

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Notes from the Epping

Public Meeting

16th February 2017

**Panel Members**

Police and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst (RH)

Ch/Insp Trevor Roe (TR)

T/District Commander Lewis Basford (LB)

DPCC Jane Gardner (JG)

Cllr Gary Waller – CSP (GW)

Caroline Wiggins – CSP (CW)

Approx 40 present

RH spoke about his priorities from his Police and Crime Plan, his intentions to increase the Special Constabulary and to put more emphasis on local, visible policing and policing being part of the community we serve. The clear message was that we needed to work hard on the prevention on crime.

LB advised there been local issues with ASB in Epping High Street during December. He had sent out more foot patrols as part of the local policing strategy. The team had also engaged well with local business owners and have found that people have engaged with them in return. Essex police have worked very closely with the CSP and have put together various interventions as a result.

**NTE** – LB was aware of issues in the night time economy as had policed the area for 11 years, and he cited a case where he had recently revoked a licence after responding to police involvement.

**Drug Dealing** –there had been some recent successes but the cases were ongoing so couldn’t comment in detail.

**Questions and concerns from the public:**

**Waltham Abbey** – a resident who had primary age children advised that they did not feel safe allowing their children out as there was a known group going around robbing children of cash and mobile phones. She added that they felt increasingly vulnerable in Waltham Abbey as there is no visible policing. She asked if there was anything being done?

LB advised that these crimes were not being reported and were not showing up in the crime figures. He explained the process of reviewing crime figures and deploying officers according to local patterns. He has been in touch with local businesses about putting on some roadshows in local schools but he acknowledged there could be more police deployment in Waltham Abbey.

TR added that detectives would investigate robbery as it’s a serious offence and the police need to know where this was happening. PCC reiterated it was so important to report crime.

**Epping ASB** – a resident noted that ASB in the area had been particularly bad and added that they welcomed the working partnership in Epping. She asked when would the extra officers that the PCC (in reference to the council precept rise and increased Specials) had spoken about be on the streets?

TR advised the initial training course were 19 weeks.

**North Weald Halloween** – Parish Councillor from NW had been delighted with police presence over Halloween which had dramatically reduced incidents.

**Fly-tipping** – a resident noted that this was becoming a real issue in Epping Forest. RH advised this was being tackled through a fly-tipping Task and Finish Group. RH further believed that fly-tipping was an issue where large industrial grade waste was being dumped on farm land and roads. This had been raised with the Environment Agency and they have been working closely with Essex Police. Have had some success but it’s the organised crime gangs they need to catch not the drivers.

**Loughton ASB** – a resident reported repeated issues with a group of 8 hooded males 12 to 13 egging cars and properties. Cars were also being keyed and CCTV footage had been provided but nothing has done.

**NHW** – an NHW representative noted that they monitor their Facebook and should something be raised they ask people to report it but are often met with the response that it’s not worth it. She asked how can that be turned around? RH acknowledged it’s difficult as EP will not respond to every call, but intelligence was important to gather. Also funding follows crime so need to report it. LB said it is important to engage with community but the funding isn’t there anymore to do it in the way we used to, so he was aiming at engaging indifferent places and locations so people will come to talk to him that normally wouldn’t have the opportunity.

**Ongar** – a resident reported that ASB was really bad and she felt this was because they knew there would be no police response. The High Street also very congested due to inconsiderate parking. LB advised they would be having foot patrols in all areas not just Epping and mentioned that they can also use parking partnership to look at the roads issue. EP had a really good relationship with the district council and they have had joint programmes to help tackle local issues.

**ACTION - Cllr Waller would send civil enforcement officers attend Ongar High Street**.

Ongar resident asked if much could be done on single yellow lines. Cllr Waller – depends on what the restrictions are but perfectly possible to issue parking tickets.

**Scout Group incidents of ASB -** the newspaper editor (Ongar News) advised that the local scout group had a lot of problems of serious ASB and were now having to spend a lot of money erecting a high fence. He asked why hadn’t the PCC responded to his open letter. The PCC had not received it, but promised to respond.

**ACTION – PCC to respond to Ongar News Open letter.**

**Waltham Abbey** – an employee of Tesco raised the issue of dangerous parking on the bend outside the supermarket but this has been seen as a police matter. LB it is a case by case basis.

**ACTION – LB invited to go to Tescos.to view the dangerous parking.**

**Debden Drive/Debden Station – issue with homelessness -** A resident reported that there were 3 persistent homeless people who had recently accessed her block of flats where she discovered them using drugs. They subsequently left needles and drug paraphernalia. EP were rung and said they would remove drugs items but did not attend. The resident also has photo evidence of drug dealing which again the police had not collected. She added that London Transport Police had come straight away.

**ACTION - CW advised that they were aware of the issue and there is a lot of work going around this individual. CW agreed to take the residents details after the meeting and get her an update.**

LB added that it is not homelessness that’s the issue - it is illegal begging, and there will be a process that has to go through to prove it.

**Epping Forest Youth Council** – asked what engagement opportunities there were for youth JG said there are local youth forums and also asked Darren Horsman from the OPC to liaise with them.

LB was looking at implementing a young person active citizens as well ‘Coffee with Cops’ where they would invite people to come and talk to police

There was also funding available for youths to engage with police to advise on how they can engage with younger people.

RH – vital we have young people’s views which we can feed into Youth Strategy Group

The Epping Forest Youth cadets were also recruiting at the moment.

**Action - DH to take the Epping Forest Youth Council details.**

**ASB** – a town councillor asked if there was any general advice on looking at community policing and how we can tackle this at a local level. LB – haven’t got numbers they had ten years ago and need to work more with partners. Advice would be to get something out to local traders and businesses and can advise of what is happening in the community.

**Domestic Burglary** – a resident asked what the solved rate was. LB advised Epping Forest has had a reduction as there had been investment around the network of cameras such as ANPR.

TR added that EP were looking at 20 offences in the district and have suspects in custody. Advances in tech were impressive and sophisticated. LB added that the intelligence came through NHW and he understands that some people are uncomfortable about coming to the police which is why he is opening up other lines of communications.

**Rural issues –** a resident noted that there the same crimes in rural as there are in urban but without the investment of police time taking place.

RH – was looking to bring together a small group of officers to focus on rural policing. He was also looking to increase rural specials. TR was very committed to providing more resource to the new rural team, but it needed to be reported so can deploy officers.

**Youth Engagement** – a youth engagement officer felt that early education is vital in teaching young children about cyber bullying. CW advised she was looking at a new initiative along with NSPCC & 02 to run internet safety classes for parents so they can understand what sites their children are accessing.

LB – police are seen as the arresters and as the threat – society needs to educate how police are perceived.

**Speedwatch** - PCC supports it and is a volunteer. Epping town have three groups and a fourth are being trained. It would be useful if signs were put up saying speedwatch operates in the town but it needed permission from Essex highways. Sent in an application for seven signs – this has been turned down.

**ACTION – PCC and CC to ask Essex Highways to allow a Speedwatch Zone sign to be put up.**

**Waltham Abbey –** an ex police officer believed that school liaison officers do bring down barriers. Rapport can be built and as a result you people do feel more comfortable coming forward and reporting crime. He expressed concern about the lack of policing in WA including the length of response times. The Ninefields estate had seen a lot of neighbours burgled. There is a loss of faith in the local community and the police need to publish success stories to encourage people to have confidence and be willing to come forward and report crime.

TR said he was concerned to hear this, in particular where a resident was reporting a crime but was rebuffed by the call handler. She should have been given a crime number and by the sounds of it the lady was let down.

**ACTION – EP needed to publicise successes**