

STATION ENQUIRY OFFICE RATIONALISATION – FEEDBACK FROM AND VIA POLICE & CRIME PANEL MEMBERS (Summarised)

Area/ Station referred to	Comments
Generally re Cornwall	“On the Front Line & Visible to the public” would mean bringing back ‘Walking the Beat’ which was a far better deterrent. Numerous accounts of Police failure to answer the current 101 system. Would like to see this improved prior to introducing any additional communicational changes.
St Ives	St Ives lost its public enquiry desk a couple of years ago. It has caused some inconvenience, but not significantly. The alternative has been to use the 101 number, which does not operate very well at times. Suggest more resources are put in to this service if the proposed closures take place. Suggest police enquiry office function incorporated into “One Stop Shops”. Police may need to fund this/make contribution, plus training etc, but could work very well.
Liskeard	Concerns expressed at the Liskeard ‘Have Your Say’ Panel that Liskeard will be closing and concerned that the police officer on the front desk had many other duties they undertook between members of the public arriving, which would still need to be done. This potential saving may be less damaging than some others.
Generally re Cornwall	Pressure being put on police services as a result of reduced budgets recognised, and accept that reducing the number of manned Police Stations is probably a cost-effective measure, even if re-investing savings in front-line services is ingenuous. What it really means is that the cuts to these will be slightly reduced. With modern communications media, the majority of the population may have little need to visit a police station other than to present documents when requested. However, those without access to mobile phones, computers/internet etc. include a disproportionate number of the most vulnerable in our society. For them to travel to the few remaining stations during the limited opening hours could be difficult and expensive. Should this proposal come to fruition, it is requested that a system be set up, and well publicised, providing an alternative form of access. For example, where an individual has real difficulty reaching a police station, documents could perhaps be processed by using PCSO s as intermediaries, calling on individuals at their homes. Apart from being of practical help, it would help to reinforce the position of such officers in the community.
Bude	In Bude there is considerable disquiet about this move. We can see that there is scope for a reduction in hours, especially in the winter months, but the complete removal of the service makes contact with officers much more difficult. Bude Stratton Town Council have written with their objections. Little confidence using the online and telephone services so if this goes ahead these services will need considerable review and enhancement. In our own station the community run a volunteer based CCTV system and the desk officers help with downloading images when required. Without them downloading will be much more cumbersome and will lead to delays. The only alternative is to train frontline officers to perform the task. This is an exercise that will give a short term saving but careful analysis of the overall cost would not show much real saving.
Generally re Cornwall	Before considering closing down these front offices, the alternatives need to be working right. Concern that the 101 service is failing. So get that (and other alternatives) right and then there might be some safety in making the closure move. £750k is a lot of money, but look at the amount that Mr Hogg is wasting on himself and it starts to come very close. His office costs - which the Home Secretary promised would be less than the old police authority - are actually over £300k more. He is spending more on consultants than the PA, wasting money demanding

