

Harlow Public Meeting

September 17 2014

District Profile

Harlow is a new town that is located in the west of the county and on the border with Hertfordshire, on the Stort Valley. It is one of three districts that make up the West Local Policing Area.

The new town was built after World War II to ease overcrowding in London. The development incorporated the market town of Harlow, now a neighbourhood known as Old Harlow, and the villages of Great Parndon, Latton, Tye Green, Potter Street, Churchgate Street, Little Parndon, and Netteswell.

A major feature of the new town is its green space, with over a third of the town being parkland or open space. Harlow Town Park is one of the largest urban parks in Britain, and occupies a large area of the central town. Each estate is also separated by open space.

The district has a population of 81,944 (2011 census) with an employment rate of 72.2%, which is above the national average of 70.5%.

Policing Structure and Resources

A new local policing model has been introduced this month and details will soon be published on the Essex Police website and PCC website. Harlow is policed from one centrally located police station, which affords easy access for the public and a good base to respond to calls for service. The station houses the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) who work with the community to seek long term solutions to local problems. The station is also the base for the Local Policing Team (LPT) which provides a 24-hour service within the district, attending emergency responses and routine calls from the community. Custody, Scenes of Crime, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and one of the force's new Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams (Operation Juno) are also based at Harlow.

The front desk is open from 8am until midnight every day of the week. There is a magistrates' court co-located with the police station which is now only open for specialist hearings.

Safer Harlow Partnership

The Safer Harlow Partnership is made up of organisations, such as Harlow Council, Essex Police, Essex County Council, Essex Probation Service and others – working together to reduce crime, disorder and the misuse of drugs in the town.

It has five priorities for the year which are: reducing domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, house burglary, alcohol and drug abuse, and violent crime.

Crime trends for Harlow district

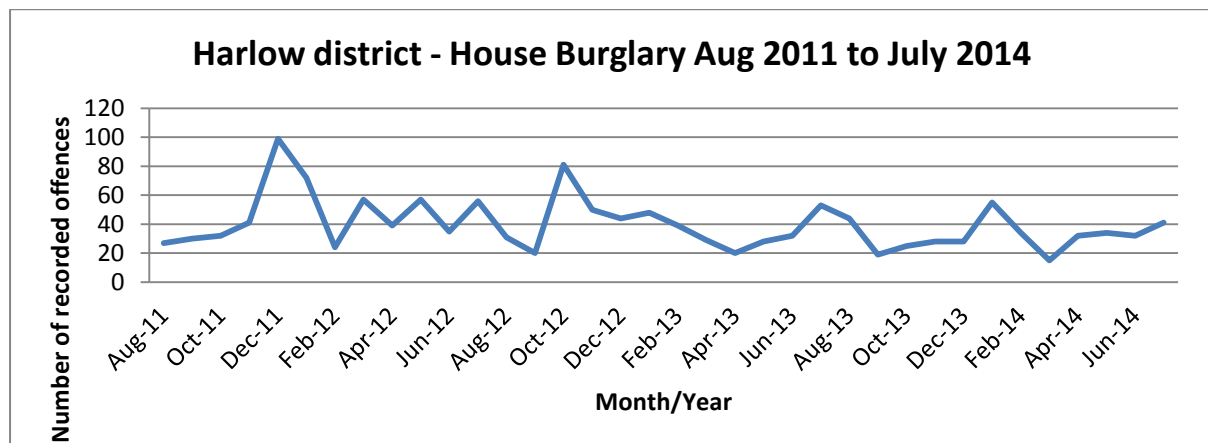
At the meeting on September 17, 2014 there will be detailed discussion about the crime trends and the facts which lie underneath the statistics.

Comparing reports for 1st August 2013 to 31st July 2014 with 1st August 2012 to 31st July 2013, areas of note include:

- All Crime has increased by 0.2% (10 more offences);
- House burglary has decreased by 17.7% (82 less offences);
- Robbery has decreased by 27.1% (35 less offences);
- Other Theft and Handling has decreased by 12.9% (99 less offences);
- Anti-Social Behaviour has decreased by 3.9% (157 less incidents);
- Shoplifting has increased by 14.7% (141 more offences);
- Other Violence Against the Person has increased by 12.0% (174 more offences);
- Serious Sexual Crime has increased by 21.3% (16 more offences).

