

POLICE Question Time

with  Cheshire
Police Authority

WILMSLOW, 7 JULY 2010

THE PANEL

- *Margaret Ollerenshaw, Chairman of the Police Authority*
- *Phil Thompson, Assistant Chief Constable*
- *Chief Superintendent Mick Garrihy, Area Commander for Eastern Cheshire*
- *Tony Potts, Community Safety Partnership*
- *Sandra Link, Assistant Chief Executive, Cheshire Probation*

COALITION GOVERNMENT

- Q Does the Authority have any problems with the new government's proposals for the police and the authorities?
- A Cheshire Police Authority is naturally concerned about the quality of the service the proposed elected individual will be able to provide, considering the vast scope of expert areas they will have to cover. Currently there are very few details as to how the proposal would practically work. It is not possible to scope the impact the proposal would have until further details are released by the Government this autumn.

PARKING

- Q Does the panel think that a non town centre based traffic warden system could help stop expensive verge damage and obstruction?
- A Ch Supt Mick Garrihy replied that such issues have not been raised previously and therefore additional research would be required.
- Q A gentleman with a hearing impairment has asked about cyclists on pavements. Some have no fitted bells and some don't use them.
- A PCSOs and Police Officers do remind cyclists the importance of the fitted bells when they see a cyclist that has removed the fitted bell off their bike.

ROAD POLICING

- Q The management of traffic in the village of Alderley Edge is being reviewed in readiness for the opening of the by-pass. If a weight limit restriction was placed on the current A34 (London Road) such that large lorries could be kept out of the village centre, how would the police enforce such a restriction?"
- A Ch Supt Mick Garrihy explained that Police do enforce weight restrictions however the law does allow legitimate access to such areas. The question is whether the activity is legitimate or not, police will investigate but in order to do so they will often

have to follow a vehicle through such an area to determine its reason for being there and if appropriate, prosecute the driver. It is a general consensus though that the traffic would naturally flow through the by-pass due to the much better road and travelling conditions.

POLICE VISIBILITY

Q How many officers are walking the beat, percentage wise, at any given time in the Tatton area or if that is not available, in Wilmslow, Handforth, and Alderley?

A Chief Superintendent Garrihy explained that he would prefer to see officers walking in the community but different times of the day will often require different policing. It is often the case that 25% of officers will be on duty during the day, 50% during late evening and early part of the night and 25% during the later part of the night. In reality officers shifts overlap and change frequently according to what is happening but many are often walking in our town centres and communities. Whatever the case, officers need to be able to respond quickly.

INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS

Q How are complaints against the police are investigated. For example, would a report of rudeness by a police officer to a parishioner be investigated?

A All complaints against the police are handled by the Professional Standards Department within the Constabulary or by the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

FINANCE

Q When will the 2008/09 and 2009/10 PURE assessments be published on the Authority's website? Has financial management improved since the '2' score in previous years?

A The 2008/09 Use of Resources Assessment is on the Authority's website. Over the last year the Authority and Constabulary have worked hard and achieved many improvements in the use of resources. The External Auditor had partly completed his 2009/10 Assessment when the new Government announced the immediate suspension and withdrawal of both the Comprehensive area assessment and the Use of Resources Assessment. The Auditor will undertake no further work but will report in writing on his findings to date in the Annual Audit Letter which will be presented to the Authority on 21 September. The findings will not be scored.

Q From recent HMIC data why does Cheshire have a lower % of personnel in frontline policing work compared to peer group average?

A "The Frontline Policing Measure is calculated by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary from the numbers of officers in particular functions. The roles that officers perform in these functions vary considerably from force to force and the measure should only be taken as indicative. A large number of Cheshire officers are in public facing functions categorised as 'Investigative' by the HMIC but which the public would still recognise as fully operational. Overall the statistics do not indicate that Cheshire has a disproportionate number of officers in administrative roles but we are not complacent and are actively reviewing where we post officers to so as to

ensure that the maximum capacity is dedicated to operational policing including those roles defined by the HMIC as frontline."

Q After how many years in the force can officers receive pensions?

A The earliest an officer can receive a pension is after 25 years service if the officer is over 50 years of age. They can receive a pension at a younger age but only if they have completed 30 years' service.

Q What are the average numbers of days sick leave per officer?

A As at 31 March 2010, the average number of working days lost for police officers was 5.44 days and for police staff 6.85 days. The average number of working days lost for PCSOs is 4.73 days which is a decrease of 2.51 days on the same period last year (7.24 days). The statistics demonstrate a continued improvement in attendance and for police officers we are placed 3rd best in the country.

Q What is the percentage in relation to overall pay, of overtime payments?

A Police Officers:	4.2%
PCSOs:	6.8%
Police Staff:	3.8%
Total Cost:	4.2%