 PFCC Epping Public Meeting November 20th 2017 –

**Present**

PFCC Roger Hirst

DPCC Jane Gardner

Ch/Insp Lewis Basford

Station Manager ECFRS Dave Barnard

Caroline Wiggins – Community Safety Partnership

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| The PFCC welcomed all present. This was the second public he had held in the chamber where he had also attended a Town Council meeting and a year ago, held a Chief’s Challenge in Loughton. As PFCC has he has responsibilities in governance which includes appointing the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer and setting strategy for the police and fire service. He also sets the council tax precept and it is important the public know what it is being spent on. The £3.1 million raised from the 2017 precept was being spent on a number of initiatives including increasing frontline officers and improving the Force Control Room. It was important that the public report crimes which if not urgent can be done online at www.essex.police.uk or 101. Always dial 999 in an emergency. The precept had also been spent on improving technology, enabling officers to spend more time out on patrol and improving the Athena reporting system which is being rolled out across other forces so we can share information better. Funds were also being raised through selling the unused police estate which will be used on improving custody suites and the remaining stations.  Specials were going through a big recruitment drive and there had been over a 1000 applications with 400 special constables currently recruited. There had also been negotiations with the Chambers of Commerce around sponsoring special constables. The current picture was that local policing is over stretched across the county. Essex has the tightest funding in all of England and Wales but is rated ‘good’ by HMICFRS. The PFCC had also been campaigning for more funding for police and have put in a joint submission to the HO quantifying what the police service needs.  Ch/Insp Lewis Basford - Since the last public meeting there had been 9 arrests for drug dealing in Buckhurst Hill. Collaboration was happening with the fire & rescue service around programmes being delivered in schools. ASB in Epping was being tackled by the community policing team. There were also problems with offences being committed by youths on motorbikes . Ch/Insp Basford had met with west Midlands police to see how they tackled it. 26 bikes had been seized since February and this had been enabled by members of the public taking mobile phone footage and dash-cam footage. Overall crime was on the increase nationally and to date in Epping there had been 1500 extra crimes in the past year. Crime recording standards had changed in UK and a proportion of the increase was down to that, but the change is an improvement on how it was reported previously. The biggest challenge at present is resourcing. | |
| **Questions/Issues** | **Answer** |
| The Lions Farm residents association was alarmed at what seems to be preference of voluntary officers over police officers.  There was a recent spate of fireworks being thrown at resident’s properties and it took quite a while before the police service attended. Are the police going to be better funded so they get more officers? | The doubling of specials is incremental and will not replace police officers. The PFCC is doing all he can to raise the funding to get more officers. There has been a huge growth in DA, Cybercrime up 245%. This means numbers have been taken away from crime prevention work and there was now a need to rebalance and put more into community policing and for crime not to happen in the first case.  CH/Insp Basford advised there was the whole CPT working over the bonfire period. Specials had also stepped up on the peak nights and had proved invaluable. Not a replacement for officers but can be used really effectively. |
| Youth project worker acknowledged that due to a lack of resourcing officers could not go into schools but if there could be a sponsored Special to fulfil the roll he would consider and could sponsoring | The DPFCC thought that was a good proposition and would look into it. |
| Should officers come back to people who report crime with an update? | PFCC agreed if it involved a high risk crime police should respond.  Ch/Insp Basford advised that where once there used to be times when officers were able to respond now it was not unusual to have 6 emergencies in the same area in 15 minutes.  He also works closely with the Community Safety Partnership who supported the work of the police. Recently he had cases where there was nothing reported to police but lots on social media so it was vital people reported to police. |
| Coopersale have been reporting crime and having huge problems with the same group of youths. One night one had a gun and a mask and it took over an hour for police to attend. It was never had a report back on and the same youths are coming into Coopersale regularly buying drugs. | DC – has been involved through the council looking at the family involved and there has been an arrest made. He agreed there was a need to deal with the youths involved and with the families. |
| Stapleford Abbots had recently experienced an armed robbery in the local store with bb gun. Police attended within 30 minutes. Is that a reasonable response time for a rural crime with a gun. | They should respond in 15 minutes for an emergency. In an armed response it can take longer.  PFCC – we are asking for more armed police from the government to make response times better. |
