

Mark Lancaster puts police red tape in the spotlight

A city MP has quizzed the government on how police officers can be freed of red tape to spend more time on the streets.

Mark Lancaster, MP for Milton Keynes North, asked the Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice Nick Herbert what the government was doing to reduce the burden of health and safety rules on police officers.

The Minister replied, during Home Office question time on Monday, that the government had issued new guidance for police and appealed for a 'common-sense approach' towards such regulation.

While Mark welcomed the government's commitment to reducing the burden of red tape, as a bomb disposal officer in the Territorial Army he empathised with officers who were delayed from doing their dangerous jobs by a 'mountain of paper work'.

The Minister praised one chief constable's work in reducing police hours taken up by bureaucracy, and said that 800,000 police hours a year will be saved by scrapping stop forms and easing the burden of stop-and-account forms.

Mark later said: "It is good news that the government is committed to tackling the restrictions of red tape on police officers, but the war on bureaucracy and overzealous health and safety rules is ongoing, and more can be done. Police officers should be free to spend their time on the streets keeping us safe, rather than in the station filling out forms."