



RESPONSE FROM THE ARLINGTON ASSOCIATION TO DRAFT POLICE AND CRIME PLAN FEBRUARY 2013

The Arlington Association wishes to respond to the recent MOPAC consultation. Our response will concentrate on matters of local concern – in particular the proposed changes to the structure of Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

We are very fortunate in St Peter's Ward to have an effective, efficient, engaged SNT which is Ward based, guided and focused. The crime statistics speak for themselves. Our local SNT has had great success in deterring crime, being visible, gathering intelligence and dealing with anti-social behaviour. The Ward Panel works well and local relationships with the community are excellent. SNT members are strong supporters of local residents groups such as ours and regularly attend AGMs and events.

Our concerns are around the proposed structure of SNTs and the move to a new local policing model based on clusters of Wards. As we understand it is proposed there will be a "named Sergeant" for each Ward which is different from a dedicated Sergeant. We also understand there will be only one PC per Ward (we currently have 2). There is no information about the numbers of PCSOs per Ward (we currently have 3). We do understand that there will be a move away from the deployment of PCSOs generally but the proposals for their replacement in the new structure are unclear.

This much reduced core team will be supplemented by a police team working across a 4 Ward cluster if we have understood the geography correctly. Their role would be to support Wards as needed but they are open to deployment across the Wards by the responsible Inspector as need arises.

Whilst the numbers may be greater the dedicated Ward role is seriously diluted under the proposed new model and consequently all the hard won benefits of a strong Ward policing team will be lost. How can Police Officers who do not know the Ward intimately police it effectively?

We understand there must always be flexibility in deployment but our real concern is that the majority of the police cover on any given day in our Ward in the future will be provided by deployed police officers and not dedicated police officers.

As we understand the proposal there does not seem to be a role for the Ward Panel and we are concerned all decisions concerning policing priorities will be made at Cluster level – or further up the chain of command. How will Cluster level decision making be an improvement – if this is indeed the proposal? When decision making becomes removed from those immediately affected by

the decisions, there is an immediate loss of “ownership”. This can only be a retrograde step.

Many proposals in the document are sensible – for example releasing valuable and underused part of the Estate. However, we urge that the proposals concerning the change to the SNT structure be reviewed so the hard won benefits of the current model are not lost.

Gordon McArthur
Chair, Arlington Association

The Arlington Association is made up of residents of the westerly part of the Arlington Conservation area in St Peters Ward, Islington.