

Thurrock Public Meeting – Thursday June 9th 2016

District Profile

Thurrock district consists of 20 wards including the areas of Grays, Chafford Hundred, Tilbury, and Corringham.

The district forms part of the West Local Policing Area (LPA) and covers an area of 165 sq. km, 70 per cent of which is green belt land. The south western area of the district has significant industrial and retail employment. The district is bordered to the south by the River Thames, which gives the district 18 miles of riverfront.

The 2011 census records the population of Thurrock as approximately 157,705, which is an increase of 10.1% from the 2001 census.

The district has a number of iconic sites and is home to Intu Lakeside, one of the UK's largest shopping destinations. There are currently proposals to expand Lakeside shopping centre by another 40 retail outlets at a cost of £180m.

Retail crime is an obvious challenge to the local policing team and during the year there are a number of policing operations that take place around Lakeside, such as Operation Presence, that occurs in December, which have helped minimise crime levels, and have increased shoppers' confidence that their visit to the centre is safe. After recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, it is vital that public confidence is maintained.

The QE2 Bridge is the southbound element of the Dartford–Thurrock River Crossing, a strategic charged road, crossing the half-mile-wide River Thames, east of London.

London Gateway is located on the former Shell Haven site in Thurrock, Essex. The 1,500 acre (6.1 sq. km) site is a former oil refinery, which closed in 1999. However, the site has been used as a port since the 16th century. Dubai Ports World (DP World) received government approval in May 2007 for the development of the London Gateway and was also given the go-ahead for construction of the port. Work started in February 2010.

DP World is planning to invest over £1.5bn to develop the project over a 10-15 year development period. The jurisdiction of the new port will remain with Essex Police and already communications are underway to establish and forge good working relationships.

To address the increased vehicular movements to and from the port, there have been significant infrastructure changes, including extensive road improvement works around the junction of the A13 and the A1014 (Manor Way) amongst other developments.

Policing Structure and Resources

Grays Police Station is open seven days a week, from 9am to 5pm. The station houses:

- 24/7 Local Policing Teams;
- CID;
- Juno Domestic Abuse Investigation Team;
- Custody;
- Front Office;
- Special Constabulary (aligned to Local Policing Teams);
- Crime Scene Investigation;
- The Community Safety Hub comprising of an Inspector, Crime Reduction Officer, Essex Watch Officer, ASB Officer, Licensing Officer, Missing Person Liaison Officer and two Children and Young Persons Police Officers.

Local Policing Teams (LPTs) were formed by Essex Police in September 2014 with the amalgamation of Neighbourhood Crime Teams and Response and Policing Teams. These teams operate around the clock to police the whole district. Each team is managed by an Inspector and either one or two Sergeants who supervise a number of Constables per team. The LPTs have responsibility for attending emergency, priority and routine graded incidents as well as road traffic collisions and other policing incidents. They also have responsibility for the investigation of volume crime, crime reduction and general policing duties. In addition, LPT Inspectors manage their respective teams at Brentwood Police Station and oversee critical and significant incidents and performance management in that district.

Tilbury police station front counter closed to the public on March 31st this year. The station currently houses the Police On-line Investigation Team (POLIT).

South Ockendon police station front counter closed to the public on March 31st this year. It currently houses the Community Policing Team.

Corringham police station closed to the public in October 2011. Members of the Thurrock Community Policing Team occasionally use the building as a base to work from whilst in the Corringham and Stanford-le-Hope area. The building also houses the Thurrock Council Youth Offending Service.

Community Policing Team

The Thurrock Community Policing Team manages and solves community policing issues, cases of high harm anti-social behaviour and hate crime working to priorities set by the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership. The team is made up of two Sergeants, nine Police Constables, ten Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) and five Special Constables. Once trained, Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) between the ages of 13 and 18 will also be aligned to the Community Policing Team.

