

# POLICE Question Time

with  Cheshire  
Police Authority

**WARRINGTON, 13 JULY 2010**

## THE PANEL

- *Moira Chapman, Member of the Police Authority*
- *Ian Wiggett, Assistant Chief Constable*
- *Chief Superintendent Richard Strachan, Area Commander for Northern Area*
- *Katherine Fairclough, Assistant Chief Executive, Warrington Borough Council and Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (known as the Safer, Stronger Thematic Group)*
- *John Davidson, Assistant Chief Executive, Probation Services*

## POLICING OF CREAMFIELDS

**Q** Do the Police have plans in place in preparation for the Creamfields Festival in August? Please could we have an outline of such plans to protect the public and residents.

**A** Chief Superintendent Strachan responded that planning started the day after Creamfields closed last year. There are two aspects; the policing of the event on-site and policing of the roads and communities outside the event. Last year policing inside the event was a pleasure with the lowest number of incidents to date. Police have been working to rectify some of the issues outside the ground e.g. low level disorder and nuisance. There will be a dedicated community hot line available and a dedicated local response team. Police have been working closely with the local authority. Halton Borough Council is responsible for licensing the event. The company that runs the event pays for the policing of it.

## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

**Q** What are the police doing about anti-social behaviour?

**A** Chief Superintendent Strachan said that reducing ASB is a top priority. The visible patrols in the neighbourhood policing units focus on where people say the problems are through community meetings and engaging with the public. Officers attend 90% of reported ASB incidents. Reports are followed up, vulnerability and risk of people is assessed and most people get a follow up visit at home.

The police, Youth service, Probation Service and Council work closely together. The majority of ASB is caused by adults misusing alcohol but there are also concerns about young people and their use of alcohol and we try to provide things for them to do to divert them away from alcohol misuse. We do not want young people to become victims of crime.

Katherine Fairclough said ASB is taken seriously by the Warrington Partnership in both prevention and reduction. The partnership has worked hard to understand all types of ASB and looks closely at connected areas such as alcohol licensing.

Moira Chapman said that the Police Authority takes ASB very seriously and has added ASB reduction to the Policing Plan targets for the Chief Constable to achieve. The Authority also monitors the satisfaction levels of how people are dealt with.

Mrs Chapman added: As a magistrate, we don't see ASB as it is not a crime but do see ASBOs where evidence has been collected and the Magistrates can specify what the offender can / can't do as part of the order. If the ASBO terms are broken, it can be an imprisonable offence.

John Davidson said that Probation Services manage approx 900 adult offenders in Warrington. ASB is not a crime but many criminal offenders also commit ASB . Each offender is assessed thoroughly and alcohol is the most significant factor in offending behaviour.

Community Payback can help to put something back into society. If anyone has a community project that could be done contact the Probation Services office. All workers are assessed and supervised.

Q What is done about licensees who sell too much alcohol to people?

A The police work closely with the Council to manage licensees and significant work has been done to intervene early, they are given words of advice, then an action plan with monitoring or test purchasing and can have their license taken away.

Q What % of ASBOs are breached?

A Moira Chapman said that every situation must be judged in context in court.

#### OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

Q Many young offenders come from families with a history of violence and crime. How do you intend to break this cycle?

A John Davidson explained that re-offending assessments consider family history. Education is needed to break the cycle and Probation Services target the most troubled and troublesome families through different interventions.

Katherine Fairclough said that the Council provides support to young parents, expectant mums and early years children but one size solution does not fit all and individual support packages are needed. There is an ongoing cycle of improving services to families that need extra support/ or are vulnerable.

#### PCSO POWERS

Q Why and how are PCSOs being recruited when PCs have legal power? What are you doing to ensure PCs don't feel usurped by PCSOs?

A Assistant Chief Constable Wiggett explained that PCSOs have most of the powers that fully warranted officers have apart from the ability to arrest on suspicion. PCSOs are a valuable additional resource in community policing and we want to maintain the separation of roles between PCSOs and police officers. PCSOs predominantly performed more 'community work' and worked with other partners as they do not get abstracted into the investigative process following an arrest.

Moira Chapman said that PCSOs are community problem solvers and have a

different job to do from warranted officers. They have the time to work closely with people and really contribute to reducing crime and disorder.

Katherine Fairclough stated that although financial pressure may cause the situation to change, that the Council has already committed to mainstreaming their contribution to PCSO funding for the next 3 years from 2010.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

Q IMPACT Warrington asked: The number of young people involved with crime is decreasing. Where do these statistics come from and what are the Police doing to stop young people involved in crime?

A Some of the projects to divert young people away from alcohol are having a positive effect. We don't want to criminalise young people and we need to encourage positive parenting. Restorative Justice is a good way of dealing with young offender without them getting a criminal record which could adversely affect their life chances. First time entrants to the criminal justice system is at its lowest for years which is something to be celebrated.

The Council and partnership carries out projects with youth services and voluntary sector but need to know what young people want and what does and doesn't work.

Q Teen crime is on a decrease, yet despite this Police still admit to targeting young people - how can this be justified? Why can't it be accepted that this is no longer necessary?

A 93% of arrests are adults. We do not focus on young people – we do focus on behaviour. We recognise that young people are vulnerable and are serious about protecting them. We need to listen to young people more and it is good to see so many here tonight, stepping up and taking responsibility. We also focus on drivers aged 17+ as we want to keep them safe on the roads.

Q In order to get the "police message" across, would Police consider regularly and personally taking part in school assemblies?

A Chief Superintendent Strachan said that there are officers based in schools which were highlighted as areas of high deprivation, crime or offending and where the schools thought this would be beneficial, schools liaison officers who work in a range of schools and neighbourhood officers who also work closely with the school community.

Moira Chapman explained that the Authority had challenged the Constabulary about its approach to young people some years ago as under 18s make up 22% of the population across the policing area and many of those are victims.

#### POLICE VISIBILITY

Q Both the Government and police have promised to have police in the beat. Where are they? Still running round in cars?

A Chief Superintendent Strachan said that the police are on patrol on foot, bicycles, in cars and also use public transport. The website shows what they are doing. However, we will always need to maintain an emergency response in cars.

Moira Chapman added that the Authority ensures that the Constabulary are achieving the targets set by close monitoring. Cheshire has the best results for public satisfaction in the country, what is most important is that the public are getting a good service.

#### ROAD POLICING

Q Would be possible to have an unmarked police car going round Grassmere Avenue at the weekend to catch the motorbikes going up and down at speed and are noisy.

A Unmarked cars and motorbikes already operate in the area. Just last week a motorbike in that location was seized.

Q A question was asked about the provision of public transport in Warrington, particularly at Stockton Heath where the last bus departs Warrington Causeway at 17:40 and there is no Sunday transport.

A The subsidy for Sunday bus service has been reduced as part of the Council's 3 year financial strategy. There is a service that runs until 11pm on week days and the situation is being kept under review.

Q What are you doing to improve relations with ethnic communities?

A Chief Superintendent Strachan said that the police treat everyone with dignity and respect and Cheshire leads in meeting diversity standards nationally. We do this because we want people to talk to us and trust us.

Moira Chapman added, one of the roles of the Authority is to monitor stops, arrests, fixed penalty notices etc by ethnicity to make sure that there is no disproportionality. We get right underneath the data and challenge the Constabulary if anything needs further investigation.

ACC Wiggett said that one of the challenges in society is difference whether it be age or ethnicity. Studies have shown that this causes tension. The police often get complaints about "youth nuisance" who aren't doing anything wrong. The key is getting local officers to build relationships and ease the tensions.