

Community Conversations aim to provide residents across South Wales with the opportunity to talk to the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner about their local policing, issues impacting their community and the role of the Commissioner.

On Tuesday 24th November, 2020, the Commissioner held a virtual conversation with residents of the **Vale of Glamorgan**.

Here's a round up of what was discussed.....

“ **I'm concerned about speeding motorists in Cowbridge** ”

A resident discussed their concerns about speeding motorists in an area of Cowbridge, where children walk to school. Members of the community felt there should be speed restriction bumps in place to reduce speeding.

The Commissioner advised that both traffic and parking issues were shared by the local authority and local policing, however, in this case the council would need to address applying parking restrictions in the area of concern.

The local officer agreed to meet with the resident to discuss this matter further.

“ **How are you helping to divert young people from anti-social behaviour?** ”

A resident noted that the Vale had seen successful regeneration projects in parks and skate parks. However, in turn, these had now attracted vandalism, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour. A resident asked what work was being done with the community to help divert young people away from anti-social behaviour.

The Commissioner acknowledged that it was tragic when local authorities put money into improving communal areas, for them to only be misused by individuals.

The Commissioner advised that the role of PCSOs was to work with communities and monitor what was going on. The force and the Commissioner's team also worked closely with Youth Offending Teams.

The Commissioner noted the importance of reporting incidents to the police, as this provided the intelligence to flag where there were ongoing issues and enabled officers to focus on those areas.

The Commissioner advised that the force had developed a youth volunteer scheme, which involved over 200 young people. The scheme aimed to prioritise the recruitment of vulnerable youths or those who may be drawn into criminal activities.

“ **What precautions are the police taking to protect people who are shielding?** ”

A resident asked how the police were taking into consideration the health of individuals who were shielding, when they were responding and interacting with the public.

The Local Policing Inspector advised that officers were sufficiently equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves. Officers were also reminded that when they visited people who were at high risk, that they maintained social distance, and where possible conducted as much as their communication over the phone.

The Inspector also noted that in instances where officers couldn't avoid a 'hands on approach', officers remained cognisant to the dangers of the virus and aimed to minimise risks by adopting police practices.

“ **Are the police observing different crimes since Covid?** ”

A resident asked what the current crime trends were and whether these had changed since Covid.

The Commissioner noted that county lines remained a big threat. The Local Policing Inspector advised that recent changes to the Basic Command Unit structure, had allowed extra resources to assist with tackling county lines and drugs and substance misuse in the local area.

The Commissioner noted that the level of safety and relative success of arrest and prosecution in South Wales was down to good policing, mapping where things were happening, and good partnership working.



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“ It’s important that the police recognise and understand the impact that Covid is having on people’s mental health ”

A resident noted the impact of lockdown on people’s mental health, and that it was imperative that people were able to reach out to the police and other emergency services.

The resident felt it was important that the police were compassionate in responding to incidents, as people’s vulnerability was not always apparent at the time of initial engagement.

The Commissioner acknowledged the impact of Covid on people’s mental health. He noted that the force had a mental health triage service in the Public Service Centre, which enabled officers to consult with mental health professionals about the appropriate services and pathways for individuals, depending on the type and urgency of the response.

“ Are there crime reporting apps available? ”

A resident queried whether there were crime reporting apps in use or being considered, that the public could use to report crimes to the police.

The Local Policing Inspector advised that there were currently no crime reporting applications at present. South Wales Police had previously trialed an online ‘track my crime’ for members of the public to use, however, uptake was poor. It was clear from this trial, that people wanted face-to-face contact.

The Local Policing Inspector advised that the force continued to explore and develop systems and apps, however, at present, it wasn’t something the force had in place.

“ Some people are unable to travel far to access domestic abuse support services ”

A resident flagged their concerns in relation to people affected by domestic abuse, and the fact that some people were unable to travel very far due to being financially controlled or having their movements controlled.

The Commissioner noted that he was concerned that domestic violence and abuse would increase as a result of lockdown. Therefore, he and the Chief Constable increased messaging to provide reassurance to the public that the police continued to respond to people who were experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

The Commissioner also noted that following a request to Welsh Government, it was now clear in the regulations that people could leave their house if they were concerned about their safety.

The Commissioner advised that violence against women and girls remained one of his main priorities, and his team had led a lot of innovative work in partnership with voluntary organisations, including the delivery of the DRIVE programme, which was aimed at tackling perpetrators

“ What support can you offer to Neighbourhood Watch? ”

A resident noted that Neighbourhood watch was very active in the Vale of Glamorgan and asked how the scheme could be supported by the Commissioner/South Wales Police.

The Commissioner noted that money from police funds supported local community safety partnerships, who had the relationships with local Neighbourhood Watch associations.



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