

PUBLIC MEETING

DATE 13TH MAY 2013
LOCATION PLUME SCHOOL, FAMBRIDGE ROAD, MALDON
TIME 5.50PM – 7.30PM`

SPEAKERS

Nick Alston (PCC) – Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Ch. Insp. Steve Ditchburn - Local District Commander
Hazel Berrett – Chair of Community Safety Partnership

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Burglary and Theft
2. Visibility of Police
3. Marine Crime
4. Topics for discussion raised by the audience

HIGHLIGHTS OF PRESENTATION

1. BURGLARY AND THEFT

- 2012/2013 House burglary increased over the previous year, rising from 81 to 97 offences, whilst burglary of shops, offices, sheds and garages fell slightly.
- Theft from motor vehicles, theft of pedal cycles and shoplifting fell, but theft of motor vehicles, garden ornaments and scrap metal rose.
- Police regularly liaise with Neighbourhood Watches. A Farmwatch scheme has been launched in Maldon and Dengie to support farmers in tackling rural crime.
- Theft from Vehicles has reduced by 12.3% (44 fewer offences)
- Other theft and handling have increased by 13.3% (44 more offences)
- You can help reduce burglaries by securing your home and don't forget the rear gate!
- Crime Reduction Officer can come out to your home to assess your security

2. POLICE VISIBILITY

- Essex police aim to attend 90% of all emergency response calls within 15 minutes in urban areas and 20 minutes in rural areas.
- Response and Patrol (R&P) policing teams, who attend the majority of the emergency incidents, are based at Chelmsford Police Station.
- R&P are supported by Neighbourhood Crime Team officers based at Maldon Police Station who deal with a range of duties, including incident demand, appointments, missing persons and the night-time economy.
- 2012/2013 saw 4669 emergency response incidents in the Chelmsford and Maldon areas. 86.2% of these were attended within target.
- Response times have steadily improved since January. 92.2% of emergency incidents were attended within target in March.

3. MARINE POLICE

The Marine unit operates in collaboration with Kent police. The Essex Marine unit is based at Burnham on Crouch. Essex Police Marine officers are trained and equipped to carry out the following functions;

- Patrol using advanced intercept and surveillance craft (trained to advanced offshore powerboat and yacht master standard)
- Search and rescue, offshore and inland.
- Mud rescue
- Fast water and flood rescue
- Specialist inland search
- Specialist crime investigation in the maritime environment
- Forensic body recovery

Marine Unit community officers and regular officers place an emphasis on crime reduction and prevention including the following:

- Marine watch system
- Crime and community surgeries
- Marina visits and talks
- Owner education and crime prevention techniques
- Schools visits (including water safety)

Questions

1. BURGLARY AND THEFT

Q1 Does the existence of regular offenders indicate a lack of success in the judicial system?

A1 People have differing views. Prevention is more effective, so we must look at the causes of crime. Alcohol and drugs play a big part as a cause of crime and preventing addiction will be more successful and cost effective. One estimate is that 90% of people going into Chelmsford Prison used drugs in the previous 12 months. The Government announced that Probation will be working with all those released from prison as currently there is no aftercare for those serving less than 1 year.

Q2 Of the 91 burglaries how many were millennium burglaries?

A2 Millennium burglaries are those where the burglary is intended to steal the keys of a high value motor vehicle at the address. The number of these offences is very low as Maldon is very difficult to drive in and out of without being observed. These thieves are involved in serious or organised crime and good use of intelligence and police operations has reduced the number of these offences.

Q3 At what level are your sanction detection rates?

A3 Last year it was very low at about 10%. Currently they stand at 22% as we have been very successful in arresting and convicting a number of prolific offenders.

The PCC has tasked the force with reducing all crime but has not set specific targets. The new Chief Constable has set three broad objectives for the force, bring down crime; increase detection rates and people must feel that crime is reducing and thereby feel safer.

Q4 The new government initiative of providing probation for all ex-offenders released from prison, the Probation Service is under staffed and under-funded. How realistic is this initiative?

