

New command units

The Metropolitan Police Service has announced changes to the way local policing is delivered in London through the introduction of Basic Command Units.

A BCU is a larger police command unit that will replace the Met's current 32 borough model, by merging local policing in boroughs to form 12 BCUs. In the current model, boroughs vary in size, have different ways of doing things and have different resources and issues. This can mean that demand is difficult to manage and our flexibility to meet new policing challenges is limited.

BCUs will each deliver the same core local policing functions - neighbourhoods, emergency response, CID and safeguarding - in a more consistent way. Each BCU will be led by a chief superintendent who will be the BCU Commander.

In Hillingdon this will mean that we will merge with Ealing and Hounslow Borough's to become the West Area BCU. The expected "go-live" date is in June 2018.

From Monday 19th March 2018, Chief Superintendent Paul Martin (previously Ealing Borough Commander) will take up overall responsibility for policing in the three boroughs continuing to prepare for the transition to the new BCU. Hillingdon's current Borough Commander, Colin Wingrove, will remain as part of the West Area command team responsible for the HQ function.

We will also continue to keep you informed and engage, in the usual way, through the Safer Neighbourhood Board, Ward panels, Community Contact Sessions, and through email.

On a BCU, people, buildings and resources will be shared across the borough boundaries meaning greater

flexibility in how these are used. The change will allow us to improve the service we provide to London in several ways as well as investing resources to address key priorities.

It remains the case that the Met continues to face a significant financial challenge, alongside increasing demand, and must make savings of £325m by 2021/22. Our police officer numbers are expected to fall to 30,000 by April, and further by 2021.

We need to plan for a future with less, and become more resilient so we can continue to meet our financial and operational challenges, and our current and future policing challenges - terrorism and safeguarding in particular. Without significant changes in how we manage our resources we would be unable to meet these head on.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

- As well as saving money and increasing efficiency, we want to invest in other areas of policing which the new model will enable us to do more effectively.
- Increasing community confidence is a priority and these changes will build on the success of Safer Neighbourhoods, where local officers are visible in each London ward.
- **We have met our commitment to put two Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) and one PCSO in every London ward. These officers work with local people on local priorities and are not taken away to help with policing elsewhere in London.**
- In BCUs there will also be more police officers working with young people, educational establishments and care homes. We will bring the management of issues such as anti-social behaviour and licensing into one team so we are working more closely with local authorities and our other partners.

SAFEGUARDING

- We are changing the way we help safeguard vulnerable people by investing more resources in preventing and investigating domestic abuse, sexual offences and child abuse.
- **We will introduce 'multi-agency hubs' where police officers and child safeguarding professionals from other organisations will sit side-by-side. This means all safeguarding referrals about children will be made through the same team, improving our joint working and information sharing to protect London's most vulnerable children.**
- Through BCU safeguarding teams we are increasing our work to prevent harm coming to those with mental health issues or those who go missing, alongside the management of offenders, especially those who pose the highest risk.
- BCUs will also bring together the investigation of these crimes and deploy specialist officers and detectives directly to the scene of serious incidents at an earlier stage. This means they can set the investigation strategy early on and make contact with the victim, reducing the number of different officers they have to deal with.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND CID

- With calls to 999 and 101 on the rise, the new BCU structure will see more officers responding to emergency calls across borough boundaries to fit with local needs and help those people who need us the most.
- **Response officers will also be trained to investigate some of the crimes they attend rather than passing them onto other officers. This will provide a better service to victims and allow CID colleagues to concentrate on more serious crimes and proactive work.**
- We will continue to deal with a greater proportion of crime online or over the telephone, to give the public greater choice about how they contact us and reduce demand on response officers.

TESTING THE MODEL

- The BCU model has been tested in two areas since January 2017, bringing together Barking & Dagenham, Redbridge and Havering boroughs; and Camden and Islington boroughs.
- These two pathfinders allowed us to see in action the benefits of the BCU model as well as identifying and dealing with any problems. We have closely worked with officers, staff and partner agencies, including leaders of local councils, to identify the key lessons learnt. All these views have

helped shape our decision to move forward with the BCU plan.

Leading the work is Deputy Assistant Commissioner Mark Simmons. He said:

"Local policing is at the heart of what the Met does every day, and we will improve it further by offering a service that is more personal and responsive to the needs of Londoners.

"BCUs will allow us to put first victims of crime and those people who need us the most. Our new structure will also give us the resilience and consistency we need across the whole of London, so we can continue to respond to large scale incidents and meet the financial and operational challenges we are facing."

The roll-out across London will be staggered over the next 12 months following the decision.

The first of the boroughs to come together will be Ealing, Hillingdon and Hounslow; and Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Wandsworth.

Correction - Volunteers at Ruislip nick

In the last issue I made a typo when informing you of when our volunteers open the front counter at Ruislip Police Station. I said they open up between 10am and 3pm but they actually open from **10am-5pm Monday-Friday** and additionally on Saturday between 10am-1pm. Please remember that this is a voluntary service performed by local residents for other local residents and there will be occasions when no volunteer is available to fill a shift. When this occurs then the station office will remain closed.

A police officer will open the station office at Ruislip on Wednesday 5pm-6pm and Saturday 2pm-3pm.

Rob's Rapport

For those of you who read each Communicator, you will have been aware of the changes we have been making in preparation for this move to a tri-Borough command. We are in good shape to make this happen very smoothly. I will keep you all up to date in future editions.

Please tell your friends and neighbours about the **Broken Wing Mirror fraud** which is rife in Ruislip and Harrow right now. It involves a driver accusing you of clipping his (already broken) wing mirror and trying to get cash out of you to replace it. It is fraud. Don't pay up and call the police straight away.

Inspector Rob Bryan