

Aldenham Parish Council



First Floor, The Radlett Centre
1 Aldenham Avenue
RADLETT
WD7 8HL

Tel: 01923 856433

E-mail: manager@aldenham-pc.gov.uk
www.aldenham-pc.gov.uk

Cllr C Gray
Portfolio Holder Communities, Neighbourhoods Enforcement, Economic Development and Transformation.
Hertsmere Borough Council
Civic Offices
Elstree Way
Borehamwood
WD6 1WA

9 August 2023

Dear Cllr. Gray,

Re: Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) Funding

I am writing on behalf of Aldenham Parish Council (APC) regarding the above, which was discussed by the Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC) Cabinet at its meeting on 12 July 2023.

APC have read the paper that preceded the discussion at Cabinet and are disappointed with the recommendation in the report to remove funding of the PCSOs in Hertsmere, and to direct this funding towards the employment of extra enforcement officers for HBC.

The report does not seem to consider the value of PCSOs, especially in the rural parts of the borough such as the parish of Aldenham. APC sees great value in the local Safer Neighbourhood Team, which includes two PCSOs, and as such provides them with office and storage space from which they can work locally in its depot building at Phillimore Recreation Ground.

These local PCSOs provide an important resource and go above and beyond their enforcement role by doing the following:

- Provide a visible police presence in the community, especially given the fact they are either walking or on their electric bikes. This makes them very approachable.
- Liaise with the local farmers, including talks at 'Farm Watch', which highlight issues such as fly tipping, theft of vehicles and animals.
- Run the mini police, an innovative police engagement programme aimed at 8-11 year olds, in the primary schools.
- Give assembly talks at all the local schools on subjects chosen by the Headteacher. These are so good that they are invited back time and time again. We question whether this would be the case for an enforcement officer.
- Provide support for local events, where they will not only be visible but often will run their own stall with information for the public as well as fun activities. This further promotes good relations within the community.

As well as a loss of the above additional duties, APC are not convinced that enforcement officers will provide the same sort of support for the local community. A particular area of concern are the hours of operation, as currently the PCSO's shift pattern covers from 7:30am up to 10:00pm every day. APC requests clarification on whether enforcement officers would provide the same level of coverage, and how HBC plans to deal with any shortfall. Similarly, PCSOs have recognised powers, backed up by the Police. APC therefore requests clarification on what powers these enforcement officers will have in comparison to PCSOs, and how HBC will address any shortfall in dealing with issues outside of the enforcement officer's remit.

Given that the money allocated to PCSOs funds only 50% of their wages, APC would like clarification on whether numbers will be affected, or whether HBC will pledge further funding to ensure staffing remains at current levels. Furthermore, will enforcement officers be assigned to communities to build links in the same way as PCSOs or will all enforcement officers be stationed in Elstree? We would be interested to know who will be responsible for training the new enforcement officers.

HBC claims that Herts Constabulary receives enough money and it is up to them to fund PCSOs, but we question whether this would happen. We therefore ask that HBC, as part of the current review, ask Herts Constabulary what the effect on the provision of PCSOs in Hertsmere will be if HBC withdraw funding.

In conclusion, APC questions whether these enforcement officers will be value for money, provide the same level of service, and be integral parts of the community in a way that is equal to the current PCSOs and how this loss of funding can actually benefit the community.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely



Cllr H Jones
Chairman Aldenham Parish Council

CC – Aldenham Borough Councillors.