

Members Questions – 2020

R: 06.01.20

S: 06.01.20

A: 13.01.20

Cllr Richard Britton

Please could you tell the Panel how much of the ‘basic’ training of new officer intakes is done centrally or in collaboration with other forces as distinct from ‘In House’.

I can confirm that all of the initial police learning is done by Wiltshire Police. Historically there have been national training schools, but for a significant number of years each cohort of student officers have been trained by Wiltshire Police officer and staff trainers on Wiltshire Police estate. Training is held primarily at Devizes HQ however, Swindon, Melksham and Salisbury have also been used.

When we adopt the new entry routes in to policing as part of the nationally mandated police education qualification framework (PEQF), we will collaborate with the University of South Wales for our student officer training. The University of S. Wales was selected via a procurement exercise undertaken in collaboration with other forces in the region, with the exception of Avon & Somerset. Wiltshire Police will still have primacy for the initial police learning, which will continue to be delivered by Wiltshire Police trainers on our estate.

With regards to the training undertaken wholly in-house, there are some variances between forces and each has to validate its own approach separately with the College of Policing and the University of S. Wales. There is a ‘minimum content’ that must be delivered by each force to its students, which is mandated by the College of Policing. Each force retains discretion about its methods to deliver that content and anything else they may wish to include that sits outside the minimum content required.

Each force works with a university to deliver the training required for their force. A single university may collaborate with multiple forces, so there will be similarities in approach, but each force retains autonomy on training its student officers.

Wiltshire Police employ trainers (staff and officers) to ensure we are able to service the demands for its police officers, as indeed other forces do the same. There are shared learning benefits and fortnightly meetings are held with counterparts across the region, including the University of S. Wales and the College of Policing.

Cross-force and regional collaboration was extensively considered when we were initially planning our approach to PEQF. However, given the different requirements per force (e.g. timing of courses, frequency of courses, cohort size etc.) there were no reasonable opportunities to collaborate.

I have also included a presentation I recently gave to students at New College Swindon on Wiltshire Police Career Apprenticeships, including the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship, which I trust provides further information on the PEQF course.

R: 09.01.20

S: 09.01.20

A:16.01.20

Cllr Jonathon Seed

Please could I ask the PCC whether there has been any restriction or brake in the recruitment of special Constables in the last twelve months? If so what effect has this had on the falling number of special Constables serving in Wiltshire?

A decision was made in September 2019 to temporarily pause intake number 26 of Special Constables for a number of reasons: There were relatively low numbers getting to the training stage in the previous few intakes and Wiltshire Police wanted an opportunity to review the processes to ensure they were 'fit for purpose'; A move to focus on quality recruitment rather than quantity; A Continuous Improvement (CI) Review was completed, which made a number of recommendations to improve the special constabulary. These options are currently being considered with a view to which should be agreed and progressed. A decision was made in December 2019 to continue with the pause (i.e. intake 27 also) to allow for the Continuous Improvement Review to be considered.

With regards to current numbers, intake 25 is still ongoing for training and this cohort will go to the front line in April 2020. In terms of impact of the pause on the current

number of specials, this would not be realised until late 2020. To clarify, it takes on average 9 months from initial paper sift to the completion of training of specials before they get on the front line. Therefore for example intake 26 would not have been complete until June 2020. The impact of these pauses has no bearing on the current number of specials.

In terms of the current position, at the end of December 2019 Wiltshire Police had 207 specials who performed just short of 14,000 hours of duty over the October to December period. The attrition rate was 4% (9). It is useful to note that Wiltshire Police has recorded a continued increase in the numbers of specials exiting, averaging at 11 in last 3 quarters. The vast majority would site a change of personal circumstances as reason for leaving, along with a high number joining the regulars.

Wiltshire Police are in line with the national decline in Specials. The impact of the PEQF (Policing Education Qualifications Framework) framework for the training of new police officer is that Special Constables are not going to be the natural route into becoming a regular, as it has been in the past. Numbers may decrease as a result. Operation Uplift and the recruitment of additional police officers might also impact further on the Specials headcount, with an approximate estimate of 30% of our Specials joining over the next few years.