The Community Policing Team is based at South Ockendon police station. It is managed by Inspector Lee Argent, who also oversees the operation of the Community Safety Hub, based at Grays Police Station. The team works collaboratively on a daily basis with partner agencies, including Thurrock Council, the Youth Offending Service, the Essex Fire and Rescue Service and the security team at Intu Lakeside, to address community safety issues. The team will be trialling

the use of a Community Policing Team Facebook account, the first of its kind in Essex Police, and will also be attending local community meetings at various locations across the district.

Community Safety Hub

The Community Safety Hub will be working to the following priorities in 2016-17:

1. reduce youth offending and re-offending of adults and young people, thereby reducing instances of domestic burglary, and most serious violence
2. reduce harm to vulnerable victims and safeguard them from domestic abuse, sexual offences including rape, child sexual exploitation, gang related violence, hate crime, anti-social behaviour, cyber bullying, honour-based abuse and serious organised crime encompassing modern day slavery and fraud
3. prevent violent extremism locally, delivering the government's counter-terrorism strategy

The priorities were informed by a strategic assessment, a legal requirement, which identifies the scale and scope of crime, disorder and community safety issues within Thurrock.

Crime data for Thurrock

At the meeting on Thursday 9th June there will be a detailed discussion on local crime figures and trends, and the facts that underlie the statistics.

Comparing reports for 1st May 2015 to 30th April 2016 with 1st May 2014 to 30th April 2015, areas of note include:

- All Crime has increased by 17.2% (1862 more offences);
- House Burglary has decreased by 13.0% (104 fewer offences);
- Anti-Social Behaviour has decreased by 5.9% (350 fewer incidents);
- Violence with Injury has increased by 16.1% (167 more offences);
- Theft from the Person has increased by 56.5% (65 more offences);
- Shoplifting has increased by 22.7% (252 more offences).

Crime/Incident Type	# offences		# diff	% diff
	2015	2016		
ALL CRIME	10825	12687	1862	17.2
Violence with Injury	1036	1203	167	16.1
Violence without Injury	1313	1915	602	45.8
Sexual Offences	248	255	7	2.8
Robbery	109	113	4	3.7
Dwelling Burglary	802	698	-104	-13.0
Other Burglary	612	711	99	16.2
Theft from Vehicle	999	1066	67	6.7
Theft of Motor Vehicle	492	547	55	11.2
Theft from the Person	115	180	65	56.5
Theft of Pedal Cycles	227	273	46	20.3
Shoplifting	1111	1363	252	22.7
Other Theft	1334	1318	-16	-1.2
Criminal Damage (incl. arson)	1408	1726	318	22.6
Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents	5904	5554	-350	-5.9

All Crime

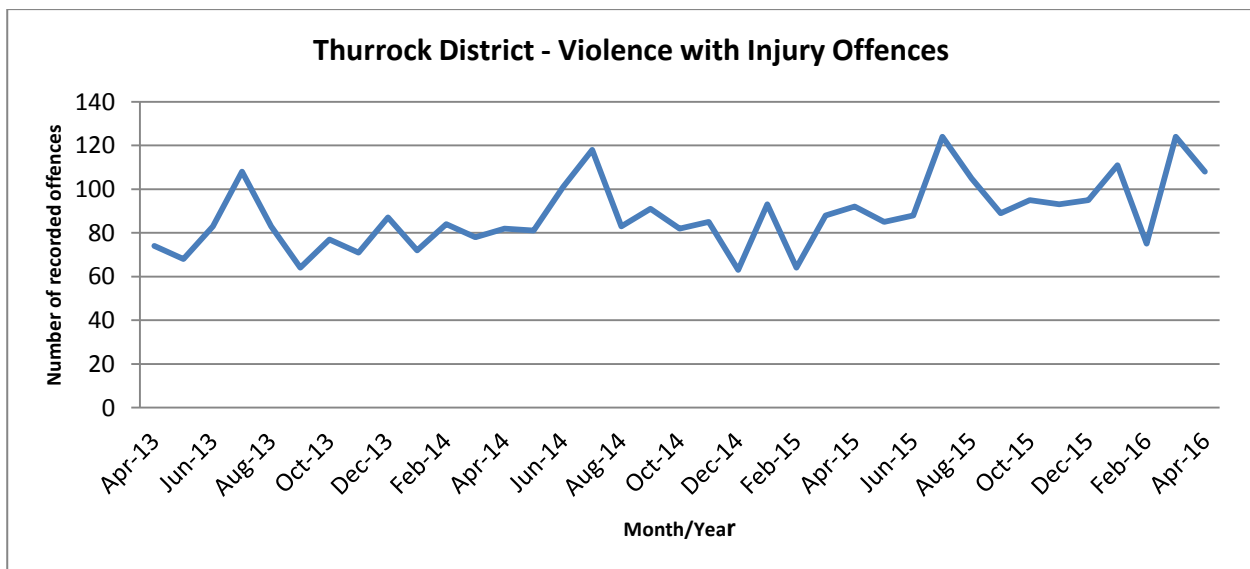
During the above reporting period, all crime increased in Thurrock by 17.2% (1,862 more offences).

