

Subject: Contact with Constabulary - 0845 no.

Dear Mr Stannard

I refer to your letter addressed to the NPA Chairman (attached) which was received here on the 17th. I am sorry I have not replied sooner. I note your Councils concerns. The NPA, as part of its ongoing contact with the public, has been aware of issues that have related to this 0845 number. That said, it is fully supportive of the single point of contact arrangements - at least for the initial call. Those who are trained to deal with calls are the best people to handle that first contact. The attached "crib sheet" sets out some useful background to the issues we face on handling an increasing no of calls. I hope you and you PC members feel this puts into context some of their concerns.

That said the Constabulary are looking at ways of improving the service further and of exploiting technology and the full potential of its staff. It is not possible to keep throwing resources at the issue - but if the case is made for increased resources then the NPA will consider that alongside all the other requests for growth and prioritise according to ability to fund that.

You won't be surprised to hear that given all the increased costs and additional responsibilities laid on the Police Service (we are averaging two Home Office Acts of Parliament per year nowadays!) that we face a budget increase of 6% this year to "standstill" (that includes funding the shortfall in grant to pay for the new Police & Community Support Officers we need in our Safer Neighbourhood Teams) and we know that government grant will increase by only 3.7%. This means that we have to cut existing services to afford the new ones - catch 22!

I appreciate that this does not fully address your members concerns but I hope it contextualises their comments. You will recognise that it is vitally important that the public report crime - information is essential to gain a full picture of criminal activity - the service needs intelligence. I would ask however, that they must recognise that with finite resources not everything can/will be responded to and that we have to prioritise according to importance and availability of staff.

Sincerely

Chris Harding
Chief Executive & Clerk
Norfolk Police Authority
CE&C's Office
Jubilee House
Falconers Chase
WYMONDHAM
Norfolk
NR18 0WW

Telephone 01953 424 451
Fax 01953 424 462