



'I want to hear your views'

New Commissioner to embark on 'listening tour' and give the public their say on policing

Cheshire's new Police & Crime Commissioner will be asking the public and stakeholders to 'join the conversation' - and give their views on his priorities for his four years in office. A six-week mini-consultation will start next month with stakeholders, community groups, residents and businesses given their chance to help shape the Commissioner's Police & Crime Plan - which will set out the priorities for policing Cheshire between now and 2020.



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Mr Keane said: "I'm excited at the chance this consultation will provide to travel the county listening to the widest possible views. With responsibility for nearly £200m of spending for police services, I want to make sure that my priorities reflect those of the people, to ensure that Cheshire is a safe county, with real neighbourhood policing protecting all of our communities from harm.

"Cheshire, like so much of the country, faces many challenges - not least growing violent crime, disorder in town centres caused by alcohol, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Cheshire's police service is doing much to tackle these, but I believe - by listening to our partners and the people - we can do far more.

"I want you all to 'join the conversation', and will be writing to you asking you to help shape my plans by completing an online consultation.

"In addition, I hope to meet with as many of you as possible in the coming weeks, to have a fuller discussion.

As part of the consultation, the Commissioner will attend a number of high profile events across Cheshire during the summer. Stakeholder events across the county will be organised.

Youth action on crime

ALMOST 30 young people from across the county have become members of the first Cheshire Youth Commission on Police and Crime.

The partnership, led by the Police & Crime Commissioner and social enterprise 'Leaders Unlocked', will see 28 enthusiastic volunteers spend the next six months consulting with Cheshire youngsters on priorities they consider important.

The results will be presented to Police & Crime Commissioner David Keane and Chief Constable Simon Byrne to help inform and develop plans for the future of policing in Cheshire.

Mr Keane said: "Better community engagement is one of my priorities and this Commission will help us reach out to younger people. I'm grateful to all those who are volunteering their time to help us achieve this."

Six priorities have been identified: hate crime; relationship with the police; mental health and vulnerable young people; abusive relationships; drug and alcohol abuse; cyber bullying and online safety.

For information on how to get involved, email ben.mccrorie@cheshire.pnn.police.uk or visit www.youthcommission.co.uk

New law to help police tackle legal highs

NEW legislation has been introduced making it illegal to sell or supply psychoactive substances.

Psychoactive substances are often referred to as legal highs and used as an umbrella term for products intended to mimic the effects of controlled drugs. In reality many do actually contain controlled substances, which are illegal and have unpredictable side effects.

This legislation will fundamentally change the way forces tackle psychoactive substances and will make new drugs that appear on the market illegal quicker than ever before. It will give police the power to shut down shops trading in legal highs, and it will also be an offence to import them.

Possessing a psychoactive substance will not be an offence, except in a custodial institution. However possession with the intent to supply, import or export a psychoactive substance is now an offence.

Cheshire police have been tackling this issue for some time and work very closely with local authorities who provide support services for addicts. Operations have taken place across the county to raise awareness of changes in the law, giving shop owners and other suppliers time to adhere to the new legislation and



stop the trading of these dangerous drugs.

Police & Crime Commissioner David Keane said: "I'm reassured to see that psychoactive drugs are now illegal. Just because they have been known as 'legal highs' doesn't mean they are safe - they can kill - and people are playing russian roulette each and every time they take them.

"Cheshire Constabulary, working closely with local authorities, has done much to remove this scourge from the streets by taking action against some of the shops supplying these drugs. Now that the law has been passed, I'm confident that the Constabulary will use this to tackle those who may flout the law, supplying these drugs to our communities."

Hats off to officers with new caps

BOBBIES on the beat in Cheshire will soon have a new look.

Hard caps are being introduced following successful trials in Northwich and Chester.

The unisex caps, which will be given to the majority of frontline officers (including sergeants, constables, inspectors and chief inspectors), are replacing the traditional flat caps, with 'custodians' now reserved for ceremonial purposes.

Chief Constable Simon Byrne said: "I want Cheshire officers to be equipped with the most appropriate uniform to carry out their jobs safely and effectively. Following internal and external consultations we're introducing hard caps for most frontline police officers. This is a positive step for the force and great news for those working on the frontline.

"The caps are light but very rugged. Their size means officers can comfortably get in and out of vehicles without having to remove them, and their modern ventilation and lightness means they're comfortable to wear all year-round."

A proposal for the new head gear was first put forward in summer 2014. Since then, much work has gone on behind the scenes testing out the new caps to see how they work on the frontline – and surveying the public to



get their thoughts on the new look.

