

PLR Conference 2025 – Questions and Answers

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Questions	Answers
With the publication of the PFCC priorities ‘Safe and Sound’ what assurances can you give us about policing levels in North Northants LPA? For context there have been a number of instances (such as unlicensed raves, vandalism and thefts) where there has been a woeful response by the police leaving parishioners fearful about their property and feeling unsafe in their own homes - when writing to the police through FOI we get no information to be able to have a decent challenging conversation with you about police numbers hiding behind exemptions that people could work out our policing resources - however through pitiful responses to such incidents the perpetrators would have already worked that out!	DS: We recommend using Northamptonshire Talking rather than submitting FOI requests – through Northamptonshire Talking you can enter into a conversation with the Police and are likely to get an accurate answer, faster. Northants Police are in a better position than other forces, but it does not mean we’re where we need to be – we do not get fair funding. The budget for Neighbourhood Police Teams has doubled recently, but we’re still only working with 1.9 officers per 1000 heads; and the estimate of what we need is 2.8. IB: We have 3000 officers and staff together and are recruiting – with a focus on prioritising and looking at demands. The demands are complex, and the County keeps growing, which puts more demand onto policing. We’re now answering 999 calls in 8 seconds, 101 call answering times are getting better and we’re growing Neighbourhood Policing Teams.
Northamptonshire Police aims to become the safest county in the UK. What are the key milestones you’ve set to achieve this vision, and how will parish councils be involved in that journey?	IB: Attending conferences and working with PLRs is helping with this. The safety of Northamptonshire is not about policing alone – we need to focus on prioritising and prevention which involves working with partners. We’d use metrics and statistics – as well as independent inspections – to monitor the work we’re achieving. DS and I want to continue talking to the public about how they’re feeling – an example of this is our working with partners around violence. We want people to feel safe in the County – not

	experiencing drug users/ASB in the town, wanting rural areas to see more police in the area, and for shop owners to feel safe and enjoy their work. It's not an exact science but an aspirational vision. DS: We're working hard to meet people in the community and after each engagement they feel better as they've received the information they need. An example is the threat of public disorder last summer – it was felt by many as not likely to happen in Northamptonshire as partners work well together, but the Police and OFPCC still ran a campaign to meet and reassure the organisations involved which helped grow the level of trust through these meetings. We need people in the County to help us, and if they feel unsafe they can't – so we're empowering them.
How do you plan to rebuild public trust in the police following recent challenges, and what role does community engagement play in that?	IB: Community engagement is huge. We've made mistakes and withdrawn from some communities – some things have been undertaken more like a private business than a public service. We need to be more present and are growing the number of officers we have. We want to work constructively and listen to feedback. The way we communicate is important and we're working on having this engagement with you. Vetting has improved and standards are helping to rebuild trust and confidence. AT: Northamptonshire Police has led the way with the Vetting Review nationally and are being seen to change national processes around vetting – everything is being rechecked with high ranking staff members. We offer no apologies for having a large number of officers who are suspended currently – they will be reviewed and any misconducted will be responded to appropriately. We want people with the right values in our roles. IB: Trust and confidence is growing in the Police – recent survey shows approx. 6% increase on these and we aim to continue building on this.

We have invested in speed cameras throughout the county, yet I believe these are not being used – why and how can we get them back on to improve road safety?	IB: All the static cameras in the County are turned off – they are out of date and don't work. We have good Road Policing Teams and mobile camera vans. IB and DS have spoken about the static cameras – the issue is the whole infrastructure would need replacing; as it's not as simple as just replacing the cameras. This is on the list and continues to be reviewed. In the interim, please engage with Speed Watch. DS: It is a high priority for us – as many deaths occur. We have relaunched the Road Safety Partnership to try and address the issues. Some issues are Police related, but some come under highways (for instance, the poor road states) so we need a partnership approach to this.
Anti-social behaviour is a recurring concern in many Northamptonshire parishes. How will the new policing plan address persistent local issues and what targeted strategies are being used to address this at the local level?	DS: Why are people behaving badly in their own locality? For young people, it can be due to boredom and needs not being met. We are now paying the price of the Community Centres being closed years ago. We need to invest in young people and create safe spaces for them. I am going to work with LAPS to focus on this and both Unitary Authorities have youth provisions now. Some ASB is caused by adults and we need to understand why and how – if we don't know what's driving it, we don't know the solution. For some it's drug and alcohol abuse – so working with agencies to try and help people out of their addictions. IB: It is a key priority for us. For repeat ASB, we make sure we have the most appropriate response to solve and deal with it. It's not always easy, but it is a main priority. DS: We have teams focusing on this: the Prevention Team works with communities, the Youth Team works with groups of young people, and the Community Justice Team works restoratively and is where Police can refer people to the Team and the response focuses on working in the community.

