

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

06 March 2013

Dear Deputy Mayor,

Draft Police and Crime Plan 2013-16

I am writing on behalf of Haringey Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in response to the draft Police and Crime Plan 2013-16 and the accompanying Estate Strategy.

The Plan will see an increase in Police officers working in Safer Neighbourhoods in Haringey which, on the surface, would be welcome. It is unclear how neighbourhood policing will work in practice though. The current Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) work within specific wards and are thus able to develop strong relationships with residents and businesses which are vital in establishing good communication and confidence within the local community. The Plan refers to named sergeants and dedicated base teams being allocated to each ward and greater flexibility in the deployment of staff. This suggests a smaller dedicated resource that will be more subject to external demands which may well limit its effectiveness.

It is noted that the overall increases in Police officers which each borough will have is considerably smaller than the increases in those officers in Safer Neighbourhoods which implies that officers will be redeployed from other duties to work in them. Haringey will get 89 additional Safer Neighbourhood officers but the overall increase in number within the borough will only be 6. This would suggest that 83 officers will be moved from other duties. This will undoubtedly have an impact but the report does not state clearly what this will be and how it will be mitigated.

Under the Estate Strategy, each London borough, with the exception of Westminster, will only have one 24 hour Police station. Haringey's will be situated in Wood Green which will mean that the Police stations at Hornsey and Tottenham will no longer be 24 hours. Whilst the Strategy states that the MPS has established that some front counters are underused, no evidence has been presented to back this up and it is therefore unclear which Police counters this applies to and whether this includes any within Haringey

The Strategy nevertheless imposes a “one size fits all” solution that does not take into account the levels of use of Police front counters. In areas with higher levels of crime, there will undoubtedly be a greater need for people to contact the Police than those with lower levels and therefore a greater requirement for public access facilities. In January 2013, Haringey had approximately double the number of notifiable offences of some London boroughs and it is highly likely that the number of visitor numbers to Police counters reflect this.

The Committee feels that boroughs, like Haringey, which have higher levels of crime need additional Police counter access to reflect the higher levels of demand. These should be located in areas such as Tottenham where demand is the highest. In addition, there are particular sensitivities within Tottenham which the Strategy fails to acknowledge. There is an ongoing need in the area to improve relations between the community and the Police and reduce the fear of crime. A 24 hour Police station is very important to this. There is potential for it to be used as a hub to build better community engagement and involvement which could play an important part in improving levels of trust and confidence. The Committee would therefore urge you to reconsider the plans to reduce the opening hours of Tottenham Police station.

I hope that you will be able to take into account the views of the Committee in finalising the Plan. Any response or comments that you may have would be gratefully received.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Reg Rice
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

c.c. Cllr. David Winskill, Chair, Communities Scrutiny Panel
Cllr Richard Watson, Cabinet Member for Communities