

## **Dedicated rural and town neighbourhood policing comes to North Dorset**

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# **Dorset Police**

### **Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) in North Dorset are being restructured to better meet the differing needs of rural and town areas.**

Previously, the teams were organised based on location alone and covered both the town and rural areas of Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Sturminster Newton and Blandford. The new team structure will reflect the need to respond to competing priorities in town and rural areas.

Blandford Town will have a dedicated team, consisting of five police community support officers (PCSOs) and one police constable (PC), overseen by a police sergeant. A further town-based team will cover Gillingham and Shaftesbury, made up of six PCSOs, two PCs and overseen by a police sergeant.

The final team will police the rural areas of North Dorset. The current Gillingham Rural, Shaftesbury Rural, Blandford Rural and Sturminster Newton teams will be combined into one team, dedicated to rural policing. A police sergeant will manage two PCs and six PCSOs.

North Dorset Neighbourhood Inspector, Rob Chalkley, said: "This model is already working well in the East of the county, so we are excited to get it up and running here in North Dorset.

"The issues facing our towns and our rural areas are different, so they require a bespoke approach from their neighbourhood police. This restructure will ensure that teams have the correct expertise, resources and time to assist the communities they serve.

"The introduction of a dedicated rural NPT in North Dorset will ensure that rural communities receive the policing support they require, without resources being diverted to deal with demand in the towns. This complements the increased focus on rural communities Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Martyn Underhill led with the introduction of Pan-Dorset Rural Crime Team, who the rural NPT will work alongside.

"The new NPTs will also work closely with the teams of response officers, who respond to calls for service across North Dorset, to protect our most vulnerable victims, robustly police our crime hotspot areas and monitor and deter active offenders."

PCC Martyn Underhill, commented: "Over half of Dorset's residents live in rural areas, so it is critical that we continue to develop our approach to rural crime.

"The introduction of the Rural Crime Team last year represented an important step towards consistency in intelligence, reporting and crime prevention. Consolidating the work done to tackle rural crime in North Dorset into one team that is equipped with the correct knowledge and expertise will help to continue this positive trend."

