

1st February 2007

Debate on the Police

House of Commons

Wednesday 31st January 2007

Column 253 - 254

In an intervention during the debate in the House of Commons on Wednesday 31st January Nicholas Soames intervened to ask Nick Herbert (Member of Parliament for Arundel and South Downs and the Shadow Minister of State for Police Reform):-

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Mid-Sussex) (Con): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way so soon in his response. As a fellow Sussex Member, he knows that Sussex police have been asked to do more and more. The settlement will make it much harder for them to deliver the target of 525 police community support officers, for which they budgeted under earlier Government commitments. The current plan will leave them with 171 fewer PCSOs. Does my hon. Friend agree that, in his constituency and mine, that represents a genuine disappointment for people who appreciate PCSOs and know that they do a valuable job, especially on low-level vandalism and antisocial behaviour?

Nick Herbert: I agree. The consequence of the so-called flexibility that the Minister mentioned is the withdrawal of the promise of 171 PCSOs in Sussex, or 8,000 nationally—4,000 in the so-called respect areas that the Government announced only a week ago.

Chief constables throughout the country were busy making promises to communities about the additional policing that they believed that they could provide. They will now be unable to do that.