

**Saffron Walden Public Meeting**

**14<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**District Profile**

Uttlesford District is one part of the Uttlesford and Braintree District Policing Area (DPA) which comprises two of England's largest districts, covering 484 square miles. The DPA consists of the five towns Braintree, Witham, Halstead, Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow and the surrounding rural areas.

The DPA is split into 124 parishes with 107 parish councils and four town councils. The M11, A120, A12, A130 and A131 run through Uttlesford and Braintree, and the areas are linked to London by two separate railway lines.

The rail and road links to London allow a high proportion of the population to commute for work. These links also make cross-border travelling more viable for criminals.

**Crime Data for Uttlesford**

At the meeting on May 14, 2015, there will be a detailed discussion about the crime trends and facts which lie underneath the statistics.

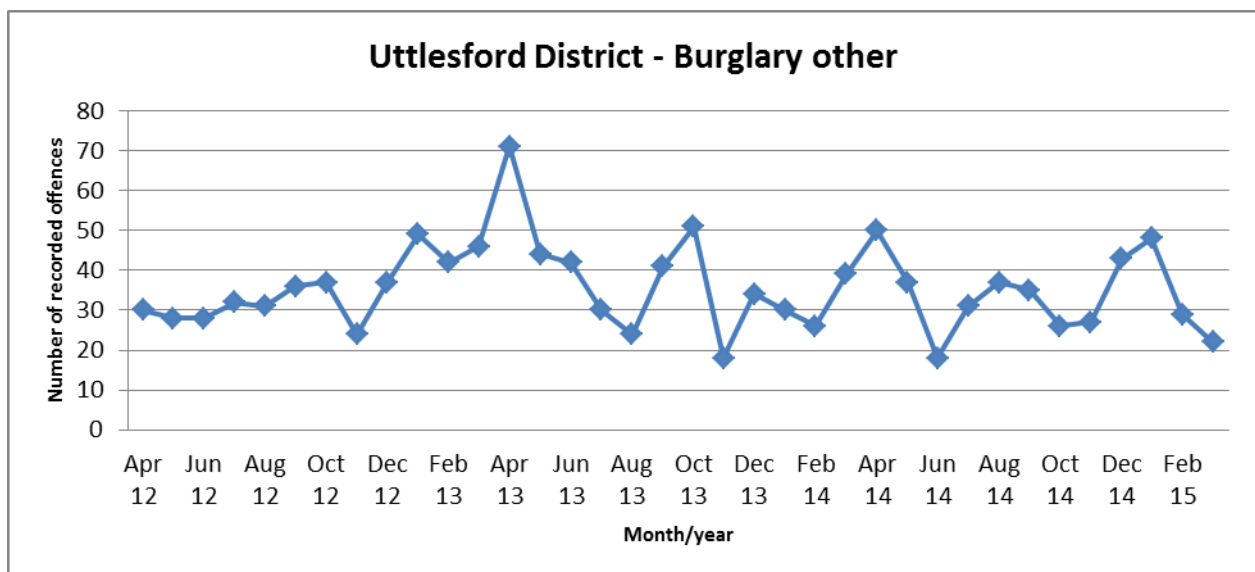
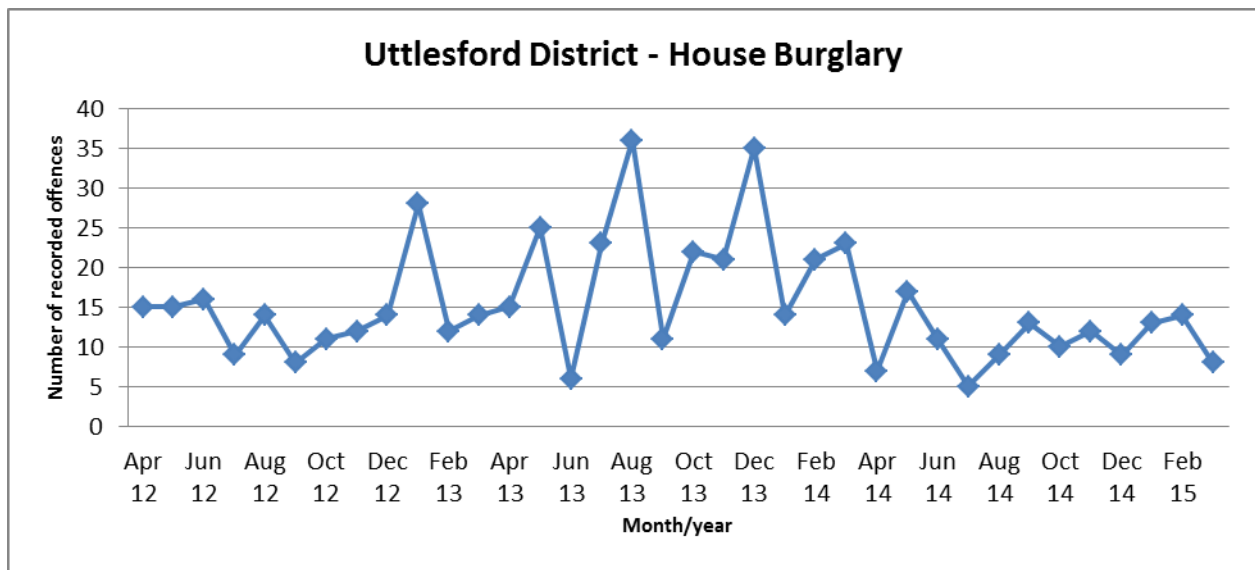
Key areas of note for Uttlesford, comparing reports from April 1 2014 to March 31 2015 with April 1 2013 to March 31 2014, are:

