

Welcome to this special edition of Making Contact, the newsletter which keeps you up to date with policing in Bedfordshire. In it we explain how policing in Bedfordshire will change in October and answer as many of your questions as possible.

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1. Chair and Chief Welcome

We know people want to know what's happening so, over the last few months, both the Police Authority and the Force have been actively explaining, face to face, what will change to partners, stakeholders and the public.

However, people remain hungry for more information. We completely understand this which is why we have pledged to communicate as widely and effectively as we can, when we can.

We can't tell you everything now because, quite simply, we don't know everything now. All the pieces of the jigsaw will take time to fit together and it seems reasonable to expect that we won't get everything right first time. We want to give you the right information, at the right time.

We have listened carefully to local partners and stakeholders, including those who work with us at an operational level, during our seminars and practitioner days. They have told us the sort of information they would like to receive and we appreciate this guidance.

In addition, officers delivering the changes have been engaging more closely with practitioners across the county since June to help them understand the changes and work on how improved services can be delivered.

We had intended to hold another seminar in September but on reflection we decided it made more sense to hold the next event after the changes had taken effect, so that you could give us your views. Therefore, the next Partner Seminar will take place in November, invitations will be out soon!

To help you, we are preparing some fact sheets and online resources, but if you have any specific concerns for either of us you can email us directly using the links below.



Peter Conniff

info@bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk



Alf Hitchcock

Alfred.hitchcock@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

2. Tell us about it

Your views are important, help us to get things right by telling us what YOU think. We have just launched our new survey, the responses from which will help shape our plans for policing in the future. Please take a few minutes to give us your thoughts by clicking on this link: <http://www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk>

3. Feedback from the Practitioner Days

We know that the success of the work with our partners relies to a great extent on the joint working between the people doing the actual job, not just the senior executives. Therefore earlier in the summer, we organised some practitioner days specifically for people who work with our officers and staff, which established that partners are keen to be involved in the development of our changes.

We were told that these days were really useful, giving a greater understanding of the new local policing model. In turn, our partners are keen for us to understand THEIR requirements, particularly in relation to intelligence, the analytical products they require and the capturing of partner intelligence.

People attending recognised that police resources are scarce, needing to be prioritised and targeted according to a threat, risk and harm model. It was agreed that partners need to understand their role in prevention and early intervention initiatives.

In many ways our partners have similar aims to ourselves. They are keen to rationalise structures, processes and meetings and they would like more joint planning, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour. The Force is setting up a working group to co-ordinate planning and strategic assessments and partners have been invited to be members of the group. Partners also need to look at ways in which they can rationalise their structures and processes to reduce, where possible, duplication.

In addition, partners want to see a consistent approach to problem-solving. All partners need to consider how they can align resources in order to provide a joined up service.

These meetings have enabled us to bring our officers and staff together with practitioners to work on how we can take services, like child and adult protection, forward to improve the ways we work and the outcomes for vulnerable people. To keep them informed we will be setting up a dedicated part of the website – watch out for more details.

4. October Lift Off

A series of changes to local policing will take place between October 2011 and April 2012 that will see some areas of work centralised, leading to increased operational capacity and capability. Some changes have already taken place, like the centralising of our Criminal Justice Unit in Luton.

The changes we are making mainly relate to the way we organise our staff and should not be noticeable to local residents. However, for reassurance that any changes have been positive, later in the year the Authority will consult local people about the impact of the changes on the quality of policing where they live.

For more information visit www.bedfordshire.police.uk

5. Local Policing – officers doubled!

We are moving more resources into Local Policing, increasing Officer numbers from 92 to 185, meaning there are more officers available to deal with local issues. There will be no geographic divisions and local policing will be organised into three Local Policing Districts each under their own Chief Inspector and linked to local authority partner areas.

Within these districts, community policing will be delivered by PCSOs under the direction of a sergeant and led by an Inspector. Local issues and minor crime, anti-social behaviour and problem hotspots will be addressed by Police Constables and Sergeants dedicated to the task, also led by a local Inspector.

PCSOs will carry out local patrols, under the direction of a sergeant, which means that more officers will be available to tackle local crime, ASB and hotspots.

How it works

Chief Superintendent Mike Colbourne will be in command of Local Policing and Chief Superintendent Clare Simon will direct the work to tackle Crime. Three Local Policing Districts, under a Chief Inspector, will work with Community Safety Partnerships and the Local Policing Teams will have additional resources to tackle local crime.

Chief Superintendent Mike Colbourne and Superintendent Mark Turner will work with the Local Strategic Partnerships and other strategic bodies.

The three Chief Inspectors for the districts have been named as:

1. Bedford - CI Rob McCaffery
2. Central Bedfordshire - CI Neil Waring
3. Luton - T/CI Rob Bartlett

We will be able to give problems such as sustained anti social behaviour a higher priority and any intelligence generated will be utilised to help the investigation process and prevent future offences.

Local Policing will be responsible for investigating low level volume crime affecting communities. Officers will target and disrupt prolific offenders living in neighbourhoods through early identification. They will also support vulnerable people who are at risk of becoming a victim.

