

Welcome to the AGM Cambridgeshire NHW it's nice to see so many of you here tonight we're extremely pleased that our new Chief Constable Simon Parr has agreed to be our key note speaker for this evening.

Good evening everyone, firstly some thank you's, thank you for inviting me because it is always a pleasure to speak to people who work with us from whether they're inside the organisation or work closely as you do from just a little bit outside and can I thank also the committee for organising this, pass on my thanks as we're both new chairs, so pass on thanks to those who worked on the committee in the past and have now stood down for all the service you have given both neighbourhood watch and the constabulary over the years.

I'll just give you a bit of a flavour of where I think we are in terms of the constabulary, where I think it's going, what I think the government's agenda and the things they're talking about mean for policing here in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

So, policing, where are we? Well all of you who clearly have an interest in policing will know what the government's doing both in financial terms and what it refers to as it's big society idea. Whether you believe those in the press who say the big society is a means of explaining cost cutting or whether you don't the net affect to a certain extent for us is about the same. Alongside every public service in the country we will face unprecedented cuts not just in the level of funding we're going to lose, but the speed to which it's going to disappear from our grant from the government. They've also decided that in order to protect the public from that cost being transferred from income tax and being laundered back through government they will put restrictions on what we can raise by way of precept. So that gives us some uncertainty for a few more weeks in terms of exactly the number that we're left with, but it also gives us a bit of certainty once we know that number. We know in the next three to four years we will be looking at reductions in the amount of money we've got.

Now I think there are a number of ways that you could look at that and one or two colleagues in the room have discussed this with me and we've had a bit of a chew on it. A very simple question would be, for example, how do I/we cut £30million out of Cambridgeshire Constabulary's budget and to be fair that is a pretty blunt question and it's pretty boring and if I gave you a copy of our accounts and a red pen most of us in the room could do it by 8pm. But what it wouldn't do is necessarily leave a coherent policing service here it would balance the budget and I don't think the government are simply asking us to balance the budget, I think they're asking us to change the way we think about public services and I think they're asking us to think about the way we change policing alongside all the other deliveries of public services that there are in the country particularly here in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.

So we've decided to ask ourselves a slightly different question, we've decided to ask ourselves as a senior team and through the organisation how do you maintain the performance of the organisation and improve it where possible, become more engaged with our communities for about £105million and that's a much more interesting, professional question as it asks us different things than just slashing and burning things off the budget. Now it's also very easy to get obsessed with money when the figures we have to deal with in percentage terms are so big and I don't want my

organisation to do that. Some of you will have seen some of the things I've been saying in the press they are very determinately meant and I absolutely believe what I am saying because I think alongside all that stuff that's going on in terms of balancing the budget we have more important things to be getting on with.

One of the most important things we have to be getting on with and this is something that anybody who listens to me will become hopefully use to saying and will start to repeat, but what I want my staff and officers to do is transfer the fear of crime from the victim to the criminal. Quite simply if we add up the number of people in this county who really cause us real problems it's probably somewhere between 100 and 150, but they're very busy and what I want to do is to take the 2000 to 2500 of us, however many we have left when we've done our reorganising, change the way we deliver routine stuff and focus as many hours as we can on closing down the space in which those individuals operate. So that their lifestyle which will involve a whole series of things, a whole wheel of activities just as yours do, just slightly different to yours and shrink that space the criminal operates and we deny them access to the things they think make their life worth living. Until they reach the point when they're either in prison or they say enough I want to stop and that is where the other hand we hold comes into play because is redesigning public service delivery I think we need to look very closely at what causes people to commit crime and what causes them to carrying on committing crime? Because yes it's lovely to sound all vengeful and lock them up and throw away the key, but it's hugely expensive and surely it would be better to stop people committing crime when they come out again or stop them committing crime in the first place. So we're all working very hard to get alongside our partners in the county and district councils and the unitary in Peterborough so when somebody says enough my drug habit, my alcohol habit, whatever it is between us we think is causing them to commit crime and they want to say 'I want to stop' we as the police can say ok we'll hand you over to partners in the public sector who can help you. So that we stop more people becoming victims of crime rather than just chuck away the key.

Now there are some people for whom locking them up is the only solution, they don't want to stop and society needs protecting from those and I think we need to gather all our ammunition, all our partnerships and focus on that relatively small number of people amongst the population who plague our citizens and make no mistake as we trim the money out of the budget, which I have to do and will do we will make sure that every penny we can move from managing the organisation is moved to delivering on the front end. We need some sort of infrastructure, we need to be able to look after ourselves and hold ourselves to account, financially and ethically to make sure what we're doing is right and to make sure we know what we're doing and we can see the impact and affects of my staff's work, but we don't need to deliver a huge industry that just generates stuff that goes to the government or the HMI and if this government really means what its said by cutting through sways of bureaucracy, I can take many thousands of pounds out of the organisation without taking one police officer, one PCSO or one operational member of staff off the street and that's what we intend to do.

