



COMMUNITY JUSTICE SECURITY

## **Speech to the 69th Annual Conference of NCALC**

**Saturday 8 October 2016**

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to begin by thanking you for inviting me to your annual conference. Events such as these are very beneficial as they provide me with an opportunity to talk directly to councillors from across our county about the work I am doing with Northamptonshire Police, and to learn about the concerns and issues facing you.

I understand from Danny that this year, you have helped him break his attendance record and I am delighted to take this opportunity to explain to so many of you, how I want to make Northamptonshire safer.

I have to be honest; nothing can really prepare you for the role of Police and Crime Commissioner. Before I was elected to the role, I spoke to as many people as I could to gain a greater

understanding of both the role of PCC and the issues facing communities across our county.

As we all know, Northamptonshire is a large place. It is home to nearly three quarters of a million people. There are over three hundred thousand domestic properties and 268 parishes, all joined together by a network of over two and half thousand miles of highways.

This helps to underline the challenge that faces our police force each and every day as they undertake to deliver the priorities that I will set out in my police and crime plan.

As you may know, each Police and Crime Commissioner must publish a Police and Crime plan which sets out their strategic priorities for policing for a five year period. My overriding key priority is a simple one; to make Northamptonshire safer. Whilst that sounds like a simple undertaking, delivering effective

policing is a complex and demanding undertaking. This is why I have already undertaken a great deal of work to ensure that the force play a central role in both the development and delivery of the new Police and Crime Plan for Northamptonshire.

Whilst I may be the Police and Crime Commissioner, I am not a professional police officer. I see no value in setting any targets or priorities that may attract a good headline, but would in reality prove to be unachievable or detrimental to the delivery of effective policing in our communities.

This was why - for the first time - a joint workshop for members of staff from the Force and my Office was held to develop ideas for the new plan and how they can best be delivered. Everyone in this room will know the value of identifying and sharing best practice. We all may think we have the answers, but there is no substitute for front line experience and understanding.

I want the force to deliver my plan, but I also want them to want to deliver it, this was why I brought together a wide range of officers from across the Force to work with my office to share ideas and experiences. This meant that we had a well-informed foundation on which to refine and finalise the plan which will go out for public consultation next week.

As part this public consultation exercise, I would welcome the input of every single parish and town councillor across Northamptonshire to ensure the completed and finalised report captures the views of local communities and leads to a local criminal justice system which operates effectively and puts victims at the heart of everything it does.

Ensuring your views are heard is vital to me. You are at the very grassroots of democracy in our county. Whilst there may be times you feel unappreciated, not listened to or under-

valued, I want to be very clear to you today. I believe Parish and Town Councils are the very lifeblood of our local communities; you are uniquely placed to help not only me, but also our police force, our local district and borough councils, the county council, our local criminal justice system and the very many local organisations and clubs that do so much to enrich and support the lives of our residents.

Working smartly together is essential and I am very encouraged that the theme of this year's annual conference is 21st Century Community Safety. There needs to be a shared recognition that policing models need to adapt and evolve to the ever changing threats and challenges that face us.

For example, the internet has revolutionised our lives and has changed forever how we as local representatives interact with local residents. I am sure there are many of us here who would

now be lost without our smart phones, and running our lives on the go has never been easier. However, as technology evolves and becomes more integrated into our lives, it also provides criminals and predatory individuals the potential to exploit the digital windows that are sometime left open in our lives to steal our personal data or groom young or vulnerable individuals.

This issue is as relevant to our small rural communities as it is to our large urban towns. For example, the level of recorded crimes in England and Wales more than doubles once Fraud and Cyber-crime are included. The Internet Watch Foundation report there has been a 417% increase in child sexual abuse images and videos being created and shared since 2013 and 34% of those were classed as category A, the category for images and videos showing the rape or sexual torture of

children. This is an issue of paramount, international importance.

Let me be clear, tackling this sort of criminal activity will be a key priority for me, and this will mean having to take difficult decisions with the Chief Constable about how we allocate our limited funding and resources to ensure we can protect people from harm and make our communities safer.

Our current budget for Policing Northamptonshire is around £122 million, which may sound a lot, but given the size of our county and the ever increasing challenges we face, it means we have to make some difficult decisions on how our limited resources are allocated.

