

Cllr Pam Barrett
Chair, Buckfastleigh Town Council
Town Hall
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Our Ref: PCC_3316_BARRETT

4 January 2018

By E-mail: clerk@buckfastleigh.gov.uk

Dear Councillor Barrett

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your letter to Insp Tomlinson regarding your concerns on policing matters in Buckfastleigh.

I too hope that PC Young will make a full recovery and I wish him well. I understand your disappointment at PC Young's absence but this does not inherently make Buckfastleigh a dangerous place. The crime figures for the area Buckfastleigh and Ashburton area are similar to the Force-wide average with a reduction over the last twelve months in burglary and vehicle offences.

I will leave Insp Tomlinson to respond to your questions on staffing levels but budget changes have not deprived Buckfastleigh of a police officer. The number of police officers in the Force remains unchanged. The deployment of staff remains a matter of operational discretion for the Chief Constable.

I remain fully committed to Neighbourhood Policing and fully recognise it as pivotal in keeping our communities safe. In publishing my Police and Crime Plan earlier this year, I announced an additional £24million of investment available to the Chief Constable over the next four years. The Chief Constable has chosen to reshape the police workforce to ensure it is able to meet the demands placed on the service and conduct a wide ranging review of neighbourhood policing. This work is well underway and will continue into the first quarter of 2018.

You make a number of references in your letter to Sir Tom Winsor's State of Policing report. This important document sets out the Chief HMIC's annual statutory report to Parliament on the aggregated policing position in England and Wales. However it does

not comment on local policing issues which are instead covered through individual Police Force inspections. In its two most recent inspections, Devon and Cornwall has been rated 'good' in the extent to which the force is efficient and legitimate at keeping people safe and reducing crime.

Devon and Cornwall has the 5th lowest crime rate in England and Wales and is ranked first out of the 42 police forces in England and Wales when the local public are asked how good a job the police are doing in the area.

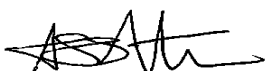
Whilst this is good news, I do recognise that the demands on the Force are rising and we face additional pressures in the years ahead. I take every opportunity to make the case for fair funding for Devon and Cornwall. I recently met with many of our Devon and Cornwall MPs and in addition I held one-to-one discussions with your MP, Mel Stride.

We are facing pressures from age old crimes that have morphed themselves into modern day problems such as slavery, fraud, child exploitation and terrorism. The Chief Constable's workforce review will result in some of our resources being redirected towards tackling these and other threats. Neighbourhood policing is both very important to keeping communities safe and is also highly valued by local people so I will closely monitor how the police progress with these changes.

In closing, I would like to draw your attention to the Councillor Advocate scheme that my office is establishing. The Scheme aims to foster closer working relationships between this office, local police and councillors through an agreed contact route. It is intended to improve information flows in all three directions, supporting early resolution of issues and wider dissemination (through the Councillor network) of key messages and information. The Scheme is voluntary but will be supported by the OPCC who will seek to recruit a network of Advocates across the peninsula. The Scheme is not intended to work in isolation – it will link into the wider Connectivity Framework being developed by the Chief Constable and to the Commissioner's Community Link Officer Scheme.

Should you wish to nominate a councillor to join the scheme or require further information, please contact Vicky Booty in my team who will be happy to assist. vicky.booty@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk .

Yours sincerely



Alison Hernandez
Police and Crime Commissioner

