

**LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
17 November 2023**

ITEM 8 – Delivery of the Police and Crime Plan

Q1. Regarding 2 - Community Safety and Prevention in Partnership: Since you have been successful in your application to round five of Safer Streets Funds and just under £1 million pounds has been secured, can you outline how you decided on the criteria of where these projects will be delivered in the county?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – This has been a Partnership approach, predominately working with District and County Councils to understand what is going on in local areas and to determine the priorities to enable us to bid. The bid must fit the criteria and if they do not meet the criteria, we must look for other avenues to maximise the amount of funding coming into Lincolnshire. The PCC works with Local Government to be able to identify areas that fit the criteria and matches local priorities, so that we can try to deliver as much community safety as possible.

As you may recall, it was successfully argued that bidding rounds should be done differently to ensure the amount of money to bid against was fairer for all areas. Whilst larger areas such as London might disagree, I believe on behalf of the residents of Lincolnshire, the process is now eminently fairer.

Every area can now bid for £1 million pounds. It was initially £1.4 million however due to the Police Pay Award and accepting the full recommendation of 7%, £0.4 million was effectively repurposed to ensure the full staff pay award could be implemented.

In conclusion, we look at bids in partnership to enable the best possible fit to the criteria and to ensure it is successful. The challenge is often meeting the criteria and sometimes we need to find other ways of delivering what is needed to an area. It is very much partnership led and it is important to move forward and work together. This includes gathering local intelligence about areas that will aid future bidding rounds.

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Q1. (a) Supplementary Question - Previously it was stated that £1.4m was going to be allocated for funding but was reduced by £0.4m for the Staff Pay Award. Was it normal for the Government to fund increases in salary or was this just a one off?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – It was pleasantly surprising that the government put much time and effort into trying to fund as much of the pay award as they could. They did repurpose some funding, for example the increase in the cost of immigration visas which had not increased for some time, actually paid for the vast majority of pay increases. There was however still a shortfall which required one off funding.

The distribution of the pay award funding was based on the national police funding formula model. For example, if we have an increase in officers because of council tax, it was not on the net revenue model, but it does mean there are still shortfalls that we have to fund through our own budget. Overall, the outcome was more favourable than anticipated and was welcomed by officers and staff.

Q1. (b) Supplementary Question - As pay rises come up from time to time, do the Government usually provide something towards it or was it just a windfall?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – It was a windfall, but there are no guarantees that we will get that again. A 2.5% increase was budgeted for, and we were very clear to ministers that anything over that was a massive budget pressure. Pushing it up to 7% meant that we would have been required to reduce services by the equivalent amount and that would have been substantial. In essence, they would not have been giving us a pay increase while at the same time as needing to reduce by fifty officers to pay for it. In the end, they were keen to maintain officer numbers which is why they worked very hard to provide the funding.

Q2. In relation to the criteria that is set by Government, Gainsborough is a deprived area and has not received any of the full funding. What missed them off the criteria for funding?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – Gainsborough has received funding in other rounds, and we are ensuring that it has been a priority. For this particular round, we have been trying to deliver on gap filling in areas where funding has

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not been achieved in previous rounds. Gainsborough has received a significant amount from the Safer Streets Fund and has more PCSO's than previously. Although it was not on the list for this round, Gainsborough is one of those areas that has benefited from longer term strategic planning at a partnership level.

Q2. (a) Supplementary Question - There were always concerns from a County/Corporate point of view that Gainsborough has suffered over the years and despite investment going in, a lot of services were lost after 2010. Assurance was requested for the PCC to keep an eye on Gainsborough with the Chief Constable.

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – Whilst it was noted that Gainsborough was only one of many towns and villages across the whole county, it is important we work together in a partnership approach to make sure that all of the services are fit for purpose and work. For example, domestic abuse services have been commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council at an increased level which will support Gainsborough and the rest of the county. It will also in turn support the reduction in demand for policing. How we approach this collectively is key.

It is really important to listen to how people talk about their area, and in areas that are most affected by perception and feeling of crime, these are some of the real social challenges. Without being overly critical of working in a partnership space, we have a collective responsibility to be good partners to each other and ultimately serve the public.

