
Council officers to suit up and fight crime

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By Alice Foster

The police and crime commissioner has said council officers wearing fluorescent jackets and cameras will soon join the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour.

Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner Kevin Hurley said council workers will assist with law enforcement on the streets as part of a pilot scheme expected to start in Reigate and [Banstead](#) this January.

Mr Hurley said council officers will be kitted out in fluorescent jackets and peaked caps as well as body-worn cameras, which can capture antisocial behaviour, provide protection and ID offenders.

He said: "They will have a visible uniform. They will deter criminals by sheer presence and offer reassurance to the public.

"We are going to use an audacious approach using every form of enforcement to go after offenders."

The potential partnership approach in Surrey has been influenced by the example of Newham Council which has enforcement officers in uniform.



Mr Hurley said it is easier to close a brothel because the owner does not have planning consent to run a business than through a police raid to collect evidence of condoms and catch women with men.

He said: "It's a very expensive policing operation. Then you have to process it through the criminal courts and a year later they are convicted."

He also referred to notorious gangster Al Capone, who led a prohibition-era crime syndicate in Chicago, adding: "They did him on tax evasion. You get them on a different offence."

He said: "Decent people do not throw litter on the floor. Only bad people do and they do other stuff."

He added: "We can all stand around wringing our hands and saying things ain't how they used to be and someone should do something.

"This is a case of Reigate and Banstead and the police rolling our sleeves up and doing something about it."

A Reigate and Banstead Council spokeswoman said they already have a team of community officers who have enforcement powers for fly tipping, littering and dog fouling.

In addition she said the council also has powers relating to noise, environmental health, health and safety and parking offences.

She said: "We have been in discussions with the police and crime commissioner and Surrey Police about how we can all work together to maximise our existing powers to tackle anti-social behaviour and those issues that cause concern for our residents.

"These discussions are still at a very early stage, so no decisions have been made yet about how the project will work in practice."

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