

# **Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex Public Meeting – Colchester District Public Information Pack**

## Essex Police

### District Profile

Colchester District is part of the North Local Policing Area (LPA) covering an area of 125 square miles and including a diverse mix of rural and urban communities from Dedham Vale and Constable Country in the north, to the oyster beds of Mersea Island in the south.

Colchester is the oldest recorded town in Britain, attracting a high number of visitors each year. The town centre has a vibrant economy with retail, cultural and evening entertainment facilities attracting a diverse mix of people.

Colchester United Football Club plays in the national second division and has a stadium and conference complex to the north of the town. This is next to the new junction on the A12, developing industrial areas and a new Park and Ride facility. This venue hosts a number of high profile 18000 capacity concerts each year.

In recent years, successive house building programmes have seen the expansion of the historic main town of Colchester and fast developing satellite towns such as Tiptree on the southern border of the district.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010, identified two small areas within Colchester's 27 wards as being in the top 10% of deprived areas in England; these were St Andrews Ward and St Annes Ward.

The local resident population of Colchester is the second largest of any district in Essex. The 2011 census recorded a total of 173,100 residents, although in 2012, Essex County Council estimated the population to be more than 180,000 and the largest district in the county.

In 2018, the Colchester District was reported as the fastest growing District (population size) outside of London with an estimated population now well over 200,000 and increasing.

Colchester has 47.1% of all recorded short-term residents in Essex. This influence is illustrated by two significant community groups. Firstly, there are more than 15,000 students at Essex University. These include more than 3,000 post graduates from 140 different countries, which is instrumental in supporting the university's excellent globally recognised reputation. Secondly, there are thousands of military personnel living and working in the town, making Colchester the second largest military town in the country.

These short-term residents provide a significant boost to the local economy. The soldiers, students and support officers provide a cultural mix not seen anywhere else in the county of Essex.

## Ethnicity

In the 2011 survey, Colchester was the third most ethnically diverse area in the whole of Essex, with the district consisting of 92% White, 3.7% Asian, 1.8% Mixed Race, 1.5% Black, 0.6% Arab and 0.4% other ethnic groups.

## **Policing Structure and Resources**

### Colchester Police Station

Colchester Police Station is the single operating base for the district. It is open to the public daily from 9am to 5pm.

The following resources are based at Colchester Police Station:

### 24/7 Local Policing Teams

There are six Local Policing Teams (LPTs) working 24/7 on a 'six days on and three days off' shift pattern. Each of these teams is managed by a Duty LPT Inspector. The LPTs deal with a range of policing issues including response policing, major incidents, incident demand, crime investigations and missing persons. Each Inspector manages two Sergeants and 16 Constables. In addition, there are 32 Special Constables aligned to the LPT that are shared equally amongst shifts.

### Community Policing Team

The Community Policing Team is managed by an Inspector. The team consists of two Sergeants, 10 Constables, 10 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and 19 Special Constables. The team works in a Partnership Hub, alongside partners which include the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), Licensing and the Colchester Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

The team's priorities are decided by the CSP and are:

1. Reducing violence
2. Protecting vulnerable people
3. Tackling urban street gangs
4. Repeat high-harm anti-social behaviour

### Colchester Town Centre Policing Team ('Team 10')

Colchester Borough Council has invested more than £300,000 to progress a joint plan with Colchester Police to implement a Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP) for Colchester. Public opinion has been quite negative recently towards the Town Centre and associated anti-social behaviour. In partnership with Essex Police, this additional Colchester Borough Council funding over the next two years will enable the creation of a dedicated Colchester Town Centre Policing Team. Launching in mid-September 2018 the investment will provide for the recruitment of three additional Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and one Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator (Colchester Borough Homes). In addition, Essex Police will dedicate four Special Constables to the Team and two Police Constables from the existing Community Policing Team establishment. This dedicated Town Centre

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Policing Team is known as 'Team 10' and is led by a Community Policing Team Sergeant and managed by the existing Community Policing Team Inspector.

'Team 10's' priorities are focused solely on Colchester Town Centre in the delivery of the TCAP (a far reaching partnership project designed to crack down on anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder in the Town Centre) and improving Community Safety. Joining forces with the borough's existing team of Zone Wardens, Licensing Officers and anti-social behaviour officers, the dedicated resources of 'Team 10' are committed to tackling specific related Town Centre crimes and disorder from aggressive begging, drug use or selling and street drinking through to business burglary, Public Space Protection Order breaches (PSPO) theft, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour.

### Criminal Investigations Department

This team consists of one Detective Inspector, three Detective Sergeants and 15 Detective Constables. They investigate more complex crimes, such as robberies, burglaries and serious assaults.

### Domestic Abuse Crime Investigation Team

This team consists of one Detective Inspector, three Detective Sergeants and 15 Detective Constables. They investigate incidents of domestic abuse where the level of risk has been assessed as medium or high.

