

POLICE CHANGES FROM 3RD APRIL 2016 IN SURREY AND ELMBRIDGE

Surrey Police organisational changes

Below are details of the Surrey Police new local policing model, which went live on 3rd April 2016, summarised from announcements by T/Deputy Chief Constable Gavin Stephens and North Surrey T/Chief Superintendent Jerry Westerman.

Surrey Police's new local policing model went live on Sunday 3 April 2016. This is part of their 'Policing In Your Neighbourhood' project, a pro-active response to the new picture of crime in the UK. Burglary and car theft are down but have been replaced by challenging increases in complex and often more hidden offences like child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and cybercrime. These offences require specialised investigative officers who will also work with partners to safeguard the vulnerable, and are essential in keeping the public safe.

The most significant change is that local police officers will be carrying out a broader range of tasks; where possible, officers who start a job will see it through the investigation to its conclusion. Thus victims of crime will have continuity of care and an identified contact throughout. Where more specialised skills are required, cases will be taken on by CID and the Safeguarding Investigations Unit (protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse), the latter receiving a significant investment in additional resources.

In addition to resources for the specialist investigation teams, local policing teams will be bigger with more officers for each borough, tackling local problems and supporting smaller but still dedicated Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Boroughs and districts will continue to have a dedicated local Inspector and dedicated Safer Neighbourhood Team PCSOs who will work with partners such as hospitals and councils to make communities safer. They will focus on solving chronic local issues that cause the greatest risk and harm. Neighbourhood policing will remain visible, accessible and focused on solving the problems that concern local residents.

This is a significant change programme for Surrey Police but extensive preparation work has been carried out in the past few months to ensure that the organisation was as ready as it could be to move smoothly into the new model.

From April, in North Division (which includes Elmbridge) an Area Policing Team has been formed with Officers assigned to a specific borough or district, responsible for responding to all crime which requires an officer to attend. If appropriate, they will then retain those cases from start to finish, giving victims a continuity of care. Neighbourhood matters which require specialist support will be tackled by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Police Community Support Officers. These teams will all be led by a named Borough Inspector giving them the flexibility to move resources where they are most needed. Serious and Complex cases will be dealt with by divisional Criminal Investigation Departments and Safeguarding Investigation Units.

Surrey Police already have many successful local partnerships and will continue to work with them to ensure local residents are helped to find the right organisation to best tackle their issues as well as collectively problem-solving those repeat and chronic local issues known to be of great concern.

'Policing In Your Neighbourhood' also aims to reduce demand by helping residents of Surrey find the right help rather than phoning 999 on initial impulse. The difference between 999 and 101 is being highlighted along with details about what is a policing matter and what is better dealt with by another organisation.

These changes complement other work including alliances with Sussex Police, other police forces in the region, and local authority partners (including the other emergency services). Collaboration has already meant that Joint Enforcement Teams (JET) made up of council officers and police officers (already enjoying great success in Reigate and Banstead and Spelthorne, and about to roll out in Elmbridge) tackle low level nuisance crime together, quickly and efficiently using joint powers which can speed up the solution and cut out the need for court cases. Meanwhile some specialist and back office functions such as firearms, dogs, major crime, HR and ICT are collaborations with Sussex Police delivering greater resilience at reduced costs across both counties. Further work continues in these areas too.

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Elmbridge Police organisational changes

Below is a summary of the changes to Elmbridge police, from a presentation given to a recent Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators' meeting by our Neighbourhood Inspector, Sarah Milligan.

Across Surrey In the last three years there has been a significant increase in reports of rape (153%), sexual offences (122%)* and domestic violence (34%). At the same time, reports of house burglaries have fallen by 24% and reports of theft from cars is down 32%. The "Policing in Your Neighbourhood" project completed a thorough review of this change in demand versus available resources. The result of this, from April 2016, is the introduction of a new policing model – "Policing in Your Neighbourhoods", involving:

- Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) – smaller but dedicated to individual boroughs; will tackle chronic issues that affect local communities; will work with partners to make communities safer; PCSO powers to be reviewed.
- Community Safety Team – support SNT tackling specific problem locations, events and offenders; include ASB unit, IOMU, Youth Intervention, Licensing Casualty Reduction, Quality Assurance and Crime Prevention.
- Area Policing Team (APT) – respond to calls requiring police attendance; will investigate crimes from start to finish; liaise with specialist resources; led and tasked by the Neighbourhood Inspector; will be aligned to specific boroughs and support the SNT.
- Criminal Investigation Department – smaller but more focussed; will deal with serial, serious and complex crimes such as threat to life incidents, unexplained deaths, grievous bodily harm and burglary and robbery series.
- Safeguarding Investigation Unit – larger teams; will investigate serious sexual offences, high risk domestic abuse and child protection and manage on-going missing persons enquiries.
- Local presence in our communities is retained; identifiable local contacts; more focus and people working to protect the vulnerable; a flexible model, built for the future and designed to withstand further saving requirements.

For Elmbridge police, led by the Borough Inspector, this results in the following teams and an overall increase of 50 officers:

Safer Neighbourhood Team: 2 Sergeants, 2 PCs, 11 PCSOs

Area Policing Team: 9 Sergeants, 70 PCs

With diminishing resources over the last year, the police have been unable to service the many panel meetings they historically attended and those that were held were poorly attended. Now, with smaller Safer Neighbourhood Teams, the police need to review how to continue with our communities, vital to understanding community needs and concerns.

One possible alternative to is larger borough based meetings led by the Neighbourhood Inspector – possibly quarterly and run on similar lines to the Surrey Police Authority's 'Police and Community Partnership Group' meetings which were generally well attended.

Technology, including social media, is increasingly used to inform local residents and businesses of incidents of crime, anti-social behaviour, witness appeals and campaign details and will continue to be a crucial link in with the community.

It is anticipated that Street Meets and Meet the Beat sessions will continue to be held to address specific issues affecting specific communities, but any other ideas for better engagement would be welcome.

The inspector gave a massive thank you for the continued efforts of NHW for giving up their time to support both Surrey Police and our local communities. Without their assistance, the local teams would be unable to see a continued reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime or identify those individuals responsible for criminality within our community.

* [Note: largely because of historic cases being reported (post Jimmy Saville etc); rest assured that there are not a lot of new rapists and sex offenders running loose in Elmbridge!]