

Southend Public Meeting

8th January 2015

District Profile

Southend has a current population estimated at 173,600 living in 74,700 homes across the borough.

Three of the seventeen wards in Southend: Victoria, Kursaal and Milton are in the top 20% most deprived areas in the East of England.

Southend has a thriving tourist industry and is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. Attractions include the High Street, seafront, arcades, beach and pier, a thriving night-time economy, a huge variety of restaurants and Southend United football club.

London Southend Airport is a fast growing provincial airport which is covered by Rochford District; however, it borders Southend District and its flight path crosses much of the town. The recent opening of a new terminal building and the increase in flights by various operators, including Easy Jet, has meant greater volume in air traffic.

Policing Structure, Demand and Resources

Southend is part of the South Local Policing Area and, although small in geographical size, it has the highest number of police incidents following calls for service of any district in Essex. Despite a 30% reduction since 2007, Southend also suffers the highest levels of recorded crime of any district in Essex. The three wards that make up the town centre (Milton, Kursaal and Victoria) are responsible for just over 5% of all the crime in Essex.

Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT)

The Neighbourhood Policing Teams in Southend district are overseen by a Local Policing and Partnerships Inspector, and are made up of neighbourhood Sergeants, neighbourhood Constables, retail crime officers, youth officers, Police Community Support Officers and customer contact administrators.

Each of the 17 wards has a dedicated neighbourhood Constable and Police Community Support Officer, who is a named contact for any community issues. The officers attend Local Community Meetings and work with the community to seek long-term solutions to local problems.

There are three police stations within the district at Southend Central, Leigh-on-Sea and Shoeburyness. The police station at Southend is open between 8am and midnight seven days per week. Leigh-on-Sea and Shoeburyness police stations are no longer open to the public, but officers are based there as part of the NPT.

The Town Beat Section covers retail crime in the district, crime on the High Street and the increased tourist trade in the spring and autumn along the seafront. The team works between 8am and midnight, seven days a week, and is made up of a Sergeant, Constables and PCSOs. It operates the town link radio system ensuring retailers can be in contact with officers on patrol.

Local Policing Teams

There are five Local Policing Teams working providing 24-hour coverage. Each team has an Inspector, two Sergeants and 20 Constables who deal with a wide range of policing duties, including responding to emergency and priority incidents, other incident demand and appointments, missing persons and investigation of volume crime.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID)

Based at Southend, CID has three teams of detectives led by two Detective Inspectors, which investigate more serious crimes such as high risk domestic abuse incidents, GBH and burglary.

Crime data for Southend

At the meeting on January 8, 2015, there will be a detailed discussion about the crime trends and facts which lie underneath the statistics.

Key areas of note for Southend, comparing reports for 1st December 2013 to 30th November 2014 with 1st December 2012 to 30th November 2013, include:

- All Crime has increased by 1.5% (194 more offences);
- House burglary has decreased by 10% (99 less offences);
- Theft from Vehicles has decreased by 15.9% (205 less offences);
- Robbery has decreased by 48% (145 less offences);
- Anti-Social Behaviour has decreased by 8.5% (713 less incidents);
- Other Violence Against the Person has increased by 21% (605 more offences);
- Serious Sexual Crime has increased by 25.7% (53 more offences);
- Assault with Less Serious Injury has increased by 19.2% (212 more offences).

