

Borough Commander Questions from Commission Members

<p>Councillor Edward Foley</p>	<p>Crime Trends and Priorities <i>What are the current crime trends specific to Merton, and which types of offenses are most prevalent?</i></p> <p>Neighbourhood crime types across the borough of Merton have reduced over the past 12 months in line with our mission of 'less crime'. This includes a personal robbery reduction of 28.2%. In the last financial year there was 415 robberies in comparison to 298 robberies in this financial year. Residential burglaries have reduced by 15.2% with there being 659 in the previous finance year and 559 this year. We have also seen a reduction across motor vehicle related crimes.</p> <p><i>How does the police force prioritize addressing these issues?</i></p> <p>There are a number of ways we're addressing this, firstly: we are making best use of 'met insights' an innovative MPS system, enabling us to target and disrupt the highest harm offenders, for an evidence based approach to our policing.</p> <p>An intelligence led and evidence based patrolling strategy in key hotspots.</p> <p>Dedicated patrols from our safer schools officers, after school finishing times for crime prevention for young people.</p> <p>Taking a holistic approach with our monthly precision crime fighting forum chaired by the Neighbourhood Superintendent. This brings together the crucial teams in this space, including, our ASB officers, licensing team, schools officers, Youth IOM and other key functions across the BCU. The forum also includes wider assets, from other operational commands in the Met, such as representatives from specialist crime and our intelligence teams – where we draw in resources based on our operational focuses.</p> <p>Our volume crime offences can often be attributed to 'the power of few' principle where a small number of offenders commit a large amount of linked offences. Our teams are also working closely with retailers as the Met continues to adopt retail principles which ensure best evidence.</p>
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	<p>Where we have identified linked series we work very closely with our secondary investigators to robustly pursue the offenders.</p> <p>We have been committed to ensuring meaningful outcomes at court and are using community protection notices and post-conviction CBO's to further reduce offending.</p> <p>Crime prevention advice has been shared across our key networks including neighbourhood watch.</p>
<p>Councillor Edward Foley</p>	<p>Challenges Faced by Officers <i>What are the biggest challenges that police officers in Merton encounter while carrying out their duties? How do these challenges impact their ability to maintain public safety?</i></p> <p>The demand of policing and complexity is growing however the MPS have introduced the Right Care Right Person (RCRP) policy which has resulted in a reduction in mental health call demand.</p> <p>In addition, the target of resources to solve problems related to local priorities, is a challenge faced by our police officers. However, we have been working closely with other strands as part of our Merton Precision Crime Fighting forum to ensure challenges are solved and addressed collectively.</p> <p>The Operation Hampshire policy is in place to support officers around assaults and hate crime in addition we have a welfare support team who can help with referrals to Occupational Health and other support services.</p>
<p>Councillor Edward Foley</p>	<p>Officer Retirements vs. Recruitment <i>Could you provide information on the number of police officers retiring in Merton over the past few years? How does this compare to the rate of new officer recruitment? Are there any strategies in place to address potential gaps due to retirements?</i></p> <p>We have attempted to gather this data, unfortunately it has not been possible.</p>
<p>Councillor Edward Foley</p>	<p>Retention Strategies <i>What initiatives or programs are being implemented to retain experienced officers within the force? How does the Metropolitan Police support officers' professional development and job satisfaction?</i></p>

	<p>MOPAC have funded an ‘inspiring leadership’ programme for black officers.</p> <p>We have launched a new Professional Development Review process for our staff which provides better clarity on goal setting, with line managers, supporting development.</p> <p>We are working in line with the New Met For London priorities, which include re-calibrating resources to support Front Line Policing. This includes, the use of non-BCU resources to complete central AID requirements, which make up resourcing for protests, events, etc.</p> <p>This has reduced the demand on the front line operational teams, meaning they are abstracted less and staffing levels, locally, are significantly more consistent.</p>
<p>Councillor Edward Foley</p>	<p>Morale and Well-Being <i>How does the Metropolitan Police prioritize the well-being and morale of serving officers in Merton? Are there resources available to address stress, mental health, and overall job satisfaction?</i></p> <p>Occupational (OH) health are one point of contact for officers. OH can refer officers to the appropriate places for physical and mental health support, treatment and rehabilitation. They will also create reports which if agreed by the officer will be shared with their line manager who can then further support them.</p> <p>The SW BCU is very fortunate to have a Welfare Support Team. This is a team made up of officers whose primary goal is to support officers in all aspects this ranges from financial worries, bereavements to support dealing with trauma. The welfare support team offer drop in session weekly for officers and will then support them and refer them to the most appropriate place for help.</p> <p>The Met also use the Rock to Recovery programme. This programme was founded by ex-marine’s suffering with mental health. This programme has now been extended to the Met and officers suffering with mental health can attend the programme. The programme involves the use of a range of techniques to help a variety of mental health conditions</p> <p>Merton officers have recently attended a staff away day at the mosque and we are planning a future training day with partners creating respect, trust, strengthening relationships creating morale amongst the officers.</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>According to government statistics the number of police community support officers employed in London has</i></p>