I am keen to work as closely as I can with people of every political persuasion and to try and make sure that we work together for the good of our community.

Q3. In your report, you refer to a Community Remedy Consultation, can you elaborate on that?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – The Community Remedy Consultation is an upcoming activity, and no further detail was available at this stage. I want to make sure that the community has the opportunity to come forward and be part of the solution. Further details can be provided for the next meeting. Fundamentally, communities will have the opportunity to be part of the solution as it is important that they understand what their rights and opportunities are so that they can challenge some of the decisions being made which will affect them.

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Q4. In terms of the Right Care Right Person Project, there has been issues with other agencies and concerns about implementation, are you assured that the issues have been resolved?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – The Right Care Right Person Project is a nationally adopted Government Programme. It is a cross departmental agreement between Health and the Home Office which is backed by No.10.

To say what is right for the people of Lincolnshire is to ensure you get the appropriate care when needed. It should not be over policed which has happened previously, and it is now acknowledged that it was not the right thing to do.

For example, if you have a safety concern and someone is having a mental health crisis, but not an immediate risk to life - either danger to themselves or a member of the public, it is not always appropriate for the police to be the first responder.

I fully support the concept of what they are trying to achieve with Right Care Right Person. We need to determine how to move forward in a fair and sensible way that supports all our partners in delivering it, but ultimately the priority is delivering healthcare where needed for residents.

The conversations that are occurring are not what we are trying to achieve, but how and when. I have confidence that those conversations are ongoing, and strategic and tactical level meetings are continuing between police, my office, health and local government at all different forums.

It is important to ensure police are available to respond to the community for crime rather than responding to health care, as they are not trained to deal with health crises. In other areas of the country where this model has already been implemented, it has ultimately led to better outcomes for the community. There is also a lot of national pressure for this to be implemented.

When approaching the Home Office for funding, the first question they ask is have you done everything that is reasonably expected of you to free up officer time to make sure the frontline is effective and why you have not implemented this national programme that has been agreed with the health minister. For many reasons, we must get this programme in place.

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The public is the absolute priority and building and maintaining effective trusting relationships with partners is something that I do not want to see put at risk.

Q5. Noting the further investment with the Vulnerable People Department, will there be an evaluation on the increase in resources to look at the impact made?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – Generally, no in the truest sense of what an evaluation would be, because what we are referring to is the Chief Constable making an operational decision to increase a team of operational officers to tackle specific sets of crimes. We are aware from the HMICFRS reporting that it is an area of concern that the force needs to address. They are responding internally to a known issue with external backing to inform that a response is needed, and my expectation on behalf of the public is that they will respond.

Nationally there are expectations that investigations into rape and serious sexual assaults are taken very seriously and carried out in a timely way to ensure a high percentage are being charged and brought to court. All of this can only happen if they have an appropriate number of people working in the unit.

In general, evaluation comes through monitoring performance outcomes. For example, questioning if we are getting people reporting, if investigations are being carried out in a timely way, if we are getting to court and if people are being sanctioned for the crimes they have committed. This is not a formal evaluation, but this will continue and be monitored as part of normal business processes.

Q6. We all agree that the specialist areas are being bolstered with additional staff, but it is a concern that the only place additional officers can come from is frontline general policing. Who is going to fill the void when operational police officers are not going to be available for standard operational work, and how is that going to be evaluated?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – This is a time old problem. There is always a situation where you are inspected, and gaps are identified that need to be filled. You take people from other areas to fill those gaps and the next time they inspect; they proceed to point out the gaps you created as a result of their last inspection.

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It is always a challenge to fill those gaps, and the Chief Constable is in place to make operational decisions as to how best to deploy resources and keep the community safe. Everything that is included in my Police and Crime Plan will have to be dealt with and at the same time it is acknowledged that the public want to see traditional visible policing.