A4 This is an exciting initiative. It costs £40k to keep an adult in prison for 12 months however probation for the same period costs £6k. The government will be seeking private sector participation in the scheme which will pay on results.

Q5 Why does it cost so much to keep someone in prison?

A5 The costs are enormous, heating; food; security; accommodation and staff costs for a start. However these can rise for significantly for other groups of detainees. For example the cost of detaining a 14 year old girl in secure accommodation is up to £240k per person, per year.

2. POLICE VISIBILITY

Q1 Is policing a complex business or is it a complicated business?

A1 Policing can be very complex and it is important to make the best use of intelligence. For example police need to know where incidents regularly occur to enable them to calculate what level of staffing is required to respond to them. Officers with the right skills need to be in the right place so they are able to respond within target. But policing can be approached from very simple principles; look after the public; treat them well; give them the best service possible and ensure they are happy with the service they receive.

Q2 The force has helicopters, motor cycles and uses these in policing operations. The force also has ANPR, does it enhance intelligence led policing?

A2 Motor cycles are part of the casualty reduction unit and have limitations for response policing use. The helicopter is part of the National Police Air Service and Essex Police use the helicopter for appropriate deployments and when one is requested, the nearest helicopter is deployed to assist. ANPR is used across the county, some systems are fixed and others are in police vehicles. Additional ANPR would always be useful.

Action: Ch. Supt. Carl O'Malley to arrange a meeting with the PCC and partners regarding ANPR use.

Q3 By how much do you use the press and media?

A3 The media are very important and there are a number of journalists present this evening. There is a need for a balanced view about crime and its reporting.

Action: PCC to hold a seminar with journalists to discuss press reporting of crime

3. MARINE POLICING

Q1 How do you prioritise the jobs that you do?

A1 The Marine Unit has a calendar of events to ensure that occasions such as the Clacton Air Show and others are covered by the marine unit. Enforcement action is normally pre-planned with the local responsible authority.

Q2 How secure is the continuity of the Marine Unit?

A2 All specialist units are under scrutiny regarding cost and the value they provide. This is a continual process as circumstances and needs change. The Marine Unit costs £0.5m per annum so there is a continual review to see if the work can be done in a better way at

less cost. The whole unit is community focused although part of the work is anti-terrorism work.

4. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Q1 Before the 101 number there was the 0300 number which was expensive. Is the 101 number free?

A1 It is absolutely essential that all crime is reported so that the police have a good knowledge of what is going on. If the crime is in progress use the 999 system. If it is not, use the 101 number. The 101 system is not yet as efficient as Essex Police would like it to be and improvements are being made. The 101 number has a flat rate cost of 15p per call.

Q2 When something is reported on the 101 line, the police are grateful for the information but there is never any feedback, why not?

A2 Essex Police would ideally like to phone everybody back, but there are only sufficient operators to answer the calls and while they are calling back, they are not answering the phones to new calls. There are also decisions to be made about how many times you call back if the person does not reply. However it is recognised that calling people back does improve customer satisfaction.

Action: PCC to obtain more comprehensive data regarding 101 calls – costs and statistics; calls and call-backs

Q3 Why do young people never hear anything about crimes and Neighbourhood Watch?

A3 Neighbourhood Watch was described. Neighbourhood Watch should be developed so that it can be used as a method of passing information back to the police.

Action: Hazel Berret Information to young people can be included in Crucial Crew when it is delivered in Schools

Action: PCC to develop ideas for youth engagement in crime reduction

Q4 When does an ASB incident become a statistic?

A4 Any incident brought to the attention of police irrespective of the way that incident is closed is a statistic. Not all reports of ASB will be followed up but the Neighbourhood Policing Team does review all ASB incidents.

Q5 Are PCSOs being phased out?

A5 There are no plans to phase out PCSOs. Vacancies from natural wastage have not been filled over the last 12 to 18 months.

Q6 There has been a constant theme of a lack of resources. How does the expenditure of the PCC compare to the expenditure of the Essex Police Authority that you replaced?

A6 I hope to run the office of the PCC at a level of 20% less than the EPA of three years ago. It was then about £1.5m or £1.6m and I intend my budget to be about £1.2m.