



## **Report for Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Merton Council**

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### **1. Background**

In November 2014, Merton's full Council Meeting passed a motion calling upon Merton Police to review the deployment of officers across the Borough. Prior to the motion being debated and passed, the Merton Police Borough Commander was asked to comment on the proposed motion and responded as follows:

"Thank you for sight of the motion, the content of which is duly noted. As Borough Commander, I have a responsibility to provide a service to all of the residents of Merton and I am committed to doing so. The operational deployment of police resources is and will remain a police decision. Our current service delivery model is delivering crime reduction across the Borough, with all 3 Sectors currently showing reductions in recorded crime over the last 12 months. However, as always, we will continue to monitor crime trends and levels, as well as other policing demands, and will respond to these by tasking our available resources accordingly."

However, the motion was passed and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee have asked for a written report covering the following points:

- I. whether a review of the deployment of officers has been carried out and, if so, what was its nature
- II. what are the current levels of crime in the three sectors
- III. what is the current deployment of officers in each of the three sectors and the rationale for this
- IV. The Commission understands that of the 300 officers on the borough, 200 are dedicated to specific areas and 100 are retained for flexible deployment. How are these 100 being deployed at present?

Subsequently, following the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting in March 2015, the following additional points were raised:

- Information about the review that has taken place of the allocation of officers to the three sectors in Merton
- Outcome of the consultation with MOPAC about the proposed move from 3 to 2 sectors in the borough
- Crime data in same format as for 25 March meeting
- Formal response to the questions sent previously in relation to the motion of Full Council on 19 November 2014:

## 2. Response

- I. whether a review of the deployment of officers has been carried out and, if so, what was its nature

The Local Policing Model (LPM) was introduced across London's 32 Boroughs to deliver a consistent approach to Neighbourhood Policing. As a 'Tranche 1' borough, Merton implemented the Local Policing Model on 8th July 2013. Within that model the Safer Neighbourhood's structure for Merton was predicated on three Neighbourhoods, namely Wimbledon comprising of six wards and Mitcham and Morden each comprising of seven wards. Locally, Boroughs were given little or no latitude in terms of variations from the model.

The Budgeted Workforce Target for Safer Neighbourhoods under the LPM is 3 inspectors, 20 sergeants, 80 constables and 40 PCSOs. There are 20 wards in total. Each of the three neighbourhoods is therefore comprised of the following posts:

- 1 Neighbourhood Inspector supported by 1 sergeant as Neighbourhood Deputy
- 1 Pc and 1 PCSO per ward as Dedicated Ward Officers
- 5 leave lines of 1 sergeant and four constables

I can confirm that a local review of Neighbourhood Policing had been under consideration prior to the Council Motion. The driver for this was that the demand profile and confidence levels for the three neighbourhoods demonstrated that policing in Merton is more challenging in the more deprived east of the borough. Mitcham Neighbourhood accounts for 41% of borough crime and 43% of call demand while confidence in policing sits at 68%. In comparison, Wimbledon Neighbourhood accounts for 30% of total crime with overall confidence at 79%, while Morden accounts for 29% of crime and confidence levels of 71%.

The substance of this discussion internally recognised that Mitcham Neighbourhood would benefit from having additional neighbourhood officers posted permanently to this Neighbourhood, and a review was commissioned to explore how this could be achieved from within the Budgeted Workforce Total. At the same time, a corporate review of the LPM was commissioned by MPS Management Board, and the local review needed to be cognisant of this review and its recommendations, and there was no latitude to introduce local changes in advance of the corporate review. Unfortunately, the corporate review took longer than anticipated to be agreed by Management Board and therefore the ability of the Borough to make any changes locally was also delayed. The findings of the corporate review did not fundamentally change the LPM model, however it did introduce a new corporate shift pattern for neighbourhood officers and remove some functions from neighbourhood officers; both measures were designed to increase neighbourhood officers' visibility, engagement and problem solving.

