

Notes of Basildon Public Meeting

4th September 2013

Speakers:

- Nick Alston (PCC) – Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex
- Chief Inspector Glen Pavelin (GP) – Basildon District Commander
- Gerry Levelle (GL) – Chair of CSP Tasking and Co-ordination Group
- Chief Superintendent Luke Collison (LC) – Local Policing Area Commander

PCC gave welcome and introduction to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Enable the PCC to hear the public's concerns about policing
- Enable the public to hear and understand the facts about crime and policing
- Discuss three points of focus
- To discuss points raised by the audience

The PCC highlighted the points of focus as:

- **House Burglary**
- **Night Life**
- **Community Safety Action Zones**

Essex Police

GP provided an outline of policing in Basildon and the most prevalent crimes.

Vehicle crime is lower this year to date, compared to last year to date, with a significantly lower number of crimes recorded. There is a need for the community to pass information about vehicle crime to the police. The reasons for the improvement are:

- Policing in Basildon has become more offender focused
- Persistent offenders are targeted

Theft of metal: Essex Police is leading the way nationally and a number of scrap metal dealers have been prosecuted under the new legislation.

Drug dealing: Specific action has been and continues to be taken against drug dealers in Basildon. An operation by the Serious Crime Directorate in Basildon has also seen a number of drug dealers appear in Court recently. Good intelligence has been received and drug taking has been linked to other crimes.

Community Safety Partnership

GL Basildon held a Young Peoples Alcohol Conference which was the first in Essex. The next conference is to be held on the 27th November at Wat Tyler Park, Basildon.

The CSP are to tour the Basildon night-life 'hotspots' to inform them regarding the provision of resources.

The SOS bus is used at Festival Park and this reduces the number of people taken to A&E and is part funded by the CSP.

The annual 'Together Against Crime' event has been held and was a successful event.

Police - Dwelling Burglary

GP briefly outlined the current pattern and seasonal trends. Essex Police have good links with British Transport Police and there have been significant arrests around the railway network. Police operations will take into account all the seasonal factors.

Dwelling burglars are also involved in retail crime and Essex Police are following an intelligence led strategy and are targeting repeat offenders.

Some repeat offenders are consenting to use the Bunny Tag system, which identifies their location at all times. Integrated Offender Management is also used to manage the most persistent offenders.

In the rolling year there has been a rise in the numbers of burglaries, but the numbers are still less than last year.

Q1 What resources are there to combat social media bullying?

A1 Essex Police have an on-line crime investigation team and a Child On-line Exploitation team

Q2 What are the crime detection success rates?

A2 The detection rate is between 15 to 20%, which is lower than we want. The Chief Constable wants to increase the detection rate as part of his aim to reduce crime. In total, 4/5 of victims of crime are broadly satisfied with the policing response.

Q3 There is a reduction in staffing levels of PCSOs and some PCSOs cover a number of areas.

A3 Essex Police have to strike a balance as we have less officers than we did before and the structure has had to change to make it more efficient. Across Basildon, each Neighbourhood officer has a PCSO assistant. We must do the best we can with limited resources and balance the demands on us with community reassurance. Community messaging will be used to pass information between the police and the public. When we respond to a dwelling burglary, a certain number of houses both sides of the burglary will be visited to make enquiries.

Q4 The second round of the Community Safety Fund has now been implemented, it came out in July with only two weeks to apply. Will it continue?

A4 It will be kept going, there will be no more deadlines and you can apply on a rolling basis.

Q5 Why do we not make better use of CCTV, both police and partners, and other surveillance to help detect crime and charge more people?

A5 Partnership is absolutely essential and we do not work in silos. Legislation for the use of CCTV on domestic premises is restrictive. Detection rates rest on having enough evidence to charge and then it is for the CPS to decide. The decision to charge rests on the quality of evidence provided. Essex Police have under-invested in technology.

Night Life

GP gave an update on Night Life in Basildon explaining the uniqueness of the Festival Leisure Park. Other areas night life ends earlier and their customers then feed into the Festival Leisure Park. There is a lot of partnership working to reduce crime but there still

have been a number of serious violent offences, but there is not a serious Night Time economy problem. Serious violence offences can take place anywhere and can include domestic abuse.

Q1 What will be the effect on crime when the lights are switched off at night? In addition shift workers will have to return home in the dark, will they be safe?

A1 The lights will continue at the Festival Leisure Park and at junctions. There is no evidence that burglaries will increase. Basildon Council have thought very hard about this issue and will respond effectively to any evidence coming to light.

Community Safety Action Zone

GL outlined developments. The latest CSAZ is in St Martins and they are ward based with a local focus concentrating on what the community wants. They are driven by crime statistics. Key issues in St Martins have been groups collecting around shops and at school closing times linked to drug problems. A Pharmacy which issued methadone has stopped this activity during school closing times. Frierns will be the next CSAZ.

Q1 There is no long term legacy and we must have community involved and listened to. Rye Street was a 60mph limit and a petition wanted it reduced to 30mph. The council did not consult and reduced it to 40mph and now the Council refuses to consult further. The councillor responsible is not voted for in our area and so we cannot vote him out.

A1 Speed and Road safety is a priority and police undertake surveys to identify the problems. Action is based on a need for enforcement.

ACTION PCC To find out more about this subject.

Q2 Langdon Hills High Road is a 30mph zone but speeding has been a problem for many years.

A2 Speeding is still a priority and Essex Police have an excellent roads policing team.

ACTION GP To engage with the Casualty Reduction Bureau and will look into this area.

Q3 Legal Highs are a problem what is being done about them?

A3 They are a fast moving part of the illicit drugs economy. Drugs are changing very quickly and they are easily obtained from the internet. Police are aware of this problem and are working with partners and specialist officers visit sellers. Some are sold not for human consumption and can be fatal when taken. We are working with schools to inform our young people about risky behaviour.

Q4 Why are so many police stations closing?

A4 These are tough choices. The first round of budget cuts was about £40m per year and the second round about £20m per year more. Estates consume a lot of funds. We had to look at what benefits a particular police station was providing. If they were not providing value then they were closed. We will look at other methods of communication, volunteers, mobile police stations or other contact methods such as Twitter and Facebook.

Q5 Laindon Police Station is a façade as people believe it is full of officers. When you shut the station, people no longer believe that it is full of officers and the perception goes. This station was purpose built about a year ago.

A5 We have commenced a major review of estates. Every officer behind a desk is an officer who cannot be deployed outside. We must ensure we deliver our services, which is different to having a police station open.

ACTION PCC To discuss with Chief Constable why a police station full of officers cannot be open.

Q6 If you want the public to help, you must help communities in return by attending their events when requested.

A6 Whilst Essex Police will try to attend events when requested, we must balance resources and make hard decisions about how we use them. We have to operate differently.

Q7 When dealing with parking offences police sometimes only leave notes on cars, why is this?

A7 The leaving of notes on cars is sometimes the most effective way of dealing with an issue. PCSOs do not have the same powers as officers. If this doesn't work, the PCSO can call on an officer to assist.

Q8 Psychological abuse, do we give it sufficient weight in domestic abuse cases?

A8 Domestic abuse includes psychological abuse and police will respond appropriately. There are stated cases that this type of abuse can be classed as an assault.

Q9 Will the remaining traveller site be removed?

A9 Basildon Council has agreed to take action. They have given an undertaking to the High Court not to commence action until an outstanding legal challenge has been on the 22nd October.