Since 50% of crime was now related to fraud and online harms, we are spending 1% of the national policing budget. Tackling the 1% will not maintain at that level either, because at some point it could increase to 70% of crime which is related to fraud and online harms, leaving only a small increase of our entire budget which would be available to tackle it. With hidden harms and crimes, it is always going to be a challenge to explain to the public why you need to resource them.

People wanting to see a police officer in the town centre is not an unreasonable request, but at the same time until you become a victim of domestic abuse, sexual violence or your child is groomed online, that is the point at which you are exceedingly grateful that the level of strength, depth and expertise is available. All of this has to be delivered and the Chief Constable has a very difficult job to determine priorities.

There are around 100 officers still in probation, not on independent patrol, yet they are the future of the neighbourhood policing model. They do not progress straight into specialisms but gain independent status and will be deployed by the Chief Constable accordingly across the county. This is where the additionality and longevity of the model originates from.

The Special Constabulary has got a lot more to offer over recent years and regulars have been prioritised, which means that a lot more specials have joined the regulars. We have not had the training capacity to backfill, but we have started recruiting specials again. A national drive is being sought to reinvigorate and promote the Special Constabulary which will shape how we respond in the future as crime changes.

Q7. On Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG): I note the VAWG panel's nervousness about the introduction of a new model to the force and have recommended a phased transition. Do you have an update on this?

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The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – It is an area very important to look at when you consider over decades that policing and indeed society has not done enough to get it right. I felt very strongly that we use a much information as possible and have an independent panel to advise me. It has been very valuable, and I am looking forward to sitting down with the chair to talk face to face. The Panel are right to urge implementation at a pace that the organisation can deliver, which ultimately can be monitored to make sure it is effective.

We have a superintendent role who specifically deals with this piece of work which was introduced by the force, and I believe it was the right thing to do. It also supports the superintendent's role by having the backing of an independent panel to make sure the rollout is occurring at an appropriate pace.

I have confidence that the force understands this and want to get it right. I am required to get a formal response from the force to this report and my intention is to take it to the next public accountability meeting to get further assurance and ensure recommendations are taken on board. I can give you assurance now that conversations are continuing, and we will be having those conversations with the force in a very public way.

Q7. (a) Supplementary Question – Irrespective of the details that would come out of the public meeting you have just referenced, have you had any feedback update through the Chief Constable in terms of the reception of the force to the changes proposed? And have you had any comments from either victims or members of the public as to their perception of the rollout of this new programme, particularly in regard to changes in police attitudes and their adaption to the new social climate?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – In terms of feedback, the short answer is no. The report is hot off the press. It was included in today's meeting because I felt very strongly about its importance, and I did not want to delay it.

The public accountability meeting will be where we really get to explore all of that, and I agree that we need to change attitudes. However, changing culture and attitudes will take some time.

It has been assuring that the VAWG panel has been independently led and are people who understand frontline fears, concerns and challenges. Through the report they have given a high level of

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confidence about what the force is doing. I am also assured that the panel has done a great job in delivering the work it has completed which will ultimately lead to supporting the force.

In conclusion, I will make sure that the points raised are publicly addressed at the next public accountability meeting which will be the first time this will be discussed with the Chief Constable in front of the public.

Q7. (b) Supplementary Question - Regarding VAWG, are any plans or ideas being considered regarding police priorities and police handling of cases involving men and specific issues to how police deal with them?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – The work around violence against women and girls comes out of a national programme which is specifically looking at a societal set of challenges, which is attitudes by men and boys specifically to women and girls. It is quite a unique set of issues, but it does not mean we should not be prioritising issues that happen to men and boys particularly in a domestic setting.

Around 20% of violence in a domestic setting is perpetrated on a man either by another man or by a female partner. Equally there are situations where you have trans victims, and it is very important everyone experiences good quality services for their situation.

Societal change is key, and we need to make sure that people feel empowered to come forward to report and have the confidence that the police will take action. Also, for them to have confidence that the criminal justice system is robust enough, can get people to court in a timely fashion and are able to make informed high-quality decisions.

There is always more learning to be achieved and work on changing long term attitudes. It is very important to me that we get this right.

