

MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME (MOPAC)

At the MOPAC Meeting for Hammersmith and Fulham (H & F), we were briefed on how 92 extra Police Constables (PCs) would be available for deployment for Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) duties in H & F. This increase would be possible because of savings made by the closure of public access counters, the reduction in senior officers and the reduction in supervisory grades.

We, in Rylett Road W12, who benefit, through our Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) Scheme, from a close working relationship with our excellent SNT, would hope that some of this extra manpower would be given to our SNT, who have been under strength for most of their time since 2007.

We believe that the current model of the SNT having a Sergeant, two PCs and three Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), dedicated to local policing in the Ward, has really worked. Our NHW Scheme was started in 2007, when it was announced that SNTs were to be formed. We could see that we could best benefit from this new policy if we formed our own NHW Scheme to work closely with our Ward SNT. It has worked really well. We had our first 6 monthly meeting in May 2007. Our SNT Sergeant attended, with members of the Team, and that has always been the case. We had our most recent 6 monthly meeting, our 12th, in November 2012, and the Sergeant and Team members were there – they have never failed to be there. The result of this consistent relationship is that the Road residents know the Team, trust has developed, information has been two way traffic and the Road is a better and safer place. The SNT has developed a deep knowledge of the Ward, its residents and the obvious differences to other Wards. This is classic local policing and it has worked. We know our SNT and they know us.

So now is the moment to bring this excellent working model up to strength. But that is not the MOPAC Plan. The plan is to reduce the Ward SNT to one PC and one PCSO, as the only officers dedicated to the Ward. In addition, there will be a pool of Sergeants who will be “named”, allocated to each Ward. This presumably means that he will get to know the Ward but will be doing other duties as well. We understand that the remainder of the extra PCs will be centralised into a force which can be deployed to meet policing needs. Clearly, they cannot get to know the individual Wards in the same way as our SNT does now. In our view, this is a reduction in the local policing that our existing Ward SNT achieves. The PC and PCSO are not enough to do the job and the “named” Sergeant can never get to know his Ward, in the same way as the present one does. We are going to lose much of what has been achieved since the SNTs formed in 2007. We doubt, for example, that will see the same faces that we know, who we consider to be our local SNT, patrolling our streets. And we doubt whether we will see faces we know at our 6 monthly meetings, which has worked so well. The concept of local policing, which started in 2007, will be eroded.

I could go on, but you will understand that the message from this NHW Scheme is clear. Do not reduce the Ward SNT, which has worked so well. Give it more manpower, when it has been under strength for so much of its existence. Build on a model which has really worked. Please do not undermine it.

Tony Twiss.

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