

MOPAC: DRAFT POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2013-2017 PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE

1. Introduction

I found the Police and GLA presentations delivered in Ealing Town Hall on 5 February 2013 very interesting. All the questions and all the answers were interesting too. I've read both documents which were handed out at that meeting.

The presentations were concerned with significant planned changes to Policing in Ealing.

Clearly the driver for changes is someone's decision that MPS should not spend £500 million of its current £3.6 million annual budgets for the whole of London by 2016. That amounts to saving £100 million each year from now till year end 2016. I know that the challenges to do more with less are enormous and they confront many of us domestically and professionally on a daily basis.

A number of facts and opinions are presented in these documents, which give rise to questions I would like answered. I would value a response or even better a meeting to discuss the issues raised.

To make this document free standing to those who might care to read it, MOPAC Mission and Priorities can be viewed at:

www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/MOPAC%20Mission.pdf

2. 'Crime: including anti-social behaviour and terrorism' are Consistently Ealing Residents' Number One Concern

Each year the London Borough of Ealing (LBE) surveys its residents. 'Crime: including anti-social behaviour and terrorism' has been residents' number one concern in Ealing in 2009, 2010 and 2012. I have lived in Ealing now for over 34 years. I have been Vice Chair of West Ealing Neighbours (WEN) for six years. Violent crime has been a regular feature in my neighbourhood especially over the last 18 months. Appendix A is a copy of our current WEN newsletter which lists just those episodes we reported on our web site.

We are, allegedly, the seventh richest country in the world and certainly not the stupidest. It should not be beyond our powers to enhance all our quality of life by spending adequate money in a constructive ways to significantly reduce crime and the fear of crime. If our AMR surveys in Ealing for 2013/4/5/6/7 still show crime as the number one concern we will know that the MOPAC plan has failed in Ealing.

3. We Want More Police Stations Not Fewer

Robert Peel in the 19th Century established the concept of Police Stations. At these facilities residents and businesses could report crimes and present whatever paperwork might be required of them. Witnesses and suspects were interviewed here and those arrested were detained there in custody. Police Officers patrolled from the stations. Desks and typewriter/PCs were provided for Officers to write up crime incidents and miscreants' and witnesses' statements.

The new MOPAC plan to have three dedicated Police Stations to deliver law and order services for the 338,449 residents in Ealing is clearly inadequate. The fact that only one of these Police Stations will operate on a 24 hour basis gives cause for great concern. It's not as though the location of this 24 hour facility in Acton will be located anywhere near the centre of the borough. It's in the south east of the borough. Greenford and Northolt, for example, are a fair distance away. The roads throughout our 21 square miles of what is the 11th largest city/town in England are often congested.

Ealing is effectively made up of nine 'towns'. These are Ealing, Acton, Southall, Hanwell, Greenford, Northolt, Perivale, West Ealing, and Park Royal. Each town needs its own Police Station with 24 hour public access. The fact that Southall with an official population of 66,000 does not warrant a 24 hour Police Station is very worrying. Currently Southall has more residents than Corby or Boston. After the Gas Works site is redeveloped Southall's population will rise to 73,000.

In my town West Ealing we had 300 people rioting for 3 hours overnight on 8/9 August 2011. There was no Police presence whatsoever. I am concerned that this could happen again. A Police Station in the neighbourhood is essential not only as a local base for Police operations but as a visual symbol of the State's commitment to law and order. As Ealing Council Leader Julian Bell said at the 5 February 2013 meeting, these plans represent our Police force 'in retreat'.

Back to my rough description of Police Officers' work – just where locally will miscreants and witnesses be interviewed? In people's homes? In local cafes? Will the three Police Stations be able to provide effective working environments for 727 Police staff in 2015?

4. Safer Neighbourhood Policing: Announced in 2004, Failing in 2013

Safer Neighbourhood Policing (SNP), announced in April 2004 and implemented in 2006 promised that each of the 23 Ealing Wards would have six staff. Initially these staff were based primarily at Ealing, Acton and Southall Police Stations. Every morning they cycled to and around their Wards. The plan going forward was that each Ward SNP team would be found a base (mini Police Station) in its Ward. This never happened. I participated in a review of SNP in Cleveland Ward

some years ago now. My input at the time is at Appendix B. I never got any response to this.

What confidence can we have that our feedback on these new plans will be listened too? What confidence can we have that these plans might be executed as advertised?

5. Asset Management Plan, Ealing November 2007

MPS consulted on this. WEN's response is at Appendix C. I understood that over 300 residents commented on these plans. Why didn't MPS take the trouble to communicate back to the 300+ who took the trouble to review the plan? Was this plan ever implemented?

