

## **Response from Waltham Forest residents**

### **Resident 1**

How do you decide where the station in each borough is to be located?

Regarding services being available on-line and telephone.

What services could possibly be available on-line? Not everyone has access to a personal computer.

Who will man the Crime Prevention desks and bureaus in libraries etc?

I can offer several scenarios of crimes committed where the victim needs to have close access to a police station. The crime prevention desks would be too public, inappropriate and lacking in privacy.

They need access to a station within easy reach, not half way across the borough.

You say that Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be increased but where have the ones gone that were patrolling neighbourhoods until about 18 months ago?

Every time there is a cut in services we are told by the powers that be that this will not have and negative impact on services. That it will make them more efficient, reliable and visibility will improve.

The reality is, in the public's experience quite the opposite.

### **Resident 2**

Dear Mr Johnson,

I had hoped to attend this evenings meeting in Walthamstow which was attended by one of your Deputies.

To have only one 24 hour station open for the whole of the borough is unworkable and in my view unsafe. One of the complaints from people around the country is the lack of police presence. If there is only one station then the lack of police accessibility becomes more obvious. The police become invisible.

I believe that as the station is difficult to access for many people in the borough it will result in them being reluctant/unable to report crime. Another way at looking at the situation is that less crime being reported will look good for statistics. This will be the perfect excuse to cut police numbers again.

Once upon a time in the Coppermill Lane area (about 2 years ago) we saw 2 PSCOs on a daily basis walking around, talking to residents. Then about 18 months ago they were replaced by 2

PSCOs on bicycles, they have now vanished. The same has happened regarding police presence in the High Street area, they too have vanished.

We keep being told that there are more police being employed, this not how it is seen by the public. When talking to police officers they confirm that numbers are being cut not increased. To me the money that was spent on employing commissioners was an utter waste and could have been better spent. i.e keeping police stations open/employing additional officers.

Then the plans to fast track people with degrees after 3 years' service. Common sense has been side tracked, experience is worth more than anyone with a degree. There are officers who have passed their exams to become sergeants and inspectors but due to the cuts there are no posts available for them to transfer to.

Are these changes preparing us for the police force to be sold off? Who to I wonder, G4S?

I do hope I receive a reply to my email as I will be very interested to see what you have to say.

### **Resident 3**

Good evening

I attended the MOPAC consultation public event in Waltham Forest on 25th February and wish to provide the following feedback on the proposed plans.

#### **CLOSURE OF FOUR OUT OF FIVE FRONT COUNTERS**

Although I appreciate cost savings must be made, I feel the proposal to close four of out of five front counters is grossly unfair to the residents of the borough.

Why are the residents of the borough of Richmond upon Thames being allowed to retain all three of their front counters? Why have neither of the front counters in Islington been earmarked for closure? Westminster has seven (!) front counters and the proposal allows for them to retain four.

Proposing that Waltham Forest lose 80% of its front counters is incredibly disproportionate.

Based on the Metropolitan Police crime statistics for January 2013, the nearby boroughs of Haringey, Redbridge and Enfield all had lower crime rates than Waltham Forest for the same period yet, if the current proposal is put in place, Haringey would retain three of its four front counters with Redbridge and Enfield each retaining two of their existing four front counters. It is not logical that boroughs with lower crime rates would require more front desks than those with higher crime rates.

#### **LOCATING THE ONLY FRONT COUNTER IN CHINGFORD**

You only need to look at the physical map of the borough to see why the proposal for the only front counter to be located in Chingford is nonsensical. How can a front counter that is geographically located at the extreme northern end of the borough best serve and respond to the needs of all the borough's residents? As was pointed out at the public event, transportation links from the rest of the borough to and from Chingford are very poor.

Also, Chingford Green has the lowest population density in the borough - <http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/Documents/2011%20census%20Waltham%20Forest%20Ward%20Population%202011%20map.pdf> - and based upon the Metropolitan Police crime statistics for January 2013, Chingford Green is tied for second place for the lowest crime rate in the borough - <http://maps.met.police.uk/access.php?area=00BH&sort=count>.

Would common sense not dictate that the only front counter in the borough be located near where a) the majority of the residents live and b) the majority of the crime takes place? Chingford meets neither of these tests.

## **RELEASING UNDERUTILISED PROPERTY ASSETS**

The former police station located at 360 Forest Road has now been vacant since September 2011 - [http://www.guardianseries.co.uk/news/10013637.WALTHAMSTOW\\_\\_Police\\_station\\_put\\_up\\_for\\_sale/](http://www.guardianseries.co.uk/news/10013637.WALTHAMSTOW__Police_station_put_up_for_sale/) .

What is the status of the sale? Could the Metropolitan Police be more proactive in moving a sale forward? The borough is in great need of affordable housing and this former police station could be put to much better use than continuing to leave it vacant.

## **SUGGESTED COST SAVINGS**

The documentation distributed at the public event invited suggestions for cost savings and I have two I would like to propose.

### **1. Do Away With Handwritten Witness Statements**

In the past few years, I have had to give witness statements for a variety of crimes. I am mystified why the Metropolitan Police continue to require their detectives and officers to handwrite these statements.

With the advent of computer technology and high level on-line security, it would be much more efficient for personnel to be issued with laptops or tablets, have witnesses type their own statement in the presence of the detective or officer and, when finished, the witness could click on a box saying the statement they have given is a true account followed by electronically signing the statement and locking the file so that it cannot be altered in any way. This electronic statement could then be directly uploaded to a central location on the Met's computer system where only approved personnel could have access to the information.

If the witness was unable to type their own statement for any reason, the detective or officer could type it for them and the procedure could continue as noted above.

It's an incredibly inefficient and a complete waste of time for highly trained personnel to handwrite a witness statement and then take it back to the station where either they or someone else has to input it into their system. If the goal is to get officers out from behind their desks and out dealing with the public then this would go a long way to achieving that goal.

### **2. Do Away With The HO/RT1 Form aka A Producer**

I was bewildered when I moved from the US to the UK and found you didn't have to physically carry your driving licence with you when you were driving.

Instead, if you're pulled over, you can be issued with a HO/RT1 Form which requires you to turn up at a police station within seven days to produce your documents. What a load of nonsense and huge waste of everyone's time!

I appreciate the Police National Computer now holds most of the details regarding drivers documents so the HO/RT1 Form may not be used much but would it not be easier to pass a law saying everyone has to carry their driving licence when they are going to be behind the wheel?

To my knowledge, the UK is the only country in the world that does not require drivers to physically carry their driving licence.

If a law were to be passed and a driver failed to produce their licence when stopped, a spot fine could be imposed thereby creating an additional revenue stream. As they say, every little helps. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Police and Crime Plan for 2013 - 2017 and I hope you take my views as well as those of others from Waltham Forest into account when making your final decisions.