The following functions are also based at Colchester Police Station:

- Custody Suite (for use by the county)
- Missing Person Team
- Child Abuse Investigation Team (responsibility for the North of Essex)
- Adult Sexual Assault Investigation Team (responsibility for the North of Essex)
- Intelligence Unit (responsibility for the North of Essex)
- Integrated Offender Management Unit (responsibility for the North of Essex)
- Criminal Justice Unit (responsibility for the North of Essex)
- Crime Scene Investigation (responsibility for the North of Essex)
- Multi-Agency Community Safety Policing Hub
- Licensing
- Front Office

### Community Concerns and Media

Concerns were raised via local community forums, local reporters and via councillors as to the level of ASB that was taking place in the Town Centre, and reported increases of drug misuse, all crime levels and the general increase in the fear of crime across the Colchester District.

A more visible and accessible police and partnership presence was highlighted as being needed within our communities with specific concerns raised around night-time economy related drinking and associated violence as well as concerns raised regarding aggressive begging, gang criminality and burglary.

Violence connected to the Night-Time Economy (NTE)

Night-Time Economy offending is defined as any incident between the hours of 21.00 – 05.00 of a specified type against people or property in publically accessible places within designated NTE locations.

Colchester has one of the busiest night-time venues in the county, with nearly 100 registered licensed premises.

In Colchester, Essex Police maintains a strong partnership approach to addressing violence that occurs within the NTE. Colchester is seen as leading the way in Essex for its proactive stance and problem solving. Street briefings take place weekly and are attended by the police, street pastors, staff from the SOS Bus, door and bar staff and licensing officers from the Council. The Colchester Police 'Don't Cross the Line' media campaign was launched throughout this summer within the District targeting pre-loaders of alcohol and drugs frequenting licenced premises. This is set to be repeated throughout the winter months and Christmas period. The campaign increases public awareness, offers reassurance and gives safety advice regarding violence associated to alcohol and drug misuse (specifically the consequences). The campaign also complements police and partner operations within the District which have been aligned to focus on reducing violence against the person offences and violence with injury perpetrators. Supported by the recently introduced and agreed TCAP, a number of bespoke policing operations are being maintained to target both crime prevention and detection associated to our NTE. These operations are being delivered as Days & Nights of Action mid-week as well specific Friday, Saturday & Sunday night police and partnership deployments.

Working closely with the Safer Colchester Partnership, community representatives, educational establishments, the Independent Advisory Group (IAG), Colchester Borough Council, Community 360, Licenced premises and businesses, the Colchester District Crime & Harm Reduction Plan 2018/19, formulated in January this year has provided the backbone and structure in organising sustainable bespoke community safety and local policing responses. Listening to local concerns and intelligence-led delivering our shared objectives and priorities for Colchester. Designed to make best use of all available resources with a proactive focus on keeping people safe, preventing and reducing crime and ASB and developing 'Social Action', it has provided strong foundations and the architecture in the delivery of sustained key operations, Community initiatives and positive developments in reversing the trend in crime, ASB and harm.

This has included the reinvigoration and expansion of Colchester Taxi-Watch and Pub-Watch schemes across the District as well as appropriately applied Dispersal Orders in designated locations when identified as necessary and enforcement of Public Space Protection Order breaches, all with the shared purpose of reversing the trend in violence, reducing crime and ASB and instilling a Community Safety legacy.

**Colchester Police 'Fusion' briefing model** was introduced to the District on the 20/11/2017. This District based policing tasking model is centred on harnessing powerful local knowledge by bringing all policing teams representatives together for a bespoke intelligence-led briefing enabling the ability to cross-crew officers from different departments. This concept has permitted an increase in our policing capacity to carve out proactive fugitive arrest attempts daily whilst still maintaining the reactive local policing teams core responsibilities of responding to emergencies and critical incidents. Fusion is delivered everyday within Colchester Police Station and is a 10 minute directed tasking

model chaired by the District Commander. It has seen the successful location and arrest of more than 220 outstanding or wanted prolific offenders since its inception (cutting down the time offenders remain outstanding or at large, making best use of all available resources regardless of role or department).

By harnessing best use of all available officers and teams in this way, the District top and repeat offenders are relentlessly tracked down and brought to justice as quickly as possible. Focusing on those offenders causing the most harm to our communities, their location and subsequent detention as a result of this concept has in turn had a direct correlation in the reduction in key crimes such as residential Burglary and Violence against the person. Fusion has evolved over this period to incorporate partners, specialist policing teams outside of Colchester District and include surrounding force contacts such as the Metropolitan Police and Suffolk Police. In this way Fusion is supporting the prevention and detection of transient criminals and organised crime groups (OCGs) who enter the District of Colchester from out of area to commit crime.