Our serving Specials remain a valuable asset to the force, supported by our community police team model and Superintendent lead. They were very much involved and continue to be so, in the Continuous Improvement Review and their feedback will help shape any change going forward.

R: 29.01.20

S: 29.01.20

A: 03.02.20

Anna Richardson - Independent co-opted member

A while ago I reported a minor theft from a vehicle. The operator informed me (almost jauntily I felt) that the matter would not / could not be investigated. I explained I knew that, but was calling to report in the interests of accurate statistics.

A few weeks later I received through the post a letter from victim support offering their services.

While the commissioner's aim to "put victims first" is laudable, I wonder if it would be possible somehow to apply a common sense approach - or allow callers reporting minor crimes to opt out of being offered victim support?

I found it slightly ridiculous as well as a waste of time & resources.

I am also concerned that for the vast majority of the law abiding population, calling 101 to report an often minor crime may be the only contact they have with Wiltshire Police.

I feel that the combination of being bluntly advised that nothing can be done to investigate- then followed up by the unnecessary (in my view) contact re support, does not create a good impression.

I understand the aims and processes which have caused the above events to occur, but does the commissioner agree that for the "ordinary person in the street" (i.e. one who does not read the PCC plan or attend PCP meetings) the overall impression could be improved?

Offers of support for victims of all crime, meet standards outlined by the National Victims Code. This National Code requires all victims of crime to be informed of the support available to them should they wish to receive it. The letter you received outlines that offer and is the same as that received by other victims of crime in Wiltshire. This is regardless of further police investigation into the crime. Crime affects every victim differently, the offer of support is made to all reflecting good practice, in line with the Victims Code and recommendations from national reviews into care for victims.

During the report, the call handlers assess victims against criteria set out in the Victims Code. If a person is assessed as requiring enhanced support, the victim will be contacted by the Horizon Victim and Witness care team by telephone. This OPCC commissioned service has been in operation since 2015 and provides a single point of contact for victims and witnesses. They offer specialised practical and emotional support.

R: 29.01.20

S: 31.01.20

A: 03.01.20

Cllr Vinay Manro

I have a question from a Haydon Wick resident.

In the new budget there is allocation for 40+ new recruits.

Are these 40+ on top of existing open vacancies?

If any existing officers leave the force, will they be replaced on top of these 40+ officers?

There will be an additional 49 frontline police officers recruited linked to the Central Government Uplift programme.

A further 16 posts are being sought, linked to the additional precept increase proposal. This is a budgeted increase in staff posts.

With regards to officers leaving the force (for example, through retirement) then they will be replaced in order to maintain operational staffing levels.

R: 04.02.20

S: 05.02.20

A: 11.02.20

Cllr Vinay Manro

Question to OPCC - These give the public and Councillors useful information. Why have the CPT reports stopped being updated since Oct/Nov 2019?

There are important and useful reports available:

<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/article/1199/Priorities-for-Swindon-North>

<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/article/4487/Priorities-for-Swindon-South>

Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I am pleased that you have been finding the briefings useful. I understand that CPT information and reports need to be informative and up-to-date as they are a good tool for councillors and public alike.

As Panel members are aware the community policing model has recently been reviewed and changed. As a consequence work is being undertaken to update the Force website to match the new CPT areas, their teams and priorities. The January 'area priorities' and information on the previous CPT arrangements have temporarily been removed from the website to allow these changes to be completed. We expect this work to be completed in the next week and the January briefings will be uploaded. From then the Force will produce and publish Swindon CPT briefing every two months.

R: 06.02.20

S: 06.02.20

A: 11.02.20

Cllr Junab Ali

Dear Councillor Ali

The saga of the PCC precept continues and I gather there is another panel meeting tomorrow.

