

PFCC Saffron Walden Public Meeting Monday 4th December 2017

**Panel Members**

Roger Hirst - PFCC

Terry Povey, General Manager, ECFRS – Interagency Liaison Office

Chief Inspector Craig Carrington, Uttlesford LDC

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| Roger Hirst opened meeting with an update on his role as PFCC and changes in governance since 1st October 2017. He also spoke about greater collaboration between the emergency services. For further information see:  http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/what-we-are-doing/fire-rescue-strategy/  http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/what-we-are-doing/police-and-crime-plan/  RH also spoke about funding for policing and the need for more officers nationally and locally. Essex Police needed to provide the best service possible for the people of Essex and increasing investment will help us deliver this. It was not possible to count on any increase in central Government funding for this year but he was lobbying hard for that, and for the freedom to raise the police precept. Before any decisions are made around increased investment he wanted to know residents’ views.  Every meeting he attended the public wanted more police on the streets and it required more money and more resources to deliver it in the way we would want. The demand on the police service is rising. New crime types are emerging and existing crime is rising in its complexity, this is against a backdrop of an unprecedented shift in the national security environment. Of the 5030 responses received, 75% of those who responded were willing to pay up to £10 per year more towards policing and 8% were willing to pay up to £75 per year.  Chief Inspector Craig Carrington addressed the meeting and ran through all the things that were raised at the last public meeting in February and that had been completed: The police office at the Lodge was opened this year and has been providing 9-5 counter service with 24 hour patrol and response. Positive feedback has already been received from the public.  Rural policing -There have been some operations recently around harecoursing in the Uttlesford area which resulted in arrests. More are planned as well as nationwide days of action. The new Gypsy & Traveller Rural Engagement Team have also been formed and the revised rural crime strategy for Essex was launched on 16th November 17.  **Policing in schools** – Due to the stretched resourcing in the police, they have joined with the fire service to help get messages into schools. The fire service is a leader in youth intervention. The PFCC is also meeting with the children’s society to see how we can support their ‘Big up the Bill’ campaign. The OPFCC has also met with youth councils across the county about how better to engage young people and we are planning a youth forum in March 2018.  **Drug dealing in the district** - A family living within the Uttlesford District were known to use and supply drugs and had developed links with London drugs gangs and were bringing them into the area. Community Safety Partners worked together to tackle the issues with the family, to prevent them from offending and to break the links with the London drugs gangs. Partners looked at all aspects of the families activities and, as well as the Police targeting them for drugs offences, partners investigated breaches of their tenancy agreement and the validity of their benefit claims. After months of concentrated activity not only had the Police arrested and prosecuted members of the family for offences, but the housing provider had brought about eviction proceedings for tenancy breaches; as a result the family have been removed from the area and the London drugs line operating in the District via the family was severed | |
| **Questions/Issues** | **Answers** |
| Poor advertising for the public meeting, publicity was poor and felt very last minute. | RH said we would look at how and where we advertise the meetings and will ensure they meet as wide an audience as possible. |
| 101 service is still not fit for purpose, it takes too long and often people cannot get through | The current 101 service was in need of improvement. The Force Control Room was undergoing an extensive upgrade under ACC Pippa Mills, who previously oversaw the force control room improvements at the Metropolitan Police service. Other ways to report non-urgent crime can go is via the Essex Police website Do It On-line https://www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online/ |
| Not all people like reporting on line, they prefer a face to face experience but many felt this was very difficult at the Lodge/Council offices. The council offices are not in the centre of town and the front desk facility is closed at lunch times when that is the only time that some people could report crimes. | Chief Inspector Carrington explained that the footfall at the old police station was 8/10 people per day. The decision was made to save costs and have a front counter at the council offices as many people attend there. He did however say they would review this if the offices were too difficult to access. |
| Saffron Walden is now known as “coke town” as they know they can deal drugs and never worry about seeing an officer, what are you doing about this? | Chief Inspector Carrington talked about drug arrests and stated there was not a cocaine problem but they had made cannabis arrests. He again stressed importance of reporting things to help his team gather Intel. If they have enough Intel they can obtain warrants and execute them. |
| Why did your local PCSO say someone would come out to me as I had been abused in town on 3 occasions whilst on my mobility scooter and then someone from HQ phone to say they did not have enough information to come out and look for suspect? | Chief Inspector Carrington explained that when the victim had reported the incident locally the PCSO would have agreed to go and look for the perpetrator however as the victim had originally also called 101 and left a message a decision would have been made by HQ based on the information from the phone message and they would have decided that there was insufficient information to follow up. He said it was a case of two different offices. It did not mean that the local officer had not been out looking. He undertook to check up with his local officer and provide feedback. |
| Cllr for residents for Uttlesford commended the local officers on doing a good job with the limited resources but asked Mr Hirst where had the proceeds of the sale of the Saffron Walden police station gone. At the previous meeting Mr Hirst had said that the proceeds would go into local resources but they had no evidence of that. Therefore it was not working. | Mr Hirst agreed the local officers were doing a really good job but that they were not always able to respond to was crime prevention. Monies have gone back into operational policing but more is needed to invest in local policing and prevention work. Petty crime and volume crime are up and we need to get better at rehabilitation and working with partner agencies.  Mr Hirst is campaigning to the Home Office for more resources for local policing and the right to raise the council tax precept cap as referenced in the beginning of meeting.  Terry Povey from Fire & Resue spoke about the protection and prevention work that the Fire Service do and the work they are doing collaboratively with ambulance and police. An example of this is Home Safety visits where the Fire Service advice on things like smoke alarms, this is an ideal opportunity to discuss crime prevention advice etc. Fire also deal with ASB and Youth Schemes. |
| A member of public raised an issue he had with poor response from Essex Police which has taken almost 2 months with broken promises of actions to be taken. | Chief Inspector Carrington took the details and promised to get back to the victim as soon as possible. He apologised on behalf of his officers and said he would be dealing with the officer. |
| Burglary – do police attend burglaries? | Chief Inspector Carrington explained the process. If the burglary has already been committed and no one is present at the time it is unlikely anyone will attend straight away as no one is at risk of physical harm. All burglaries should be attended later by CID however again there are resource issues. EP is working on putting a burglary pack on line for victims to record losses, serial numbers and other important information. A SOCO should also attend to see if they can obtain forensic evidence and take statements. |
| CCTV – could more be done by local businesses to protect themselves more by having CCTV? | Chief Inspector Carrington confirmed it is used for evidential purposes. |
| Funding of Specials and PCSOs. A Cllr raised the subject of funding for individual PCSOs and Specials. He said the Council was considering funding some PCSOs but were put off by the contract from the Chief Constable which says the council pick up costs of the resource and ongoing training but they would not be guaranteed that they would always be available to that area. | The Chief Constable reserves the right to redeploy the resource in emergency situations however Frinton on Sea have 6 PCSOs under this scheme who are available to their local area 99.9% of the time. He suggested that they contact Frinton Town Council to see how the scheme worked from their experience. He also said to contact Superintendent Simon Anslow who is in charge of the Specials. |
| What’s App – a group of local farmers have set up a What’s App group which allows them to alert members of any break-ins, suspicious activity etc. This has been a very successful tool for the group but they were frustrated that they could not share the group with police. | Unfortunately due to security reasons the police were unable to join What’s App at the present time but they were fully supportive of communities using the system to relay information. |