How is Northamptonshire Police working to recruit and retain officers who understand and reflect the communities they serve, especially in rural and underrepresented areas?	DS: IB and I are working together (through round tables and walkabouts to meet community organisations) to highlight opportunities – as we don't want people to not feel invited and want them to join. IB: We're reviewing recruitment and positive action work – we go into communities to talk to them about joining. Currently the split is approx. 50% men and 50% women in officers – we want to continue to grow number of females joining. The numbers are not as high for ethnic minority figures and we're working on this. The Accelerated Detective Programme is helping with this – there are approx. 140 officers on the scheme and we have seen a real difference in terms of people joining: gender, age and ethnicities. We're looking at different pathways and how to support people joining. Retention is also key – making sure officers have the right training, development, mentoring. We have heavily invested in wellbeing and employee support programmes.
Why are West Northants Highways so dead set against effective traffic calming manoeuvres (chicanes etc)?	DS: Highways have recently been joining planning meetings – as it shouldn't be about remediation, but they should be involved from the planning stage. Restoring lighting across the county would be helpful, cutting back bushes, restoring signs – the Road Safety Strategic Group are looking at this. We need to be clear what is a policing issue and what is an environment issue.
What mechanisms are in place to ensure transparency and accountability within Northamptonshire Police?	DS: IB does vlogs, I have had 6 press interviews today and I publish a regular newsletter. Annual reports are also published – making the information as accessible and understandable as possible. IB: The Police are operationally independent, but DS holds us to account for the public. We have a constructive relationship working on initiatives. There are also formal accountability structures where I am held account – we have a full inspection of all policing services every two years.

What steps are being taken to ensure a visible and consistent police presence in rural and semi-rural parishes like ours? Given the resource constraints in policing, how are rural areas being prioritised to ensure fair allocation of officers and support?	IB: We know we cut Neighbourhood Policing Team numbers – we’ve increased them and continue to. Everyone should have access to knowing who they contact. We have a specific Rural Crime Team who works – DS and I recently attended a rural crime roundtable. We have a big county with finite resources, and attending round tables is a part of the engagement and getting feedback. From the last roundtable, feedback said 101 call were taking too long to answer and were not responsive enough – I am reviewing this and instant messaging systems; we’ve just got to get this right. DS: Citizens in policing – DS has been bowled over by the number of volunteers we have.
What data or reporting can be shared with parish councils to help us understand crime trends and policing outcomes locally?	DS: We are data rich and welcome sharing the data – people have a right to know what’s going on in their community and much of this is published. IB: You should be able to contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Team to ask for this information. DW: Click app. App is being developed for PCSOs to quickly draw together crime trends and data for the PLRs – it is due to come online shortly.
Can you share examples of successful early intervention strategies already in place in Northamptonshire that we might replicate locally?	DS: The Youth Team, the Community Justice Team. IB: We do early intervention work and have a MASH at the hub in Brackmills ensuring we’re doing early intervention to try and prevent harm – risk is identified quickly so we can intervene. DM: PLRs/Parish Councils are at the heart of the early intervention – helping the police with this. The police and the public and vice versa.

Are there any community-based crime prevention initiatives that parish councils can help promote or participate in?	DS: They're working on the "Crime Prevention In A Box" scheme – where a pack will be distributed to PLRs/PCs with information they need to contact relevant organisations. They get reports in the rural areas for issues relating to four-wheelers (for example), but not for domestic violence – it must be occurring, so there is a worry about under-reporting.
What role can parish councils play in shaping local policing priorities and supporting community safety initiatives?	DS: They already have played a large part. The Big Conversation were consulted about what their experience of policing was and what they wanted – the Safe and Sound Plan is based on these conversations and the conversations will continue. IB: We're doing more and more surveys with the public for feedback. Every 6 months on Northamptonshire Talking we do the Locally Identified Priorities (LIPs) Survey – responding to this is key. Crime statistics can guide us, but they're a snapshot and are unreliable – we need to know what is going on for you.

Meeting Chat: Questions and Answers

Ivan Balhatchet (IB); Chief Constable, Northants Police

Danielle Stone (DS); Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner, OPFCC

Ash Tuckley (AT); Deputy Chief Constable, Northants Police

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Danny Moody (DM); CEO, Northants CALC

Questions	Answers
What kind of youth initiatives are you currently working on to reduce youth anti-social behaviour and knife crime?	IB: Lots - two I will highlight Violence/Youth Reduction Unit and Child Exploitation Hub
How much cooperation do we have with our surrounding police services and is there likelihood of specialist service mergers?	AT: We have regional collaborations for things like major crime and forensics. Constantly reviewed to make sure best value for money. IB: We are in a regional collaboration with East Midlands forces for serious and organised crime. Need to always ensure what is best for our county first though.
How can we enforce HGV restrictions which are constantly being ignored too?	AT: I think one of the sessions is road safety so will take that away. JB: We are looking at 'safe systems' as a model for road safety - info on this link - The Safe System and road safety Brake DW: Enforcement of HGV weight restrictions falls to our Neighbourhood and Roads Policing Teams. The challenge is the vehicles have to be found driving in the restricted areas to allow enforcement measures to be taken which can be challenging with the competing demands placed on the teams. However,