This is why I want as many of you here today to take part in the current consultation on the new Police and Crime Plan for Northamptonshire. I am sure there will be some cynical

individuals who may dismiss the plan as yet another statutory document from a public body that no one will read. However, I want this plan to really reflect the concerns and priorities of residents from across our county.

Before I took office, I spoke to thousands of people about their concerns and how the Force should address them. Time and again, I heard the same things being raised and these have helped me shape the four key areas I want to focus on as Police and Crime Commissioner.

I want to:

- Keep young people safe
- Build Community Partnerships
- Protect people from harm
- Put victims at the heart of our criminal justice system

I know that for too long rural communities have felt that they get a raw deal when it comes to policing. There is a reality that the days of having a bobby in every village have gone. However that does not mean that communities should not expect to get the very best service from the police when they are needed and that communities don't have a right to feel safe. I know that there are issues that genuinely concern rural communities and stop people feeling safe. And these range from burglaries in villages to inconsiderate parking, speeding and other aspects of anti-social behaviour. I know that farming communities are fed up with the theft and damage that occurs to their property and their livestock. It is for these reasons that taking action in rural areas is something that I feel very passionate about and why rural policing features as a priority in my draft Police and Crime Plan.

As parish councillors, you will know at first hand the importance of how early intervention work is essential to maintain community cohesion.

It is also clear to me that early intervention will play a vital role in helping to protect our young people. We all want our children and young people to be healthy and succeed, but sadly many are denied such things through no fault of their own. This inevitably has significant social costs, as well as financial costs.

Currently, the cost of not intervening early costs this county, in other words us as taxpayers, almost £200m. For me this is totally unacceptable and represents both a waste of money, as well as a waste of life chances.

This is where again we need to work better together; schools, health, youth groups, councillors and the police need to share information and be more unified to be able to intervene earlier

and prevent our young people from following a path that will almost inevitably lead to criminal behaviour.

This will not be an easy undertaking, however as Archbishop Desmond Tutu eloquently explained, “There comes a point you have to stop pulling people out the river, get upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”

in 2013-14, Northamptonshire hospital admissions rates as a result of self-harm for young people were 510.9 per 100,000 of population; this is over four times more than the lowest rate in England.

In addition to this, Northamptonshire hospital admission rates due to substance misuse for young people were 97.1 per 100,000 population; a figure that is almost four and a half times the best rate in England

Finally, in 2012/13 the percentage of Northamptonshire's secondary school population who were permanently excluded was seven times the number of our nearest statistical neighbour.

Preventing young people from being excluded will be a key component to our early intervention work and will help to prevent young people from making ruinous life choices which put pressure on local services and places an unnecessary burden on already stretched budgets.

It is clear that the quantifiable costs of exclusion to the public purse and to the individual are great; one estimate of the cost of permanent exclusion is £65,000. A place in a pupil referral unit for excluded young people is calculated by the Government to cost £15,000 per year. We also know from young people

who had been frequently excluded that the personal costs are significant and long-term.

For example, if a young person is excluded from school, their chances of committing criminal acts significantly increases. A recent report highlighted that eighty-five per cent of boys explained that they had been excluded from school before they came into detention, 73% said they had truanted from school at some time, and 41% were 14 or younger when they last attended school

Figures such as these highlight the need for early intervention and is why we have been working with Weston Favell School on an innovative pilot project to reduce exclusions and in turn improve the life chances of pupils at risk of engaging in difficult or challenging behaviour. So far, there have been no exclusions thanks to the success of this pilot, and it

demonstrates the important of working in a collective manner and sharing information.

The sooner we can intervene, the greater chance we have to divert young people from a pathway to criminality and avoid the related costs and damage this can cause. However, we should never lose sight of the damage crime has on society and the support that victims need to navigate our criminal justice system and rebuild their lives.

As I mentioned earlier, one of my main priorities as Police and Crime Commissioner is to put victims at the heart of our criminal justice system to ensure we have efficient and sympathetic services that best respond to the differing needs of both victims and witnesses. Since the end of 2014, the Office of Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner assumed

the statutory responsibilities for commissioning support for Victims and Witnesses of Crime. Voice, the Victim and Witness Service for Northamptonshire, was developed as a result of this change and after two years since its inception, I am reviewing how the current model delivers its services and looking at the re-commissioning of victim and witness services under the current Voice arrangement.

