



A Force To Be Reckoned With - Meet the Man Behind Op Galaxy

Over the last eight weeks, the man behind the expanded Op Galaxy team has kept quite a low profile, mainly because he's been busy orchestrating the magical proactive work of the team across East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire, but we thought you'd like to meet the mastermind behind the last couple of months' worth of action, and find out what really goes on behind the scenes....

Chief Superintendent Darren Downs has worked for Humberside Police for 28-years, starting out in 1992 as a patrol PC in North Hull and moving up the ranks of the force over the years, currently in the role of Commander for the North Bank, overseeing policing across East Yorkshire and our busy city of Hull.



With experience in a wide range of departments and units including Patrol, Neighbourhood Policing, Intell, Custody, Corporate Development, HR and across all the four Local Authority areas that make up the Humberside Force area, Ch Supt Downs was the ideal candidate to pull together the comprehensive plans for the expanded Op Galaxy team, to target the criminals and make our communities safer, but what does it really involve?

Ch Supt Downs explains: "The expanded Galaxy team was an idea that came from our Chief Constable Lee Freeman, as to how we could maximise on the reduction of crime during the lockdown period, and also send a very clear message to criminals as restrictions were eased that we would not tolerate any form of criminality.

"I wanted to continue with the already established Galaxy team, but add more resources from across the force to the team to be able to make a real impact and deliver highly visible, proactive target driven policing, to let criminals know how hard it would be for them to operate in across the Humberside force area

"I developed our plans so that they had three main objectives and that the team's work would focus on these areas of crime – Serious Acquisitive Crime such as burglary and theft, sexual offences including possession of indecent images and inciting sexual activity and dismantling organised crime groups involved in drugs and the exploitation of vulnerable people.

"This was because these crimes and offences cause the most significant harm to our communities, and also to enable us to concentrate on the criminals that are active within the force boundary area.

"However, what I wanted to make absolutely sure and what was a key part of the planning process and at the heart of all activity, was how we engaged with our local communities and explained what was happening in their area and why, and how they could help going forward.

"Neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs) have been pivotal for this element of the operation and their accessibility and visibility absolutely vital for community engagement. To ensure the success of the operation we heavily featured this area throughout all of our work, and I have made sure all our activity and action carried out has had a separate wraparound engagement plan the NPTs have delivered to our local communities."

The day to day running of the Galaxy team following the start date of Tuesday 26 May, was set up in a command structure of bronze, silver and gold, which is a typical structure in policing for operations.

Gold command has overall responsibility and has strategic oversight, giving direction and guidance to ensure the operation runs smoothly on a daily basis and objectives are continuously being achieved.

Silver is the heart of the operation, headed up and coordinated for Op Galaxy by Superintendents Jo Roe and Matt Peach, with all the information and intell fed in to silver, decisions made and arrangements and actions agreed.

Bronze are the officers and staff out on the frontline involved in and carrying out the action as part of the operation and are a crucial part in delivering successful results.

Ch Supt Downs continued: "We have been operating on a daily command rota which identifies on any given day of the week who the respective leads are, so all officers and staff were always fully briefed and in the loop with the day's activity.

"On some days with more than 10 warrants carried out simultaneously on a morning, our planning had to be precise and accurate to ensure we achieved the best results.

"The action also needed to be spread across the entire force area, with one week more heavily focussed on the North Bank, and the following week more resources

and action taking place on the South Bank, to ensure so all our communities would benefit from the action of Op Galaxy, as well there being no let up or place to hide for any offenders.

“The collation of intelligence and information is produced on daily basis by analysts, who form detailed documents that help us focus the work we undertake. This info comes from police led activity, however it also comes from our residents and it really is an invaluable part of the success we have achieved over the last two months, as it has given us a much clearer picture of where criminality is taking place and where to target.”

In just two months, the results have been really outstanding, now reaching:

751 arrests for various offences including drugs, robbery, burglary, sexual offences and theft

153 warrants executed at properties across East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire

234 people charged with crimes and currently going through the court process

Large quantities of drugs seized include cocaine, heroin and cannabis

An approx street value of drugs, predominately cannabis from factories discovered through warrants, being **in excess of £5 million**

Numerous weapons seized including a Hand Gun, Shot Gun, air rifle, two Tasers, Imitation Hand Gun, PAVA Spray, four Knuckle Dusters, four Bladed weapons, machete and an axe

More than 46 individuals detained on fail to appear warrants

Ch Supt Downs concluded: “Our priority will always be to keep the public safe and to protect vulnerable members of our community, and our aim has been is to make a real difference for the future, and to create a legacy that means we have a ‘new norm’ in tackling and reducing crime.

“The expanded Op Galaxy Team is continuing in its current form throughout the month, with the original proactive Galaxy Team eventually taking back the reins and carrying out further action as they have previously, protecting our communities and making the lives of those responsible for criminality across the Humberside Force area incredibly difficult, holding them to account for their crimes and bringing them to justice.”

Message Sent By

Sarah Howson (Police, Senior Communications Officer and Business Partner, Humberside)

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