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	that the taxpayer pay for his overnight accommodation when he could take up the free lodgings available and spending money on lip balm, post-it notes and other gimmicks with his name on them. Cut the waste - Keep the front counters.
Newquay/ Falmouth/ Bude/ Penzance/ Bodmin	As well as Newquay, both Falmouth and Bude should also have summer opening hours. Bude has a large number of visitors during the same summer period. Unless there has been a big change over the years. Similar consideration should also be given to Penzance for summer. In the case of Launceston; bearing in mind how many officers there are based at the Launceston station and custody suite, it is unbelievable that there will no front office open to the public during the daytime. It is quoted by the PCC and supported by the Chief Constable that the closure of these front offices will make an annual saving of £750,000 which will go towards 'front line policing'. Question; When was the last time you saw any improvement in front line policing, and this is only a term used to justify what they are doing. The only area of policing these days worthy of praise is at major incidents such as serious road accidents and the like. Near Bodmin Police Station when an accident occurs on the A30, police turnout and speed of attendance is most admirable. But that of course is the Traffic Department, not the local law. But ring Bodmin and report boy racers on a nearby business park, on many occasions, and the earliest attendance to date has been fifteen minutes. That business park is only 800 yards from the Bodmin Police Station!!! Concern that new ways in which Police engage more with the public face to face sounds good, but unlikely to happen. With this continual retreating from the public gaze, concern whether we shall see any police officers at all one day other than at major incidents! One things for sure – the PCC' office will still be there!!
Penzance	A more visible on the beat policing strategy is needed as a deterrent. Given the area it covers, Penzance police station should be open 24 hours a day. It's all gone mad. There is no real preventative police work in the community, because the budgets are so low they can really only react to situations. Concern 101 is a complete waste time and often requires being 'on hold' for over 20 mins and callers 'giving up'. Is it true that the 101 is a shared call centre not dedicated to just this number?
Looe/ Liskeard	In Looe the numbers of visible police on the beat has decreased and in the near future they want to share the sergeant with Liskeard, leaving just one constable and a PCSO for the town. This is being done without consultation of the local members, town council and residents. My fears are that when our only PC makes an arrest and takes the offending to custody in Launceston the town is left without cover. The front desk in the local police station went a few years ago and the visible face of the police has gone.
Newquay	Newquay is a little different as they operate a restricted leave scheme in the summer months to offset influx in population. They have also had dedicated officers working night shifts who get to know the night time economy in detail. That said staff cuts are even impacting on these initiatives.
Looe/ Liskeard	At the recent Morval coach crash and the Widegates incident involving a missing armed man, locals commented positively about the speed and numbers of police and medics deployed. I know some came directly from Looe and Liskeard stations. There is a concern that this rationalisation may result in less officers locally based. My concern is the lack of communication between residents and the police. Many elderly and vulnerable people, with no access to phones, prefer to discuss issues face to face. If 101 worked, or email or other modern methods of communication received instant responses, I would accept the need to modernise. I live in a low crime area, but this will change if the police are never seen and cannot be contacted.
Saltash	I do not think, on what I see, the police service is failing the residents of this county. It may not be so evident because of government cuts and yes some may wish to see PCs rather than PCSO's but generally I think it still serves the public as well as its funding allows. I think the Saltash area of the force is efficient and caring. The station front desk has gone and I don't like that, and the 101 service is a national disgrace and

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	<p>shame but our local police are good, I think. The two big failings for me are the PCC office which I think has become remote, and seems dedicated to its own publicity, presumably to ensure re- election and which has lost the force respect, and secondly as mentioned the 101 service.</p>
Saltash	<p>Is it any wonder that our Police service is suffering? The office of the PCC is costing us £1.95 million per year, £350,000 more than the previous Police Authority, though that the former Police Authority was only around £900,000 per annum. The PCC is costing us about one million more each year! £7,000 of public money was spent on lip balm, fridge magnets and sweets in order to promote the office of the PCC! Are we not the ones footing this bill for the PCC? Should we not be involved in decision making that costs us money that we are struggling to find? As Cornwall Councillors we are struggling to make ends meet on greatly and continuing budget reductions. Why do we not have a greater say in what the office of the PCC is doing with our money? The term “protecting our front line services” is regularly heard. Although not directly under our control, the police service certainly comes into that group. The bottom line is – our police service is badly failing the public of this county. How can they say that shutting the front offices can save them £750,000 when they are throwing far more than that away in other areas? As a council we should have a stronger say in where our police service is failing the residents of this county, especially when we are footing the bill! In no way am I criticising police officers or the Chief Constable. They are working within the restraints given to them. Within the force, from the officers I have spoken with, they have nothing but praise for the Chief Constable. BUT ask them about the PCC! Perhaps Saltash do not have the continuing problems of the rest of the county, but that may be because they are in close proximity to Plymouth and just the width of the Tamar separates them from a large number of backup numbers. It is understood that on many occasions officers have crossed the bridge to attend incidents when Saltash officers were stretched. The public don't know where the officers have come from.</p> <p>Other members concerned that their towns and villages are noticeably short of police presence and cover, and the reaction times to attending issues are very poor, other than major incidents. However in Looe or Liskeard, it is somewhat different.</p> <p>Concern re the remoteness of the PCC and his office from the public, his continual promotion of his office and position, and most importantly his failure to deliver! How long do we sit back and allow the PCC to continue down his present course of rising costs of his office and a continual reduction in the police service in the county? If we don't act in the interest of the residents of Cornwall, then who will?</p>
Launceston	<p>It is understood there may be a plan to close the custody centre at Launceston as an option but no consultation has taken place. When asked, OPCC unaware. Concern that if Launceston police station goes there will be a huge rural area with no presence and if an arrest is made then there will be no-one available at night when the 2 police travel to Plymouth or Newquay custody. Launceston is positioned with direct access to the A30 dual carriageway. It has the best and most modern custody suite in the 2 counties and to see that closed would be a huge loss and would create a feeling of insecurity in the populace and the whole of east Cornwall. Losing the front desk in a few weeks' time is yet another nail in the coffin of a strong police presence in the town and serving the rural area. Great concern this era of cuts to services is having an undermining effect on good law abiding people. Police should attend a local meeting, make a statement and/or give an explanation in person.</p>

