

Policing my way: exclusive interview with Surrey's new Police and Crime Commissioner

[Exclusive By Hardeep Matharu »](#)

Surrey Police should be abolished, part of its funding should be spent on building more prisons and ethnic diversity in the police is unnecessary.



Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner Kevin Hurley set out his views on a range of issues in an interview with the Epsom Guardian

Those are just three of the views of Surrey's outspoken new Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Kevin Hurley, expressed in a interview with this paper last week, just days before he was criticised in Parliament by the Shadow Home Secretary.

Speaking in the wake of the suspected suicide of Guildford sexual assault victim Frances Andrade, 48, a highly-regarded violinist who gave evidence against her attacker Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper told the House of Commons: "The Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner has said in the last couple of days, 'it's the responsibility of the police to present evidence to the court with the victim in a way which is untainted'.

"That means they will not and should not refer a victim for counselling until after they have given their evidence."

She said it was completely unacceptable that victims of sexual abuse should ever be denied support and counselling.



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Mr Hurley claimed the quote had been taken out of context as his philosophy puts victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.

He said: "Much comment has been made about the tragic death of Frances Andrade. I again offer my sincerest condolences to her family.

"One of my central promises to the public when I stood for election was to put victims at the centre of the criminal justice system. I am absolutely committed to this principle.

"Any support received by a victim can be disclosed in court and national guidance from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) sets out that the police should inform victims of the potential implications of any therapy or counselling on the conduct of their case.

"That is not the same - as has been implied by those who should know better - as denying support and counselling.

"We need victims of serious and traumatic crimes like sexual assault to feel confident that the criminal justice system will look after them if they come forward and give evidence.

"The dreadful treatment of Mrs. Andrade by the defence barrister – and the failure of the judge or the prosecution to intervene and protect her from the impact of that – is a tragic demonstration that change is urgently needed in how the CPS and the courts protect victims in their care."

Surrey Police insisted that it was its policy to encourage victims to seek appropriate support, but it would be reviewing its involvement in the case.

Last week Mr Hurley, who was elected in November as an independent PCC, although just six per cent of the electorate voted for him, outlined his views on a wide range of subjects.

After 30 years in the police where he did everything from being a PC to commanding a borough, a detective and undercover officer, he is confident he has the answers and public support for what he is trying to achieve.

Speaking about his first few months in the job he said: "There was no learning curve.

"I know quite clearly what the public want and they are very supportive of my six priorities - a zero tolerance approach, more visible street policing, putting victims at the centre of the criminal justice system, giving people a greater say on how their streets are policed, and being uncompromising in the standards you expect from police."

He has already asked for a 1.99 per cent increase in the amount of money given to the police from council tax this year, which would raise an extra £2million a year for policing the county - to help offset a 23 per cent cut in Government funding for policing nationally.

He said so much criticism is now being levelled at police officers that it gets in the way of their work so "the first thought becomes, how do we protect ourselves and our institution?".

He believes the skills required to be a policeman are "a desire to make things better, being physically and mentally brave, and having emotional intelligence".

He said the latter was lacking in Tottenham in the aftermath of the shooting of Mark Duggan by police in 2011 - a deficiency which he said sparked the London Riots.

And he said the London riots would not have happened if he had been borough commander in Haringey at the time.

He believes good leadership is vital in the police but those at the start of their career should be paid more than the £19,000 now on offer: "If you give peanuts you get monkeys".

Mr Hurley gives his views below on a range of police-related issues:

Zero tolerance

The 59-year-old said he is working hard to ingrain his policy of zero tolerance into Surrey's police officers and said that while "98 per cent" of the hundreds of residents he has so far interacted with in introductory meetings across the county have had a positive response to it, one of his real challenges is making people with "narrow, blinkered views" understand what the approach is about.

He said: "Zero tolerance policing means do something about the problem, don't ignore it.

"It doesn't mean lock people up forever, flog them or hang them.

"At all stages we remain professional, reasonable, moderate, but uncompromising in the face of anti-social behaviour.

"It's a mindset. At no stage have I said we need to put anyone in prison.

"At no stage have I said that rehabilitation doesn't work.

"Some people are bigoted about zero tolerance. They are uninformed and think 'this man must be extremely right wing'."

Mr Hurley said his approach is inspired by the 'broken windows' policing style of Bill Bratton, who was chief of police of the New York City Transit Police in the 1990s. Under this approach the belief is that if minor crime, such as graffiti or unpaid train fares, is not dealt with, crime as a whole will increase.