Once the corporate review had been received in early 2015, this was used to inform the formal local review and an internal paper was prepared recommending changes to the Merton LPM structure. The paper recommended that Merton moved from a three to a two neighbourhood model. This would conflate with political boundaries in the borough, providing a 'West' and 'East' Neighbourhood each comprising of ten wards. In simple terms the proposed model would be similar to:

<b>Current</b>		
Wimbledon	Morden	Mitcham
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Inspector, 1 Ps deputy</li> <li>• 6 Pc and 6 PCSO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Inspector, 1 Ps deputy</li> <li>• 7 Pc and 7 PCSO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Inspector, 1 Ps deputy</li> <li>• 7 Pc and 7 PCSO</li> </ul>

<p>DWOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 sergeants and 20 constables on leave lines</li> </ul>	<p>DWOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 sergeants and 20 constables on leave lines</li> </ul>	<p>DWOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 sergeants and 20 constables on leave lines</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed</b>		
<p>West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Inspector</li> <li>• 10 Pc and 10 PCSO DWOs</li> <li>• 7 sergeants and 25 constables on leave lines</li> </ul>	<p>East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Inspector</li> <li>• 10 Pc and 10 PCSO DWOs</li> <li>• 9 sergeants and 35 constables on leave lines</li> </ul>	

It was felt that the proposed changes would provide the following advantages:

- Allocating available resources across two Neighbourhoods rather than three allows more officers to be posted to a leave line and allows flexibility to post more officers to the east of the borough, better reflecting demand.
- Larger leave lines with enhanced resilience to absences and more experienced officers on leave lines to support probationers.
- With more officers in the east of the borough, it allows a fairer allocation of investigations per officer and improved levels of victim care.
- Two neighbourhood boundaries rather than three improves ability to flex officers across the borough to crime and ASB hotspots and provides enhanced visibility and ability to problem solve.
- Reassurance for the community that resources are allocated to demand.
- A model which remains true to the principles of LPM and retains the existing DWO footprint on every ward.
- Better alignment of neighbourhood boundaries to political boundaries.
- An inspector and 2 sergeants freed up to focus on pan Borough partnership activity. This alleviates demand on Neighbourhood Inspectors, allowing them to concentrate on reducing crime and disorder, investigating crime and improving confidence and engagement in their areas. It also provides renewed focus on pan Borough partnership activity in areas of risk including gangs, Integrated Offender Management (IOM), Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), mental health, Troubled Families, violence against women and girls, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) as well as pan Borough problem solving.
- A continuing commitment to making Merton's SNTs accessible, retaining existing Contact Points and buildings within Merton's Safer Neighbourhood estate

The perceived weaknesses of the current model were:

- Abstraction levels mean that running leave lines of less than 1 sergeant and 4 constables is not operationally viable and therefore, resources have had to be allocated equitably across the three neighbourhoods despite the stark contrasts in demand.
- The small size of SNT leave line teams coupled with the rise in numbers of probationers and the need for 'skilled' officers to be deployed predominantly on Emergency Response and Patrol Teams has resulted in probationary constables often working alone without the daily guidance and support of 'substantive' constables. 65% of constables allocated to SNT leave lines are probationers.
- Low numbers across each of the three neighbourhoods and the difficulty in flexing across Neighbourhood boundaries, has reduced the ability to effectively 'pulse patrol', problem solve and provide a visible presence in areas where confidence is lower.
- The allocation of the numerous pan Borough portfolios such as ASB and mental health to Neighbourhood Inspectors has proved a significant drain on their time and their ability to concentrate on driving day to day performance for their Neighbourhoods.

The review was completed and formally submitted to MPS Chief Officers at the end of April 2015. We have recently been informed that the review has been supported in principle, however due to the current backdrop of continuing financial pressures and the ongoing corporate change programme (One Met Model 2020) no formal changes to neighbourhood models will be agreed at this time. To re-draw Neighbourhood boundaries and amend processes internally to support any such change is a costly exercise and it would be imprudent at a time when the organisation is on the cusp of significant change.

