

From: "CRYER, John" <john.cryer.mp@parliament.uk>
To: Helen Zammett
Sent: Tuesday, 26 March 2013, 14:39
Subject:

Helen,

Sorry I have not been in touch on the issue of Wanstead police station for a while. I am obviously deeply upset by the official news. Below is my latest intervention on this on the floor of the House.

Best wishes,

John

Damian Green: I will come to station closures. I take the point, which has been raised by the hon. Lady and other hon. Members. I want to deal with it.

The consultation includes commitments about not only the level of resources that the Met will have at the front line but—this point has been neglected but needs to be injected into the debate—how those resources will be used. At the forefront of the Met's plans is the Met change programme, which is being used to transform how operational policing is delivered in London. The programme has several strands, including plans to deliver a flatter management structure, thereby putting more constables on the beat, engagement with the supply services market to examine new ways of delivering the services they provide in areas such as human resource, technology and finance, and plans to release under-utilised assets.

I hope that hon. Members agree that the Met's recently issued plans show that it is looking at a transformational approach to the way in which it delivers policing in London. Everyone has observed that London is a fast changing city that is difficult to police, so it needs to keep ahead of the curve. Clearly, there has been great interest, not just in the debate, but across London about the closure of police stations. As has been said, decisions about the number of stations and their operating hours are matters for the Mayor and the Commissioner. I am sure that many hon. Members will contribute to the consultation.

It is important not to confuse buildings with quality of service provided to the public. Fewer than 50 crimes a night are reported at front counters throughout the Metropolitan police area. Since 2008, the number of crimes reported to those front counters has dropped

6 Feb 2013 : Column 129WH

20%, and internet and e-mail reporting is up by 32%. That shows how changes in the modern world must be reflected in changes in the way the police deliver their services.

John Cryer (Leyton and Wanstead) (Lab): I cannot keep quiet. I will give a concrete example of what will happen. Wanstead police station will shut, and there will be no replacement whatever. Response times will lengthen, and people will be put in danger. That will be a green light for burglars in the Wanstead part of my constituency. That goes directly against what Boris Johnson promised. People in Wanstead and throughout London want to know what Boris Johnson does not understand about the word "no".

Damian Green: There is no reason why response times should go up. I have explained what is happening in the way people report things to the police. There are ever-increasing ways in which the public can contact the police. That includes contact centres on the new non-emergency number, 101, which takes some of the pressure off 999 services, and contact through supermarket surgeries and so on, where the police can meet thousands of people, instead of the very few who may come in to a police station.

Several hon. Members made the point that the quality of contact as well as the quantity of contact matters. It seems to be unarguable that getting the police out there into buildings where thousands of people are likely to be is a better way of making that contact than simply being inside a traditional big-building police station.