Essex Police suggests some of this rise may be due to several factors including:

- Increased population in the district - the 2011 census put the population at around 157,705. The transient population (those passing through Thurrock on the strategic road network, or those visiting residents or Lakeside for instance) will increase this figure considerably;
- Active encouragement around reporting crime and incidents linked to domestic abuse, and serious sexual assault (including historical offences). In Thurrock victims have also been actively encouraged to report hate crime. From 1st April 2015 Malicious Communications is an offence that requires a crime report to be completed, something that wasn't the case prior to that date. This offence, and some linked to domestic abuse and hate crime, will feature as part of Violence With (or Without) Injury crime data.

Violence with Injury Offences

During the reporting period offences of Violence with Injury increased by 16.1% or 167 offences.



These have included a number of significant incidents in May 2016. These incidents have included:

- An attempted murder in Stanford-le-Hope that involved the use of a firearm.
- An attempted murder in Chafford Hundred that involved the use of bladed weapons.
- An offence of grievous bodily harm in Chafford Hundred in close proximity to a licensed premises.
- An offence of aggravated burglary in Horndon-on-the-Hill that resulted in the homeowner being assaulted with the use of a crow bar.

Although none of these serious offences appear to be linked in any way, all have received local media attention. All of these crimes are being managed by Grays CID and have the oversight of a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO).

The Community Policing Team is working closely with CID, Licensing (Essex Police and Thurrock Council) and other appropriate agencies to address crime prevention and reduction.

Violence without Injury

Violence without Injury has increased in Thurrock by 45.8% (602 more offences). This pattern has been echoed across the rest of the county and is not unique to Thurrock. Violence without Injury can encompass a broad range of offence types including Common Assault, Threats to Kill and more recently since April 2015, Malicious Communications offences which are now recognised as a violent crime after a change around National Crime Recording Standards.

Some of this increase could also be attributable to work by Essex Police and the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership to increase reporting and awareness of domestic violence and hate crime, and a subsequent and welcome rise in public confidence in reporting these types of offence.

