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People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Doubts cast on North Wales Police crime figures

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A RETIRED police inspector has hit out at North Wales Police and the Police Authority for trying to “hoodwink” the public over crime figures.

Former police officer David Curtis has slammed the police for claiming crime is falling and the public are wrong to be fearful of crime. His criticism follows a claim by North Wales Police Authority that crime has fallen by 15% and public perception of crime is far worse than statistics reflect. Mr Curtis has labelled the regulative body **patronising** ahead of public consultation meetings across the region entitled **Perception v Reality**.

“By saying perception versus reality they are saying crime has fallen, but of course that is only reported crime,” said Mr Curtis, who is the chairman of the Old Colwyn Residents’ Association. When you think about it alongside some areas of Britain, it is safe, but we do have our problems. On November 5 we had a huge riot in Colwyn Bay, and to ignore that, to say there is no problem, is blindfolding yourself. I think it is patronising, what they are trying to do is hoodwink us.”

Mr Curtis said he believed North Wales Police went to some lengths to avoid incidents being recorded as crime.

“We had a situation in Old Colwyn where a car wing mirror was kicked off, the police officers couldn’t find who did it so they wanted the victim to agree it was an accident and withdraw it as a crime. They travelled four miles to try and get the crime dropped. If they are willing to put that much resource into getting rid of the evidence of crime of course statistics are going to fall.”

But North Wales Police Authority says statistics prove the region is one of the safest places to live in the country, and is holding six public meetings to deliver the message. It says the number of recorded crimes has dropped by 15% in the last two years, which it says is the largest fall in England and Wales.

Rhian Rees Roberts, the Authority’s newly appointed policy officer, said: *“The detection rate is up from 21% in 2002/03 to 40% in 2007/08, and North Wales has the second highest sanctioned detection rate in England and Wales. Sanctioned detections are those in which the offenders are confirmed but the cases may not have reached court. However, national figures demonstrate that fear of crime and anti-social behaviour is higher in North Wales than in many areas of England and Wales despite the higher detection rate. Why should that be so when there’s a less than 3% chance of anyone becoming a victim of crime?”* Mrs Roberts said: *“We hope the public will grasp the opportunity to attend the meetings and express their views. Senior officers of the Police Authority will provide an overview of the situation across the region and local inspectors will explain in more detail the local perspective.”*

The PPP comments ... We endorse Dave Curtis’ take on North Wales’ Police policy and performance. We are particularly concerned that the new Policy officer appears to be from the the Alistair Campbell school for spin Doctors. We will endeavor to bring you the facts, good and bad in as clear a presentation as possible Watch this space!