

## Questions to and responses from the Borough Commander

- 1. *The O & S Commission looks forward to welcoming the Borough Commander on Wednesday 8th September, a few days after the music event promoted by Slammin Events in Morden Park concludes (weekend of 4/5th September). Could members please have your report on the issues encountered in policing the event, including any arrests and crimes reported?***

Not possible to answer the question at the time of submission of this paper. Verbal update to be provided at the meeting.

- 2. *ASB is an ongoing concern. Much of the queries I receive are from residents about the thoughtlessness of Neighbours especially in relation to, parking, rubbish and noise. Local police do help but sometimes this does not resolve the issue. What advice and help can you give to Councillors to assist in dealing with this problem and support distressed residents?***

As you will be aware, a number of the issues you mention are well dealt with by Merton Council. Where relevant and possible police work in partnership with the Council. Specifically:

Parking – Councillors should advise residents to report serious contraventions of parking regulations to the police when there is risk to other road users or pedestrians and details should be provided of location, duration and vehicle details. Police intervention will be limited to those cases where there is immediate risk to the public. In other situations the report should be made to the Council who can advise further.

Rubbish – In extreme cases of rubbish such as fly tipping councillors should advise residents to record as much information if they see it happening, taking descriptions of vehicles, registration numbers and who the people are, if known. This information should be reported to Merton Council in most cases, or the police can pass information on. Police intervention and investigation will be limited to aggravated cases only. This could include where there is risk to the public, serious organised criminality, vulnerability around modern slavery.

Noise – Councillors should advise residents to record the type of noise, the duration, any aggravating factors and the number of occurrences. This should then be reported to Merton Council. Situations involving noise disturbance which serves to create significant alarm, harassment or distress could potentially become criminal matters which should be reported to the police.

- 3. *Local residents in the Wards, surrounding Morden Park, are most concerned about the concert being held there on 4/5th September. They had a great deal of ASB at the last 2 concerts, including defecation, urination in people's front gardens as well as, allegedly, an abundance of drug use. There were also 4 stabbings. What are you doing to ensure local residents do not suffer adversely as a result of some behaviour at this concert? I appreciate that the concert will have been held before our next meeting for you feedback, but input on your strategies is appreciated.***

Police raised a number of issues for consideration at the planning stages of this event based upon the outcome of previous events. All areas specific to the crime and anti-social behaviour matters have been considered by the organisers and they are ensuring mitigation is in place. A proportionate policing plan is in place where police will work with the organisers to ensure a safe and secure event. However, it must be noted the organisers have primacy and responsibility for the event itself.

**4. What is the data for knife crime in Merton Borough and what is being done to ensure we keep on top of this devastating issue?**

Please see attached spreadsheet for the data.

Preventing violence is the top priority for the Met and enforcement is ongoing. In addition to regular partnership working and the borough violence reduction plan, policing also completes diversion activity for young people – through schools officers and Council provision.

We carry out regular weapons sweeps as the result of intelligence or in the proximity of where people have been seen with weapons or any reported incidents.

We targeting habitual knife carriers and predatory offenders who use or threaten with knives. We seek cooperation from all victims of knife crime to gain evidence to prosecute knife crime offenders. This can be challenging in regards to domestic abuse, gang related attacks where the victims can be uncooperative. Increasing public awareness of police activity around overt police activity knife seizures and charging of offenders to increase confidence.

Knife Crime Prevention Orders are a newly available option too.

**5. What is being done to increase Police visibility especially around our open spaces?**

**Open space violence reassurance patrols**

Our first task has been to demonstrate increased visibility in violence hotspots. This is in order to provide reassurance and protect women and girls from becoming potential victims. Enhanced neighbourhood policing activity is critical to building community trust and public confidence. This activity has been overlaid with central resources being available to target violent crime types.

Also, we are:

- Maximising the use of local resources (ERPT default patrols, Parks patrols, Safer Neighbourhood patrols etc.) and *where available* Pan-London Reserve (PIMA patrols) to offer increased coverage in key hotspot locations identified through intelligence.
- Working with Roads Transport Policing Command who prioritise Transport Hubs/Routes (*buses, etc.*) and direct activity in response to the passenger demand profile.
- Involving our Public Protection colleagues to support local activity and put in place appropriate prevention orders in relation to perpetrators.

**6. Please provide an update with regard to the future of Wimbledon Police Station?**

We do not have a formal update on this yet. However, our understanding from MOPAC (via our property directorate) is that we will be able to retain this important station.

**7. Please provide update on the progress in recruiting new officers across the Met and how many for Merton?**

The recruitment campaign is proceeding well and in recent months we have been receiving new recruits each month. Recruits are allocated to Basic Command Units as a whole, rather than boroughs. With the inclusion of new recruits, we have been able to keep our response team based in Wimbledon fully staffed. New recruits spend 6 months on response teams and 6 months in neighbourhoods when they arrive. There are some new vacancies in neighbourhoods in Merton, however this is a very low number.

**8. Domestic violence – update with regard to increased incidents and what extra measures are being taken?**

Domestic Abuse figures have remained high across London in recent months. There has been significant and consistent partner work in this area for some time.

In November 2020 a new Predatory Offender Unit (POU) was set up, and this new unit has identified and arrested 54 of the most dangerous and high harm offenders across the South West, including those committing domestic abuse.

Currently we arrest 80% of suspects on scene arrested and 80% BWV captured and used – these are good figures.

Our Partnership & Prevention Hub has conducted a mapping exercise of all Women's and Girl's groups across the BCU to supplement existing Borough contacts.

