

ACRA Meeting with Martyn Underhill (MU), Police and Crime Commissioner 10th May 2013

ACRA were represented by: Mike Collard (ACRA Chairman – SAMRA); Steve Roberts (WCRA); and Jim Biggin (ACRA Secretary – WCRA)

In response to questions and comments from the ACRA team:

1. MU outlined his new police and crime plan, stressing his focus upon simple, achievable targets that the general public can relate to and understand. These include a reduction in the number of victims of crime and an increase in measured satisfaction levels with the police. For example, he would like to achieve a 25% conviction rate in 2013
2. MU has identified 10 key areas: putting the victim first; cutting crime and catching more criminals; tackling anti-social behaviour; tackling domestic violence; increased visibility of police officers; reducing re-offending; rural and marine policing; obtaining value for taxpayer's money; listening to people; securing more funding for Dorset
3. MU acknowledged that burglars are moving into car theft. He is waiting for statistics to reveal if this is correlated with the "lights out" policy of DCC but suspects that the economic conditions combined with people's failure to always lock their cars are of greater significance.
4. MU agreed that the 101 system of reporting non-emergency events is not working as well as it could. He has taken steps to increase the staffing level of the call centre.
5. MU outlined his plans to revamp the level and nature of support given to the victims of crime. This will include a Victim's Bureau that will be tasked with keeping victims abreast of developments in the investigation of their case
6. MU has obtained a pilot scheme for Dorset in "early intervention". This involves working with children up to 5 years old to ensure they have basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. This process is designed to reduce the number of future criminals – many of whom resort to crime because they fall behind at school and end up lacking the basic skills needed to survive in any other way
7. MU outlined how the road safety budget has been reduced from £2.5million to £0.5million. He wants to work with local doctors to try to reduce the number of people who are driving whilst medically unfit. He is pursuing the introduction of community speed watch to try to tackle motorists who speed along back streets (especially rat-runs) and on main roads out of peak hours.
8. MU indicated the budgetary constraints that the police are working under that perhaps prevent the latest equipment being used at for example the scenes of serious road traffic accidents. This contributes to the delay and helps to cause gridlock. He indicated that the control of traffic whilst a major accident scene closes a road *is the responsibility of DCC and not the police*. He acknowledged that communication between the police and DCC could be improved. He also felt that both parties could learn lessons from the manner in which The

Met manages such situations without causing anything like the level of chaos that results in parts of Dorset.

9. MU agreed that the current role of PACT was “as clear as mud”

All agreed that the meeting had been of benefit and agreed to meet again to review progress

Our ACRA view was that MU had a tough job on his hands. Just the complex structure of local Government bodies in Dorset would make his life difficult let alone the resistance of the police to change. We indicated that we would help him in any way that we could. To that end it is our immediate intention to raise with DCC their role in failing to manage the traffic gridlock that follows on from a serious road accident.

Jim Biggin

May 2013