	<p><i>fallen by a third since 2015. Can the BCU commander detail what the position was in Merton over that period and what current plans exist to increase their number?</i></p> <p>The Strongest Ever Neighbourhood Policing project team are working out the allocation of an initial uplift of 500 PCSO numbers across London and we hope to be in a position to provide more details soon.</p> <p>With regards how many additional PCSO's have we had in Merton we attempted to gather this data but unfortunately it has not been possible</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>Does the BCU commander have any updates on the long term future of Wimbledon police station?</i></p> <p>Awaiting a decision from MOPAC</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>What plans exist for the retention of Mitcham police station, if Wimbledon police station is retained?</i></p> <p>The MPS has launched an estates strategy to review current provisions in support of the policing uplift and therefore we hope to retain both Wimbledon and Mitcham police station, whilst seeking to increase our estate. We await a decision from MOPAC.</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>According to an informal survey in the Wimbledon Park ward 69 out of 80 women on Dora & Vineyard Road feel unsafe due to the low intensity of street lighting. Councillors are receiving an increasing number of complaints from residents regarding a problem which appears to have coincided with the introduction of LED lighting. Is the BCU Commander aware of such concerns regarding the level of lighting on Merton's streets and more generally is she aware of any correlation between the absence of adequate street lighting and the level of crime that occurs in that locality.</i></p> <p>As a key part of the Met's transformation, we have committed to radically improving how we protect the public from harm. We are especially combatting the violence women and girls suffer, largely at the hands of predatory and abusive men.</p> <p>More information can be found, via the below link:</p> <p>https://www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/about-us/about-the-met/vawg-action-plan-summary/overview/</p> <p>We will publish a progress update on this plan after 6 months.</p>

	<p>Locally, Inspector Oli French-Greenslade leads the VAWG strategy in partnership with Merton Council (Zoe Gallen). Part of this strategy includes looking at how we can work together to improve street lights and other safety features in order to support this we have set up a VAWG running club so women are able to feel safe and exercise and also identify hotspots where they do not feel safe.</p> <p>To support our VAWG work, volunteers of staff from across the BCU, who bring varied areas of expertise, have joined a VAWG focused working group to support the various initiatives and tackle this issue collectively.</p> <p>We are looking to implement some more ‘walk and talk’ events in Merton in the future. This will help us identify areas in the borough that don’t feel safe for women and girls.</p> <p>We have also held a VAWG focused New Met for London event with our communities, partners and charities to listen, co design and co- produce our VAWG strategy in line with public views to create a mutual sense of trust and respect.</p> <p>The information provided in this question has been shared with our teams to focus on hotspot areas.</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>We have raised concerns previously over whether police ward panels are achieving their potential. Has the BCU commander made any progress in this area and are there any plans to reinvigorate them in the future?</i></p> <p>This is an area being reviewed by the borough superintendent with the view of maximising potential. We are also looking at reinvigorating our IAG chair and looking at how we can include more diverse and representative community members.</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>The community is very grateful to the BCU Commander who spoke with great dignity and passion following the tragic deaths of Nuria Sajjad and Selena Lau at the Study School on 6 July. The police investigation is still ongoing more than 7 months after that terrible event and the Commander will be aware of reports in the press of the added pressure the delay is having on Selena & Nuria's grieving families and the wider community. Whilst it is clearly important the police do not rush their investigation can the BCU Commander give any updates on when it will be finalised and what she is doing to expedite the process?</i></p> <p>We have our central traffic investigation teams working diligently on the investigation which has proved complex in</p>

	<p>nature. The matter has recently been sent back to the MPS investigators, with actions which were not anticipated. We understand the impact of this awful incident on our communities and the MPS are linked in closely with Merton LA to ensure press lines are aligned and the families and wider communities are supported.</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>According to data obtained from the Met by Lib Dem London Assembly Member Caroline Pidgeon, police officers across London failed to record 6225 stop and search incidents via their body worn cameras between January 2022 and May 2023. What were the figures in Merton during this period and subsequently? Have any measures been introduced to ensure the cameras are always switched on in such circumstances?</i></p> <p>The SW BCU is consistent with 98% of stop and searches having body worn video evidence in line with the rest of the MPS. The other 2% is likely due to equipment failure and stressful spontaneous events that means the officer was unable to use it.</p> <p>We currently have no specific measures in place to drive the 2% down even further, however the stats are monitored which will identify any deviations from the normality at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>The issue was discussed at the February and Chief Inspector Andy Storr is meeting with our stop and search scrutiny panel to review public feedback on approach and learning opportunities to ensure Merton are rightly held to account.</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>Anecdotal reports from police panels indicate that a new computer system, introduced in part to reduce the 20 mins it usually takes officers to log crimes, is now taking up to an hour to do so. Can the BCU Commander please provide an update on what is happening with regard to the new system and when the hoped for savings in time will be achieved.</i></p> <p>The new system is called CONNECT and the final phase is currently being rolled out across the MPS. Whilst CONNECT has proved challenging for our staff and officers during implementation, CONNECT seeks to bring together multiple police systems for improved efficiency in the long term. Intensive mandatory training is currently taking place for all MPS staff to support implementation.</p>

