



Nottinghamshire

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Christine Goldstraw OBE
Chair of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel
c/o County Hall
West Bridgford
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2 February 2018

Dear Christine

Thank you for your letter dated 10th January 2018 about the Panel's consideration of my Annual Report for 2016-17 which I presented to the Police and Crime Panel's meeting of 18th September 2017.

In respect of your points about the reduction in Police Officer numbers, I would like to say that I share your concerns and I have done everything I can to maintain the highest level possible within the budget available. Members will be aware that the Force has had to make £54m savings over the past five years which has inevitably led to a reduction in Police officer numbers. For example, shortly after I came into office in March 2013, there were 2,095 Police Officers and five years later in March 2018 there were 1,837, a loss of 258 (-12.3%).

Staffing costs represent the largest portion of the Police budget and our establishment has to align with what we can afford. Nevertheless, as I said at the meeting I am committed to recruiting a further 200 Police officers in order to have closer to 2,000 officers ultimately (subject to future grant settlements, efficiencies and any revised funding formula). In addition, I plan to maintain 200 PCSOs and appreciate your support with our plans.

Police numbers have fallen nationally by over 20,000 since 2010 and are at their lowest level for thirty years. Figures released last month show numbers have reduced by another 900 in the year to September 2017. I suspect overall numbers will continue to fall nationally whilst there are planned increases in Nottinghamshire.

Since the Chief Constable's appointment last year he has been busy not only in identifying efficiency savings which will help pay for more Police officers, but you will be aware through the media that his team has been working hard to recruit and select new officers and at the next Panel meeting I will let you have the most recent position.

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You were also concerned about the change in prioritisation of crime types through the Force's THRIVE¹ approach and the increase in acquisitive crime, aggressive begging and shop thefts which you thought might be linked to the changed focus of the Integrated Offender Management team; in this respect, I would like to reiterate what I said at the meeting i.e. with much less resources, it was right that the Force focuses on people most at risk, although I accept that this may have led to increases in volume crime in some areas. However, I don't believe the new system of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) recently implemented is causing the problems you refer to.

I am in the process of finalising my draft Police and Crime Panel and I am currently in consultation with the Chief Constable exploring ways in which areas identified with high levels of severity and harm can be targeted with partners; our initial research suggests that many of these areas also have high levels of volume crime so we may be able to find a way of tackling both issues with the support of our partners.

We continue to work hard with partners, in particular Nottingham City Council on begging. Arrests are being made. I would also emphasise that Police officers have to comply with the 'necessity to arrest' test before arrests can be made, otherwise the Custody Sergeant would be obliged to release a person and this is neither a good use of resource or in fact legal.

I agree with your view that there is a possibility that the reported reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has been masked to some extent by a 92% increase in public order offences. As I have reported to the Panel on numerous occasions, following the national data integrity inspections undertaken by HMRCFRS, the Force is significantly more compliant with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and the increased scrutiny of this issue has led to many more incidents being correctly recorded, a change which you and other members commended us for in your letter.

You raised concern about the reasons for the continuing underperformance against Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) target. I accept that the Force could improve performance with POCA, and as I mentioned at the Panel meeting, we are in discussions with Derbyshire Police who have a good track record in this area. That said, it should be noted that any decision to apply for an order is made by the Crown Prosecution Service, based on information and advice provided by the Police. A decision to grant an order is one for the Court alone. Also, an order is not granted until sentencing and in many cases there can be a gap of many months between point of arrest and an order being granted. In other words, both the CPS and the Court can influence the outcome of this measure.

You queried the reduction in risk of crime felt by Nottinghamshire household residents, as highlighted in the Crime Survey for England and Wales, i.e. that people's perception of household crime has reduced at the same time that recorded crime has increased, and as I mentioned in my Annual Report, I am assured that the main reason for the large increase in crime is due compliance because this independent measure clearly shows that residents perception of household crime actually reduced during this same period. Had it increased, I may have had a different view concerning the crime data.

¹ THRIVE: stands for Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation Opportunities, Vulnerability of the victim and the Engagement level required to resolve an issue. THRIVE methodology is a recognised technique in policing and is used by a number of police services around the country.

You questioned whether the Force is likely to utilise so-called 'paedophile hunters'. You may recall DCC Barber's answer when she informed the Panel that there was a fine balance between such practice and vigilantism and the Force would prefer to have more resources to enable this sort of online investigative work to be undertaken by the Police. There have been a few reported cases in Nottinghamshire but the Force was not planning on collaborating with these people, although a similar approach to online investigations would be taken through the Force's own undercover online approach.

You also queried whether the early guilty plea rate could be improved by an earlier submission of Court files and the submission of body worn camera evidence by officers. As I mentioned at the meeting, work is underway to ensure better file preparation. DCC Barber informed the Panel that she accepts that there were issues with file quality and submission rates, with some common mistakes. Best practice from elsewhere would be shared although it would take a while to see improvements from the on-going work in the Courts.

I am in favour of Body Worn Video for a number of reasons and I believe this has contributed to the 31% reduction in complaints against Police officers. This being the case, producing such video evidence for the Court to consider can only improve criminal justice outcomes. As DCC Barber mentioned, this issue is also linked to the digitalisation of back office functions and production of video evidence has been factored into the Force's plans for improvement.

Furthermore, I would like to reiterate that discussions were on-going with the CPS about the storage of the video cameras and some funding had been made available to the Courts and the CPS around this issue (but not to the Police).

I appreciate that Members welcome the funding for a Domestic Violence Advisor in Mansfield and Ashfield but concerning your query in respect of the funding period and the exit strategy, I would like to say that a meeting with the City and County Councils is planned about the resource implications of such roles. I recognise that some victims of domestic violence are male and I am particularly keen to focus upon the impact on children in all cases.

I am immensely grateful for the support and challenge the Panel have provided over the last financial year and look forward to working with you in 2018-19.

Yours sincerely



Paddy Tipping
Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner