

Policing South Yorkshire in 2020

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Chief Constable believe that the public of South Yorkshire and the police workforce need to think about how the context of policing is changing and how the Force must adapt to meet the challenges that will follow from that. Without this, 'ad hoc', and possibly hasty, decisions will be made year to year. We need a more strategic approach. This paper summarises some of the thinking going on.

What are the changes and challenges?

Crime – For many years crime has fallen overall; but it may now be rising again. However, within the mix of crime types some, like burglary, continue to fall, while others, like sexual crimes, are increasing. Then there are emerging crimes, like internet crime and organised gang crime that crosses borders. We need to understand these changing patterns. Detecting some crimes will require co-operation with others at a local, regional or national level. The Force is already committed to a Strategic Partnership with Humberside Police, doing as much together as possible, apart from neighbourhood policing. As we plan for the future, these trends must influence decisions about workforce needs, development and deployment.

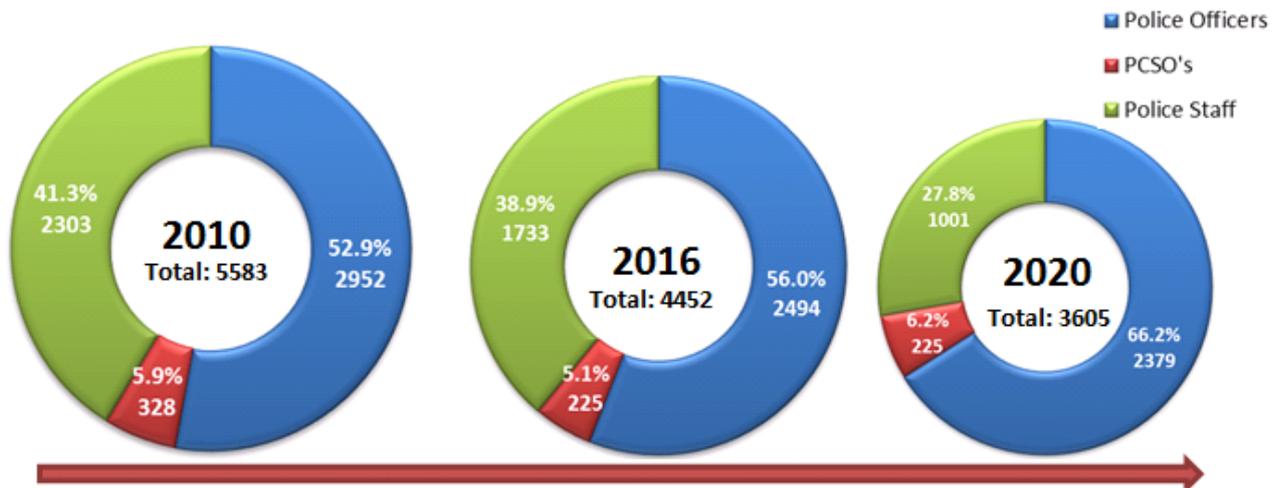
Demand - Demand on the police is growing. There is a steady rise in vulnerable people requiring police intervention. Some of this is because some victims have greater confidence in coming forward, such as those who suffer domestic violence, hate crime or so-called honour crimes. Some is due to an ageing population with more people suffering frailties in older age, such as forms of dementia. They are more vulnerable to criminals. But some of the demands on the police arise from the fact that other agencies are struggling and need the Force to meet responsibilities that really sit with them. If this is to be managed, there will have to be closer working with partners – such as the NHS, local authorities and other emergency services.

Finance - Since 2010, the Force has had to work with falling resources, doing more with less. £53m has been taken out of the budget through efficiencies and cuts. Because 90% of the budget is salaries, cuts have meant job losses. At the end of 2015, the Chancellor said that the funding available to police forces would be the same in 2016-17 as in 2015-16, provided that PCCs increased the precept to council tax payers. In South Yorkshire that meant an increase of 10p per week for Band D council tax payers. This still leaves the Force budget short by about £8 to £10m, the majority of which will be met by further savings and reductions in workforce numbers – hopefully without redundancies. There will also be further costs relating to the Hillsborough Inquests and the child sexual exploitation investigations, as yet unquantifiable.

The implications of these changes for the workforce: our current best estimates

The pie charts below illustrate the impact of cuts in funding between 2010 and 2020 – on current assumptions. The changing make-up of the workforce is a consequence of the changing nature of crime, the increased sharing of services with Humberside – such as IS, HR and Legal Services – and the likely levels of police grant and council tax.

The brunt of the cuts in numbers has been borne by police staff and police officers – until 2015 when PCSO numbers also fell. Over the next five years we hope to keep the number of PCSOs constant at 225. The PCC recognises that PCSOs are often the reassuring face of the force locally.



Source: Home Office Workforce Statistics and SYP Workforce Planning Percentage Rounded to One Decimal Place

It is worth noting that South Yorkshire Police has seen one of the largest increases of special constable volunteers in the country between 2010 and 2015 – to over 400 – a higher proportion of the workforce than many other forces. Special constables will continue to play a prominent role in both Local Policing Teams and specialist services.

The Police and Crime Plan: Putting Safety First

Whatever its size, the Force will be seeking to deliver the priorities for policing set out in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan: Putting Safety First. This was drawn up following consultation with the public and stakeholders. The 2016 renewed plan has the same priorities as in 2015:

- protecting vulnerable people
- tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- enabling fair treatment

We are working on comprehensive delivery plans but, essentially, these will be delivered through:

Local Policing Teams (LPTs) These bring together response and community functions into single multi-skilled teams with a neighbourhood focus. Uniformed officers will be able to spend longer in communities as a result of new technology. Management structures will be leaner with senior leaders taking on thematic roles in addition to command responsibilities. Local structures will include hubs for the investigation of crime, public protection and community safety.

Partnership working It is essential that partnership working is made a greater priority to make best use of diminishing resources. The Home Office wants all the emergency services to work more closely together. We are already in a strategic partnership with Humberside Police. Work with local authorities and other community safety and criminal justice partners has begun.

Contact Management Service The PCC has asked for a review to improve the 101 service and to enable the public to contact the police through other media. This will involve investment in new, enabling technology.

The next five years are going to be extremely challenging for many police forces. The Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable of South Yorkshire are committed to having a frank dialogue with partners and public so that they can shape the future in the best way they can.

Alan Billings

Dr Alan Billings
Police and Crime Commissioner

David Crompton

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