

BRIEF GUIDE TO LOBBYING MPs

Colleagues, we are aware that many of you have written to, emailed or visited your MP. The riots in August saw a massive increase in public support and pressure on the government to rethink the 20% cuts to police budgets – even from within the government’s own backbenches. Personal lobbying has produced some fantastic results. Peter Harman & I met with Mark Reckless and he withdrew his Police Redundancy Bill as a direct consequence. A Kent officer visited his MP; she was so moved by this meeting she instigated a debate in the House of Commons. Lobbying works – be under no illusion.

We need you to lobby your MP – the best way is by a personal visit so that you can ask direct questions and push for answers. We have produced swathes of information on Winsor, Hutton, cuts, etc, information that can be viewed on our website kentpolfed.org.uk

However, here are some bullet points to assist you to lobby your MP. Underscored points are what you can expect the MP to put to you.

20% BUDGET CUTS

- The cuts aren’t 20% they’re only 6% - whatever the figure, Kent will have 500 fewer cops and 1000 fewer police staff; that’s the reality. Is the MP suggesting the Chief Constable is cutting unnecessarily?
- You’re wasting your time there is no more money – overseas aid is set to rise by 34%. By 2015 we will be spending more on this than policing. Will the public accept this?
- Why should the police be exempt from cuts – we have never said this, but we should have been protected like education, defence, etc. HMIC stated we could cope with 12% cuts without affecting the frontline.
- Mr Learmonth tells us the frontline won’t be affected as he’s increasing NHP and visibility – this is not an extra, we are depleting other teams to increase NHP. Ask the MP what he/she thinks the frontline is. Talk to them about, detectives, surveillance, intelligence, undercover, domestic abuse, sex offenders, counter terrorism, etc. These are not in uniform but surely they’re on the frontline. Who do they think was putting offenders before the courts during and after the riots? What do they want us to stop doing.
- By 2015 we will have 16,000 fewer cops in this country – it took 16,000 cops to snuff out the rioting in London. Where will those cops come from in the future?
- In 2005, the Conservative election manifesto pledged increases in numbers of police officers under the interesting banner – “More police officers catch more criminals; it isn’t rocket science”. What’s changed? Why do they now believe that fewer cops won’t lead to rising crime?

- The govt focus seems to be solely on visibility – uniformed patrols. As important as this is it is not the totality of policing. How does the MP see these officers preventing/detecting domestic abuse, child abuse, fraud, cybercrime, etc?
- How does the MP see the loss of 1000 police staff impacting on the “frontline”? E.g. statement takers – officers will not be visible as they will be taking witness statements.
- 80 – 85% of police budget is on pay. The remainder cannot be lost in its entirety. Simple maths, you cannot remove 20% of the budget and cover that with alleged reductions in bureaucracy.

WINSOR 1 & HUTTON

This will be very much down to you to explain how these cuts will impact on you personally and your families. There is nothing better when lobbying an MP than to have that personal impact.

Pensions

- Under the PPS 1987 you currently pay 11% over 30 years based on 60ths.
- Under the NPPS 2006 you currently pay 9.5% over 35 years based on 70ths.
- As a comparator MPs have 3 schemes – 5.9% based on 60ths, 7.9% based on 50ths and 11.9% based on 40ths. Their schemes were exempt from Hutton.
- You have seen the proposed increases in contribution rates and we know other changes are afoot to the schemes. Ask the MP about the science behind these decisions. Ask about actuarial assessments. Increases in rates and schemes should not be a backdoor tax for deficit reduction.
- If the schemes become too unattractive and officers either leave or don't join, ask the MP what provision has been made to cover any shortfall in income. The schemes do not have a pension fund; those paying into them pay for current pensioners.

Pay & conditions

- The proposals from Winsor 1 are currently to be decided by a Police Arbitration Tribunal (PAT). It is important that you stress the impact of Winsor's recommendations. To assist there is an analysis of Winsor's

examples on our website - kentpolfed.org.uk under the Winsor on the home page.

- Emphasise the restrictions on an officer's private life – pay particular attention to the inability to take any form of industrial action; to do so would be a criminal offence. Ask the MP if they think that is something to be valued and rewarded.
- Follow this theme highlighting the need for fair and transparent negotiating machinery – currently the Police Negotiating Board (PNB).
- If the MP talks of the need for greater flexibility remind them you can be ordered back from you're A/L; ordered to work on a RD or BH; ordered to remain on duty; be required to change your shifts at short notice. How much flexibility do they want?
- The outcome of the PAT is binding on the Official Side of PNB (employers) and the staff side of PNB (us – the employees). However the Home Secretary does not have to ratify that outcome. Remind the MP of their party's position when in opposition in 2007, when the then Labour Home Secretary declined to ratify a PAT outcome on pay. In opposition, the Conservatives stated they would only ever decline to ratify after a full vote in the House of Commons. This is hugely important – get them to agree this. If they don't, remind them of your restrictions & fairness. Really push them on this point.

I hope these bullet points will be of assistance to you. In reality they should be read in conjunction with the other material we have circulated. They should serve as a reminder.

It is vitally important that you engage with your MP and this is best done in person. Letters and emails tend to produce “copy & paste” responses. As I have said on numerous occasions, the Police Federation cannot do this alone. We need your help. This battle is not a spectator sport.

Good luck,

Ian Pointon
Chairman
Kent Police Federation