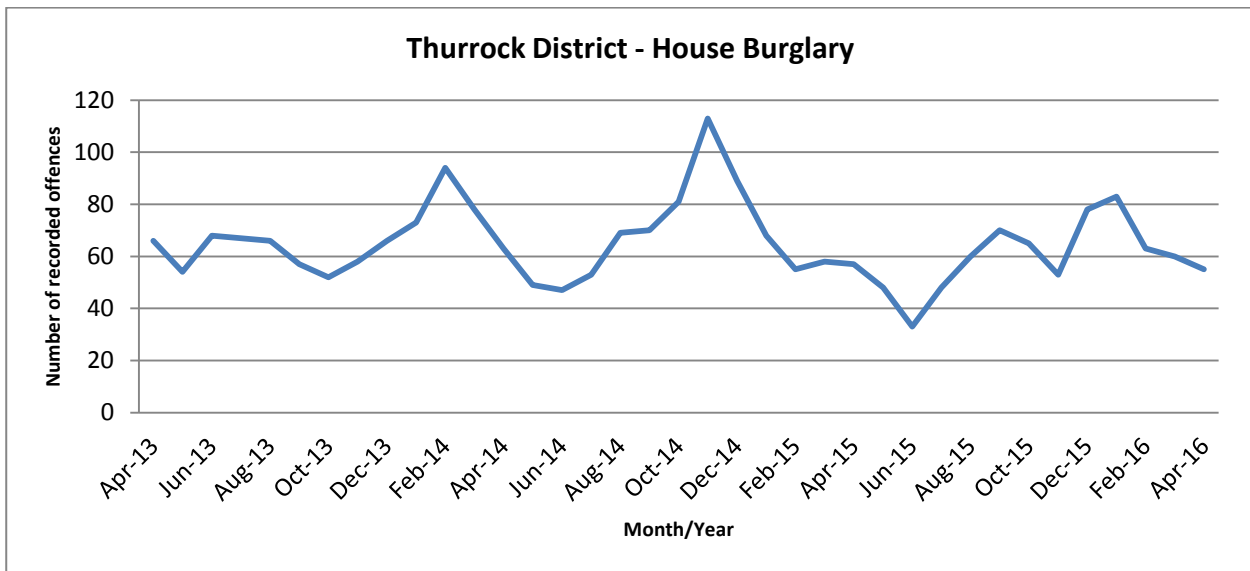
Patterns around hate crime (some of which would account for the increase in offence reporting) were identified in South Ockendon in October and November 2015 and in Tilbury at different times throughout the year. Police and Partnership action plans and operations were instigated in response, and in some cases are on-going, to address these matters.

Since December 2014, Thurrock has been one of five districts in Essex where police officers are using Body Worn Video cameras. The cameras have been individually issued to all Local Policing Team (response) officers and these have helped considerably in securing and preserving evidence, and have been invaluable in securing evidence relating to domestic incidents and crimes where victims are unwilling or unable to support a prosecution.

Thurrock, like other districts in Essex, also benefits from a bespoke team which investigates cases of domestic abuse. The Operation Juno team comprises a Detective Inspector and a number of Detective Sergeants and Investigators who oversee the investigation of all forms of domestic abuse.

House Burglary

During the period in question house burglary has decreased by 13.0% (104 fewer offences). Thurrock was one of a small number of districts in Essex that achieved a reduction in burglary during the reporting period.



A number of burglary suspects were arrested and imprisoned during the period in question which has helped reduce the number of offences reported. However, the solved rate for house burglary remains relatively low at 9.0% in Thurrock, which is in line with the countywide burglary solved rate of 8.9%.

A number of tactics continue to be employed by both police and partners to address burglaries. These tactics include high visibility patrols, 'cocooning' - crime prevention visits to an area affected by house burglary - and 'Days of Action' focusing on crime prevention and reduction work involving police and Thurrock Community Safety Partnership staff. There have also been collaborative operations with the Metropolitan Police Service. Essex Police continues to run "Operation Insight", where officers carry out high visibility patrols in areas intelligence suggests may be about to be targeted by burglars. Police in Thurrock also use social media and the press to inform the public and press of any crime patterns and notable examples of good police work.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) has decreased by 5.9% (350 fewer incidents) during the reporting period.

This reduction is in part attributable to Essex Police focusing on incidents of ASB where there are vulnerable or repeat victims. Police in Thurrock continue to work with partner agencies to address repeat locations and victims of ASB as well as trying to address potential high risk cases and ensuring safeguarding measures can be introduced to reduce harm and vulnerability.

Locality Action Group meetings (LAG) have been in place for a number of years in Thurrock. These multi-agency forums, along with fortnightly police-led district tasking meetings, will address matters referred to the group from various agencies to ensure that a collaborative approach is in place to prevent, reduce and target the victims and perpetrators of ASB.