Q7. (c) Supplementary Question – Regarding the 4.1 strategic commitment in relation to violence against women and girls, it is noted that the panel has heard that the multi sector Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme no longer exists in Lincolnshire and is not needed. Could you comment on where we are with that?

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The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – Funding was originally secured in a partnership approach with the County Council to put this programme in place, but it was always envisioned that it would not be for a finite amount of time and would be evaluated. Factors such as the out of court disposals process is being updated and improved, and from the next financial year there will be a real need for police to be able to divert people into various schemes.

There is a recognised challenge around domestic abuse perpetrators and the biggest barrier is always cost. It is a societal problem and not just a policing problem, but partnership discussions are ongoing. I would agree the programme is needed, but there are aspects that could be streamlined and improved to reduce cost. It may be possible that a model that works for Lincolnshire is not of the cost of the Perpetrator Programme, however it will usually come down to making hard choices.

Q8. With the recent news that 4,500 officers have left policing nationally during their probation period since 2019, I note on Page 37 of your Precept Commitments report you mention the securement for new officers, are you able to comment on Lincolnshire police's retention of officers in their 2 year probation, for example in the past couple of years, how many probationers have dropped out, and do we know the reasons why, so this can be addressed going forward?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – This is an important question. I have been consistent in my view that the mandatory degree entry is wrong for policing. After convincing the Home Secretary of this, we have now got a fourth entry route which starts in April.

This will be taking the best of the practical elements of the degree without all the additional academic work that is needed. This gives Chief Constables the option on which way they want to recruit. It also prevents a two-tier system which will level the playing field for when officers go for promotion.

We have been working very hard to get this right and as a member on the board of the College of Policing, this is work that I am very close to. The PQF mandatory degree entry route has never been introduced in Lincolnshire. Where this has been implemented in other areas, we have observed a significant rise in the number of recruits dropping out during the probationary period. This has not

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been observed here because the mandatory degree route was not implemented.

The situation has been consistent, and we need to make sure we are getting the absolute best people through the process at the same time as not making the process too easy. It is also important to ensure the recruits are reflective of the community they serve, and we need to make sure that the training programmes are fair and equitable for all. Even if English is your second or third language, you should not be discouraged from joining.

Lincolnshire is not seeing a rise in people leaving. The fourth entry route may prove a good option for other areas that have failed to meet their recruitment target or experienced issues with retention. The way Lincolnshire has approached it to have a mixed entry including a degree and non-degree route is the right way.

Recent experience from meeting with a large number of young people going through a local college programme has shown that young people do not always want to work exclusively in policing, but in public sector or the emergency services. It was brilliant to see that level of engagement through that programme, but we equally need life experience.

Policing has got a lot to offer for people who want a change of career, and I believe Lincolnshire has done very well with the training centre at Skegness which was funded from the town deal.

Lincolnshire is physically very big, and Skegness is very important for recruiting people from the east of the county and those who live and want to work there. Understandably, it must be frustrating to those who live in the west of the county and need to drive to Skegness for a 12-hour shift. Therefore, we want to make sure our communities are well served by people who are well rested even if they do not live locally.

Q9. I know you are aware that this Police and Crime Panel has serious concerns with cuts in PCSOs in current year's budget and after government funding for policing was less favourable than expected. There is no mention of PCSO's in your precept commitments, yet the number of PCSO's has fallen by two thirds since you have been Commissioner. Can I ask that you seriously consider increasing PCSO numbers across Lincolnshire in the coming discussions for next year's budget?

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The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – The first thing I would clarify is that PCSO reductions was not a result of national budget pressure. The Chief Constable chose to spend £2 million on new roles and that was funded by reductions elsewhere. New roles are often created in response to HMICFRS reports and other pressures they must meet. The Chief Constable found the best way forward with the budget available to keep public safe.

Budgets always must be balanced, and decisions need to be made. It is an important distinction that there was more money last year than ever before in Lincolnshire Police's history. The increase in police officer numbers and maintaining them was the priority stated in a previous Council Tax commitment and that is what is being delivered. The Council Tax commitment is current and future plans are yet to be discussed especially while our annual budget survey is underway. We will see what comes back from the public as a result of that before making any decisions.

