

Stephen Greenhalgh
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Anne Bristow
Corporate Director
Adult and Community Services
Town Hall
1 Town Hall Square
Barking
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6th March 2013

Dear Mr Greenhalgh,

Barking and Dagenham Partnership's response to MOPAC's consultation on a Police and Crime Plan for London 2013-2017.

On behalf of the Partnership, I should like to thank you for your attendance at the consultation meeting at Barking Learning Centre on Monday, 4 March 2013. In particular, we appreciated you staying for longer than scheduled in order to respond to the many questions that members of the public raised.

I am pleased to attach the Community Safety Partnership's response to the consultation on the Police and Crime Plan. This response replaces the holding response we sent on Wednesday 6th March 201, as discussed with your officers at the public meeting and in subsequent correspondence. Given the proximity of the public meeting to the consultation deadline, I trust this will not have caused difficulty, particularly since the public meeting was a key staging post in arriving at a consultation response that reflected our community's views, and were unable to hold it any sooner due to your conflicting commitments.

After the meeting there was a widespread welcome for your assurance that the savings arising from closing outdated buildings will be invested back into the police budget, recognising the pressure that is currently on the policing budget for the capital. However, as you will have seen at the meeting – especially given the large attendance – our residents have many more issues to put to you, and we also have the concerns that we set out in our attached consultation response.

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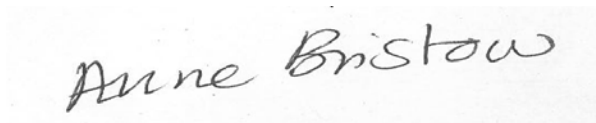
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Most concerning is the further delay to the additional Police Officers, as well as the lack of understanding of the partnership work done in the Borough to reduce anti-social behaviour. We would welcome a chance for you to further discuss these proposals in more depth with residents if you are able to meet with them.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Bristow". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Anne Bristow
Corporate Director, Adult and Community Services &
Chair of the Community Safety Partnership

cc: Councillor Liam Smith, Leader of the Council
Councillor Jeanne Alexander, Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities
Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Andy Ewing, MPS Borough Commander
Steve Watson, MPS Area Commander
Glynis Rogers, Divisional Director, Community Safety and Public Protection

Enc. Barking & Dagenham Partnership Response to MOPAC Consultation on a
Police & Crime Plan for London 2013-2017 (draft)

MOPAC Policing and Crime Plan 2013-2017 Consultation Response of Barking & Dagenham Community Safety Partnership

11 March 2013

The following comments have been produced in response to the consultation issued in January 2013, and takes into account discussions with members of the local community at the public meeting attended by the Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh

Barking and Dagenham Community Safety Partnership are pleased that our lobbying has been heard and that MOPAC has decided to retain Borough Commanders and to keep a Chief Inspector Partnerships and Community at borough-level. Additionally, we welcome the move to make savings through a rationalization of the MPS's estates. Nevertheless, we have concerns about the plan's implications in the following areas:

- a) Policing numbers
- b) Accommodation rationalisation
- c) Partnership-working

Policing Numbers

We welcome that the proposed increase in policing numbers in Barking and Dagenham is still a part of the Police and Crime Plan. However this has been promised on numerous occasions. At a meeting with London Chief Executives at New Scotland Yard in April 2012, and at his Roadshow last year, the Police Commissioner promised our residents that we would see more Police Officers after the Olympic and Paralympic Games: this has not happened, and we are now being told to expect them in 2015. We would suggest that the MPS bring forward deployment of this additional resource, as the consultation event on 4th March 2013 made clear that this is affecting residents' confidence in the MPS. We would suggest that the Met should issue a firm position statement as to how many more officers there will be and by when to reassure that these resources are committed to the Borough. We have formally requested this three times now.

As stated above, we do of course welcome the increase in Police Officer numbers. We are however aware that as Officers retire a great deal of experience is being lost; whilst we anticipate receiving our share of newly recruited officers, we expect that the majority of new officers placed in the Borough have considerable front line policing experience.

Public Perception of the Accommodation Rationalisation

Barking and Dagenham recognises and understands the need to consolidate the MPS's estate, and we particularly welcome the pledge to maintain and improve public access to the Police. We are confident that this is the right approach and we are already working with the Met as the plans go ahead to close Barking Police Station to keep a 24/7 Police presence in the town centre at the Barking Learning Centre. We also welcome the pledge that individual stations will remain open to the public as a front counter until such time as an equivalent or better facility for public access has been identified. Nevertheless, we have two key concerns:

Communication

It was clear at the consultation event that the public do not have a good understanding of how the new mechanisms will work. For example, although the MPS is pledging that it will be able to meet victims at a place of their choosing, queries were still made to CPEG as to how victims of such crimes as domestic violence could be met at their homes. We would recommend that communications around this need to be enhanced before the estates strategy is enacted. We

have found that when we engage with the public, using communications from the Partnership as well as the Police, we have seen improvements in public confidence. This needs to continue, and clear communications regarding the rationalisation will help to improve public confidence in these proposals.