- All Crime has decreased by 5.1% (139 fewer offences);
- House burglary has reduced by 49.2% (124 fewer offences);
- Theft from Vehicles has decreased by 29.4% (106 fewer offences);
- Other theft and handling has reduced by 13.7% (63 fewer offences);
- Anti-Social Behaviour has increased by 4.1% (54 more incidents);
- Other Violence Against the Person has increased by 38.6% (147 more offences);
- Serious Sexual Crime has increased by 57.6% (19 more offences);
- Assault With Less Serious Injury has increased by 35.9% (56 more offences).

## Overview of all Crime in Uttlesford

Crime in Uttlesford has dropped by 5.1%, or 139 fewer offences, between April 2014 and March 2015 compared with the same period the previous year.

Police in the district have been carrying out targeted operations and activity against known criminals living in the community, coupled with working jointly with neighbouring forces. These actions have led to a significant reduction in acquisitive crime (burglary and theft) in Uttlesford. During the same period house burglary reduced by 49.2%, equating to 124 fewer offences whilst theft from vehicles decreased by 29.4% (106 fewer offences). The offences of other theft and handling stolen goods reduced by 13.7% or 63 fewer offences.



Officers have also arrested a number of travelling criminals, with offenders travelling in from outside of the county identified and arrested and stolen property recovered. Essex Police states these positive results have been the result of the targeted deployment of

officers within the DPA, with officers being drafted in from Braintree and set aside to gather intelligence and disrupt criminal activity.

### Violent Crime and Serious Sexual Crime

The increase in violent and serious sexual crime in Uttlesford mirrors the same pattern that has been seen in other districts across Essex. This is largely attributable to an increase in the number of people coming forward to report domestic abuse. In the category of “other violence against the person” 40% of the offences (which equates to 210 of the crimes) and 47% of the offences (or 99 crimes) falling into the category of “assault with less serious injury” were related to domestic abuse. Few of the serious offences occurred in public or between strangers.

From September last year, Essex Police created teams dedicated to tackling domestic abuse, known as Operation Juno teams. Each area has an Operation Juno team made up of officers dedicated to investigating domestic abuse related offences and offenders. In Uttlesford, between September 1 2014 and March 31 2015, the Operation Juno team have dealt with 73 domestic related offences.

Reducing domestic abuse is a priority for the district’s Community Safety Partnership. They organise domestic abuse awareness weeks and deliver domestic abuse awareness training.

Essex Police also works in partnership with Uttlesford District Council and other housing providers to identify and support victims of domestic abuse, with the aim of improving their safety and preventing them from suffering further abuse. Police and the council also operate the Sanctuary Scheme whereby tactics such as installing ‘safe rooms’ and other security measures are put in place for victims.

Uttlesford does not have a significant night-time economy (NTE), but local officers ensure there is a visible presence within the main towns to deal with any isolated pockets of disorder or anti-social behaviour. There has been a decrease in the number of alcohol related incidents and crimes in the district.

