

## **Questions from Cllr Sansome & Responses**

### **May 2020**

#### **1. Has there been a significant increase to the number of hours worked by special constables and on-call fire fighters since the beginning of the lock-down?**

We are not able to comment on the on-call fire fighters and direct you, through Linda Noble perhaps, to SYFRS or those who support SYFRA.

In relation to special constables, April has seen a significant uplift in hours as officers are being furloughed, and rather than being at home, are supporting the force by working a Five Shift Duty Rota (FSDR), or carrying out significant amounts of tasking to support Silvers Tactical Plan. Key focuses being: support response policing, provide tasking patrols around COVID-19. These figures also include Initial Learning for the Special Constabulary (IL4SC):

Jan – 3,093  
Feb – 3,584  
March – 3,612  
April – 4,465

15 officers have completed over 100 hours in April, mostly due to being furloughed from day time employment.

#### **2. What impact has the lock-down had in regard to delays to recruitment, or new officers joining the front line?**

In July 2019, the Force and PCC announced an uplift in police officers for South Yorkshire Police of more than 200 following an increased precept and a review of the role of Police and Community Support Officers. The Force has now recruited many of these and are set to work on recruiting their allocation of the 20,000 officers allocated following the Government's announcement in October last year. The Force's next recruitment window opens in June.

The College of Policing have suspended the national assessments. Other options are being considered but if this continues into September / October this may impact on recruitment.

There have also been delays in receiving vehicles and equipment and preparing accommodation due to the availability of contractors to undertake the work.

#### **3. Costs for police, fire & rescue including associated support staff are expected to increase significantly as a result of COVID-19. Is this the case and has the Commissioner engaged with the Home Office regarding financial compensation?**

Both the Force and OPCC have incurred additional costs as a result of COVID-19, and these are being routinely collated with a view to reclaiming them from the Home Office. Discussions have been going on at a national level with the Home Office to look at how these can be reclaimed. The PCC feeds into these discussions through the fortnightly PCC group conference calls with the Policing Minister, and the PCCs interim CFO also feeds in through the Police and Crime Commissioner's Treasurer's Society (PACCTS).

On 6th May 2020 the Home Office issued a statement expressing support for policing, and the importance of the police in relation to the overall national response. The Home Office has committed to ensuring that forces will get the financial support they need.

To date, two things have happened:

- a) HM Treasury has agreed to increase flexibility on half of the £168m national ring-fenced grant for the Police Uplift Programme to help meet forces' Covid-19 cash flow pressures. From June, forces are able to draw down on their allocation of this funding on a monthly basis, in order to meet a proportion of their additional Covid-19 related spending as well as officer recruitment where it continues to take place. For South Yorkshire this amounts to £2.1m.
- b) The Home Office has sent out a spreadsheet, to be completed and returned on a monthly basis, as a submission of Covid-19 costs, and to highlight changes to policing demand. The deadline for the first two returns, covering March and April 2020, is Friday 15th May. The Force and PCC interim S151 officers are working closely together to prepare the spreadsheets, and undertake careful and regular monitoring of the financial implications.

The PCC continues to work closely with the Force and Home office in relation to this issue.