6. Policies on Crime Detection are Missing

There is nothing in these proposal about crime detection. Nothing about current detection rates. Nothing about targets for improving detection rates. Why is this?

7. Explicit Policies for the Elderly are Missing

It has been the case for well over a year now that residents over 55 years old in England and Ealing match or outnumber those of 14 years and younger. In my Ward – Elthorne – the ONS 2011 Census sizes the 0 -14 and 55-65+ communities as each making up 14% of the 14,000+ population. ONS says there were around 34,000 over 65s living in Ealing in 2011 and throughout the country Age UK's research reveals that 49 % of the over 75 year olds live alone.

It's a cliché that children are our future but the vast proportion of volunteers who run more and more of our local services are people over 55 years old. There is little in these plans which explicitly covers the law and order needs of the elderly and particularly the elderly who live alone.

5. MOPAC's Planning Window is woefully Too Short

The planning window being used by MOPAC is just four years. This is way too short. The statutory spatial planning window for LBE's Ealing 2026 Local Plan and West Ealing Centre Neighbourhood Forums (WECNF's) Neighbourhood Plan is 15 years.

6. Reported Crime Statistics are Unreliable

Myself and many others have entered Ealing Police Station over the years in order to report a crime and have been kept waiting unseen for hours. Sometimes I and others have given up without being seen and have just not reported that

crime and subsequent crimes. Others have reacted in the same way. A very good friend of mine entered Southall Police Station in December 2012 and was kept waiting unseen for 2.5 hours. This is completely unacceptable.

Ealing, Southall and Acton Police Stations do not have car parks for use by residents. This in itself discourages residents from visiting the Stations to report crimes.

7. MPS Consistently Does Not Report Back to Those who Report Crimes and Allegations of Crimes

In 2010 I stood as an independent candidate in the LBE Councillor elections. I received an anonymous letter containing a stream of allegations of misbehaviour about two other Councillor candidates. I went straight to Ealing Police Station and handed over a copy of this letter bearing these allegations. To this day I have received no feedback whatsoever about these allegations.

If MPS intends to improve its performance in communicating with the people it is protecting it must invest time, money and resources in providing and maintaining an effective customer service infrastructure.

8. MOPAC's Crime Priorities are All Over the Place

Crime priorities are variously listed on page 8 of the slides and on page seven in the consultation text. Listing ten priorities makes little sense and then adding three more as 'special emphasis' doesn't help either. Further to that the priority lists in the two documents which were handed out do not match.

Citing business crime is an interesting throw away comment. As I understand it MPS still chooses to not investigate with Credit Card fraud. Any conversations I and others have had with MPS on cyber crime in the past suggests that knowledge and resourcing to fight it are thin or perhaps non-existent.

9. 'Call Us, and We'll Come Round to See You'

The 'public access' concept floated at the 5 February 2013 in Ealing Town Hall seems to involve hundreds of residents phoning a Police Call Centre ('...press 1 for murder, press 2 for burglary, 3 for rape etc, etc'). In response to these calls Police would cycle/drive to homes and places of work to investigate. This is akin to closing pretty much all the 79 Ealing General Practitioners' surgeries and running a Healthcare Call Centre '...(press 1 for hernia, 2 for chest pains, 3 for Aids, etc, etc'). As a result of these calls the 217 GP doctors, along with nurses, in Ealing would drive to see the thousands of patients in their homes.

Is this really what the future State social provisioning of law and order and primary healthcare is going to look like? Will it work?

Just were in England or the world is this 'call us and we'll come round to your house' approach working successfully. It would be good to have some case studies to review.

10. A New Local Policing Model

We are told that there just seven weeks to go before this is implemented in Ealing. What is it? I am active in a number of Ealing community organisations and none of them have alerted members to review or be apprised of this? Surely this public consultation exercise begun on February 5 2013 in Ealing Town Hall, with its input deadline of 6 March 2013 cannot relate to this 'new local Policing model'? Introducing a radical restructuring of local Policing just three weeks after the closing date for public consultation is a travesty of community engagement.

11. Quality of Life Crimes

To devote just seven lines of text to this topic somehow misses the point. All crimes affect our quality of life. Quality of life is admittedly difficult to define. However one view of it is that our quality of life depends on the provision of local services. These services might be provided by family and loved ones; some by State organisations; and some by voluntary and commercial organisations. Local services are provided by human beings operating from local facilities. In England facilities that means land use and bricks and mortar. Law and order facilities (along with healthcare facilities) must be dedicated facilities which provide a safe and secure environment.

12. Police 'Access Points' in Supermarkets, and Post Offices etc

'Bobbies Before Buildings' is nice bit of alliteration but we need bobbies and buildings. I can only presume that access points are not police stations. An access point could just be a free-to-call phone point.

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Draft 1
10 February 2013