When I last wrote to you, Macpherson was “consulting” this year about a further 12% while admitting that the extra staff we were asked for last year and are paying for now were not yet in post. Now that HMG has announced all police may have an extra 10% next year, he seems to have decided to have the 10% as of right without the consultation. He has also failed to publish the results of his consultation.

That might be OK if he had not poached 13% last year. HMG clearly intended a 10% this year but they did not intend 20% plus over two years.

Macpherson needs to do two things. One, publish the results of his consultation, since they relate to proposed increases for 2020/21. Two, admit that he has not yet fulfilled the conditions for which he took the increase last year and hence he should not claim a second increase for the new year.

He also owes me an honest answer to my letters, but that is not your problem.

Thank you for your interest

Andrew Martin

The precept public consultation in January 2019, proposed an increase of £12 per annum and this was subsequently approved by the Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel at its meeting on 7th February 2019.

My public consultation exercise on the proposed police precept for 2020/21 asked residents of Wiltshire for their feedback on the following scenarios:

- *Support for an over £1 per month to improve police services*
- *Support for a £1 per month to maintain police services*
- *A less than £1 per month increase, which would see a reduction in police services.*

The consultation exercise was undertaken between Monday 6th January and Friday 31st January 2020 and commenced before the Home Office announced its police funding settlement for 2020/21. The Home Office settlement was made on 22nd January and granted PCCs in England flexibility to increase local funding for 2020/21 by setting the council tax limit to £10 per annum (i.e. for a typical Band D property).

This was approved by the Wiltshire Police Crime Panel at its meeting on 6th February when members voted unanimously to the £10 per annum increase.

The 2019/20 precept increase has enabled me to provide an additional 43 police officers who are currently in tutorship and are starting to become visible in communities, as part of their ongoing training. As one would appreciate it takes time for new recruits to be trained and become

fully operational in our communities. The additional funding has also secured two cyber-crime teams which focus on online fraud and child sexual exploitation. Investment amounting to £500,000 was also made towards crime prevention with a particular focus on early intervention.

The £10 per annum precept increase will provide an additional 16 police officers. This is in addition to a further 49, funded via the National Uplift Programme the Home Office announced in October 2019. These 49 police officers form the first tranche of the Government's pledge to support police forces to recruit an additional 20,000 officers over the next 3 years.

The precept consultation responses for January 2019 were published on both the Wiltshire Police website and the Wiltshire Police and Crime page on Wiltshire Council's website. The 2020 responses are currently on the Wiltshire Council's website – link [here](#) – and will shortly be available on the 'How your money is spent' page of the Wiltshire and Swindon PCC website – link [here](#)

Finally I can confirm that your correspondence has been responded to by myself.

R: 21.07.20

S: 21.07.20

A: 05.08.20

Cllr Richard Britton

Please could you tell the Panel what budget, plans and targets does the force have to reduce its carbon footprint?

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Wiltshire Police are currently embarking on a joint Environmental Strategy and are currently procuring a specialist consultancy service to assist with this work. The consultancy service is being

procured via the ESPO contract framework, as recommended by Blue Light Commercial.

The Terms of Reference are included as follows. An evaluation of the specialist companies who have submitted proposals is currently underway with a view to an appointment and commencement of the work in September/October 2020.

The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme Procedure is also included as follows. This tracks the journey of carbon reduction from the Introductory Phase of the CRC Scheme until the Concluding Footprint Report year of 2018/19, at July 2019. This document includes activity and efforts undertaken to reduce carbon emissions.

The carbon footprint associated with electricity and gas consumption as reported in the 2018/19 footprint report was 2,434 carbon tonnes. This represents a 54% reduction compared to the period 2010/11 when the carbon footprint was recorded at 5,328 tonnes.

Energy efficiency is central to all current and future planned maintenance and capital investment schemes and the procedure provides an overview of what the PCC/Wiltshire Police does in consideration of reducing its carbon footprint.

