



Audlem Parish Council

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David Keane
Police & Crime Commissioner
Stockton Heath Police Station
Grappenhall Road
Stockton Heath
Warrington
WA4 2AF

25th September 2017

Dear Mr Keane

Audlem is a rural village in the far south of the county, with county boundaries close to the Staffordshire and Shropshire borders, and it appears sometimes to fall under the radar of Cheshire Policing. Audlem Parish Council is increasingly concerned with the rise of rural crime and the apparent lack of regular patrols in the more isolated areas within the ward. There is confusion regarding the use of PCSOs and rural beat officers and your statement regarding changes within this system. Parish Councillors would like a definition as to the expected area being covered by designated PCSOs and beat officers also the expected response time to emergency calls and non-emergency calls by the police.

It is a concern in most rural areas that the minor roads and main roads through villages and towns seem to be under constant threat from speeding motorists. However, there is also a feeling that the more serious crimes; burglary, drink driving, drugs, and ASB, may not be being given the priority and responses that they require within the rural areas.

As you are aware there are concerns that the role of PCSOs is being limited by the lack of transport and the ability of patrolling officers to undertake complete coverage of the areas (especially the more rural areas). This gives the impression of reducing the policing profile footprint particularly within these rural areas. It is becoming obvious that the increased use of CCTV coverage within towns is now driving criminals into the more rural areas. Rural area surveillance is significantly reduced so making it more favourable for criminal activity, e.g. increase in thefts from farms, villages and more isolated properties.

Residents in rural areas contribute to the police budget but don't seem to be getting as adequate cover or response as the more urban areas. As a prime example, a farmer contacting the police regarding an individual arriving on his farm and aggressively demanding of the farmer, for some obscure reason, access to his sheds. The farmer refused and immediately contacted the police (as a 999 call) giving the registration number of the vehicle (which turned out to be false). There has been no further response from the police after the initial phone call. This, after an incident spike within Cheshire East of farm related crimes. Residents are wondering if crime solving and criminal apprehension are now paramount within police thinking.

Parish Councillors applaud your statement of intent to have an 'on-going conversation with Cheshire residents and our communities' but are somewhat confused by your refusal of our invitation to attend one of our Parish Council meetings to introduce yourself and to have a conversation with regard to local issues and policing.

Audlem Parish Council understands some of the difficulties being experienced by all police authorities by Central Government funding constraints. However, we hope that, when you formulate your changes to Cheshire Constabulary, we and other rural areas are not overlooked and that police priorities are not significantly over targeted on the urban areas to the detriment of rural dwellers.

Councillors were somewhat surprised at your decision to remove your centre of operation from the central Cheshire location of the police headquarters at Winsford to the urban confines of Warrington. This has raised concerns that Cheshire Constabulary, under your stewardship, will be a more urban based policing unit thus reducing the police footprint over the now potentially more vulnerable rural areas. Audlem Parish Councillors anticipate a clear response that this will not be the case and that the concerns raised above will be fully addressed.

Yours sincerely



Kirstin Dixon
Audlem Parish Clerk

FOR & ON BEHALF OF: **AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL**

cc Cllr Rachel Bailey, Leader of Cheshire East Council & Ward Member for Audlem
cc CHALC – for dissemination to all Cheshire Parish Councils

APC.COR.KEANE.9.2017