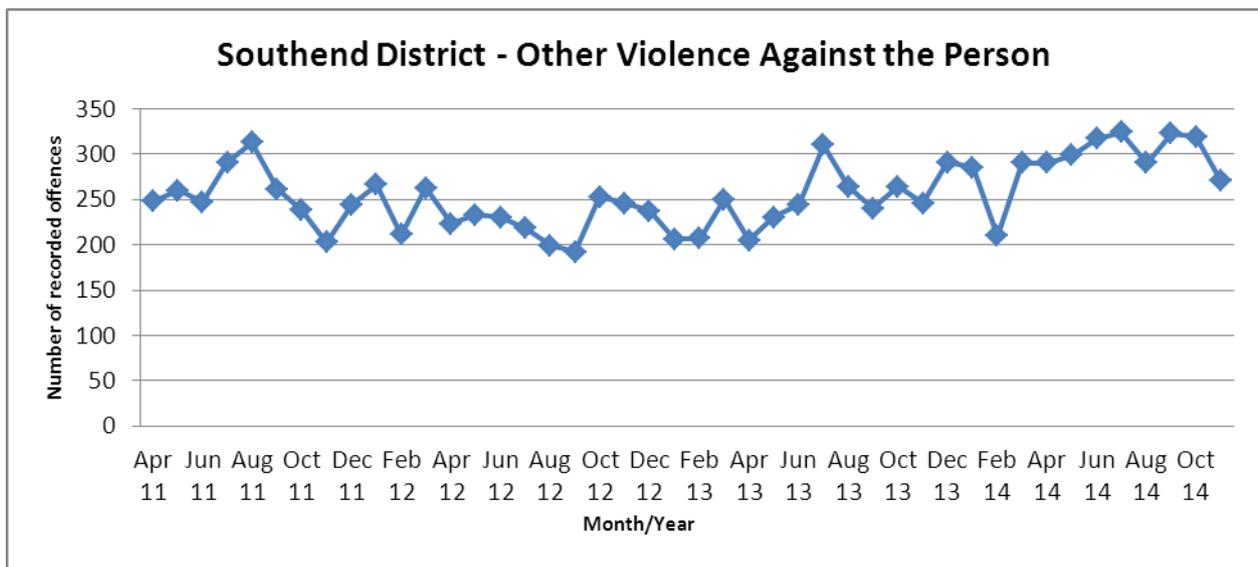
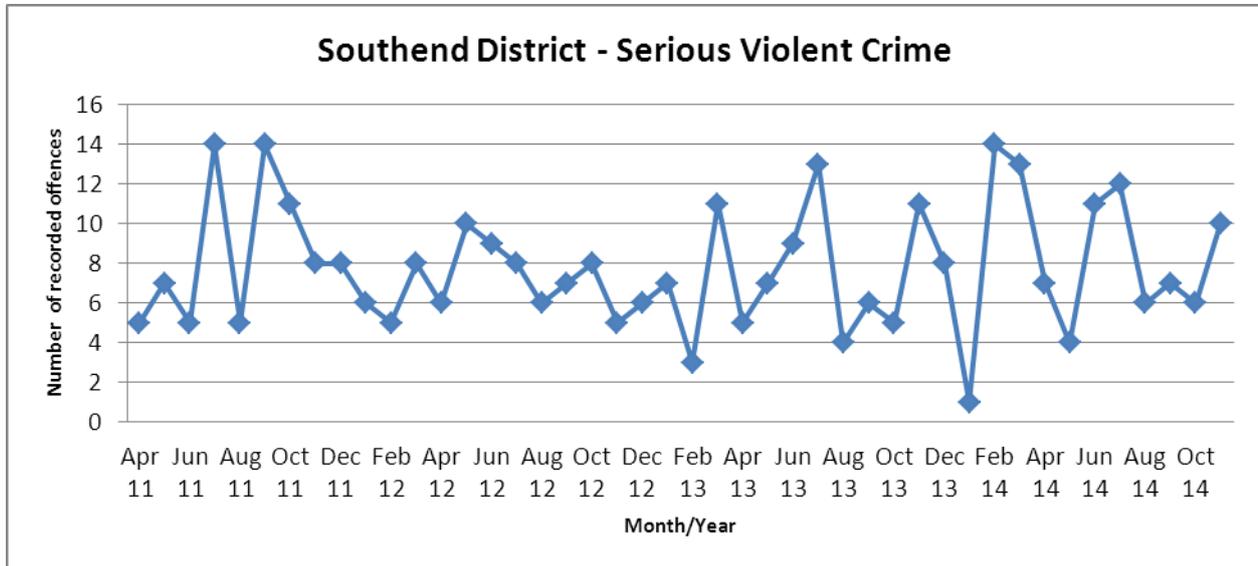
The above figures show that the number of house burglary offences has reduced by 10% or 99 fewer offences. Under Essex Police's forcewide predictive policing operation to tackle burglary – called Operation Insight - officers visit burglary victims and patrols are undertaken to complete risk assessments 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.