92.5% of all Colchester outstanding fugitives and suspects have been located (and associated investigations completed) every quarter in 2018.

Over the rolling 12 months to July 2018 we have seen an encouraging reduction in Violence with Injury offences within Colchester District by -4.9% (Year on year a decrease of 32 fewer offences).

**Operation Hornbeam** is a partnership coordinated high visibility patrol operation deployed during the NTE hours at weekends. Targeting the prevention and reduction in high harm anti-social behaviour offences and crime, robustly dealing with person's intent on causing such harm. This operation has seen Essex Police Colchester and the Royal Military Police (RMP) come together in delivering a joint-patrol protocol increasing our policing effectiveness and reach in the Town Centre. The effectiveness of this operation has led to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement signing between Essex Police and the RMP which is being formalised at Goojerat Barracks on the 12/10/18.

Whilst the District has seen an increase year on year of all recorded crime this has not been out of quilter with the national rates and when placed into context against the backdrop of the District's population increase, an increasing level of confidence in victims and the public to come forward and report crimes and concerns (with increased reporting methods, victim support, community engagement and avenues made available to do so) along with the strict compliance of the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS – changes made in how the Police Service record crimes expanded), Colchester has seen clear evidence of a downward trend in the all crime rate 'deficit' (compared with the same period on 2017) and ASB over the last 12 months.

The all crime increase deficit over the rolling year for Colchester has been reducing month-on-month (A deficit reduction of 9% - 412 fewer crimes from September 2017 to August 2018), with a downward trend specifically in violence against the person offences (violence with injury) and anti-social behaviour continuing in this positive direction.

This is an encouraging trajectory for community safety in Colchester but it is recognised it needs to be sustained and built upon to make Colchester even safer. This focus and combined commitment has been evident throughout the summer of 2018, policing the football World Cup (with only a few minor pockets of isolated disorder occurring) and our night-time economy. Significant investment from Colchester Borough Council in

September this year demonstrates the commitment and support to keeping residents in Colchester safe from harm and has enabled additional resources to formulate a dedicated Town Centre Policing Team ('Team 10'). In line with the Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP) agreed in July, work has already begun to create and maintain a multi-agency record of all TCAP actions and progress. Monthly reporting back to our Communities policing activities and action taken, continues through our "You said, We did" updates, listening to local people and responding to local issues.

"You Said, We Did" messages are delivered regularly via social media which includes the Essex Police Facebook page, Essex Police Colchester Facebook page and multiple twitter accounts held by local officers of whom there are 23 individual Twitter accounts that reach 15,100 people. Recent posts on the Essex Police Colchester Facebook page have reached 35,000 and generated more than 300 positive comments.

**Operation Jupiter** is a partnership operation between Colchester Community Policing Team and educational establishments within the District. The operation focuses on reducing the carriage of weapons (knife crime) by increasing police and community safety team accessibility and visibility through proactive engagement with older children and young persons in schools and colleges.

There have been four deployments this year (Spring and Summer term) at Colchester Institute which provides education and vocational training to persons aged 16 and above from across North Essex. The management of the Institute were very keen to increase police engagement and communicated with parents and students in advance explaining the aim of these days along with set clear unambiguous rules and sanctions for any student found breaching these standards. The operation is intelligence-led and was introduced following safeguarding concerns around out of county gang influences within Colchester.

Reviews conducted with Colchester Institute revealed that these deployments resulted in a large number of very positive engagements with students and positive feedback received. A small number of stop and searches were carried out and only one positive search conducted where a "shank" (an improvised blade) was found. It was identified that social media chatter spread very quickly the news that we were on site which will have increased the deterrence effect of the deployments. The deployment of the drug search dog was also very well received.

This operation is being expanded and developed across all Colchester educational establishments along with regular area knife-sweeps across the District and promotion of the District's knife amnesty bins.

### Examples of Problem Solving Initiatives

#### Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

Over the rolling 12 months to June 2017 we saw an increase in ASB within Colchester District by 2.5% (Year on year this was an increase of 135 more offences).

Over the rolling 12 months to July 2018 we have seen an encouraging reduction of ASB within Colchester District by -2.7% (Year on year a decrease of 53 fewer offences).

**Colchester 'Street-Weeks'** is a Police & Partnership Community Project tackling local concerns and anti-social behaviour while engaging with Colchester's most vulnerable people. Introduced to Colchester District in October 2017, 'Street-Weeks' has delivered 'proactive' face-to-face community engagement through the Safer Colchester Partnership involving a wide spectrum of police assets, volunteers, councillors and multi-agencies to tackle together head-on local issues. The initiative is supplementary to business as usual partnership and policing activity and provides at a street level greater visibility, enhanced service accessibility and community reassurance. We regularly engage and communicate with members of our communities and have listened to their concerns and feedback. By focusing a dedicated community engagement week in this way, 'Street-Weeks' has increased our community reach and most importantly, delivered proactive action to reduce anti-social behaviour, hidden harm and community safety concerns.