Burglary

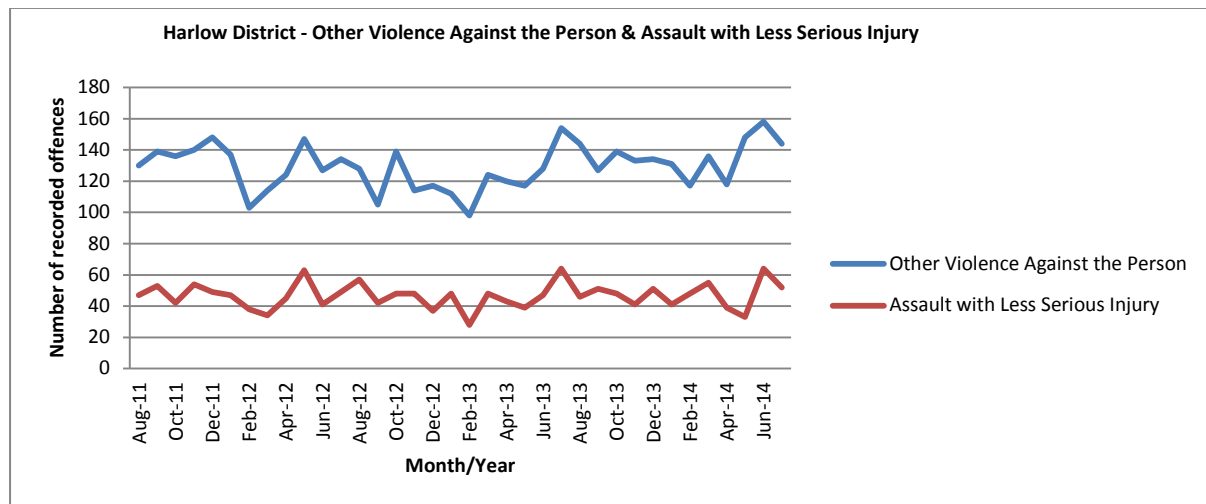
The number of house burglaries in Harlow has seen a significant reduction of 17.7% (82 fewer offences) over the period 1st August 2013 to 31st July 2014 compared to the same period during the previous year.



Under Essex Police's forcewide predictive policing operation to tackle burglary, officers visit burglary victims and patrols are undertaken to complete risk assessments on properties in the surrounding area. The risk assessments aim to identify vulnerable properties, people and vehicles and officers provide crime prevention advice to owners of such properties.

Other Violence Against the Person

The number of crimes of Other Violence Against the Person has increased by 12.0% (174 more offences) during the period 1st August 2013 to 31st July 2014 compared with the same period the previous year.



However, there has been an 11.5% reduction in Serious Violent Crime (six less offences).

Offences of Assault with Less Serious Injury have also increased during the same period by 3.6% (20 more offences). These two violent crime categories are wide ranging but include assaults occasioning actual bodily harm, harassment, making threats to kill and common assault. With the ever increasing use of social media it is anticipated that these offences will continue to increase.

Between August 2013 and July 2014, 30% of all Other Violence Against the Person crimes in Harlow resulted from a domestic incident. From this month Essex Police has introduced specialist Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams (Operation Juno) to policing districts. This will provide focus and expertise in dealing with issues surrounding domestic abuse.

Harlow Police are working closely with their partner agencies to support victims of domestic abuse. These agencies include 'Safer Places', which is an independent domestic abuse charity dedicated to supporting adults and children affected by domestic abuse and the 'National Centre for Domestic Violence', which is an organisation that provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence regardless of their financial circumstances, race, gender or sexual orientation.

When officers attend a report of domestic abuse they offer immediate support and protection to the victim. Measures are then put in place to safeguard the victim and prevent further abuse. Details of the above agencies are provided and arrangements can be made to place the victim in a refuge if required.

Local Policing Plans

From September 1, 2014, Essex Police has made changes to the way officers and police staff work across Essex. Each of the ten policing districts, under the direction of a local Chief Inspector, will now have a team of officers responsible for responding to and investigating crime and other community concerns. The new teams will be known as Local Policing Teams and will work from local stations 24-hours a day.