Additionally, we would like assurance that officers are appropriately trained for visiting vulnerable victims. Given that you claimed that those with mental health issues tend to be perpetrators of crime when our experience and data demonstrate that they are disproportionately victims of crime, this is important to us.

Patrolling Base

We are concerned that the only patrolling base will be in Barking. This means that officers could lose up to an hour travelling from one side of the Borough to the other. We propose that a patrolling base be established in Dagenham – this would not need to contain a front-desk. We would be very willing to discuss a range of venues for such shared accommodation opportunities and we have already planned a joint meeting to scope where these might be best placed geographically to ensure the best access. One caveat is that we would expect these to be open at regular hours/days, to give access into the evenings and weekends and to be staffed by suitably trained officers who were dedicated to this role so as to ensure continuity. One such venue could be the Dagenham Library in the Heathway and Officers are meeting with the Police next week to scope out where these sites may be across the Borough to deliver the best possible accessibility.

We were surprised to hear you assure residents at the consultation meeting that all of the monies saved from closing outdated buildings will be invested back into the police budget itself. The Council had been told that these savings would be used instead to balance the wider police budget, which is creaking under the huge pressure, so this announcement is welcome.

Partnership-Working

We were very disappointed to hear that you attribute anti-social behaviour issues in the Borough to a lack of joined up policing and partnership-working. That is not our experience, and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the huge amount of work we have put into making sure that our streets are safe in Barking and Dagenham. Our recent experience of MPS press statements has shown a complete lack of understanding as to how Local Authorities in London work with policing partners. Examples of this included the press statement regarding Operation Big Wing, and the recent letter to Chief Executives around the reduction in gang activity, neither of which recognise the specific impact that partnerships, both in the statutory and voluntary sectors, have in addressing these issues. The Police and the Council have worked extremely successfully in partnership in recent years, for example through S92 agreements, which have part-funded policing teams in our Parks and our Estates, and in establishing our Victim Offender Location Time (VOLT) structure for tackling anti-social behaviour. In addition, this Council has a co-located Council ASB and Police Team.

Barking and Dagenham Community Safety Partnership are keen to develop and expand this type of partnership-working, and while we are pleased that this plan considers it in much more detail than the original BOCU plan, we are concerned by the lack of clarity and specificity in how the Plan's objectives and aims will be delivered. For example, supporting victims and witnesses is key to delivering the 20% increase in satisfaction but also to deliver the 20% expected reduction in crime. It would be helpful if MOPAC could outline more clearly how CSPs can be used to ensure that services for victims can be given stability and recognition of the important role they play in delivering the key goals.

We have concerns around the future of our S92 agreements which have been key in reducing crime in our Parks and our Estates. The existing contract for the Parks Team ends in July 2014 and it is unlikely that the Authority will be able to continue to fund the team. We understand that Borough Commanders will be given a 3% local discretion to organise policing

to suit the locality. We would ask that the Met revisit the Parks Police contract and the success that this team has had, noting that the team's ethos fits with that of the Commissioners desire to see pro-activity, personal responsibility and a proper challenge to offending behaviour. This team have proved the need for a dedicated resource in the Borough's parks and we would want the Metropolitan Police to commit to ensuring that some of the additional resource coming into the Borough is used to continue to deliver this service in the way in which it currently operates.

Another vital area of our partnership-working is our local Community Police Engagement Group (CPEG). We understand that MOPAC has been charged with replacing CPEGs through a manifesto commitment; however, in spite of having previously requested information on the future of CPEGs from MOPAC, we have not yet been given a clear idea of how we will be consulted on any replacement. We would advise that MOPAC makes clear as soon as possible its plans for the future of CPEGs, as our CPEG plays a vital role in our local partnership, and we would have a very strong opinion on how and with what it is replaced.

Finally, it is not clear as to the extent to which the equalities impacts of the draft Police and Crime Plan have been fully considered and we request assurance that a full and comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

We welcome the opportunity to engage in this consultation and would be happy to discuss our concerns further. Indeed, we would be pleased to welcome you to the Borough at a date suiting your diary. Councillor Jeanne Alexander, Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice, and Communities will be writing with some suggested dates in the near future.