

**CHESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

**QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**NOVEMBER 2023**

- (1) Commissioner, I asked the question below in September last year, following an announcement of the then Home Secretary in May 2022 on the subject of tasers (my question and your answer in italics).

At that meeting I also expressed a view that whilst Specials are already challenged maintaining vocational training, why would we want to train them in Tasers when the average in England and Wales is that only 20% of full time Officers are trained to carry Tasers? The remainder who are not trained have far greater capacity to undertake this training than members of the Special Constabulary.

I was therefore surprised to see this headline in the media, and would appreciate your views on the current position within Cheshire:

**Cheshire Constabulary is set to become the first Home Office Police Force in the North West to equip its volunteer officers with Taser.**

*Question:*

*In May 2022 the Home Secretary announced that she was sanctioning (giving the same powers as full time officers) the training of special constables on the use of Tasers. I would like to know the Cheshire Police position on this issue.*

*Answer:*

*Whilst this is an operational decision for the Chief Constable, I understand that the Constabulary is minded to provide tasers to suitably trained individuals. In addition, however, I am aware that the Constabulary is currently prioritising regular officers for Taser training.*

**Questions 2, 3 and 4 relate to the Commissioners latest Scrutiny papers, which are reproduced elsewhere in the agenda pack for this Panel meeting.**

- (2) According to the information presented in your latest scrutiny papers (page 19), Traffic Offence Reports for seatbelts shows a 28% increase in the last year over the preceding period. Can you explain why this may be the case and what the Constabulary are doing about it?

- (3) Scrutiny papers (page 59) show that the number one reason for days lost from work by Police Officers and Staff is due to Anxiety-Stress and Depression. Can the Commissioner tell the Panel what is being undertaken to support the welfare of Officers and staff to reduce this loss of productivity?
- (4) Can the Commissioner explain why the average number of days to finalise a complaint against the Police has increased from 31.38 days to 53.11 days when there has been a decrease in allegations? (Reference, page 81 of scrutiny papers).
- (5) Given recent disturbing international events, which have sparked some of the largest protests the country has seen, appreciating that Cheshire isn't as diverse as some other areas, can you advise what impact, if any, this has had locally, specifically with regards to any notable increases in hate crimes or community tensions, and how is the Constabulary assuring communities of their safety whilst tensions remain high?
- (6) With regards to the Online Safety Act 2023 which introduces a number of new criminal offences, how in reality will these be adequately resourced and policed given the potential scale and volume of now newly unlawful activity which can take place online?

**NB: The Commissioner has committed to provide the Panel with an update on the “Right Care Right Person” initiative at each formal meeting.**