With regards to Wiltshire Police's fleet service and its efforts to reduce energy/carbon footprint, 5 electric vehicles (EV's) were purchased in 2019/20 with a further 5 to be added as part of the 2020/21 Fleet Vehicle Replacement Plan.

In addition to this, plans are in place for the installation of 10 EV charging points at the Devizes HQ and Gablecross sites. Depending on potential delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the plan is to have the additional 5 EV's and charging points in 2 place by the end of 2020. Once the project has produced meaningful data, a further expansion of electric vehicles will be considered.

R: 30.07.20

S: 31.07.20

A: 05.08.20

Cllr Jonathon Seed

Government has announced that three police forces in the South West are to receive extra funding as part of the government's £25million Safer Streets Fund.

Avon and Somerset will receive £400,000, Devon and Cornwall £546,781 and Dorset £266,357 – a total of £1,213,138. There is no extra funding in this round for Gloucestershire or Wiltshire.

Did Wiltshire PCC or CC bid for this funding and if not why not? If they did bid why were they not successful

A bid was not submitted by the Police and Crime Commissioner or Chief Constable to the Government's Safer Street Fund 2020/21.

Consideration was given to submitting a bid and a number of partners were involved, including Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council. However on close examination of the criteria set by the Home Office, it became clear that Wiltshire was significantly below the minimum crime level required to access the grant funding.

The Home Office's Prospectus for the Safer Streets Fund emphasised that prospective bids should meet specified eligibility criteria. Such criteria was set "to ensure the Safer Streets Fund meets its objectives and that there is sufficient consistency between areas that receive funding for the purposes of the overall fund evaluation".

One of the benchmarks in place intended bids to demonstrate a minimum level of crime that areas must meet in order for bids to pass the eligibility threshold. Whilst working up a possible bid submission it became clear that Wiltshire was significantly below the minimum crime level required to meet the criteria and therefore access the funding.

There was some considerable work undertaken with partners to scope out and further a potential funding application and such work will be incorporated into ongoing Community Safety Partnership plans to reduce acquisitive crime and the Police and Crime Commissioner will seek to support this as it develops.

The Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner is continually seeking to bring in additional resources to the area and has been successful in obtaining £458,921 in external funding to help victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault over the last six months.

R: 13.08.20

S: 13.08.20

A:

Cllr Richard Britton

With many third sector organisations under threat because of their funds drying up during Covid is the continuity of any of the services which you commission from such third sector organisations under threat?

R: 18.08.20

S: 19.08.20

A: 25.08.20

Cllr Jonathon Seed

What direction has the PCC given to the Chief Constable regarding actions on the four main causes of KSI listed in the report: Driving using mobile phone; drink/drug driving; not wearing seat belts; speeding.

Bearing in mind that one criticism the report makes is the lack of coordination between various agencies (especially local authorities and the police) does Wiltshire's Road Safety Partnership still exist?

PCC Response:

As part of the process to refresh my Police and Crime Plan which resulted in the publication of the PCP Update 2020 in June, I discussed at length with the Chief Constable my commitment to road safety. As a result the Update included the following objectives which the Chief Constable fully endorsed:

1.5 MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER

Speeding and road safety affects all our communities. Anti-social driving and speeding will be tackled in order to keep both road users and pedestrians safe. I will continue to ensure Wiltshire Police and partners:

- 1. Improve the safety of our roads by coordinated action through safety improvements and education for drivers and enforcement where necessary*
- 2. Support and invest in systems to improve Community Speedwatch schemes including support by our specialist Roads Policing Unit, local policing teams and the Special Constabulary*
- 3. Increase mobile enforcement and use of driver safety awareness education programmes, in collaboration with our partners.*

I continue to invest in and foster a multi-agency partnership approach to policing our roads. Following the disbanding of the Tri-Force arrangements with neighbouring forces in 2018, roads policing came back to the control of Wiltshire Police which has meant the number of roads policing assets in the county has increased thereby bucking the national trend. Wiltshire Police has made great strides to improve the way our roads are policed. This has included continued investment in the Community Safety Partnerships and developing a strategic road safety group with our partners to ensure a joined up approach.