Northwich and Chester LPU have been trialing the hard caps for more than 6 months now. Almost 65% of officers have said that the hard caps were practical, 70% said they had worn the hard cap more than their previous hat and almost 90% said they should become a standard part of the uniform.

Externally, the public was consulted via social media. Of 125 responses the majority were positive with 72% agreeing that the new hard caps would be more practical for police officers and 61% saying they would not interfere with the force's professional image.

Cheshire is thought to be the only police force in the UK to have equipped their officers with hard caps.

Diversity initiative yielding results

A PROGRAMME designed to improve diversity and inclusivity amongst its workforce is beginning to take effect.

The Insight Programme was launched earlier this year, aimed at anyone over the age of 18 interested in joining the Constabulary who has a protected characteristic – including those from the BME (Black and Minority Ethnicity) community.

Cheshire has been identified nationally as a police force which does not have any Afro-Caribbean officers amongst its ranks. This was further highlighted with the publication of a Home Affairs Select Committee

report, which said that police forces across England and Wales needed to do more to proportionately represent the communities they serve.

The Insight Programme is helping to improve the picture and the Constabulary expects to see some positive results soon, having already seen an increase in applicants.

Police & Crime Commissioner David Keane said: "I recognise that work has been done to try to overcome the challenge of recruiting minority staff in Cheshire, and I've been impressed with how the Insight Programme appears to be making a difference.

"There is still much to be done but I am confident that we're moving in the right direction to having a fully representative workforce that can continue to deliver high quality policing to the people of Cheshire."

Meanwhile, the Constabulary has joined Business in the Community's race equality campaign, 'Race for Opportunity'.

This will provide access to advice and current research on equality and diversity topics - which will help the force to improve its equality, diversity and inclusivity.



Crime round-up from your area...

The Constabulary's detectives have had a busy few weeks dealing with a range of serious crimes. The following are some of the main incidents from your area...

Warrington Borough

Officers were called to reports of a serious incident at an address on Penny's Lane, Burtonwood on May 18. A 68-year-old woman was taken to hospital with stab injuries. A 66-year-old woman from Blackpool was arrested at the scene on suspicion of attempted murder, but has since been detained under section 2 of the Mental Health Act. Enquiries are ongoing.

Halton Borough

A teenager has appeared in court charged with the murder of a man in Widnes. The 15-year-old, from the Merseyside area, is accused of unlawfully killing Lee Briggs, aged 43, from Widnes during an incident at St Marie's Park off Lugsdale Road on May 16. Three others were also arrested in connection with the investigation, but have since been released on bail.

Cheshire West & Chester

A 20-year-old man from Ellesmere Port was sentenced



to eight years in prison after admitting a number of offences related to online grooming of girls aged between eight and 18. David Harmes, formerly of Regent Street, Ellesmere Port will serve five years prison and a further three on licence. He will also be on the Sex Offenders Register for life.

Cheshire East

A teenage girl has been charged in relation to the assault of a 14-year-old Nantwich boy on April 30. The 15-year-old from Crewe has been released on conditional bail, to appear at Youth Court on July 27. Mobile phone footage of the incident went viral on social media at the time, and made national news.

And finally.....

A behind-the-scenes look at the work of Cheshire police will soon be viewed by millions of TV viewers as the Constabulary stars in a prime-time documentary series.

999: What's Your Emergency? will focus on the day-to-day challenges of facing the blue light services policing, specifically in Crewe and Warrington.

A broadcast date is to be confirmed, but Channel 4 bosses say it is likely to be some time in late June in a 9pm time slot.

Crews were given access to speak to officers, follow them on a range of call-outs, as well as on patrol, and also into custody suites.

Chief Constable Simon Byrne said: "We were pleased to work with Channel 4 on this series, as we recognised the benefits of highlighting to a wide audience the often challenging situations our officers face every day.

"I have seen some of the edited footage already and was impressed at the way it provides a unique insight into the work of our officers. I'm sure it will prove to be compelling viewing."

Meanwhile, Cheshire police officers and staff will be out in force once more for the Royal Cheshire County Show at the Tabley showground on June 21-22.

The Constabulary has won various prizes down the years and been commended for its often innovative methods of engagement with the public.

This year, the Constabulary exhibition stand will have a rural and wildlife theme, with information, crime prevention advice and educational fun and games for children.

There will also be the opportunity to find out more about the Cheshire Police Alert scheme, our Watch initiatives and volunteering opportunities in the police cadets or Special Constabulary.

If you are attending, why not pop in and say hello?