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	<p>Cornwall Councillors in the Launceston area have been quite vocal recently about future service reductions from Launceston Police Station. All councillors are aware of the 'front desk' closures but more recently there have been rumours about a possible complete closure or the closure of the custody suite.</p>
<p>Various Cornwall areas</p>	<p>Town and Rural council members view that compared to towns, rural areas generally do have a serious lack of police contact or visibility. There appears to be no pattern to the coverage or community involvement. In Liskeard they have virtually no issues on policing, yet only a short distance away in Looe there is a greatly reduced police presence in the town, they receive only written reports at council meetings, and there are great concerns on the issue.</p> <p>Below some of the points highlighted by members in their emails and calls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police attendance at various parish monthly and 'Have Your Say' type meetings across Cornwall, along with crime reports, is sporadic/non-existent. Some parish police surgeries have recently either dropped off in number or ended, many have never had surgeries. • Local Neighbourhood Watch Committees have ended due to the lack of attendance from local PCSO's. • A shortage of police vehicles for PCSO's – one area the PCSO even using his own car on occasions to cover an area 'the size of Alaska'. One main police station having just one car for four PCSO's all of course covering different areas. • Many PCSO's covering sometimes up to nine or ten parishes and expected to give them equal cover. • Increase in petty crime in parishes which is either going unreported due to the poor 101 system, or if reported there appears a 'lack of interest' from the police. • Lack of, or long delays, in response to any issues or concerns raised. • Never able to directly contact a local police officer in authority. • What are the parishes getting for their rising precepts? • When one Councillor made a formal complaint about the lack of police presence in his parishes he was told it was a low crime area so did not need policing. • Carne Brea have many criticisms and serious concerns on the policing of the area. • Six parishes in the Boyton ward never see a police officer. <p>There should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The same policing policy for all areas of the county – not relying solely on the local senior police officers policy , • Monthly 'Have Your Say' meetings in each major town in the county, inviting representatives of the town and neighbouring parishes to attend. This would create a far closer working relationship between the police and publicly elected officials. • A far better system of communication in place ensuring more prompt responses on any issues. • PCSO's patrolling their own areas instead of being seconded to town issues, except in exceptional cases. • Police more regularly being seen by the public, getting out of their cars occasionally and walking around. <p>Since the change in policing procedures introduced in the 1970's, many large villages have seen the disappearance of eg a local police officer</p>

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	<p>living in the village, Village posts office & shop, Bus services to and from the nearest town (especially in areas of North Cornwall). is it any wonder that the residents are feeling neglected, vulnerable and that they are forgotten? ‘Exactly what are we getting in exchange for the continual annual rising costs involved towards the running of the police force and the office of the PCC?’</p>
Cornwall	<p>For some considerable time one of the main issues In many parishes/parish and town councils in Cornwall has been the greatly reduced police presence or visibility in rural areas, to the non-existent presence. Each and every parish is suffering in one way or another from the lack of policing, and some councillors are highly critical of the methods at present being used. The PCC has been sent a five-page report on the concerns and issues raised by the large number of Cornwall councillors. The report was highly critical of the policing, or shall we say, lack of policing of rural areas, as well as certain towns, and even listed a case from a Cornwall councillor, when in February, 2013, after three emails and one telephone call with the PA assuring a reply within one week, a reply has still not been received. Eighteen months overdue! At the least a complete lack of respect towards an elected councillor!</p> <p>A couple of the many examples included in the report;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One PCSO has nine parishes to cover, and is rarely if ever seen in any one of the nine! • The four PCSO’s in one station who only have one car to share between them! • The PCSO covering four of Cornwall’s largest villages, more the size of towns, who is forced on occasions to use his own private car on duty! <p>If a copy of the report is required I will willingly forward one, but the report is written by myself to the PCC based on the facts received from a large number of Cornwall councillors. I await with interest his reply.</p>
South Hams/ Totnes	<p>The lead officer for the Community Safety Partnership was fully informed and indeed corresponded with the Police to establish whether there were any figures in relation to the Totnes Police Station. There were none and there was a conclusion drawn that the proposals were an inevitable way forward due to tight resources. There were no responses from the Totnes members. The only response received was from a member from Stokenham, a former Police Officer, who accepted the inevitability.</p>
Budleigh Ward	<p>People contact the police in many ways. In cases of urgency 999 and 101 for routine/enquiries. Many police officers and PCSOs hold regular well-publicised surgeries which are sometimes held jointly with town, district and county councillors, but attendance is poor. One concern is in respect of the requirement to report non-stop traffic accidents which used to mean reporting as soon as practicable or in any event within 24 hours at a police station - this could be a problem but the law may well have changed. Not sure if those on bail may have to travel further to comply with a reporting condition. If closing underused police stations, and by implication under-employed police staff, allows for more deployment on the street I welcome it. People may have to travel further to get to a police station - but in reality how often do they actually want to go there. The research seems to clearly support the proposal. Proposal mentioned at the town council meeting following the last PCP, but no concerns raised.</p>

