

Borough Commander Questions – September 2023

Can the Borough Commander provide update with regard to the future of Wimbledon Police Station.

Unfortunately, I have no further news on this matter and await a decision from MOPAC.

What are the plans to upgrade PC and PCSO numbers in Merton's SNT's?

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.

How many vacancies are there now for Dedicated Ward Officers?

Currently Merton SNT has no vacancies.

What are the plans and timetable for implementing the proposed Metropolitan Police plans for Merton's neighbourhood policing.

Commander Helen Harper has recently taken over as lead for Neighbourhood policing and work is being undertaken centrally around allocation of additional PCSO numbers into ward teams. This piece of work is complex and we expect timescales to be released in due course. Further information will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

Under the New Met For London plan community crime fighting and putting what matters most to communities first is a high priority and we will be listening more than ever ensuring that we are responding to the crimes and ASB issues that are affecting those that live, work and visit the borough of Merton most. We have already seen Superintendent Luke Mooney take up his position as dedicated Neighbourhood Superintendent for Merton to work alongside partners and the public to drive down crime, increase trust and deliver the high standards that our communities deserve.

We are also currently arranging public events within the borough to provide an opportunity for us to better engage and listen to residents the first of which is planned for 7th September.

Can the Borough Commander provide update on the progress/actions to stop MOPED related thefts across the BCU?

Our teams across the BCU, including: proactive local investigations, safer neighbourhood teams and emergency response teams, utilise Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology to target suspicious vehicles, intercept lost or stolen vehicles and arrest offenders.

Safer Neighbourhood teams are often engaging with local communities, offering crime prevention advice, on how best to secure their vehicles; in

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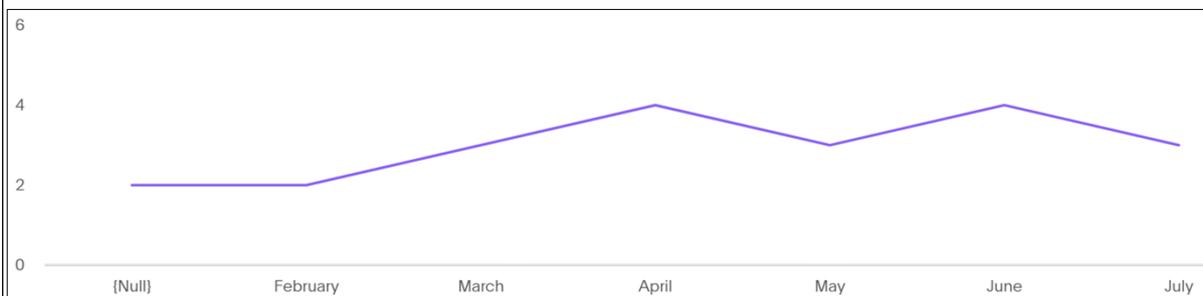
pop up street events, most recently during the national week of Neighbourhood Policing across the MET we engaged with lots of communities with crime prevention events/street pop-ups.

Operation Nightingale is an active crime tackling operation utilised across London. This is a crime mapping, hot spot and intelligence led function, to statically post a collection of officers to an area of focus. This acts as a visual deterrent, ensures that local officers are available in a vicinity to act on active calls from the public and proactively intercept criminality.

Regular sweeps on public land and estates uncover lost or stolen mopeds which are then seized by Police or returned to the lawful owner to prevent vehicles being used in crime.

Please see the below statistics which display the number of crime reports related to moped thefts in Merton:

Jan 2023 – 2
Feb 2023 – 2
Mar 2023 – 3
Apr 2023 – 4
May 2023 – 3
Jun 2023 – 4
Jul 2023 – 3



Can the Borough Commander provide an update on the initiatives to tackle vehicle damage or car and catalytic convertor theft? This type of crime appears to be increasing and is making residents feel unsafe.

Officers are using a new, targeted, database called Met Insights to develop a local understanding of their focused areas. SNT Officers will amend their patrol times and locations to prioritise these areas when and where possible. We will also carry out planned proactive operations and pool resources to tackle problems such as this.

