular local areas, the new model risks undermining the continuity and relationship building work which are vital to proactive local policing. Furthermore, we are extremely concerned that the de-ringfencing of a greater proportion of neighbourhood policing resources will lead to officers being sucked away from allegedly "quiet" residential areas such as ours and into town centres, despite the area in fact suffering from high levels of burglary and robbery. We would like to know what mechanisms it is proposed to put in place in order to ensure that decisions about the allocation of policing resources across Local Policing Areas are made in a transparent and accountable way, and believe that these should include the adoption of an abstractions policy.

We believe that the previous model of neighbourhood policing, in which each ward had a dedicated Sergeant and at least 2 PCs and 3 PSCOs should be retained.

With fewer resources ringfenced at ward level we would like to know what scope there will continue to be for ward panels to set local priorities, as prima facie it would seem that this is likely to be reduced.

Best wishes,

Mark Thomas

Chair, Furzedown Safer Neighbourhood Team Ward Panel