In view of this, whilst we are unable to structurally change to a 2 Neighbourhood model at this time, we have taken a more flexible approach to better match resources to demand across the Borough.

- 1 Inspector responsible for Mitcham & Morden Neighbourhoods who has the flexibility to utilise non-dedicated Ward Officers across both Neighbourhoods to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour problems as they emerge. The larger teams of officers provides greater resilience and numbers to effectively tackle a problem
- Flexing of officers from across the Neighbourhood leave lines to provide dedicated Town Centre Teams for both Wimbledon and Mitcham, both of which are crime generators. These measures have received positive feedback from the community already, particularly in Mitcham.
- Reduced demand on Neighbourhood Inspectors and Supervisors by removing pan Borough portfolio responsibilities and allowing them to concentrate on operational delivery on their Neighbourhoods. These responsibilities now lie with a dedicated partnership team consisting of 1 Chief Inspector, 1 Inspector and 3 Sergeants.

II. what are the current levels of crime in the three sectors

Neighbourhood	Over previous 12 months		Over previous 3 months		Over previous month, (May 2015)	
Mitcham	5,142	42.4%	1,251	41.8%	446	40.8%
Morden	3,337	27.5%	824	27.6%	307	28.0%
Wimbledon	3,650	30.1%	914	30.6%	328	30.1%

III. what is the current deployment of officers in each of the three sectors and the rationale for this

For Wimbledon, the Budgeted Workforce Target is 27 Constables. Currently, this Neighbourhood is at 27.42 Constables.

For Mitcham & Morden Neighbourhoods, the combined Budgeted Workforce Target total is 54 Constables. Currently, the strength across these Neighbourhoods is 65 Constables. This includes a team of 1 Sergeant, 5 Constables and 2 PCSOs who are dedicated to Mitcham Town Centre. Nominally, 35 of these Constables are deployed to Mitcham Neighbourhood, with the remaining 30 deployed to Morden. As discussed above, with the exception of Dedicated Ward Officers, all of these officers can be flexed across Mitcham and Morden Neighbourhoods to respond to priorities.

Currently, there are 28.75 PCSOs employed in Merton Borough. Of these, 13 are posted to Mitcham Neighbourhood, 8.75 are deployed in Morden Neighbourhood and 7 are deployed to Wimbledon Neighbourhood.

IV. The Commission understands that of the 300 officers on the borough, 200 are dedicated to specific areas and 100 are retained for flexible deployment. How are these 100 being deployed at present?

It is not immediately apparent what the above figures relate to, and they appear to be inaccurate. The current Budgeted Workforce Target for Merton Borough is 339 Police Officers. Broadly speaking, the workforce is divided into 3 main areas of business - Safer Neighbourhoods, Emergency Response and Investigation. In addition there are other limited Pan - Borough roles that support the delivery of these 3 key areas of policing (including the Senior Leadership Team, Partnership Roles and Grip & Pace). In terms of Safer Neighbourhoods, once Dedicated Ward Officers are excluded, there are 72 Safer Neighbourhood Officers assigned to leave lines who can therefore be flexibly deployed. Of these, 21 are assigned to Wimbledon Neighbourhood with the remaining 51 assigned to Mitcham and Morden Neighbourhoods.

Subsequent questions from the Overview & Scrutiny Meeting in March

- Information about the review that has taken place of the allocation of officers to the three sectors in Merton

See above.

- Outcome of the consultation with MOPAC about the proposed move from 3 to 2 sectors in the borough - As above, this was not formally submitted to MoPaC.
- Crime data in same format as for 25 March meeting - See Appendix B.
- Formal response to the questions sent previously in relation to the motion of Full Council on 19 November 2014 - As above.

Stuart Macleod, Merton Police Borough Commander, 01/07/2015

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