During the lockdown period and whilst the Community Speedwatch schemes were temporarily suspended (schemes resumed from early last month) there was an increase in the number of reports about poor or dangerous driving. As a consequence Wiltshire Police undertook a number of initiatives and campaigns aimed at proactively targeting those who are intent on speeding or driving in dangerous manner on our roads.

As published in the previous month, during the second quarter of this year there was a significant fall in serious or fatal road traffic collisions on the roads of Wiltshire and Swindon. As Commissioner I undertake regular reviews of road traffic incidents where there is death or serious injury and figures for the last quarter are down by 55%. At the time of reporting, sadly 10 people aged between 17 and 84 have lost their lives on our roads in Wiltshire and Swindon this year with an average age of just 56.

The recent tragic accident involving the four young men who died in collision on A4 near Calne is still being investigated as a team of collision investigators carrying out thorough enquiries to understand exactly what happened. Our deepest condolences have been extended to the families and ongoing support.

In recent weeks the Roads Policing Unit have been supporting a number of national and local initiatives that make up the Fatal Four and the forthcoming planned campaigns are being reviewed in light of the recent tragic accident involving the four young men.

In addition to the local planned campaigns to raise awareness of the Fatal Four I will be promoting the APCC's Roads Safety Portfolio forthcoming national public survey which aims to understand the general public's view on general road safety and roads policing, including fixed penalty notices, and local enforcement. This survey follows after the recent HMICFRS Roads Policing: Not Optional thematic inspection, PACTS Report into Roads Policing, and the Government review into roads policing.

The Strategic Road Safety Group (SRSG) which forms part of the Community Safety Partnerships for both Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council has in the past six months been reinvigorated. I provided the direction to the Chief Constable for the SRSG to be refreshed and strengthened and I can confirm that it is currently chaired by ACC. Deb Smith. Despite lockdown the group has continued to function and has drafted a revised strategy document and has good input from a range of partners including both local authorities, the PCC and OPCC, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Public Health and Highways England.

The next planned meeting on 14th September will consider both recent HMICFRS report “Roads Policing: Not optional - An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales” in addition to the Department For Transport’s “Roads policing review: call for evidence”. Responses will be made to both HMICFRS and DFT in due course. I can also confirm that the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner is part of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Roads Safety and Roads Policing Portfolio and attends the monthly meetings.

With regards to the specific actions in connection with the “fatal 4” I can confirm the following:

Speeding – I have directed the Chief Constable to increase enforcement operations and a new capability to do so should be in service by the end of this year, having been delayed by Covid during implementation. As referred to above, during the Covid suspension of Community Speedwatch the Chief was invited to increase visible enforcement operations to provide a deterrent. The 120 CSW schemes operated by approximately 1200 volunteers brings local people together to act on their own concerns and monitor speeding in their communities. They provide Wiltshire Police with useful intelligence and work closely with Community Policing Teams (CPTs), supported by the Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit.

Drink/Drug Driving – I have requested that the Chief Constable ensures that his officers target this type of offence, particularly since the easing of lockdown and the subsequent reopening of licensed premises. A greater number of positive roadside tests have taken place since and public information campaigns continue.

Seatbelts – This is being targeted through opportunity enforcement and public information campaigns.

Use of Mobile Phones and other Distractions – This is most difficult to enforce. I have raised the issue of use of new technology in this respect with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. Enforcement takes place on an opportunity basis, reinforced by public information campaigns.

Both the latter two issues are specifically targeted by Op Tramline which uses an adapted HGV to target offenders on the strategic road network.



25.08.20 Panel
Members Question.;

R: 17.09.20

S: 18.09.20

A: 12.10.20

Cllr Jonathon Seed

In June, following protestors in Bristol being allowed by Avon & Somerset Police to gather illegally in large groups and vandalise the area, the Home Secretary told the Chief Constable in a “firm conversation” that he must uphold the law. The incident caused public outrage at the failure of Officers to stop antisocial behaviour and the large illegal gathering during the worldwide pandemic. Residents, quite rightly, questioned the quality of the leadership of the force and the failure of incident commanders and senior decision makers to police the incident appropriately.