<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>What percentage of community police time in Merton has been used to police protests and other events in London over each of the last 5 years.</i></p> <p>There is no current data set for this. The number has been high however The MPS are in line with Casey report and are calibrating resources to support front line policing, this includes the use of non BCU resources to complete central AID requirements.</p>
<p>Liberal Democrat Councillors</p>	<p><i>Please can the BCU Commander provide an update on progress within the Met generally and the BCU, in particular since the Casey Report was published. What has been learnt from the public engagement events held within Merton?</i></p> <p>The New Met for London (NMFL) plan sets out the MPS response to the Casey report within its entirety. Within the NMFL plan it focuses on key themes of cultural reform, community crime fighting and fixing foundations. Across the MPS this includes the strongest ever neighbourhoods plan, strengthening public protection plan, an uplift across our directorate of professional standards, the introductory of co-ordinating crime fighting which uses met evidence based system met insights.</p> <p>Investments in frontline equipment and courses such as laptops, driving courses as well as re calibrating officers into frontline roles.</p> <p>Refreshing our approach of co-designing and co-producing how we do policing alongside our communities at our New Met for London events.</p>
<p>Conservative Councillors</p>	<p><i>Petty theft from shops and businesses is getting out of hand, how is the police helping shop owners to reduce theft?</i></p> <p>Following the success of the National Business Crime Centre week of action in October which resulted in over 300 arrests and thousands of positive interactions with local retailers and businesses about their issues, the NBCC have announced a further month of action in March 2024.</p> <p>Each Met borough will be hosting a Safer Business Action day (SaBA) during March.</p> <p>SaBA days are a joint approach by police, business, private security, Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRPs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) working in</p>

	<p>partnership, focussing resources in a designated location to significantly reduce crime. Activity will include joint high visibility patrols, proactive activity against known offenders, engagement and crime prevention.</p> <p>Through the NBCC there are links to a national network of contacts, best practice can be shared, and potentially extra resources from private businesses with a national footprint that may be able to assist with your event.</p> <p>There are also violence against staff packs that can be provided to businesses as part of our engagement day. These packs provide crime prevention advice for businesses in the 10 Principles of Crime booklet, a violence against staff crime prevention booklet and Shop Kind posters that the business can display in the public area of their store and staff areas</p>
<p>Conservative Councillors</p>	<p><i>Dark streets are a concern for women at night time, have the police reported particular difficult locations to the council and how are patrols dealing with problem areas?</i></p> <p>Please see answer above in relation to the question asked by the liberal democrats.</p>
<p>Conservative Councillors</p>	<p><i>What are the Police doing to reduce youth on youth crime and violence?</i></p> <p>OP Hambling is our dedicated response to rising crime within in Mitcham Town Centre. This operation has seen a significant success in the reduction of robberies and neighbourhood crime alongside improved public feedback and good examples of better collaborative working with MPS assets such as specialist crime.</p> <p>We have been working with local charities including Unique Talent. During this joint partnership working we have supported Unique Talent in funding for basketball and mentoring within Merton.</p> <p>We also have a Dedicated Youth Engagement Diversion Officer (YEDO) who engages youth clubs across Merton.</p> <p>During our Merton focused Precision Crime Fighting forum all strands across Merton work together identifying any issues amongst young people, this includes our Youth IOM team, and schools officers.</p>
<p>Conservative Councillors</p>	<p><i>Over recent year's cannabis farms keep popping up in Wimbledon, how do the police identify these and close them down?</i></p>

	<p>We focus on an evidence based approach and will continue to disrupt and dismantle serious organised crime through the various operations currently ongoing across the MET.</p> <p>Our intelligence ranges from external and internal sources. We receive crucial information from the local community via 'crimestoppers' and direct calls to the control room; this is vital in support of future operations and a developing portfolio against this crime type.</p> <p>Reactive policing operations - The MPS recently carried out Operation Millie which was the coordinated response into serious and organised criminality, linked with the production of Cannabis across London.</p> <p>We executed two S23 MDA (Misuse of Drugs Act) warrants during this operation and on one occasion shut down a large scale factory.</p> <p>Proactive partnership work - Project adder is a partnership working strategy and aims to strengthen the relationships between all organisations combating drug misuse. Project Adder has been piloted across the met, initially funded by the Home Office, as an investment in a holistic response to the threat of the drugs trade.</p>
Conservative Councillors	<p><i>Please can you provide an update and timeline on the investigation into The Study School car crash?</i></p> <p>Please see the previous answer as above.</p>

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