The number of serious sexual crimes has increased by nearly 26% or 53 more offences. This increase has occurred across Essex generally and nationally and appears to be attributable to the publicity around the Jimmy Savile inquiry and other high profile cases which has prompted many victims to come forward.

Serious Violent Crime and Drug-related crime

Between December 2013 and November 2014, there was a 21% increase in offences of Other Violence Against the Person (605 more offences) and a 19.2% increase in offences

of Assault with Less Serious Injury (212 more offences). In response to the rise in violent crime, a Community Safety Partnership sub-group, chaired by the District Commander Chief Insp Simon Anslow, has been set up to oversee partnership working groups on the Night Time Economy (NTE), Youth Violence and Criminal Use of Violence. These groups will meet in the New Year with the aim of providing a more focussed approach to tackling violent crime.



According to police, officers continue to face challenges with regard to resourcing dedicated patrols to police the night time economy through to the early hours of the morning. In Southend, police are currently looking at how to develop partnership support during Friday and Saturday nights, particularly in relation to night wardens and medical triage.

Between December 2013 and November 2014, the number of serious violent crimes has increased by 10.2 %, or 13 more offences from 128 to 141 compared with the same period the previous year.

Between July and September 2014, six stabbings occurred in Southend, two of which sadly resulted in deaths. Two men have been arrested and charged in relation to one of the two murders. Media reports have suggested all the stabbings were linked to gang-related drug activity.

According to Essex Police, historically it has been identified that drug gangs work in groups to take over the home of the victim in order to sell controlled drugs. This process is termed 'cuckooing'. The illegal drugs are brought in from out of town and local drug addicts are sometimes used as 'runners' for the gang members.

Police in Southend have worked closely with the Essex and Kent Serious Crime Directorate, in relation to Operation Erasure (concerning drug groups supplying Class 'A' drugs) and on a local enforcement initiative, Operation Booth.

Officers in Southend have established a crackdown, codenamed Operation Booth, to disrupt drug-related gang activity and to protect vulnerable women being targeted by drug dealers for 'cuckooing'. Police concentrated on targeting those suspected of being involved in drug activity and taking positive action once either addresses or dealers were identified. Police have also been using intelligence to stop and check vehicles believed to be concerned in the supply of drugs

An Operation Booth multi-agency group – including Southend Council, the anti-social behaviour team, Crime Reduction Institute, Drug and Alcohol Abuse Team, social housing providers, the council's housing department and the Job Centre - was established in August 2014 to ensure information is promptly shared to identify potential vulnerable victims and to ensure all parties are sighted on the potential issues.

Over the last five months, officers working on Operation Booth have arrested 39 people and executed 30 warrants. The team has recovered over 500 wraps of Class 'A' drugs, dismantled over 20 cannabis cultivations and has charged three key members of a major gang with offences relating to possession with intent to supply.

Prostitution

A 'red light' district, which is frequented by street workers, exists within the centre of Southend and has done for many years. This results in numerous reports from the public of associated anti-social behaviour. The police in Southend are addressing this issue with 'Operation Tressle', which is a mixture of long-term problem solving regarding persistent prostitutes and the targeting of kerb crawling.

Although increased policing deployments have significantly reduced this offence of late, prostitution still remains an issue. This matter will be discussed at greater length during the public meeting.

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.