Some examples of the success of this approach can be seen from historical matters of ASB regarding cruisers near Lakeside and West Thurrock, ASB (and Criminal Damage matters) around Dilkes Park in South Ockendon, and reducing repeat victimisation around hate crime and youth ASB in Tilbury. Work to address the public and road safety issues associated with nuisance motorcycles is on-going.

Shoplifting

Shoplifting has increased by 22.7% (252 more offences) during the reporting period in question. There were 1,363 offences in Thurrock during the period 1st May 2015 to 30th April 2016 compared to 1,111 during the same period the previous year.

Essex Police advises that retail crime is widespread across the district but with concentrated areas of offending around Grays, South Ockendon, Corringham and Tilbury town centres, in addition to the Intu Lakeside shopping centre and Lakeside Retail Park. Some of this offending has been linked to other forms of offending such as drug misuse, whereby shoplifting proceeds have been used to fund other criminality.

A local policing operation, Operation Lowland, introduced in 2014, identifies repeat offences at various shops across the district. A bespoke plan is then created with the shop manager in order to reduce the number of shoplifting offences. The plan makes use of communications links that have been forged with policing teams at Westfield, at Stratford, and Bluewater. Good results and suspects from CCTV images are publicised on our police social media accounts and through the Essex Police media team. In addition, Business Against Crime initiatives are still in operation at Lakeside and Grays Town Centre, and they work to ensure information is shared between retailers, security teams and Essex Police.

Essex Police believes the introduction of the new Community Policing Team and the continuation of the policing team at Intu Lakeside, along with the planned Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation of Lakeside security staff, will create a critical mass of police officers and staff (and volunteers) working alongside security teams at various locations, that can be utilised to address retail crime more effectively.

Lakeside and Cruisers

Car cruise events, until recently, regularly occurred around the Lakeside shopping centre and the retail park. Cruisers often congregated on the retail park prompting reports to Essex Police from local residents and visitors to the park about noise pollution. The biggest concern was around irresponsible driving, road safety and the large volume of spectators this behaviour attracts. Serious injury collisions were experienced in 2015 and these involved spectators being injured whilst observing dangerous driving behaviour on roads in the Lakeside area.

Under the direction of the District Commander a huge amount of work has been undertaken to address this problem working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, landowners and stakeholders, including Thurrock Council and Highways England. Work has been done to make the Lakeside area less attractive to drivers who seek to participate in events that can put public safety at risk. This has included the closure of car parks, speed reduction initiatives, the use of Dispersal Orders, CCTV installation, and enforcement operations. Most recently, in December 2015, one of the county's first Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) was introduced. Led by Thurrock Council, and with local resident and Essex Police evidence, this order has a number of conditions targeting unsocial and dangerous driving and spectating, that if breached, can be punished by a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Essex Police have also been working with organisers of legitimate car enthusiast events where possible.

A newsletter has been prepared by the District Commander for members of the public, which summarises the activity undertaken to address cruising in the West Thurrock area to date, and describes the history of the issue as well as activity from 2014 to 2016. The newsletter displays the corporate logos of over 20 businesses and agencies who have worked with Essex Police.

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Your feedback is most welcome. Should you wish to contact the PCC about this meeting, or any other matter you can do so through the following routes:

By email: pcc@essex.pnn.police.uk

By writing to:

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex
3 Hoffman's Way
Chelmsford CM1 1GU

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

www.essex.pcc.police.uk

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

<https://twitter.com/essexpcc>

To keep up to date with Essex PCC events and initiatives, you can 'like' our Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/pages/police-and-crime-commissioner-for-essex

Reporting Crime:

All criminal information and intelligence reported to Essex Police allows them to build a picture of criminality and emerging issues in the area, and therefore plan and respond to these more effectively.

Local policing teams will always act on intelligence received from the community. If you have information regarding any criminal activity please either call the force control room on 101, your local policing team, or contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Crimestoppers is a completely anonymous line where you can report any criminal activity.