On Sunday 13 September, Wiltshire Police Officers failed to break up an illegal gathering in Trowbridge choosing instead to watch the 500 people, some 470 more than the legal limit for an outside gathering, and the non compliance with social distancing rules. The local police commander said that, “it would have been unsafe for Officers to break up the gathering” and “in line with the way we police large gatherings, Officers monitored the incident...”. This was followed swiftly with a further incident of an illegal gathering in Royal Wootton Bassett involving over 200 people. Again police failed to break up the gathering.

Could the PCC explain, given the fixed penalty notices that have been given to residents in the county for holding significantly smaller gatherings, and given the expectations of the public and the Home Secretary for the law to be upheld a) which senior officer took the decision not to attempt to disperse the group and uphold the law, b) why the tactics of policing large legal gatherings were used in this particular incident, which was clearly an illegal gathering, c) the number of fixed penalty notices that were given to attendees, d) when we can expect to be informed that the organiser has been issued with the maximum £10,000 fine in line, for example, with the 19 year old in Devizes who held a large house party, e) what reassurance the PCC is going to provide to the public that this failure to deal with illegal gatherings will not happen again during this time when the Government has been very clear of the expectations of the public and the police, f) what confidence the public should have in reporting illegal activity when they know that even during a global pandemic for which specific laws have been brought in that Wiltshire Police are not consistent in upholding those laws.

When can Wiltshire residents expect robust and consistent policing of the COVID regulations?

PCC Response:

Dear Jonathan

Firstly can I thank you for your question on this matter. Delivering balanced and fair policing during this unprecedented internal pandemic is providing the service with one of the biggest challenges it has faced. Policing during COVID has placed policing on the frontline in keeping our communities safe and ensures the lives of citizens can continue as much as possible.

To support all police forces in the enforcement of COVID regulations the National College of Policing has developed comprehensive and proportionate guidance built around four stage of Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce (4 'E's). Decisions officers make are based on dynamic assessments, managing significant risk that can cause damage and injury as well as applying the legislation within the discretion that parliament gives to every police constable.

All reports of person(s) not adhering to the COVID-19 regulations are considered, investigated and actioned accordingly to their individual circumstances, following a robust assessment.

This guidance has been consistently used since COVID legislation was issued earlier this year and continues to be successfully used by Wiltshire Police. It guides officers in working through the situation they face and allows them to use their professional judgement based on many factors including the severity of the breach, the context and factors of the situation, the response by individuals being dealt with by the Police and if this is a persistent pattern of behaviour.

Recognising that consistency and balance are key considerations, given the severity of restrictions COVID legislation places on citizens, Wiltshire Police and my office work hard to ensure there is the consistency you outline. There is no COVID specific incident management process. All significant COVID related events follow the same escalation process including review by the Force Incident Manager / duty inspector, as well as escalation to duty Supt and Chief Officer if required. After any significant events there is a review with all COVID FPNs issued undergoing a robust scrutiny led at Superintendent level, involving my office and a summary report is regularly published. The role of both the Force and my office is to ensure that police action is proportionate and complies with the law.

To best respond to your questions raised through the Police and Crime Panel (17th September) and the letter in the Salisbury Journal (25 September), I have asked the Chief Constable to outline a summary of his officers' rationale and actions during the two incidents mentioned.

Trowbridge Incident - 13th September 2020

Reports were received regarding vehicles gathering and the public's main concerns were regarding excessive noise.

