

Appendix one

Police and Crime Panel, November 2023

Question from the public

Figures from the annual report of 2022-2023 showed that Herts Constabulary conducted 6,949 stop searches in 2022. 457 of those were conducted in Welwyn Hatfield.

Data from crimerate.co.uk shows that Hatfield has the second highest crime rate in the county and the second lowest number of stop searches conducted in Herts last year.

I'd like to ask David Lloyd and Panel why Hatfield, which is the second most dangerous town in Hertfordshire had the second number of stop searches conducted by Hertfordshire Constabulary between 2022 and 2023 and also if Herts PCC could tell residents the reason why there's been a decline in stop and search numbers since he took office in 2012.

Answer

In April 2014, the Government introduced the best use of stop and search scheme. The scheme increased transparency around stop and search through better recording of incidents, introduced community scrutiny to ensure that powers were used appropriately and, crucially, required a more intelligence led approach with the aim of increasing positive outcomes. That led to better standards around stop and search, and to a fall in the use of stop and search across the country.

Stop and search is one tool that police officers can use, and it can be a very useful tool. The decision to stop is an operational one, so to that extent it is not a question for me. I monitor its use through the stop and search scrutiny panel, and I am assured that it is used appropriately in Hertfordshire. That means that it is used proportionately, legally and ethically. It is still the case

that black people are stopped and searched more than others, and that is something that my office and I are scrutinising and addressing.

It is not the case that I would expect to see a direct correlation between overall crime rates and stop and search. Not all crimes would be prevented nor their harm reduced by increased use of stop and search. I would expect to see a correlation between intelligence and stop and search, and I do see that through our monitoring processes.