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Tavistock	<p>It does not really affect any of my area as we have already had most of them “closed” which is what they are in all practical terms. There is no doubt that in a small town like Tavistock the “closure” is bitterly resented by the public including the many visitors/ tourists that we get, but suspect any objection will be fruitless. One of the primary reasons that our footfall fell was that over a period of time, starting with the withdrawal of the civilian clerk, the hours of opening were successively reduced until the facility was not actually open when people wanted to use it so not unsurprisingly the footfall fell and closure was justifiable on the lack of use grounds. In the days of experienced civilian clerks many of whom were retired police officers most things got sorted without the need to even involve a warranted officer thus saving enormous sums of money by not tying up officers time on trivia. Sometimes the simple ways are best and one local experienced civilian clerk is worth 10 computers and a couple of dozen warranted officers. They do not need to be based in a police station but can be in any other local facility such as a council office or GP’s surgery, local school whatever.</p>
Camborne	<p>Although I have not come across anyone who likes the idea of the doors of the Police station being locked, I have not found people able to articulate any actual inconvenience it will cause. I think it is a bit like people’s ‘fear of crime’ often being disproportionate to actual reported crime. People want the comfort that, if they have a problem they can visit the police station and from where I am Camborne feels a long way. I have had people quoting again the problems with the 101 system so not having confidence that non urgent matters can be dealt with by telephone. Regarding local surgeries, mentioned in the letter I think these will only work if a fixed time and venue and regular enough so at least weekly. In St Just the local police have started twice monthly surgeries in the Town Council offices but, due to shift patterns, they are decided on a monthly basis and times put up on posters but that does not give people confidence of service and experience, from the outreach of one stop shops when the Unitary first came in, is that infrequently and people will not attend. If people have an issue then they want to discuss and deal with it now and whilst they may be willing to go to a surgery they know takes place every Tuesday, they are unlikely to make use of this is they never know when it will be.</p> <p>The PCC could consider the approach Probation and social services have taken - a ‘roster’, amongst team members for a ‘duty session’. That way, Monday – Fridays, during office hours, people could call in and get attention. The duty officer would know when their duty slot was so would know when they had to be in the office and they planned work for that day that could be fit around callers so admin type tasks and catching up with phone calls. I am sure Police teams have work they could catch up on, in the office (emails spring to mind these days) during a duty sessions. This way, there would not be a dedicated staff member to the duty desk but a member of the team nominated to deal with casual enquiries that day. The nature of most enquiries would dictate the grade or grades of staff pulled into the rota. That way, the public would not be confronted with locked police station doors but there would not be a need for staff employed to the role.</p>
Totnes/ Okehampton	<p>We have recently had talks with Supts Mayhew and Slevin who cover our respective areas at SMT. Mention was made of the Police rationalisation of enquiry offices as we were seeking new ways of working with the Police on co-location and joint working possibilities. In particular the use of the councils Customer Service Teams to service any public enquiries. The discussions were very encouraging and a further meeting is scheduled for later in September to continue the discussions and explore opportunities. We also talked about footfall at the enquiry offices and the Police were obtaining actual numbers for us, but were informed that they were very low. It would also be useful to have an indication as to what types of enquiry were being handled and how we could more effectively integrate and provide a better customer experience. There is a Community Safety Partnership Meeting on Tuesday and I plan to raise this there.</p>

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Anon (Devon resident)	I would like to see opening hours available for those attending outside regular working hours. If it is an emergency then the 999 system is there. I think more advertising of 101 and internet is required. Also maybe a booking service to arrange a visit from police or other service. Police do have to cut costs so it's inevitable to start seeing these cuts now. Maybe this could mean public can book to see police specialised in specific areas. I know from experience reporting about abuse has been harder when the Person on the desk does not come across as understanding. If you know the person will understand it may raise reporting.

(Further enquiries confirmed that there are no current proposals for the closure of Launceston Police Station, as part of the enquiry office review the enquiry office at Launceston will close from the 1st of November 2014.)