With regard to our preventative measures, officers often hold a number of 'Catalytic Converter Marking' engagement events. Members of the public are invited to these events and their vehicles catalytic converters are marked with a toolkit, this marks it with a forensic marker and 'target hardens' for thieves to dispose of the catalytic converter.

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In the period between Jan-June 2023 only 6 Catalytic Converter thefts have been recorded in Merton.

Can the Borough Commander provide an update with regard to the growing incidents of balaclava clad gangs mugging and stealing mobile phones and watches from school children and what actions are being taken.

Prior to local schools breaking up for summer holidays, officers were deployed in a mixture of uniform and covert patrols to target the areas affected by this issue.

SW Safer Schools are devising a return to school plan which will include dedicated patrols to prevent and/or disrupt the activity. Preventative advice is also given to staff, children and parents.

Various units across the BCU are tasked to work on this issue jointly, including (SSO) Safer Schools Officers, (SNT) Safer Neighbourhood Teams, (VSU) Violent Suppression Unit, (ERPT) Emergency Response Patrol Team and the Robbery Team.

Data of School children robberies from ages 11yrs – 16yrs:

Jan 2023 – 23

Feb 2023 – 11

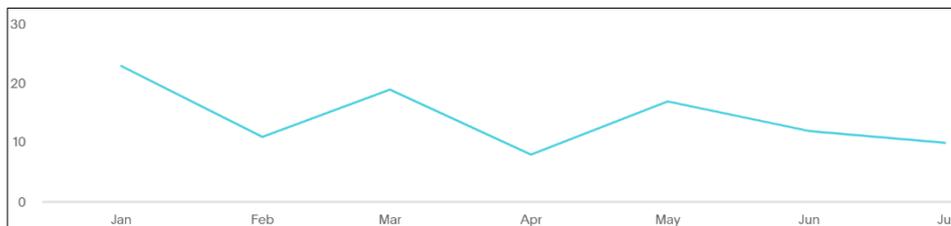
Mar 2023 – 19

Apr 2023 – 8

May 2023 – 17

Jun 2023 – 12

Jul 2023 – 10



Rise in theft from vehicles, what action is the police taking to reduce this?

Officers are using Met Insights to target known, priority, offenders in this area and reduce this crime type.

The offenders and this offence type are often linked to the use of Class A drug use, so we continue to work collaboratively with our partners to offer support and intervention to drug users in the area. Police will continue to seek to identify addresses where drug supply and use takes place, i.e. by executing warrants authorised at Court and using our powers under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to close down addresses linked to Class A supply (Closure Orders).

Crime prevention advice is also shared with the community at our street events for highlighting target hardening and preventative tactics.

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The number of crime reports, in Merton, for this offence are shown as below:

Jan 2023 – 66

Feb 2023 – 87

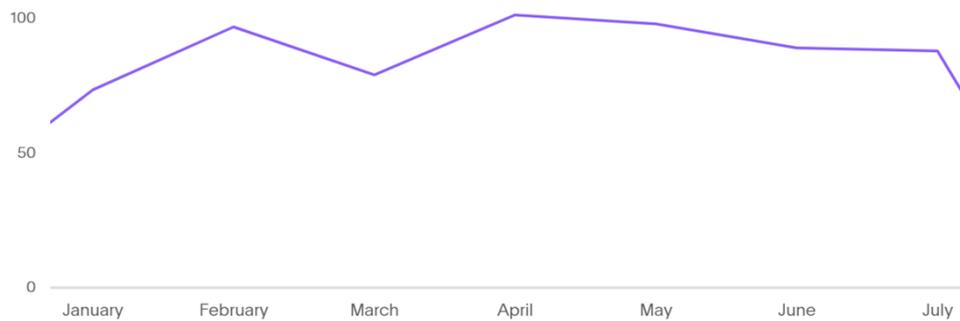
Mar 2023 – 71

Apr 2023 – 91

May 2023 – 88

Jun 2023 – 80

Jul 2023 – 79



What action is the police taking to detect cannabis farms, following the recent one set ablaze in Hillside?

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.

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.

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.

