

WANSTEAD POLICE STATION

Talk to Redbridge Council 20.9.12

The final total of signatures on the petition is over 3 ½ thousand.

In Redbridge Life, I was amazed to read the police's headline "Changes in the Met will put police at the heart of the community". Our police station is at the heart of our community and they want to close it!

I'm losing my powers of comprehension: I couldn't understand Boris Johnson's statement either when I read: *"..... any changes to the provision ... will ensure Londoners receive **improved and efficient access to police**, whilst taking the opportunity to improve the estate and at the same time as delivering substantial savings."*

People tell me that this means is that the Met is putting slashing costs and making money ahead of community safety.

The Met says that our Victorian building is not fit for purpose. As a locally listed building it can be gutted inside to meet current policing requirements. The station is on a prime site but the one-off money raised will soon disappear – the inevitably rising demand will not.

Being on the western border of Redbridge, Wanstead residents feel that without a police station, they would be a sitting target for criminal elements in Leytonstone, Manor Park and Forest Gate.

The Burglary Team and part of the Rapid Response Team are also stationed there. Some members of the Rapid Response Team told me that without having a car stationed in Wanstead, they would not be able to respond to emergency calls in time. A previous Commander, Commander Grant, told me that the A406 is a huge barrier, which meant that it was essential to have cars stationed at the west of the Borough.

Also, with the A406, A12 and 2 tube stations, criminals have easy access and escape from Wanstead. Meanwhile hundreds of police

hours would be wasted on our Safer Neighbourhood Team cycling to and fro Wanstead from their base.

Attendance at Friday's Wanstead Area One Committee showed the high level of concern. Many residents remember that when the police station closed in 2001, the Wanstead crime rate rose by 23%. By experience, they know that an accessible local police station is the strongest symbol of deterrence to criminals. A police station is the best source of reassurance which the police can give residents: you cannot put reassurance on a spread sheet.

Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary wrote: *"The toughest challenge Is the critical importance of improving public confidence in our ability to deliver safety and security in our communities, we must make sure that we are responding to the issues people care about."*

Residents believe that this police strategy is distancing the police from the community which is it their duty to protect. If these changes are pushed through, the public's trust and confidence in the police will deteriorate. People want police on the beat, not on the end of a phone in a central call centre.

The MOPAC website states that both the 1966 Police Act and the 2011 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act make it the statutory duty of the police to obtain the views of people living in the policed area, **BEFORE** a police crime plan can be issued. In spite of this, a letter from the Met states: *"Any changes regarding the front office counter services at this building will be dependent on discussion between the Met and MOPAC."* Superintendent Hill told us that the Met would engage with the community immediately **AFTER** the decision is made. We had a full public consultation in 2007 and one is needed now.