

News release



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Two hundred more police constables planned for Surrey

TWO hundred more visible police constables could be policing Surrey's streets as part of plans being developed by the Chief Constable to meet the demands of local people. They will be used to increase the local neighbourhood policing teams and add further numbers to the Operation Shield campaign, keeping London criminals out of Surrey by fighting organised crime gangs who operate across Force boundaries.

This is part of wide-ranging radical plans being drawn up to make big cuts in senior officers and bureaucracy, and to have a simpler approach to policing with many more officers on the frontline. Surrey Police Authority, who has encouraged the Chief Constable to be radical because of the financial challenges faced by the Force, will be asked to agree interim plans on December 10 before more detailed planning takes place.

The proposals include reducing the number of senior officers within the Force, simplifying the structure and cutting bureaucracy. These changes will enable Surrey Police to invest in 200 extra frontline police officers, and to ensure the Force remains financially sustainable, making the best possible use of taxpayers money. This innovation builds on the forces determination to focus on the wishes of local people above national targets and bureaucracy.

The Force is exploring, with councils, opportunities to locate local policing teams within borough and district council offices to provide a better service to the public in tackling local problems. This approach has been piloted in Woking and Addlestone, and has reaped rewards in ensuring joined up partnership activity on local issues. The Force is also looking at providing a greater range of more accessible places for the public to meet neighbourhood policing teams, such as within libraries, shopping centres and any other busy focal points in communities.

This would replace some old and expensive police buildings with even more accessible ways for the public to engage with us. Many police buildings are little-used by members of the public but there will be no changes to police stations until better locations for meeting neighbourhood teams have been put in place. Replacing old stations with better ways to meet the public will cut the cost of running our old buildings by millions of pounds and help pay for the 200

extra police constables on the frontline.

Chief Constable Mark Rowley said: "We are determined to put the Surrey Public First and give them the increases in visible policing they demand - even in a recession. We have difficult choices to make. We can either refuse to change, be forced to cut officer numbers and carry on with a complicated policing structure, lots of managers and bureaucracy and numerous inaccessible old, expensive police buildings - or have 200 more visible police constables working out of buildings in more accessible locations tackling issues that matter most to people. This can be paid for by the changes we are about to present to the Police Authority.

"This review is necessary to find ways to continue delivering this excellent service against an overall reducing budget from Government for policing. We want to fix our funding issues and at the same time we want to deliver more police officers on the streets than we have ever had before. We believe this is the best way of spending taxpayers money and giving the public what they have been asking for.

"These emerging proposals are at a very early stage. The Police Authority is interested in our plans and we need to take more details to them before a final decision can be made. We also need to have discussions with councils across the county to review opportunities for us to work closer together."

Call 0845 125 2222 for all non-emergency policing matters.

Call 999 if you have a genuine emergency requiring the attendance of the police (e.g. a crime is in progress or someone is in immediate danger).

Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if you have information about crime and don't want to leave your name.

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