We executed two S23 MDA (Misuse of Drugs Act) warrants during this operation and on one occasion shut down a large scale factory.

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.

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Distraction theft, of phones especially, appears to be on the up, mostly between young people but also thugs using e-bikes to sneak up on people. How are the police tackling this?

Offenders using bicycles/electric scooters in aid committing criminal offences can create a challenge for officers. Using an evidence based approach, officers will be deployed to our emerging crime hotspots, especially during peak hours (often established during TTCG (Tactical Tasking Coordination Group)). This helps us develop an understanding on where to appropriately deploy our resources, with a view to preventing offences and ensuring that our officers are appropriately equipped to respond.

Police work closely with our partners and often link in with local CCTV control rooms, to effectively respond to active crime incidents (such as those as detailed in this question); SNT Officers have access to bicycles to enable them to deploy efficiently to these types of incidents.

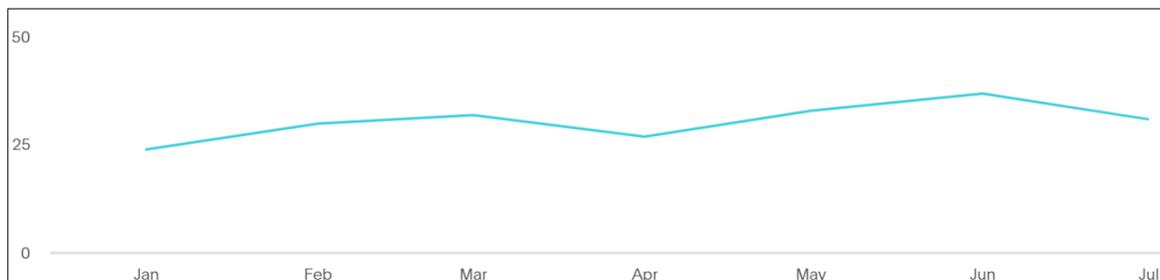
We also deploy Plain Clothed Patrol assets across the BCU, enabling us to develop our intelligence picture, identify areas of concern and intercept ongoing crime.

Prevention advice is also key, which is circulated through the SNT Officers to their community contacts.

Over the Summer holidays both the Police and Council are running various activities for children to provide a safe space for them whilst the schools are closed.

The number of crime reports, in Merton, for the offence of ‘theft from the person of another’ are shown as below:

**Jan 2023 – 24
Feb 2023 – 30
Mar 2023 – 32
Apr 2023 – 27
May 2023 – 33
Jun 2023 – 37
Jul 2023 – 31**



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There have been incidents this past academic year secondary school kids going home have been mugged. I would like to know what the Met is planning to do for this coming academic year to make school kids walking home from school as we want to encourage them to walk home.

Our schools team attend schools to speak with students and parents advising on measures that can be taken to keep them safe and to raise awareness for preventive and reactive measures children can take.

Letters are sent to parents through schools and via the Next Door media platform to reinforce the message.

After school patrols are conducted by our Schools officers alongside Neighbourhood Policing teams. Road and Transport Policing command (RTPC) officers assist the BCU and Merton by identifying high crime and linked Anti-Social Behaviour on bus routes/ bus stops and patrol these at the relevant times.

Schools Officers also identify known perpetrators with engagement and diversion activity. These strategies are run throughout the year but intensify at peak times and concentrated on hot spots (both historical and emerging.) Cameras can also be used to monitor emerging hotspots.

Another hazard on the pavements is e-scooters and cyclists riding on pavements coming at speed endangering pedestrians. What enforcement is there to stop this practice?

We have not received any particular information or intelligence relating to riding / cycling on the pavements in Merton. We proactively stop and seize illegally ridden E-Scoters whilst out on patrol as part of Vision Zero / road safety. In 2022 the Roads Transport Policing Team (RTPC) seized 174 E-Scoters and so far this year 40 have been taken off the streets.

In relation to cycling on the pavements, RTPC PCSOs give warnings in the first instance. In the case of persistent offenders or riding that causes danger to pedestrians, a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) will then be given, the RTPC do not keep a record of these and will be low in number in any case.