

Brian Longman
Chair Riddlesdown Residents Association

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Draft Police and Crime plan for London 2013-2016 Consultation

Riddlesdown Residents Association (1400 households in Croydon) has discussed the Draft Police and Crime plan for London 2013-2016. The proposal is to attach to each ward a named sergeant, a dedicated police constable (PC) not to be abstracted and a dedicated police community support officer (PCSO). All other PCs and PCSOs will work across the new local police area according to need. While there is much to commend this approach of deploying police resources to where they are most needed, we are concerned that police resources from the quieter wards, like Sanderstead, would inevitably be drawn to the busier wards of Purley and Coulsdon. Another area of concern is, where will the local police teams be based. With the possible closure of all but two police buildings, both in the center of Croydon, how local will our local team be? We certainly do not want our local Riddlesdown Safer Neighbourhood Team starting and finishing work each day, miles away with no cars in central Croydon. There is mention in the draft plan of the possible use of locations such as Post Offices and Supermarkets as locations to increase public access to the police but little indication of how this would work in practise. The Association firmly believes that the introduction in 2004 of a dedicated local police team in Riddlesdown and I emphasize the word Local brought real benefits to the local area. The question is now, how can the police increase their level of flexibility and response across the new wider police area without losing its local presence. The Sanderstead, Safer Neighbourhood Team formed in 2004 with its own dedicated team of local officers has been effective in reducing crime and ASB. If this is to continue we firmly believe that a local SNT base in the area is essential. We would suggest the use of either the local fire station or local hospital both in Purley as a base for the enlarged team. In 2012 both the RRA and the SNT panel expressed their deep concern and frustration at the abstraction level of officers, especially at sergeant level. This loss of resources especially at sergeant level had a detrimental effect on the teams continuity and community involvement. Feedback from residents, is that the local SNTs are both popular and effective. If the new local police area teams are to work in a similar fashion, abstractions must be kept to a minimum and above the proposed level of a single PC not to be abstracted. Finally if we are to have what can only be described as a less local service, we would argue that the police and the SNT teams need and must improve their method of communications. If local people are in some way, to part of the solution for a safer neighbourhood we must have open, effective and easy to access direct lines of communication with the local team. We accept on paper this should already exist but we would argue, with the SNTs possibly not so local and off the patch, communications need and must be of equal importance to the police as it is for the local community.

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