

Response from a Harrow resident

Dear Ms Coldwell

I write to you in two capacities: firstly as a 25 year long resident of the London Borough of Harrow and secondly, as an MPS volunteer in the same Borough.

The cuts in the budget of the MPS are horrendous but it is not the purpose of my response to challenge those. It has been decided that they will happen and we have to live with that.

When placed in the context of those cuts, I believe that the draft consultation document is an intelligent, and articulate response to the difficulties faced by the MPS now that it has to *"meet the challenge of service delivery with few resources"*.

I wish to make two observations regarding the Consultation document:

1) I am especially pleased that one of the crime priorities identified in the document is 'gangs'. As a volunteer, one of the roles I perform is for a recently created initiative - Mothers Against Gangs'. It has already achieved many successes in supporting (mainly) young men who are involved in/are associated with/may become associated with gang activities. You may find out more about the organisation at: www.mothersagainstgangs.com The MOPAC document is, by necessity, a **strategic** plan for the policing of London. I hope that, if and when it is approved, it will foster discussion at a Borough level about how that strategy can be implemented in terms of **operational** performance. It is my hope that, once we reach that point of operational decision-making, you will support us in Harrow by the provision of some resources to enable the association to cope with its growing workload. Please note that I write in an entirely **personal capacity** as I am sure that 'Mothers Against Gangs' will be contacting you in the future and I do not act as their 'spokesperson'.

2) As a volunteer I also work on the front desk at Pinner Police Station in the north of Harrow Borough. I am concerned that the 'front desk' appears to have been earmarked for closure. I feel this may detract from the provision of police services for two main reasons. I present my case in the context of the Mayor's Mission Statement – *"An MPS that becomes the UK's most effective, most efficient, most respected, even most loved police force"*.

Firstly, the front desk in Pinner is essentially one room in a building which would continue to house offices for both Police Officers and PCSOs. Given that the building will remain in use, the additional cost of having the front desk being served by volunteers is virtually negligible. Were that not the case, given my backing for the overall strategic response of MOPAC to the challenges being faced, I could not support opposition to the closure of the front desk. I cannot see a strong financial case for closure and, on that basis, I would ask that a review of the decision to close it down takes place.

Secondly, I understand that if 'front desks' currently staffed by volunteers in Harrow were to close then they would be replaced by 'contact points' around the Borough. In principle, there is nothing wrong with the provision of more locations at which the public could be served by members of the MPS and volunteers. In practice, I can see some difficulties. There would be a need to provide, at each contact point, the resources needed to ensure the health and safety of anyone working at one of those 'points' – in particular, there will be a need on some occasions, to ensure that police and volunteers are able to talk to a few members of the public behind the protection of security glass. In addition, I have discovered through my volunteering on the 'front desk' that you occasionally assist someone who is vulnerable and may require a quiet area where they can be talked to, given a cup of tea and then be put into contact with another

support agency. I do not know whether, in discussions about 'contact points', the front desk resources these vulnerable people need have been itemised.

Apologies for this lengthy response. I know it will not compare to the tomes you will receive from other individuals and community organisations. I hope, nevertheless, that it has provided you with support for what I see as a rational consultation document as well as giving you a reasoned explanation as to why I hope MOPAC will consider the operational implications of its proposals.