Emergency Meeting GMP and Lowton residents 15.03.17

Red Lion Lowton 7pm

Present: Sgt. Justin Topping; PC Dave Mayo; Chair Counc. Ed Houlton; Counc. K Houlton; Ed Thwaite Chair LENDF; Kathleen Johnson Chair LHSRG; approx. 100 residents

Ed Thwaite welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested a positive, constructive meeting.

Ed Houlton to take questions from the floor, responded to by the two members of GMP

Sgt. Topping responsible for burglaries and vehicle crime locally which covers the extensive Lowton East area……. This can lengthen response time, particularly if passed to Cheshire or Merseyside. There are only 6 officers working shifts.

There appear to be two different teams of criminals working the area: Vehicle crime believed to be 2 local men (one heavy set and one slim) dropped off by car and picked up and burglaries committed by 4 men from outside the area – an arrest warrant is out for these men. There is some video evidence.

GMP do share information freely with neighbouring forces in Cheshire and Merseyside and considerable intel nationally. Police aware that it may be the public conception, but it is not true that Cheshire are more proactive/successful than GMP.

No burglaries since 5th March

No vehicle crime since last Friday

In response to questions:

Policing strategy – will respond asap to aggravated crime. Non- aggravated crime will normally be responded to by the PCSO’s. Small number of officers available and domestic violence will always take priority. Frustration of police officers at their limited resources. Commenting that policing is like “spinning plates.”

There is a lot of policing carried out away from the public eye, eg visits from neighbourhood team to families of deviant youngsters; support given to drug users and those with mental health issues. If teams are out of police station on a reported crime often no one to receive phone calls at the Police station.

Of late plain clothes police deployed in unmarked cars with special constables in marked cars.

Strength of feeling and concern over policing reflected in the number of people who attend meeting.

Police maintain there is a limited use of Whats App to policing. Better or as well as - residents should inform police of their suspicions. Ring 999 if immediate action required, 101 to inform police of an incident. Information from App should be emailed to PC Dave Mayo: 08572@gmp.police.uk; Sergeant Topping 65223@gmp.police.uk

(Post meeting comment. The App is being consistently used for none emergency messages. It was set up solely for reporting suspicious activity and alerts)

No pattern to the time of burglaries. Break ins occur often by barrelling/unscrewing the lock or throwing paving slabs through patio window. Stolen goods turning up in St Helens and Salford to date. Police will not fingerprint immediately unless there is blood at the crime scene.

Majority of car thefts (95% in Golborne and Lowton West) from insecure cars – phones, handbags, ipads left in view, or under the seats. Digital keys can be used remotely. Ensure they are kept as far from car as possible.

Police officers are allocated on demand and whilst there is a current spike in crime, the Lowton area has lower crime figures than other areas. Case of recent burglaries still open.

Residents are more than happy to work with Police eg sharing photo/video evidence. Police are assured of residents’ full support.

Residents state that the police management should consider more creative ways of policing the area – “thinking outside the box.” The GMP representatives were urged to pass this message to their bosses. Greater funding required but a pipe dream. Wigan Council/the new Manchester Mayor should also be asked to take Police allocation more seriously.

Resident asked whether dealing with low level anti-social behaviour decisively might reduce crime in long term. Police explained procedure for ASBO’S.

GMP officers requested to ask for more Police constables and to stress to police hierarchy that current budgets are not allowing even for basic policing to be carried out.

A follow up meeting to be held in a month. Place, date and time tbc.