

Public Forum, Bath – 28th September 2017
Q&A Notes

Q: Bath residents would like the police to concentrate on traffic issues. In particular in George Street and the HGVs who shouldn't use the road. If the police are not able to pursue the lorry drivers would they support BANES in their request to Parliament for moving traffic offences?

A: The Chief Constable discussed some of his experience over his 30 years in policing and commented that it is not often the police or prosecution that actually makes people desist in their illegal behaviour. Whilst he is open minded to the council having enforcement powers he suspects they would also be low on resources to enforce them and suggested it would probably be better to look into ways to design out the ability for HGVs to use the road such as a physical object to narrow the road.

Q: There are a number of cars/motorbikes speeding through Midsomer Norton and creating ASB issues. Residents appreciate the police have done a lot but it is still happening – is there any more that can be done?

A: The Chief Constable was sorry that residents have to put up with that behaviour and understands how frustrating it can be. Education as well as enforcement is key to these situations. The local Beat Manager updated on some of the powers the police have used, including a number of Section 59 notices issued and the dispersals of groups of youths that have occurred over the summer and there have been a number of positive outcomes but accepts there is more that can be done and the police will work with the community and local partner agencies to address all the issues.

Q: Bathweston resident called 101 recently in relation to street drinkers as Bath is a drink free city and had to wait 40 minutes – so the call back system sounds good.

A: The PCC was sorry to hear she had been kept waiting and acknowledged that there has been an issue with the 101 line but that it has improved as previously abandoned calls to 101 were at 12% but now they are at 5%.

Q: The Chief recently made a statement on Sky News following the publication of the Tipping Point report indicating that the Constabulary would not be able to deal with a terrorist attack – if there is recruiting radicalism in BANES how quickly would the police be able to respond?

A: The Chief advised that The Tipping Point is a forward looking report and so if the flat cash continues then Neighbourhood Policing is going to be in jeopardy. Avon & Somerset share an Armed Policing Unit with Wiltshire and Gloucestershire and the Chief and the PCC regularly discuss how quickly the unit would be able to respond to an incident. Officers would be able to respond to an incident very quickly but they would not be armed. The armed officers would get there pretty quickly but it would be slower than the average response time for the Met in London. The Chief apologised he was not able to give specific times for operational confidentiality reasons but asked that residents trust him. It does not escape the Chief what his job is and the importance of these questions and issues.

Q: Would it make sense to publish an article in the Chronicle to remind people that it is illegal to ride on pavements?

A: The local Acting Inspector agreed that she had also noticed a rise in the number of people riding on pavements and confirmed that where she is able she does stop them and talk to them in an effort to educate them about the reasons why they must not ride on the pavements, in this area education is the key. Officers try to take the common sense approach in these scenarios. It was also noted that the government are reviewing cycling laws following a court case in the last few weeks.

Q: An Enquiry Office clerk wanted to remind residents that they were in Manvers Street 8am – 8pm and sought reassurance from the PCC that in the move the Enquiry Office will remain located with the Neighbourhood Policing teams.

A: The PCC confirmed that she was aware of the consultation with the Council and was putting her views across about the importance of Neighbourhood Officers being accessible to the public. The PCC confirmed the police will stay in Manvers Street and expressed her desire to have a blue light outside the building as a very visible sign to residents that they are there.

Q: With the cuts you have lost 650 officers – what is that in terms of a percentage?

A: It's 22%. Nationally there are 20,000 fewer police staff and 22,000 fewer officers.