Police officers attended the scene and identified the organiser, having previously reviewed social media reports promoting the event. The principle decision makers for this incident were the local Sergeant and Duty Inspector. The organiser was spoken to and the officers requested that the cars should disperse and this was complied with. Officers observed that most attendees were in cars with approximately 15-20

persons standing around vehicles in groups no more than six. One group of 7 within a smaller group. The group were asked to disperse from the vicinity and 'policed' from a distance thereby reducing the risk to officers' safety. Officers stayed at the location until a large number of cars vacated the carpark.

Officers decided that it was not appropriate to use the specific COVID-19 powers given the specific circumstances of the gathering. The event did not amount to people being in close proximity to one another as occupants remained in their vehicles plus the vehicles were in the open air which the Government has stated minimises the risk of transmission. There was no evidence to indicate persistent breaches of social distancing.

No Fixed Penalty Notices were issued at this incident. In line with existing processes the actions have been reviewed by senior officers and the Chief Constable is satisfied that this incident was successfully dispersed, with officers operating both proportionately and within guidelines.

b) Royal Wootton Bassett incident 15th September 2020

Reports were received regarding a large gathering in the High Street of Royal Wootton Bassett. Intelligence indicated that the gathering related to a funeral for a well-respected member of the travelling community.

Officers attended and sought to engage the 4 E process (i.e. Engage, Explain, Encourage, and Enforce) but their efforts were ignored.

A risk assessment was undertaken by the Force Incident Manager. This concluded that should police officers intervene, there was a potential for a breach in peace, in addition to a high risk to the safety of officers. Having considered such extenuating circumstances, the decision was taken to direct officers to engage with the attendees and attempt to disperse numbers. It was deemed not viable to move to enforcement, given the significant numbers of people and the nature of the gathering.

No Fixed Penalty Notices were issued at this incident. In line with existing processes the actions were again reviewed by senior officers and the Chief Constable is satisfied that the incident was proportionately policed in line with the principles of the 4E's and against the national decision making model. The Chief Constable remains satisfied that operationally any further escalation would have been disproportionate, would likely have presented as a high risk to officer safety and to that of the wider community.

I am pleased to say that the majority of people in Wiltshire and Swindon comply with the regulations and are playing their role in keep everyone safe. However as we know there are a few people who do breach the rules and this is creating additional demands on policing. Levels of COVID in Wiltshire remain low and the Force and my office continue to work with LRF partners. The public have been supportive in alerting the police when COVID breaches do occur and I am delighted that the government has recognised the additional pressure Forces are under by providing £60M for policing and funding for Local Authorities. Wiltshire Police will receive £247,000 specially to fund police action related to COVID-19, which will be used to fund 8 PCSOs tasked solely to respond to COVID breaches, conduct patrols across Wiltshire and Swindon. Working with local authority partners we will continue to

conduct joint operations to ensure businesses and licensed premises are complying with COVID legislation.

As illustrated operational decision making is dynamic and complex, often under changing circumstances and with a wide range of factors. The Chief Constable is operationally independent and it is not for politicians to influence who faces police action and what action is taken. It is for the Chief Constable and his officers. However it is for me to hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of policing services and ensure the robustness of governance is in place to actively scrutinise outcomes the Force are achieving.

Since the simplification and strengthening of COVID legislation the four 'E's remain in place however given the wide understanding of COVID restrictions the steps will move through more quickly as there is less mitigation for breaches.

From both perspectives of the Home Secretary and the public of Wiltshire there is a recognition that this is an exceptionally challenging issue and policing must continue to balance policing by consent, principles of proportionality and enforcing the law. I recall you both publically and within panel meetings, vocally supporting the positive police response during the pandemic particularly in relation to other forces that were focusing on enforcement. I am disappointed that you seem to suggest a wholesale failure in policing mere weeks since this praise. Of course incidents, are often compared without the full operational context and background. I hope this response reassures that I have robust governance in place to hold the Chief Constable to account. This is in addition to the governance I have in place for COVID and the force more generally which we have presented to the panel at previous meetings.

Yours sincerely
Angus Macpherson MBE
Police and Crime Commissioner
For Wiltshire and Swindon



Panel Question by
Cllr J Seed - respon:
