

Terrorism

DETECTIVE Chief Inspector Paul Taylor, Head of Special Branch, gave a presentation on the role and work undertaken by the Branch to counter terrorism and domestic extremism across Cheshire.

Outlined was the national threat levels which ranged from low to critical – the current level is severe which is defined as an attack is highly likely.

The links and consequences of national incidents such as the London and Glasgow bombings, to Cheshire were discussed which included increased costs associated with additional high-visible patrols and support to the forces in the affected areas.

Potential terrorist indicators were discussed, for example people videoing or photographing security arrangements at venues such as train stations, airports or crowded places.

Communities were asked to remain vigilant to people who may be visiting terrorist related internet sites, people who were using false travel documents or suspicious people renting lock up garages or self storage facilities.

The public were urged to report any suspicious activity that they observe to:-

**Cheshire Constabulary's
Special Branch:
01244 612123**

or

**Confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline:
0800 789 321**



Question Time

Q. Could there be one national non-emergency telephone number?

A. The Chief Executive advised that the Government had considered the introduction of a single non-emergency number but due to the costs involved and other priorities had not progressed the matter. Local authorities including the police, had been encouraged by the Government to consider the local introduction of a single non-emergency number and that this may be considered in time.

Q. What level of crimes were unreported?

A. The Chief Executive commented that the British Crime Survey assessed the level of crime and showed that crime levels were falling and that the gap between crimes reported to the police and the public's view of the level of crime was reducing. The public were urged to report all crimes so that any crime patterns can be identified and officers targeted appropriately.

Q. Concern was expressed about difficulty in reporting incidents at Sandbach Police Station and the lack of a response to messages left on voicemails.

A. Inspector Gammage commented that access to policing was important and that the opening hours of police stations had been reviewed to maintain a service and make the best and effective use of the officers available. There was a commitment to respond to voicemail messages within 48 hours. In terms of customer focus, feedback from victims of crime was sought about the service they had received and was monitored. The questioner was asked to speak to the Inspector after the meeting to enable the matter to be reviewed.

Q. Following three recent robberies in the town, were there plans to increase the level of policing during the day?

A. Inspector Gammage reported that this type of crime was rare and that due to the location of Sandbach just off the M6 it was vulnerable and targeted by travelling criminals. The police presence in the town had been recently increased and shift patterns changed.

Q. What is the total number of police officers in the force and where are they?

A. The Chief Executive advised that there were 2142 police officers supported by 1658 staff plus 237 PCSOs and 273 special constables. Superintendent Garrihy advised that officers performed a wide range of tasks – not only community policing but also detective roles which were not always visible to the public but essential in tackling crime.

Q. When would Sandbach get a replacement PCSO?

A. Inspector Gammage reported that new recruits were awaiting training and it was hoped the vacant post would be filled between June and August 2008.

Q. Concern was expressed about the lack of police presence in Sandbach town centre at weekends.

A. The Inspector commented that there was 24 hour policing cover throughout Cheshire and that local Neighbourhood Policing Unit officers had the support of targeted patrol teams and officers from other specialist units and that due to the developing night time in town centres, cover at weekends was increased.

The following road traffic issues were raised:-

Q. Concern was expressed about motor vehicles making dangerous U-turns at Sandbach Heath.

A. A representative of the Town Council responded that meetings with the County Council had taken place and the County Engineer had accepted that there was a problem and it had been added to the list of priorities.

Q. What action can be taken to target indiscriminate parking on double yellow lines on the A533?

A. Inspector Gammage advised that he would arrange for the PCSOs to issue fixed penalty notices to offending vehicles in the area.

Q. Concern about speeding and vehicles being used in an anti-social manner in Elworth.

A. Inspector Gammage agreed to arrange for local officers to target the offenders and added that the Police had the power to seize vehicles being used in this way.

Q. Why was the public not advised via a radio broadcast that Bradwall Road had been cordoned off following the bank robbery?

A. The Inspector advised that the police did try and advise the public of major incidents and road closures.

Q. An enquiry into whether incidents of pollution were investigated.

A. Inspector Gammage advised that the issue would be investigated by the local authority's environmental health department.

Q. Concern was raised about the Police response to an incident involving a purse theft.

A. Inspector Gammage advised of a series of measures which had been introduced to raise awareness about these types of thefts and asked the questioner to speak to him after the meeting.

Q. Concern that the Police were unable to take enforcement action against the driver of a Polish registered vehicle.

A. Superintendent Garrihy requested that the questioner discuss the matter after the meeting.

Policing in Congleton



Superintendent **Mick Garrihy**

Superintendent Garrihy reported on recent activity and performance which included the introduction of an appointment system – where the public can make an appointment to see a police officer at a time convenient to them to discuss non-urgent crimes, and the initial feedback had been positive. The arrest of two men and subsequent imprisonment for 21 and 26 years for a local murder; 18 months imprisonment for a knife carrying offender for a robbery; operations to target drug dealers and the recovery of over 8,000 cannabis plants; and the ongoing investigation into a recent armed robbery in Sandbach, were also discussed.

The meeting received performance data for recorded crime, burglary, violent crime and vehicle crime for Congleton borough and local incidents of note.