So in terms of working in partnership, the big society, I use the phrase cause I don't have a better one, it's not because I am political in any sense professionally and personally I can't be and I'm not in that order, but my job is not to challenge a

democratically elected government, my job is to deliver a police service here that actually accepts that democratically elected people are making decisions about the way society should be and I think we're engaged in the biggest piece of science or re-engineering in about the last 30 – 35 years where they're trying to bring back that issue of responsibilities in the way society works and balance that with the rights that so many of us hear about from our contemporaries everyday.

I absolutely applaud that, but there is no need for me to talk to you about the big society and there is no need for me to talk to you about volunteering because if you didn't understand that you wouldn't be here. If you didn't understand that and you hadn't already brought into that concept, whether you like that name or not and most of you probably won't because it sounds a bit like a gimmick and cliché, but the fact is being responsible for looking after where we live and who we live near and the places we like to go is something you all recognise otherwise you wouldn't be doing what you're doing. So I'm not going to stand here and lecture you about the importance of gathering communities to work with us, but I am going to say that we need to move as a policing service from visibility to real engagement with our communities. So alongside these strands about working with our partners in government, local government, working with other police forces to deliver those specialist of policing services that we only need in absolute emergencies, we need to work better with our communities, we need to go places where the community are as opposed to make appointments for the community to come to us. We need to talk in schools, hospitals, supermarkets, health centres, libraries, post offices, anywhere where the people we serve are, we need to talk to them and we need to pass that information to you and we need to listen to you because the policing of our society is far too important to be left to the likes of me and my colleagues and I know you understand that.

I suspect without knowing very much about Neighbourhood Watch here in Cambridgeshire that you will feel that by in large there is a huge amount of goodwill, but we somehow don't quite connect as well as we could do because that is the experience elsewhere that I have worked. That you want to be told the results of what happens when you or one of your volunteers tell us something you've seen or heard, that you want to get involved more in Speedwatch and that you want to be a part of policing in your communities in a much greater way than you've been able to be already and that is something that I warmly welcome and we will work towards. It will take a while because we are re-engineering so many different bits and pieces, but you and the people you work with, your volunteers and the people who run the schemes in streets, cul-de-sacs, the farms and rural communities need to be better plugged in, better engaged, we need to find ways of cost effectively listening to you, talking to you, sharing information with you, broadcasting information if we hear there is a problem so you can use your networks.

We need to use many more volunteers whether within or without Neighbourhood Watch schemes, whether we use them to help administer things such as Speedwatch and I was having a conversation a few minutes ago, I have no problem at all with that there are plenty of ways of ensuring information that needs to be kept secure can be kept secure there are lots of ways of doing that. We need to garner that will and use it to allow you and the people who live near you and work near you to help police yourselves a little, which you clearly want to do and most people are interested in

doing whether they can formally volunteer or they can just support and talk and give information.

So my message to my own staff is yes this is going to be damn difficult: to take 25% out of a budget over four years if that's what it is and it probably will be is going to be very very hard, but it is achievable if we think differently by the way we deliver policing.

We have probably the most old-fashioned way of delivering a service of any public service in the country. If you think about it, if we need to meet face-to-face, if you need to meet face-to-face with anyone else in the public service unless you have an absolute emergency who comes to you? Only the police.

I could have an officer in a car, a number of staff in a car some of the more sparsely populated areas of the rural communities of Cambridgeshire and they might get round to four people in a day in a car. The time they're travelling is dead time, they're just whizzing about, not really engaged, but if we can find a way of conveniently making appointments in mobile police stations, in health surgeries, in post offices wherever we can get to and say we can see ten people in six or seven hours. It's going to take a change and people need to understand why would you go to a GP with a minor ailment, but expect the police to come to you for a small problem. Now when we've got all the money in the world that's actually not a problem, but still even if we were doubling the amount of money we had, it still wouldn't make it a cost effective way of doing business because we've still got these 100 – 150 odd or however many people there are that we need to target and focus and squash down their space. So we will be talking more and more with our communities about how do we manage this money, how do we deliver a policing service that people need that's fit for the society we live in now and the one we're going to be part of whether we like it or not over the next four to five years and the work that you do is going to be more and more important and that's why it's more important than ever that we link up and liaise and really strengthen not just the relationships, but the communication channels and speed them up. One of the two or three things that I notice in this constabulary in coming here is that we need to speed up the way we react to things. We need to speed up our operating speed, our average pace, just a little and that includes the speed with which we speak to you, listen to you on a day-to-day basis and as the people you work for and volunteers and the people who actually run the schemes out in the community. So it is going to be hard, it is going to need some very very difficult decisions, some very difficult messages and quite a different way of doing business, but I do think that is offers us all some opportunities. It offers you the opportunity tonight and in the future to say look can we just do something a bit different, it offers me the opportunity to say I'm going to stop doing that because that adds no value to how people feel about where they live. And our currency must stop being just the number of people we've got, the number of police officers, the number of PCSOs and our currency isn't the amount of money we've got, our currency is the number of operational hours I can ring out of how ever much money the government leave me, to deal with the people who make your communities here and there, now and again places where people are scared and that's not anything I'm prepared to put up with, if people are going to continue to be scared about where they live.

And I think on that it's probably worth stopping.

Chief Constable thank you for that excellent, relevant and thought provoking input.