Appointing his deputy

Responding to criticism of his appointment of his friend, Jeff Harris, a former police chief superintendent, as his deputy on a salary of £50,000 a year, Mr Hurley said they make the "perfect pair" for the job.

He said: "There was no fairness in it. No openness or transparency.

"The role was too important for me to go through a process of interview boards with people I don't know.

"To put it bluntly, I understand the business.

"I will not be bamboozled.

"My deputy has spent two-and-a-half years working with some of the most disadvantaged youth in Surrey, and I appointed him."

Halting the sale of police stations

Mr Hurley said halting the sale of police stations in Surrey last month was a decision he took based on his "commercial businessman's nous" because "land in Surrey is extremely valuable".

He said he is now considering retaining the freehold in the buildings and entering into a joint venture with a property developer to "build some new flats or a new police office".

Disbanding county police forces

Mr Hurley believes the only way to make significant efficiency savings is to disband local police forces.

He said: "Every cut we make in policing is now cutting into the bone marrow.

"The only way to get efficiencies is to reduce the number of police forces.

"We have all these separate organisations and forces putting their own separate spins on things. It's wasteful.

"The public wants to pay for constables on the street. What hat badges they wear are irrelevant.

"You get to a size with an organisation where you can bring in economies of scale.

"We shouldn't have separate county police forces. There should be a chief constable for a region, like the South East of England, with a PCC."

More prisons

Mr Hurley said he feels positive about what zero tolerance can achieve - "we should not give up and say situations are hopeless" - but, for career criminals, prison works.

He said: "In suitable cases we should spend time to stop re-offending, but we should accept some people are just plain bad and the right place for them is prison until they stop their reoffending behaviour.

"Prison works because if you're a burglar and you're locked up in prison you can't burgle. Putting a burglar in prison is the cheaper option than letting them commit the crime.

"Would I give up a chunk of my budget to pay for more prison capacity for Surrey? Yes, I would, but it's not within my power."

Police ethnic diversity

Mr Hurley said in today's society it is seen as necessary to have an ethnically diverse police force, but this should not be the case.

He said that as long as there are people "who can do the job and know how to interact with people" their race should be irrelevant.

He believes the reason why there are so few ethnic minority police officers is largely due the minority communities themselves.

He said those from Indian families tend to pursue more academic paths and "turn their noses up" at a career in the police, while those from other Asian backgrounds are more likely to enter the business world.

He said a senior Asian policewoman was most likely to be an "under-achiever".

And, according to Mr Hurley, people with an African background are not keen to join the police because they come from countries where the police are tainted by working for dictators.

Asked about the Macpherson Inquiry which found that the police had been institutionally racist in its handling of the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence, who was stabbed at a bus stop in South East London in 1993, Mr Hurley said Sir William McPherson was suffering from "post colonial guilt".

He said it was an isolated case where if the police officers involved had dealt with the Lawrence family with more "emotional intelligence", the situation would not have escalated.

Mr Hurley said the Lawrence family had needed "a hand to hold to absorb their shock", but the police did not know how to deal with them properly.

He added it was not often mentioned that an off-duty policeman stopped to help at the scene following the attack.

Fast track police officers

The Government's fast-tracking of junior police officers into senior posts must stop according to Mr Hurley.

He said he wanted to confront the Government over the issue: "There is a system for fast-tracking which means officers can become chief inspectors within three years.

"The system is ridiculous and ill-considered and shows no understanding of the nature and complexity of the job.

"I was a fast-tracker but it took me five-and-a-half years to become a chief inspector and even then I found it a struggle.

"I will oppose the fast-tracking of police officers in Surrey."

Mr Hurley said one of three prime causes of the Hillsborough disaster in 1989 was an inexperienced fast track police officer who had opened the exit gate without then providing a police presence to guard entry to the stadium.

He said that although police have taken a massive public pasting over the football stadium crush, in which 96 people died and 766 were injured, the other two key facts were fans rushing out of pubs towards Leppings Lane at the last minute and the design of the Sheffield Wednesday stadium itself.

Police targets

Mr Hurley, who helped draw up Iraq's policing strategy and has served for 42 years as a reservist army officer, said he wants to free police officers so they can "do the right thing for the public".

He said: "I want to liberate the police from the constraints of the many targets they have to meet. For example, officers have to record how many broken-into cars they have detected.

"I haven't been at a single public consultation where a member of the public has said they want something to be done about people breaking into cars. It's not something people sit up and worry about."

Do you agree with Mr Hurley's views? Leave a comment below or email Hardeep Matharu on hmatharu@london.newsquest.co.uk