

11 September 2007

New Keighley policing plans “misguided” says Hopkins

Plans to include parts of Bradford in a newly expanded Keighley police division have been described as “short-sighted, misguided and wrong” by Kris Hopkins, the Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Keighley and Ilkley, who said it was clear the changes were being forced on local police commanders because of budget pressures from central Government.

Earlier this year West Yorkshire Police announced that the three divisions – Bradford South, Bradford North and Keighley - currently covering Bradford district would be reduced to two to align them more closely with council wards.

Consultation between West Yorkshire Police and partners across the district is ongoing with the intention that the new boundaries come into operation later this year.

However, whilst he said he had no doubt West Yorkshire Police were well-intentioned in their desire to improve local partnership working, Cllr Hopkins argued that the changes would inevitably lead to a reduction in the quality of policing in Keighley with resources being diverted into areas previously part of one of the two Bradford divisions.

He commented:

“Despite the sterling efforts of our police, crime is continuing to rise in this country. However, rather than increase resources available to help officers take on the criminals, this Government seems hell bent on saving money from police budgets as part of this autumn’s Comprehensive Spending Review. The decision to reduce the number of police divisions in Bradford district from three to two is an inevitable consequence of this.

“Relations between Keighley Police and local residents have always been strong based on a strong community focus. But these relationships will be diluted as officers are dragged out of their normal beats in Keighley and into parts of Bradford with higher incidences of crime.

“Everyone, whether they live in Bradford or Keighley, deserves the best policing that their taxpayers’ money can buy and the new arrangements will not deliver this result.

“The Government’s penny pinching is continuing to have an extremely detrimental impact across the full range of our public services. The NHS is in crisis, our post offices are being closed and now the police are joining the Armed Forces in being subjected to a financial squeeze.

“The decision to reduce the number of police divisions in Bradford district is short-sighted, misguided and wrong.”

ENDS