I genuinely value the work of PCSOs and they do an incredibly important job, but it the responsibility of the Chief Constable to make those tough choices, which is the same choices being made around the country. Other forces have lost significantly more PCSOs than we have in Lincolnshire. However, being mindful that gaps do not appear, I have committed to saying at a future public accountability meeting that we will have a review of the newly implemented neighbourhood policing model that the Chief Constable wants to put in place.

I am concerned about overstating, and questioning how the recruitment process will work to maintain that model. For example, if you wait for a certain number of officers to retire or leave before you run the recruitment process, how big is the gap before you recruit again. I am also informed that the force is exploring new models of recruiting to mitigate any issues.

The Chief Constable and I feel the same way about the importance of neighbourhood policing PCSOs and discussions will continue to take place in an open public forum so that people can have confidence the issues are still under review.

Q10. Are there any update on the new neighbourhood policy model regarding its effectiveness?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – In a Lincolnshire capacity, Boston has seen an increase in PCSOs as a result of the new neighbourhood policing model, and it is absolutely

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right to review it. However, as it was only implemented in October, it is too soon to comment.

I have been clear that I expect it to be evaluated and it will be addressed at a public meeting as this is important to public confidence in Lincolnshire Police. It is my expectation as Commissioner that the Chief Constable will account for this with his team in public. This is an opportunity to be honest and clear about what has or has not worked. There is no specific timeline, but if any problems arise, I will be challenging those from an evaluation point of view.

When changes occur concerns tend to be raised from those closer to the societal fabric, such as parish councils where people are very engaged in what is going on. It is very important we work with them to help them understand the facts.

For the first time in December, we have got a series of meetings with parishes, which are cluster meetings across the county to enable Parish Chairs and Clerks to come together to ask questions at a strategic level of senior policing, and I will be attending. This has been introduced to try and help people feel more engaged and to manage perception of change.

In addition, the force has also introduced a new neighbourhood newsletter which highlights who local officers are, how to contact them and what is going on in your area. Social media and weblinks will be provided and this will be helpful in filling in the gaps of local understanding.

There are neighbourhood teams covering the whole area and that is not going away, but people need to know who they are and how to contact them, people also want to know that police will turn up if needed.

We still must make sure that visible policing happens, but the key is understanding what is going on in the community and the public knowing police are nearby. Technology has assisted with getting the message out and I am hopeful some of the changes we are making will help.

Q11. Following a recent scrutiny meeting in South Holland where a number of issues were raised, and in reference to the mention of Long Sutton being an often forgotten area in the extremities of Lincolnshire, what some perceived as low level crime has a major impact on surrounding local

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communities, and regarding the response times on the 101 system or reporting online and not getting any feedback. Can I ask for your views on these issues and how they are being dealt with?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – I would reassure you that I never forget Long Sutton, or Cowbit or Crowland or any places that are in that important part of our county. I know residents do not feel a close affinity to what happens in the middle of the county, and I am very conscious of that, and welcome being invited to consider any issues. All of Lincolnshire matters as much as any other part.

I agree that low level crime such as road racing should not be minimised as it can lead to death and can really affect people's quality of life, which is never acceptable. The introduction of a roads policing unit was vital to that mission. Recently we held an East of England and East Midlands Road Safety Summit where nine forces were represented. Working in partnership is essential to drive down the number of tragedies on our roads and that is something that I am absolutely committed to doing.

The Road Safety Partnership and Roads Policing Unit are key as they have specialist training and equipment. For example, tinted windscreens and the loudness of exhausts can all be monitored which is helpful to tackle those who are not following the rules.

In addition, we have obtained funding which is to specifically tackle hotspot anti-social behaviour challenges. It was another instance where I was able to successfully argue that we needed a fair and equitable distribution of funding, and another million pounds has been allocated. Therefore, we have a million pounds coming from April to specifically target hotspot areas of anti-social behaviour of all forms including on the roads.

