# Government's police cutbacks threaten community safety with historic closures and token reintroductions



The push from the Liberal Democrats to reintroduce police counters in community venues exposes the devastating decline of visible policing across England and Wales—a trend driven by successive governments prioritising cost-cutting over public safety. Their proposal to open police desks in supermarkets, libraries, and town halls is a tired gimmick that entirely misses the point. The real issue is the government’s reckless neglect of frontline policing, which has led to the closure of hundreds of police stations and counters—some regions losing over 30 facilities in just a six-year span. Once again, the message is clear: communities are being left without the protection and face-to-face contact they desperately need and deserve.

Make no mistake: under the guise of “public confidence,” these proposals are mere Band-Aids for a broken system. The recent plan by London’s Metropolitan Police to cut public counters from 37 to just 19—only eight of which would operate 24/7—demonstrates how far the authorities are willing to go to save money at the expense of community safety. The justification that these counters are “used by very few people” is a stark attempt to justify neglect. In reality, it’s a thinly veiled strategy to further diminish the police’s presence in the very neighborhoods that need their support most. Recent statistics reveal victims waiting three times longer for assistance in London alone—yet the government turns a blind eye to the critical role community policing plays in deterring crime and building trust.

This ongoing centralisation and closure spree are forcing communities into a dangerous position, especially in rural and underserved areas where policing is already stretched thin. The proposal to shift responsibility from Police and Crime Commissioners—elected representatives accountable to the public—to regional mayors raises serious questions about transparency and accountability in law enforcement. Meanwhile, the government’s promises of savings are a false economy that undermines the safety of ordinary citizens. The public’s demand for more visible, approachable policing has been ignored for too long, and the consequences are mounting.

As the political landscape shifts, parties claiming to be “moderate” or “patriotic” are trying to position themselves as guardians of community safety. But in reality, they continue to support a narrative that sacrifices frontline police officers and face-to-face engagement on the altar of austerity. Opposing these cuts isn’t just about keeping police stations open; it’s about refusing to accept a future where community safety is sacrificed to bureaucratic cost-cutting. The need for real, tangible police presence in our neighborhoods is beyond debate—yet the authorities persist in undermining it at every turn.

The call to reopen police counters and strengthen community police engagement is long overdue. Citizens deserve police services that are accessible, trustworthy, and rooted in local trust—values that are being systematically stripped away. Instead of hollow promises and eye-catching proposals, what’s needed is a serious commitment to restoring police visibility and reversing the cuts that have left communities vulnerable. Anything less is a betrayal of public safety and an abdication of the government’s primary duty to protect its citizens.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckg6dd8207ro?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/lib-dems-police-england-labour-bournemouth-b1248750.html> - The Liberal Democrats have proposed establishing police desks in libraries, shopping centres, town halls, and other community hubs to restore community policing. This initiative aims to rebuild face-to-face interactions between the public and police, enhancing trust and accessibility. The funding for this plan would come from abolishing Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), the elected officials who oversee regional police budgets and priorities in England and Wales. The proposal was announced at the party's annual conference in Bournemouth, with Lisa Smart, the Lib Dems' home affairs spokeswoman, outlining the plans.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/people-wales-england-government-liberal-democrats-b996224.html> - The Liberal Democrats have highlighted a significant decline in police stations and counters across England and Wales, with over 200 closures in the past seven years. This reduction has led to public concerns about safety and the erosion of community policing. The party obtained these figures through freedom of information requests, revealing that 217 stations and counters were shut between 2015 and 2021, averaging 31 closures annually. London and the South East have experienced the most significant decreases, with Thames Valley Police closing 23 stations and 44 counters.
4. <https://www.libdemvoice.org/from-todays-lib-dem-news-6-28856.html> - An article discussing the challenges faced by public services in the UK, including the reduction in police station hours and closures of sub-post offices and libraries. It highlights the public's dissatisfaction with the decline in service availability and questions the efficiency of increased public spending. The piece also touches upon the government's response to these issues, suggesting that while there have been improvements in some areas, they may not match the scale of investment. The article critiques the government's focus on efficiency in the face of service reductions.
5. <https://www.libdemvoice.org/lib-dems-oppose-london-police-counter-closures-77947.html> - The Liberal Democrats have opposed the Metropolitan Police's plan to close nearly half of London's public-facing police front counters, reducing the number from 37 to 19, with only eight remaining open 24/7. This decision has raised concerns about the accessibility of police services for residents, particularly in areas like Wimbledon and Mitcham, where front counters will be entirely closed. The Met cites financial pressures as the reason for this 'rationalisation' strategy, but the move contradicts its previous commitment to maintain at least one public 24-hour counter per borough.
6. <https://www.mertonlibdems.org.uk/news/article/wimbledon-mp-slams-met-plan-to-close-police-front-counters-across-south-west-london> - Merton Liberal Democrats and Paul Kohler MP have expressed deep concern over the Metropolitan Police's decision to close nearly half of London's public-facing police front counters, including those in Wimbledon and Mitcham. This move means residents will lose the ability to report crimes face-to-face or seek help at their local police stations. The nearest 24/7 access points for affected residents will now be in Acton, Sutton, or Lambeth. The Met cites financial pressures as the reason for this 'rationalisation' strategy, but the move contradicts its previous commitment to maintain at least one public 24-hour counter per borough.
7. <https://www.libdemvoice.org/lib-dems-call-for-an-end-to-our-police-station-closures-and-for-a-return-to-community-policing-77948.html> - The Liberal Democrats have called for an end to police station closures and a return to community policing in London. They have uncovered that over the past year, police waiting times across London have increased significantly, with victims of crime waiting three times longer than in the rest of the country. The party is advocating for proper community policing, where officers are trusted, effective, and respond quickly, and has launched a petition to bring an end to police station closures and restore community policing.