

Local Policing Update

Inspector Teresa Futter



April 2018 marked one of the biggest changes in policing in Norfolk with the removal of the PCSO role. PCSO's had been the lifeblood of neighbourhood policing. I have been a police officer for nearly 30 years and the thing that people tell me time consistently is that what they want more than anything else is to see officers on the beat. Officers can't always be on the beat. Officers can't always be visible. But I do know it's important.

In 2018 we removed that PCSO role and replaced it with more warranted police officers. Police officers have more warranted powers than PCSO's. They can arrest people. They can work unsocial hours. They can be given a lawful order. PCSO's were also far more expensive than police officers. But they were dedicated towards the tasks which we know were important to communities, not least engaging at a parish level.

Since the removal of PCSO's just my district alone I have had 21 new students and 2 transferees join us.

I do not underestimate how much of an impact that had on local policing particularly around visibility.

Now more than a year down the line I thought it was a good time for a state of the nation. How are things working. This is an opportunity for you to give us feedback and answer questions. I hope that you do this during the meeting but I would also encourage you to complete one of the short survey forms with the agendas. You can complete this at the end or over coffee etc

There has been a changing demand profile for policing not just in Norfolk but across the country. It has been a step change. Domestic abuse investigation, sexual offences, cyber-crime, online fraud. It requires a different skill set to the more traditional crime types such as theft, assault and burglary etc This different type of crime has meant that we've needed a different skill set and more warranted officers.

The constabulary has invested heavily in neighbourhood policing. On a county level we now have 3 Moonshot Teams

Moonshot teams are ANPR interceptors – the difference is that they are focussed not just on road related offences but by criminals using the roads. When an offence is committed we are looking at suspects, their vehicles and movements and there have been some incredible results around this.

The really good news is that we are getting investment in more cameras and devices so rural crime can be properly targeted not just by moonshot teams but by officers using anpr technology.

We also have neighbourhood policing teams in urban centres which are pro-active units focussing on specific neighbourhood priorities. They can help us proactively undertake operations.

We also have on call scene guards who are willing to be called out to free officers from being on seals for major incidents.

We also have an excellent and developing investigative capacity with more detectives being trained. When the wheel falls off we have the cavalry to call.

Following a recent remodelling we sit within one of the 4 super district command areas as North Norfolk and Great Yarmouth. There are 4 local policing commands within those districts and these are headed up by Supt Mike Britton and Chief Inspector Matt Dyson. Fairly early days but so far it has been nothing but positive and we have actually gained a further dedicated inspector as part of this process.

This local policing command consists of Sheringham, Cromer, North Walsham and Stalham and all the parishes in between. This is over 60 parishes

We have 5 beat managers to manage this. This is backed up by the response teams who all start and end their days at Cromer and North Walsham.

5 Sgts, 42 PC's give or take. At any one time that is a Sgt and 5 PC's covering a pretty big geographical area

The good news – demand is low. This is statistically the safest local policing command in the one of the safest counties in England. This is a great place to police and I always say to my officers if you can't enjoy being a police officer here then you are in the wrong profession.

Cads are incidents which we deploy – we average out around 15.

The difficulty is that in some cases those jobs can take many hours to resolve. Whilst we don't have a high number of robberies and thefts we do get missing person enquiries, concern for safety, road traffic collisions and calls for people with mental health issues. None of these would fall within the target of reducing crime

Officers carry a workload. Crime investigations which don't sit within the remit of Criminal Investigation department but still have a suspect on the end. Officers work a shift pattern of 6 shifts on, 4 shifts off. Whilst this might sound nice (and having 4 days off would be great) take into account unsocial hours, night working, not seeing family, not being able to ringfence time for crime enquiries

this is where things slip and we are not always able to undertake the quality of investigation we would like.

Your beat managers, however, are ringfenced for you. They should be focussed on your community priorities. They are your first point of contact for community focussed issues. I will let those officers talk about their roles themselves in a little bit but part of the purpose of coming together today is for people to gain a better appreciation and understanding.

Parish meetings may have become neglected. We have 67 in this local policing command and whereas in the past you may have expected to see a police officer or PCSO attending several times a year if not every month now we are greeted with surprise when we are able to attend.

The engagement officer role was introduced to try and address this but their portfolio of responsibility has grown and grown.

We have cluster newsletters that go out on a monthly basis. Again, I will let Pete talk a little bit about this but broadly speaking we know there is work to do. I am trying to make it more localised but you will appreciate we are unable to give a crime update for 67 parishes.

Policing is a serious job and we have an important role to do. I think one of the biggest risks around our role, however, is presuming that we know best. We should not be arrogant enough to decide what the community should want from us. Our teams may not be able to please everybody but I wanted to take this opportunity to get some real feedback on how we are doing and whether we are on track.

If there is none and the suggestion is that everything is fantastic then brilliant but if there are simple things that we can do that make the world of difference to people locally then say so and let's get those things done too.

