

Plans to recruit 120 new Specials

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Plans to recruit 120 special constables this year have been put in place by the police and crime commissioner for Sussex, with the first 40 beginning training this month.

Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne, wants to increase the number of officers out on the streets. Special constables are volunteers who work part-time as police officers.

Ms Bourne said she did not yet know where the special constables would be placed or if any would be placed in Crawley.

She said: "It is the remit of the Chief Constable [Martin Richards] to decide where to deploy his resources. "However, he and I are working together on a longer term plan to target recruitment to specific geographic areas.

"I think there are a number of things that can be done to make sure officers are out and about where the community wants to see them.

"As well as the benefits that can be gained from an increase in Special Constables there are initiatives such as police community hubs, like the one in Broadfield Library which allows officers to be closer to the public and more accessible."

Two weeks ago, the Observer reported that Sussex Police had lost 126 officers in a year.

Some of the loss was to help the force save £52million by 2015.

The figures - released by the Home Office - showed that Sussex Police was one of 32 forces in England and Wales which saw a decrease in officers.

Ms Bourne said she hoped the public would be reassured by the increase in Special Constables.

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