I am keen to examine market towns and determine how we offer them the provision they need, such as Louth and Horncastle. It is important that any of these communities feel protected and served and I am keen to work with partners on the spending of the anti-social behaviour funding.

In order to target hotspots intelligence is needed and that only happens when people report. My absolute ask is that people report and urge their communities to do so because we need to evidence on where to spend the funds and to ensure areas do not miss out.

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In relation to 101, there are 15 additional people going into the call handling service to make sure that service improves. The complexity of calls coming into the force has increased and we are now taking over a minute longer for each call to be dealt with. The challenge is the duration of the calls and while call levels are similar, if we are taking longer to deal with a call it is more effective if the person is dealt with once. The 101 service will continue to be monitored closely. The online service is national, and we are also working to try and improve that service.

Q12. In relation to the recruitment process, where you mentioned earlier the numbers needed to make progress effective. Has joint recruitment with other forces been considered to make the process more uniform and which could run continuously?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – I would assume so, it works nationally and regionally with specialisms and there are a range of national and regional training programmes. Although, for general recruits there is a certain level of impracticality with the distances involved and travelling. The Chief Constable would point out under current training which changes in April, that training would always have a flavour of the area that officers are serving in and that is something we would not want to lose. It is very important that people are of the community they are serving in and the policing by consent model would be eroded if we tried to do a one size fits all programme.

The new training programme is 16 weeks long whereas the current programme is 20 weeks long. That provides an additional 4 weeks should the Chief Constable use it in Lincolnshire to tailor additional training for example on rural crime. The Chief Constables would not want to lose the ability to make sure training fits the local model.

Just for clarity, there is no evidence that it is more cost effective to train with other counties rather than one, especially when travel, overnight stays and long hours are taken into account. It is necessary to be mindful of the costs and with PCSO training it is certainly smaller numbers of people to begin with.

This is also why I have challenged the force as I want to understand what they are doing regarding retention, training and recruitment and how that will work compared to the traditional way of recruiting with a cohort of 50.

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Q13. East Lindsey is one of the largest rural counties in the country, we do not see local officers on the streets in Horncastle or Woodhall Spa anymore. Residents are concerned as PCSOs were the face of the police in rural areas. Is it possible to get another police officer in an area or is it only the busier areas like Gainsborough and Skegness that are getting officers?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – I emphasise because the whole county needs appropriate levels of policing. As highlighted at our national conference, sometimes it comes down to different tolerance levels and that is the challenge. We previously had a model where councils paid significantly towards PCSOs on the streets but due to their budget constraints that was no longer possible. In the same way we could stop funding anything that was not statutory with partners in order to purely concentrate on PCSOs or police officers, but that is not a sensible approach.

I understand why councils could not continue to fund them and it is a balance when we still want to be funding other areas such as domestic abuse. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Chief Constable where police officers are deployed. We are trying to take all factors into account which is why there is community engagement. The new model centres around speaking to parishes and making sure local concerns are fed in for the Chief Constable to make informed decisions.

It is essential to have information from the public on where there are concerns, and I give you my assurance of being a good partner to all local authorities and communities. We are still fighting battles and will keep reviewing it.

Q14. Regarding 2.1.2, and applauding the innovative thinking for the new initiative 'the happening' based in Sleaford, can I request assurance that there will be better and active communications with local councils so that we can communicate to residents and give support to this programme?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Response – The programme is an incredible resource. After visiting I was very impressed, it has not opened yet but is expected to launch in December. Primarily it is targeting those that are either greatly at risk of being involved in violence or likely to be in a situation where violence may occur around them. It is also targeting schools and I believe there has been significant interest from schools around the

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country. It is in a central location and is not exclusively a Sleaford resource.

As the launch date approaches, people will be invited to come along and understand what they are working to achieve. I also want Councillors, Members of Parliament and even Ministers to come and visit. Similar to the Ben Kinsella anti-knife crime campaign, we are building upon that and have created a slightly more modern thinking because it is necessary to prepare children and young people and give them resilience to be able to cope with the situations they are experiencing. Again, we have not launched the project officially yet.