

Colchester Public Meeting

12th July 2013
YMCA Activity Centre
16:30 to 18:30

Speakers

Nick Alston (PCC) – Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Cllr Tim Young – Planning, Community Safety & Culture Portfolio Colchester Council
Richard Phillibrown - Chief Inspector & Local District Commander for Essex Police
Jim White – Inspector for Essex Police
Carl O'Malley Chief Superintendent for Essex Police

Agenda items

1. Domestic Abuse
2. Evening and Night Time Economy
3. Knife Crime

Highlights of Presentation

All Crime

- Over the past two years crime has fallen with 2012/2013 showing a 4.8%, theft from motor vehicles (323 fewer offences) for the period of 1st August 2012 to 31st July 2013 when compared to the same period the previous year.

Community Safety Partnership

- Priorities for Colchester District Council
- CSP supporting the work of the police

Domestic Abuse

- Reducing Domestic Abuse is a key area of focus in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan for Essex 2013-14
- Colchester district council works closely with Essex Police and other partners to ensure Colchester remains a safe place to live, work and visit

Colchester's busy night-life

- Colchester is one of the busiest night-time venues in the county, with nearly 100 licensed premises
- The residential population includes soldiers and students who provide significant support to the local retail economy both during the day and at night
- Purple Flag accreditation has been awarded to the district as a safe and enjoyable night-time economy with good transport links

Knife Crime and Drugs

- Only Cowards Carry campaign to change attitudes of people not to use or carry knives through the delivery of educational programmes in local schools
- The police continue to work closely with partners from the local drug treatment agencies, NHS and related charities to share information and provide a multi-agency enforcement

1. Domestic Abuse

Reducing domestic abuse is a key area of focus in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan for Essex 2013-14.

Domestic abuse incidents can range from a social media interaction or verbal argument between those in a relationship or close family to an incident involving violence and in the most serious cases, can lead to murder.

Q.1 What about the perpetrator?

A.1 A perpetrator strategy was drawn up in July this year to outline how to deal with the perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Q.2 What can the public do about this?

A.2 Once Essex Police know of the incident – measures are put into place to safeguard people. If the public have a genuine concern they should either ring the non-emergency number 101 which will direct you to the referral unit. Crime Stoppers is another point of call and you can report incidents anonymously.

Q.3. All services are seeing spending cuts, how do agencies ensure that domestic abuse is tackled as a top agenda?

A.3. Domestic abuse is a high priority as outlined in the Police and Crime Plan. The government is determined to support offending and re-offending in this area, which is why Payment by results from the commercial sector. The PCC is committed to taking a joined up approach with all other agencies.

2. Evening and Night Time Economy

Most of Colchester town centre is covered by a Designated Public Place Order. A multi-agency approach is adopted to ensure a safe environment e.g. SOS bus, Street Pastors and zone managers.

Q.1 Is there a law that license holders should not sell alcohol at reduced significantly low prices?

A.1 There is no law against this. Pub Watch meetings try to encourage holders not to sell drinks at ridiculous prices – inciting drinking. Promote 'responsible drinking'.

Q.2 What is being done to get information out to the public?

A.2 The Police use a number of partner agencies and forums to publicise what is going on, where and why. Essex Police are looking into a Community Messaging system which will be looking towards promoting an innovative communication tool to get the right messages out to a wider audience.

Q.3. What is the law around drinking alcohol on the streets?

A.3. There are designated zones in the town centre which means if an individual is found to be consuming alcohol in these areas, they are in breach. The alcohol will be removed from them. Any issues around anti-social behaviour will also be addressed to include if the police suspect that individuals will attempt aggravated crime.

Q.4. Ipswich have a 'reducing the strength scheme', is Essex looking to adopt something similar?

A.4. At the moment there is a lot of engagement with the local community safety partner to not sell alcohol stronger than 6%. An educational route works better than serving a penalty.

3. Knife Crime and Drugs

There were 31 serious offences involving knives or sharp instruments in Colchester this past year against 29 the previous year.

Partnership work aims to develop crime reduction initiatives.

Q.1 What is being done by the police to deal with local drug issues?

A.1 Intelligence information is received and an action plan is drawn up based on the information provided. This is one of the areas in the Police and Crime Plan where the PCC is responsible for holding the Chief Constable to account.

Q.2 What is the view of street lights being turned off being linked in to crime?

A.2 Essex County Council are the decision makers for switching off street lights. Evidence has shown that when the street lights are turned off there is no increase of crime.

Actions

- Colchester district council to do more work around the promotion of responsible drinking
- Colchester district council to challenge Essex County Council on street lights consultation