	where specific problems are identified action will be taken. We also have joint action groups with the local authorities and highways to look at more preventative options instead of just dealing with offence.
Do you still run the Northamptonshire Emergency Service Cadets? How many kids between 13-18 years old are accepted?	IB: Yes - and numbers are growing all the time. I was with 70+ the other week in Wellingborough. Please check on the website .
Contact with our PCSO has been brilliant however we have no contact with the Rural Team despite being a rural area. I understand this is a separate team but have tried to make contact but not received any contact to date. Can someone nudge them please ??	DW: I've seen the email contact that's come through to the team. I'll chase the response to ensure they get back to you promptly. This was completed 18/06. DW: I'll ask for Abi Butler to share the Rural Crime Teams contact details with all PLRs over the next couple of days.
How do you get an invitee to the Round Table please?	OPFCC send out invites. The Commissioner's team work with NCALC and directly with parishes to offer opportunities and of course, hold our regular 6-weekly meetings where all PLRs are welcome to attend. We also have a dedicated email query address for all elected representatives (which includes PLRs) which is electedreps@northantspfcc.gov.uk
How can we find more about the Citizen Volunteers? It sounds very useful.	AB: The PLR service guide contains all the information about citizens in policing and how you can get involved. You can access more information on the website Volunteering opportunities Northamptonshire Police .
I think that a 'contract' of expectations would be useful to help the Local Teams and PLRs work more effectively together.	AB: We have a contact agreement that sets out contact expectations between PCSOs and PLRs. This will be shared with PLRs after this meeting.
My understanding is that data from speed camera vans cannot be shared with parish councils. Given new transparency can the numbers/speeds be shared please? and also what can be done about everyone	AB: Passed on to the safer roads team for discussion 19/06 Safer Roads team: PLRs can get this information themselves as we publish our data monthly under FOI on www.northantspas.com which can then be filtered to show sites you are interested in. We have maximised our efforts

flashing oncoming vehicles to warn them about speed vans?	within the current scope regarding flashing oncoming vehicles. However, we still detect people even with the flashing.
Getting Highways around the table for planning new safe highways is all very well but what about the hundreds of miles of roads already built that are almost racing tracks? Do Highways even have an inkling of 'Vision Zero' ? They are very resistant to effective traffic calming measures because - wait for it - they slow traffic down! Waiting until people get killed or seriously injured might trigger action but we don't have many volunteers - hindsight galore - but no foresight or indeed insight.	JB: Very interested in vision zero and we have been pressing partners to adopt the approach.
Can you ask those posting on Northamptonshire Talking to remember to click the box 'suitable for sharing' when they post, otherwise no-one who receives the bulletin can share the item with parishioners on other platforms? The recent one on motorbike nuisance and operation fragment (if I recall correctly) was great stuff but only I have read it because I couldn't upload it to WhatsApp. I can name names if you like!!	AB: We had an update to the system and this issue has been solved. The suitable for sharing button is automatically ticked with every message unless an officer manually unticks it
With domestic abuse increasing in both genders, is there a programme for Men being abused. As funding seems to be limited, they tend to experience more emotional and psychological abuse.	AB: The PLR service guide has a really useful list of services you can access relating to DV, sexual abuse and others. Please feel free to share this with your councils and residents. DS: Yes. Do contact NDAS or Victim support.
Crime reporting on your website is difficult to interpret and locate where it happened. Also, it would be very	AB: Thanks for your feedback, I will pass this on for discussion with the team. We try and publish good news stories and small wins on

helpful to have feedback on what has been solved. Good PR for the Police and reassuring for the public. In response to above: Totally agree - Crime Map only shows a month at a time and can only choose one type of crime at a time, so cannot see trends or history in our area without investing a lot of time and effort.	Northamptonshire Talking. We know we can share more about all the good work your local teams are doing and are in the process of improving this.
Can we discuss e-scooters offline?	AB: PLRs will receive a copy of the e-scooter guidance flyer to share with residents. Further discussion with relevant teams.
What if you can't make up the numbers you mention we have 167 people in our 2 villages..... but have a major road through them..... Cases where there are fewer than 10 volunteers can be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the Safer Roads Team when you submit the application	AB: This will be passed on to the safer roads team.
Heard CCTV mentioned!!.. can someone share some info off line....? thanks	PLR: Police to give guidance sheets to PLRs on best practice on having CCTV schemes or installations.
Op Snap?	NDL: It's an Operation that allows members of the public to report driving offences in the Northamptonshire area by filling out a form and uploading video evidence.
Can the op snap data be shared in general please. I'm curious. Thanks Does this site include % convictions vs volume of data submitted?	AB: You can access Op snap data on Northants Pas website PAS AB: It will show you offences by month and the course of action/if they were prosecuted. It will also show you monthly dash cam submissions from OP snap and the action
Danny, can we raise the planning highways issue with North Northamptonshire Council too?	DM: Yes – this will be taken forward and discussed with North Northamptonshire Council.