It is important that every victim in Northamptonshire is provided with the support they need to cope, recover and thrive.

Therefore there a number of key strategic objectives that need to be addressed and delivered to ensure that Voice as a service evolves and places a priority on continual development.

In taking Voice forward, I want to see the following:

- Victims and witnesses are actively involved in the review, design and delivery of support services
- More victims have awareness and access to support that helps them to rebuild their lives after being affected by crime, with continuous improvement built into the services provided
- Support is provided to meet individual needs wherever possible
- Victims confidence in the system is improved

And

- Ensuring that from a victim's perspective the system is designed to be seamless, getting the right services at the right time no matter which organisation provides it.

A great deal of work is now being undertaken to deliver these objectives, and it is my hope that we can build on the good work that has already been delivered which in turn will mean there will be an increase in victim awareness of services available to them, an increase in number of victims receiving support and Improved victim satisfaction with services. As key strategic partners, you undoubtedly have an important role to play in helping me to support this vitally important work. Please do get in touch to help shape these vital services.

As the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire, I have to constantly juggle the competing demands that are placed on us. As we know, Northamptonshire is a large rural county, which contains one of the largest towns in the UK, this

places a unique challenge on our police force. This is why I want to put a real emphasis on building community partnerships which make a real difference to local communities and not just accept that how things have been done in the past are the way we should do in them in the future. You are the eyes and ears of your towns and villages, you understand the unique issues and challenges that face our rural communities and you play a unique role in providing a bridge between your residents and organisations such as the OPCC and Northamptonshire Police.

Northamptonshire Police has a hard won reputation for being an innovative force that is willing to challenge outdated and old fashioned methods of working to ensure it provides a good service and protects people from harm. It cannot do this in

isolation, nor can it do it without working closely with our regional colleagues. Tackling cross border crime is one example where we work closely with colleagues from Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire to ensure that criminals who operate around the borders of our county can no longer fall through the net. To give you some idea of the success of this innovative new approach, over the past six months, the Cross Border Team have:

- made over 70 arrests;
- conducted in excess of 250 criminal disruption visits;
- executed 18 warrants;
- supported police response teams at 50 crimes in progress/incidents; and

- detected in excess of 125 motoring offences for a lack of insurance, tax, licence or using a mobile phone while driving

This underlines the importance of working and collaborating with regional colleagues and helps us to better protect the frontline and ensure that when there is a really serious crime, we have the expert people deal with it. The East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) is a collaborative unit shared by the five police forces of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire. It provides the East Midlands with the capability to respond to the most strategic threats from organised crime, terrorism and major criminality which collectively pose the highest risk to the communities of the East Midlands and national security. This collaborative working approach provides a cohesive approach

in the East Midlands and is the most cost effective means of providing essential specialist police services to mitigate and reduce serious harm within the region. We should not be afraid of exploiting the benefits that collaborative working can bring and as I stand in front of you today, I can assure you that there will not be an East Midlands Police Force, however there will be closer working to ensure that resources are invested where they are needed and that we continue to be able to access world class policing units as and when they are required.

Mr. President, 21st Century Community Safety will look very different in five, ten or even 15 years from now. The digital revolution has undoubtedly presented us with new challenges and it requires us to evolve and develop policing models to ensure they can respond accordingly. However the backbone

to any safe and successful community is a positive and constructive partnership between residents, local groups, parish councillors, district, borough and county councils and with the OPCC and Northamptonshire Police. By working closely together, learning from each other, sharing information and remembering that we are one county made up of many communities, we can make Northamptonshire safer and protect people from harm.

Northamptonshire has a long and very proud history and parish councils have played a very important role in building the very county we live in today. We should never lose sight of the very important contribution made by parish councils and as we look to the future, your role will be central in helping me and Northamptonshire Police deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century community safety.

So I would ask you to join me in helping to create a safer Northamptonshire and to drive the closer working that will see us achieve that ambition. After all, as the father of the modern police force, Sir Robert Peel said, “The police are the public and the public are the police.”