We are supporting London initiatives for example working to increase take up of 'Ask Angela' in licensed premises.

**9. Please provide an update with regard to the extent of any shortfall in Neighbourhood Policing across the BCU and in particular across the Wards of Merton.**

Merton neighbourhoods has a budgeted workforce target of 40 PCs and there are currently two forecast vacancies, which we are recruiting for.

In addition, there are 17 Constables who are training with the Merton neighbourhood teams as part of their probationary period.

**10. Can the Borough Commander provide an update with regard to surge capability, the new cluster strategy and how the dedicated ward officers could bid for extra resources if they felt that this was needed? How has this new strategy coped over the past 12 months and what changes have been made to ensure resources can be quickly deployed to problem areas?**

The cluster strategy reflects the fact that criminals rarely recognise ward boundaries and a particular crime, such as burglary, which affects one ward may well affect an adjacent ward. It also reflects that ward officers in one ward may well support colleagues in another, particularly when running a particular operation or arrest. Under the strategy each cluster of wards would have one high harm priority, one high volume priority and one individual priority. Despite the challenges of the last 18 months presented by COVID, this strategy has worked well with many examples of success. However, the MPS has recently made a decision to standardise the approach to ward priorities across London. Therefore from September all wards in the BCU will have three priorities, one of which will be violence, the other two will be local.

In terms of extra capacity, the standard practice of flagging issues to the monthly Tactical Tasking and Coordination meeting, where the relevant inspector can bid for extra resources remains unchanged.

**11. Please provide an update with regard to bringing more evidenced based policing into the BCU and working with the Neighbourhood Superintendent, what has been the outcome of these discussions?**

The Neighbourhoods Superintendent is currently undertaking a Masters Degree in applied criminology which focuses upon Evidence Based Policing. We plan to use these principles in Merton borough.

We already draw on a wide range of professional literature and practice from the College of Policing, Police Foundation, Society of Evidence Based Policing, London Councils, Violence Reduction Unit and international and academic connections.

**12. How many people in Merton have been charged, then convicted of hate crime in the borough?**

In the last 12 months 27 people were charged for a hate crime offence in Merton with a conviction rate of approximately 80%.

**13. Residents have concerns around the use of motorised scooters to commit thefts and other crimes, what action is being taken to prevent this?**

As part of Operation Hornet, officers from the Road Traffic Policing Command in collaboration with ward officers are out across the capital on a daily basis engaging with members of the public and taking enforcement action where necessary. This can include a Traffic Offence Report for no insurance which could see the rider pay a fine of £300 and get six penalty points.

We have not yet seen scooters being used in Merton on a regular basis for the commission of offences.

**14. Could the Commander confirm, as previously indicated at Locations Board, that local ward teams will be reconfigured to represent the new ward boundaries and what implications this has, if any, for the smaller two member wards?**

This is a review led by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and policing will remain largely unaffected. There will be a reconfiguration of the ward panel membership and some administrative changes for police systems based on ward boundaries. The DWO commitment will remain unchanged with a DWO from Hillside/Dundonald ward transferring to the newly formed Wandle ward.

**15. What plans the Commander has to encourage ward panel meetings to be held in public at least once a year as required under the ward team handbook?**

A local working group has been working closely with the central team to embed the ward panel framework and ensure data sharing prior to panel meetings. This will involve delivering a training package to all neighbourhood sergeants in September, a terms of reference agreed by all Safer Neighbourhood Board chairs and a presentation template showing a minimum standard of data for all ward panels. This piece of work will also involve promoting diversity within ward panel membership. A review process has been scheduled for the autumn to establish the effectiveness of the implementation of these consistent ways of working. Findings of this review will enable a better understanding of how well ward panels are working including outcomes, membership, engagement and confidence.

Ward panels are able to agree themselves how, when and where they wish to convene meetings.

**16. What is the current strategy on the retention and/or acquisition of ward team bases with particular reference to wards some distance from both Wimbledon & Mitcham police stations?**

Work is underway to assess viable accommodation for hosting displaced Dedicated Ward Officers and PCSOs. Parameters set for workable solutions include proximity to ward, regularity and reliability of public transport to enable patrolling, storage and security for officers' appointments and essential equipment and opportunity to maximise visibility amongst the community. This is an area of live discussion.

**17. Can the Commander update the committee on what progress has made in her plan to raise the profile of community policing?**

Within policing I have been continuing work to fill vacancies, prioritising this compared with other teams.

We have been reviewing how we can support ward panels to operate in the 'new normal' and to ensure they are representative of their communities.

There are new newsletters (powerpoint and weekly letter) sharing community stories.

I have been looking via our 'Confidence Board' to see how we can encourage more local people to get involved with policing (volunteering, cadets, Outreach, NBW, Ward Panels, the Stop and Search Monitoring Group, the soon to be announced police encounter panels).

Teams are also working with communities for greater involvement, e.g. starting a "street a week" again.

**18. Has the Commander undertaken any specific initiatives to address her previously expressed concerns over the potential loss of trust between the Met and women/girls in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard?**

Open space violence reassurance patrols (as above).

We consistently work with Merton Council on this area of work, including external communications.

The BCU has formed a Confidence Board which brings together a number of activities which are seeking to improve the level of engagement internally within the Met amongst our own people and externally with the public to build great trust. Improving accountability through greater transparency and better explanation remains critical for us to achieve what we need.

**19. How many s.60 stop and search orders have been separately granted within the constituencies of Wimbledon and Mitcham & Morden in the last 12 months?**

7 in the last 12 months.

**20. Has the Commander any update on the future of Wimbledon Police Station?**

As above