Essex Police’s licensing officer continues to support efforts to maintain a safe NTE in Saffron Walden and surrounding villages, where all the licensees are members of ‘Pub Watch’ and the ‘Behave or Be Banned’ scheme. So far nearly 100 individuals have been banned under this scheme in the Braintree and Uttlesford District Policing Area.

### Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage

During the reporting period there has been a small increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in Uttlesford. Criminal damage has risen by 4.9%, or 19 offences, whilst anti-social behaviour has risen by 4.1% or 54 incidents. According to Essex Police, this increase is largely attributable to isolated cases. The number of ongoing long-term anti-social behaviour problems continues to reduce and the police work closely with the local district and town councils to identify hotspots and resolve incidents quickly.

The Community Safety Partnership continues to address anti-social behaviour using legislation to address anti-social behaviour and evicting problematic council tenants.

## **Policing Structure, Visibility and Closure of Police Stations**

Uttlesford and Braintree form one District Policing Area, but both areas each have separate District Councils and Community Safety Partnerships. There is an overlap of policing staff and there are five police stations at Braintree, Halstead, Witham, Dunmow and Saffron Walden.

The DPA is run by one District Commander and has one Local Policing and Partnerships Inspector.

There is one Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) Sergeant for Braintree District and one NPT Sergeant for Uttlesford District.

The DPA is covered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by the Local Policing Teams (LPT) operating from Braintree and Saffron Walden Police Stations.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Operation Juno (Domestic Abuse Investigation) and Custody are all based at Braintree Police Station.

District policing is also supported by the policing hub officers working from Braintree Police Station, including the Licensing Officer and the Crime Prevention Tactical Adviser.

The five police stations within the DPA are currently open to the public. Braintree Police Station is open between 8am and midnight, seven days per week. Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Halstead and Witham police stations are open from 12 noon to 6pm, Monday to Saturday (excluding Bank Holidays). There have been no recent closures of police stations within the DPA.

### **Police Visibility**

Although Essex Police and their Community Safety Partners help to keep Uttlesford as a safe, low crime district, there have been concerns amongst the community with the numbers of and visibility of uniformed officers, especially in the rural villages. Uttlesford and Braintree DPA advertises and holds regular Local Community Meetings and Street Meets. However, according to local officers, few members of the public or councillors attend. The Special Constable Rural Crime Team operates from within the DPA and provides further coverage of, and engagement with, the rural community.

The police have carried out targeted crime reduction and operations in the area, particularly targeting known offenders. This activity has had a significant impact on reducing all crime levels and in particular acquisitive crime, such as burglary and theft.

### **Closure of Police Stations**

Following a rat infestation at Saffron Walden police station last year, the facility had to be temporarily closed. This appeared to prompt media speculation that the police station was facing permanent and imminent closure.

The whole of the Essex Police estate, which totals 1.25million square foot and some 80 properties, is currently the subject of a review being carried out by the Police and Crime

Commissioner and the Chief Constable. Many of the current buildings are old, in need of extensive and expensive maintenance and are no longer fit for the demands and purposes of modern policing.

The backlog of maintenance work required to these buildings has been estimated at £30m, with an additional £1.75m per year needed to maintain and keep the estate in its current condition. This comes at a time when Essex Police is already facing significant financial challenges as central government funding continues to reduce. In light of that, these ongoing costs cannot be justified and it is necessary for the PCC and the Chief Constable to make some tough decisions on the future of police buildings, including stations.

A review of the options available is nearing completion, but no final decisions have yet been made. The sale of some police stations, the reduction of the size of the Chelmsford-based force Headquarters, and the possible creation of centralised policing hubs in each local authority area are all being considered.

### **The Uttlesford Community Safety Partnership**

The Uttlesford Community Safety Partnership (CSP) works hard to make the district a safer and more pleasant place to live by ensuring partners work together to prevent and reduce crime.

The CSP's aims are to:

- Increase public confidence in tackling crime and in the police.
- Reduce crime and disorder.
- Reduce the number of young people who offend and those who become victims of crime.
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Reduce core crime (including burglary, criminal damage and theft from vehicles).
- Reduce violent crime (including domestic violence).
- Reduce substance misuse.
- Reduce the fear of crime.

**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](mailto: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](http://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.