The changes will move officers to work under the direct control of local police commanders. A policing hub will operate in each district and will be led by a local inspector responsible for maintaining strong community ties and working with partners to tackle local problems.

The District Commander will provide a more localised overview of how these changes will take effect in Harlow.

Travellers

Irish Travellers have resided in Harlow since October 2013. It is believed their intention is to stay in the town until they can find an appropriate location to settle on permanently. Both the police and the local authority have powers to move the group in certain circumstances and have done so previously. As of 15th September, 2014, there are currently four unlawful encampments in Harlow: Coldharbour Road; Elizabeth Way; Katherine's Way; land adjacent to Aylets Field/Latton Bush Centre.

There are several powers that exist to deal with unauthorised encampments. However a first resort should always be that a "trespasser who enters land peaceably" is entitled to be asked to leave the land before they are forcibly removed. Various authorities then have the use of differing powers:

- Private land owners can use common law and private bailiffs to repossess their land.
- Local Authorities can use Section 77 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA) 1994 to direct individuals to remove vehicles, belonging and to leave highway land or any land occupied without the consent of the landowner. This process is complete through the magistrates' court and any breach of it becomes a criminal offences.
- Part 55 Civil Procedures Rules is the civil option which allows any landowner to regain possession of his/her land.
- Police have two emergency powers under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. Providing the landowner has already requested the encampment to move, police can, in some circumstances, request them to move at short notice using Section 61. Section 62a is as per 61, but on the basis that police are able to request the encampment to move onto available plots/site within the district or county. This would normally be a Transit site or Temporary Stopping place. However, there are none currently in existence in Essex. Police emergency powers cannot be applied on Highways, hence cannot be used on highway verges.
- An injunction is an order made by a Civil Court (County or High Court) which prohibits somebody from doing something. This is a straightforward option when applied to a single site, however, there are complexities in applying this to a wider area and multiple sites such has been the experience recently in

Harlow, in terms of formally identifying the land affected, on what basis the injunction is being applied for, whether it is enforceable and if successful, staking out all of the affected land and publicising the injunction.

- There have been other powers suggested in recent meetings such as Section 69 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. This refers to “aggravated trespass” where trespassers have deliberately trespassed with a view to prevent the lawful use of/lawful activity taking place. This would have applied to the likes of the anti-fox hunting protesters of the past trespassing to sabotage hunts. The Travellers are accessing the land to reside for a period of time, and not specifically to prevent any lawful use.

Several Section 61 notices have already been served with regard to unlawful encampments.

- On 30th June 2014 police took the decision that it was proportionate and necessary to serve a Section 61 on the encampment at **Katherine’s Playing Field** (also called **Tithelands**). The group left on 1st July 2014.
- On 8th July 2014 a Section 61 notice was served on the above group after they moved to Harlow District Council Land on **Third Avenue**.
- A separate group of Travellers were served a Section 61 notice after setting up an encampment on Latton Common. They left Harlow on 11th July 2014.
- On 10th July a separate group of approximately ten caravans were served a Section 61 notice after setting up an encampment on land belonging to **Arrow Electronics, London Road, Harlow**. The group left the site as directed on the same day and left Harlow.
- On 7th August a group of Travellers on **Southern Way/ Pear Tree Mead** were served a Section 61 notice.
- On 2nd September Travellers at **Waterhouse Moor Playing Field** were served Section 61 notices.
- On 9th September 2014 Travellers on private land on the **Newhall Development** of Harlow were served a Section 61 notice. They moved to their current location at Elizabeth Way.
- On 8th September a Section 61 notice was served on a new encampment on **Pincey Brook Road**. This group moved to their current location at on land adjacent to Aylets Field /Latton Bush Centre.

Your feedback is most welcome.

Should you wish to contact the PCC about this meeting or any other matter please e-mail:

pcc@essex.pnn.police.uk

or write to:

Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex
3 Hoffmanns Way
Chelmsford, CM1 1GU

News alerts will usually be tweeted via the Essex PCC Twitter account:

<https://twitter.com/essexpcc>

You can learn more about the PCC's work at:

www.essex.pcc.police.uk

The neighbourhood policing teams will always act on intelligence received from the community. If you have information regarding any criminal activity please either call your local team or contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Crimestoppers is an anonymous line where you can report any criminal activity.