



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

PADDY TIPPING LABOUR MP FOR SHERWOOD

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Earlier this year I undertook a large survey across North Nottinghamshire asking for people's opinions on crime and, in particular, knife crime. The response was overwhelming, almost 2000 residents replied of which about 200 attached detailed individual letters.

Clearly crime and people's perceptions of it remain high on the agenda in Nottinghamshire. It really is important that local politicians understand residents concerns and respond to them.

An analysis of the responses has now been completed and showed that a very large majority, 91%, felt that sentences for knife and gun crime should be increased substantially.

I was pleased that a large majority supported my view that parents should be held responsible for their children's poor behaviour. For example, 80% of responses believed that parents should be fined if their children offended. High family standards really can make a difference.

Interestingly, there was a more mixed response about questions on whether local residents should be more directly involved in deciding sentences for offences committed locally. About 70% of those who replied supported the notion of Community Courts where neighbours, families and local residents can attend court cases. A lower figure, 60% believed that local people should be directly involved in deciding the punishment for offenders committing crimes in their neighbourhoods.

A number of other themes emerged strongly. There was real concern about the level of loutish and yobbish behaviour in some areas. There was a strong and continuing pleas for more uniformed officers regularly patrolling our streets. Questions were asked about the value for money that Nottinghamshire Police provided. There was a feeling that the court system was out of touch with the realities found in some communities.

It is interesting to compare these views with some of the facts. Knife crime in Nottinghamshire has fallen by more than a quarter in a year according to Police figures. There were 59 stabbings with knives recorded in the twelve months to March 31st, 2008 – a 27% reduction on 81 the year before.

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Overall crime both in Nottinghamshire and nationally has been falling consistently for several years. What's more Police resources, the number of Police officers backed by new Government funded Police Community Support Officers are at record levels.

The performance of Nottinghamshire Police has been improving. They need to be congratulated on what they've achieved whilst being reminded that our Police Force remains a relatively poor performer.

As a local resident myself, I know it doesn't always feel like that. I want local resident to feel safe and secure in our homes and streets. That's why I shall shortly be meeting Nottinghamshire's new Chief Constable and then the Home Secretary to discuss my crime survey. It is important that those at the top acknowledge and respond to strong local feelings.

ENDS

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