| Bills Amenity Society covered 500 homes and NHW. They offered their assistance on local crime which is not attended by police.  They recently had a spate of car break-ins and had CCTV showed youth breaking into a car. Another car was broken into two nights ago and the resident who came out and had a knife pulled on him. As we’ve had a number of cases with no action being taken it will just get worse. If we can have some sort of Specials on the estate it would be very much appreciated. | Ch/Insp Basford advised that the thefts being were investigated through a desk base. CCTV was looked at and a decision made whether it can be used. By identifying hotspots they looked at how they needed to deploy officers. A resident from Loughton emailed CCTV which resulted in police visiting a residence and finding stolen goods. He went before magistrate and received a 9 week suspended sentence. |
| A resident had a man waving pistol at 10am on a Saturday morning and it took an hour for the armed response unit to arrive. Were there to become more funds available – who will be apportioning in distributing those funds? | PFCC is responsible for the budget and Chief Constable for how it is spent. The budget has to be defined in advance and reviewed by the Police and Crime panel who scrutinise the PFCC’s decision. The PFCC is used to budgetary management as it is his skill set. His involvement is agreed and welcomed by the Chief. The PFCC is accountable to the public and therefore has undertaken to the MPs and leaders of council that if we do get a substantial increase he will explain how it will be spent on a district by district basis and at least two thirds on local policing. |
| A resident who lived on the Essex border was often put through to the Met when dialling 999 and had to wait a ridiculous amount of time before being transferred. Lions Farm was always being put through to the Met and takes so long to put through they don’t bother to ring. | ACTION – PFCC acknowledged this was unacceptable and would look into take this on board. |
| There has been a lot of ASB in Epping - what are the police doing with it. | Ch/Insp Basford was aware and has CCTV and is looking at how to deal with this along with the council. Action was being taken. He requested that the member of the public gave their contact details after the meeting so he could keep them updated. |
| Can the police act on evidence given by the mop? | Yes this was possible and there were various avenues that could be explored. |
| Resident had similar issues with reporting ASB but has been waiting over a year. | There has been a move away from arresting juveniles but more can be done around ancillary orders. |
| Is CCTV controlled by police?  When reporting crimes were times important. | CCTV is controlled by the council and is not monitored 24 hours but there are certain occasions such as Halloween when they are monitored overnight. Certain areas are monitored more. They will hand over to police within 48 hours.  It was important to give as many details as possible. |
| A resident lived near football pitch where youths gather and take drugs. There was a suggestion of a CCTV being put up – has this been progressed? | That area belonged to the town council but Caroline Wiggins, CSP Manager offered to liaise with them to see what they can do |
| The solved rate for car theft was very low why was that? | The perpetrators were very careful with DNA. Normally these individuals are caught through good quality CCTV and vehicle cameras. It was one of the hardest crimes to investigate as can happen in seconds. |
| It was requested that the briefing handed out at meetings include a section on fire including a breakdown of incidents.  Also the incident site on the fire service page was very selective as doesn’t record all the calls. | PFCC acknowledged this and would include it in the future. |
| Theydon Bois experienced around 300 youths running amok and throwing fireworks. Tesco had to close Tesco due to the threat.  Theydon Bois had an aging population who don’t use twitter was there any chance of a pop up for older people?  There had been a lot of petty crime and early morning stealing from cars. People are not reporting it as do not see the point. Next year Halloween could be a real issue. | Not one of the youths arrested that night were from Epping. Next year police planned to will work with British transport police and prevent them from getting on the trains.  Yes - the pop up was funded by the PFCC’s office and it was possible to load it in the car get out in the community.  Ch/Insp Baxter requested a group from the community come and speak to him and discuss the issues that are happening in the district. |
| As most of the issues raised were attributed to youths. If we can engage with them some of this could be prevented. | The PFCC’s office had met with the Epping Youth Forum the previous week and they were discussing about how to engage. Specials in schools was also an option. The OFPCC was actively seeking ways to engage.  The fire service has engaged with young people and won awards and were now a leader in youth intervention. If they can help in anyway then let them know. |
| Was it possible for an officer to attend a meeting with Staplefords Abbots parish council? The area is rural and people are not bothering reporting crime taking place. | Ch/Insp Basford agreed that would be possible.  The previous week the police had launched a new rural policing strategy and there is now a dedicated Gypsy & Traveller Rural Engagement Team. More information will be available through the PFCC website pfcc@essex.pnn.police.uk |