The officers working in communities will respond to routine incidents and appointments, engaging with the public and work with partners to identify ways of making the community safer and reduce the risk to vulnerable individuals.

Local Policing will also be responsible for providing Night Time Economy (NTE) policing and the Special Constabulary will provide visibility and reassurance specifically around the night-time economy.

For more information visit www.bedfordshire.police.uk

6. Responding to calls for help

A new centralised Response Policing Team (RPT) will respond to incidents countywide, saving money and speeding up response times, thanks to new technology.

The RPT, led by Chief Inspector John Harwood, will usually be the first point of contact for the public in an emergency situation. This team will often make the first arrest, secure any crime scene and preserve vital evidence as well as undertake the critical 'golden hour' of investigation.

Bedfordshire's new RPT operates from bases in Bedford, Luton, Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard, Ampthill and Biggleswade. From these locations they will be able to attend as quickly as possible and resolve incidents happening anywhere in the county. The new team will increase the use of 'out of court' disposals and will undertake crime patrols when there is the capacity to do so.

The Force also aims to increase the number of incidents resolved on the telephone which will reduce demand on frontline staff. As a result, we are improving the way our Force Control Room operates and are also introducing a new appointment system for non-emergency appointments. This enables police officers to meet victims and witnesses at convenient times which we feel will improve victim satisfaction. A recent survey conducted by the Police Authority found 93.5% of residents accepted this as an appropriate way of dealing with a non-urgent concern.

For more information visit www.bedfordshire.police.uk

7. NEW SINGLE NON-EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER

To make life easier for people, there will soon be one number to call in a non-emergency situation.

The telephone number will change to 101 if you wish to contact the police in Bedfordshire to coincide with the changes.

The 999 emergency number is unchanged.

8. Collaboration and strategic alliance

In a nutshell, collaboration is helping to maintain the independence of our local policing services and is saving about 100 posts in Bedfordshire alone.

Joint ventures not only save money (currently £4m a year) but increase the Force's resilience in dealing with certain aspects of policing and bolster frontline services at a time where funding is scarce.

Work on our Organisational Support Services is continuing to focus on the most effective and economic way of delivering joint human resources, finance, ICT, Corporate Development/Corporate Services, estates and facilities management, fleet management, legal services, and corporate communications.

Later this year it is hoped a delivery model will be complete and proposals put forward however an earlier solution to legal services, ICT, communications and vehicle fleet is being developed for strategic reasons.

Our collaboration will enable local policing to be kept local and to be effectively resourced and supported rather than having to suffer from the reduction in funding.

Successful though collaboration is, we are NOT merging.

9. Police inspectors say Bedfordshire is “progressing well”

An official report shows that Bedfordshire Police and Police Authority are progressing well in the bid to meet the challenges posed by the Comprehensive Spending Review which will see reductions in funding to the tune of £19m (20%) by 2015.

The HMIC report 'Valuing the Police: Preparedness Inspection' sets out how all 43 forces plan to meet the financial challenge and what the impact will be on the service they provide to the public.

Chief Constable Alf Hitchcock said: "While we acknowledge the challenges ahead it is fair to say Bedfordshire has already made considerable changes to its structure and processes in order to meet these and I pay tribute to the force's track record of delivering savings so far. This is well recognised by HMIC."

Peter Conniff, Chair of Bedfordshire Police Authority, added: "The importance we have placed on keeping local people informed and listening to their views has also been recognised.

"The financial landscape means that we have had some difficult decisions to make, so we were pleased to see the report acknowledge that our consultation with the public helped us to develop our priorities for the next four years and is supportive of the measures we are taking to meet the financial challenge."

10. Footnote on the Riots

After the events in early August it would be remiss of us not to mention the disturbances that took place in other parts of the country.

Both the Authority and the Force are pleased that there was no disorder in the county – despite rumours to the contrary. We are also grateful to officers and staff, and our partners, who worked tirelessly to keep it that way. Extra officers were brought on duty and shift patterns were changed to give a greater number of visible patrol officers as a preventative and reassurance measure.

Reassurance was also provided by the extensive use of social media and text messaging throughout the week both during the day and into the early hours of the morning. It was seen as a proactive and effective way of providing reassurance to the public and preventing rumour and misinformation inflaming the situation.

We are also pleased that we were able to support the Metropolitan Police in their work to stop the violence. Bedfordshire officers were sent to give support to public-order trained officers and a few remained after calm had been restored to retain some additional resilience.

A great many people have made their views public on these events, but one thing remains clear – our core purpose which is to fight crime and protect the public.

And finally...

If you know of anyone who may like to receive a copy of this, please forward this email - and please copy us in so that we can include their address on our distribution list.

If you have any questions about any of the articles in this newsletter, or indeed any other area of our

responsibilities, then please get in touch.

For further information or to contact us:

Bedfordshire Police Authority

Bridgebury House, Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedford, MK43 9AX.

Tel: 01234 842066

Email: info@bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

Web: www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