The key aspect of 'Street-Weeks' is its community empowerment approach to instil local 'Social Action'. The concentration of activity of each 'Street-Weeks' occurs with an area engagement and partnership consultation before the street and ward concerned is agreed upon. An evaluation phase occurs after the week is completed and results published on Facebook and bulletins to report back to our communities. Understanding what lays behind the statistics and delivering a tailored partnership engagement and intervention approach covering 24 hours of each of the seven days, a legacy for each 'Street-Weeks' is created to ensure on-going positive developments.

The third 'Street-Weeks' took place on 4<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in Highwoods Ward. More than 1300 residents were engaged and local programmes of community safety created. To date 'Street-Weeks' legacy has established 10 Speed-Watch Schemes, 15 Active Citizen & Special Constable applications, 300 Neighbourhood Watch memberships, identified and established Community Champions to maintain local Community Action Plans and Environment Care Plans (graffiti clean-up days, litter picking etc.) and numerous other agency referrals establishing single points of contact from matters relating to parking issues through to youth and child care referrals. A significant increase in local intelligence has also been evident with information provided from each 'Street-Weeks' to Colchester Community Policing, Colchester Borough Council and Crimestoppers. This has seen an increase in the number of intelligence-led drug warrants being successfully completed across Colchester and associated anti-social behaviour being dismantled.

Supported by Colchester Borough Council a £10,000 investment has been made to enhance delivery, frequency and awareness of 'Street-Weeks' for Colchester over the next two years. This funding has enabled plans for a dedicated digital media link to 'Street-Weeks' on-line to be developed, a dedicated operations group and materials associated to increasing awareness of 'Street-Weeks', its frequency of delivery and wider participation. The fourth 'Street-Weeks' has been organised for St Michaels Ward at the end of October 2018 where full details will be circulated by Essex Police Colchester Facebook Page and Colchester Borough Council. 'Street-Weeks' will now take place every two to three months with the aim of increasing the frequency further once the operations group and digital platforms are embedded.

### **Empowering communities and supporting Social Action.**

From Volunteer Police Cadets, Special Constables and Active Citizens right through to our Street Pastors, Wardens, local Councillors, MP, Colchester Borough Homes and our Police Community Safety Teams, this partnership has seen organisations work shoulder-to-shoulder to create safer communities. Partnership work like this allows us to proactively

engage directly with residents face-to-face, to listen and act on their feedback, to shape the most effective service delivery, measure confidence and satisfaction within our communities and increase our Community Safety family.

**Operation Diss** is a police and partner enforcement operation established to support delivery of the Town Centre Action Plan and focus partnership efforts on key issues such as aggressive begging, street drinking, high harm anti-social behaviour and drug dealing/misuse. Since its inception there have been two operations in August and September 2018 which have yielded significant results through effective partnership working with Colchester Borough Council including zone wardens and licensing teams. Local councillors and the Chair of COLBAC (Colchester Business Against Crime) have also attended to observe and provide their support. The results of this operation to date have included more than 509 engagements with visitors to the town centre, local businesses and persons believed to be presenting anti-social behaviour concerns. Sixty-five necessary stop and accounts, four crime related arrests including three for recent series of shop breaks and key intelligence obtained for further progression.

The operation also supports enforcement of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) with Essex Police authority obtained under Section 68 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014, to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to persons believed to have committed an offence detailed within the PSPO established by Colchester Borough Council.

The operation will be deployed regularly in support of the police and partnership activities already focusing on tackling anti-social behaviour and improving community safety, confidence and public reassurance.

**Operation Croquet** was formed in the summer of 2018 to support a police proactive focus on tackling illegal drug possession, selling and misuse within Colchester. This has led to the development of an operational partnership group to target specific individuals impacting locally and an increase in sharing associated intelligence focusing on dismantling Class A Drug lines and gangs. The operation focuses on the highest threat groups and is centred on intelligence-led deployments utilising both overt and plain clothes police officers.

Deployments are based on the latest intelligence picture and also supported by valuable information from CCTV, the public and our partners. The Dutch Quarter has seen four arrests generated for Possession with Intent to supply (PWITS) drug offences since August 2018 and six premises warrants executed under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, as well as one vulnerable person safeguarded from a dealer within his own home.

The arrests have been linked to drug activity connected to County Lines operating within Colchester and outline both the need and the importance for proactive police operations of this nature which will continue.

#### Information from the Serious Crime Directorate

#### **Operation Montana**

The Major Crime team launched an investigation following the discovery of a deceased man called Martin Dines within a public car park. On Monday 23rd April 2018, a member of the public arrived to work on the pay and display machines at the St Marys Car Park. Whilst carrying out his duties, he noticed a rough

sleeper in the stairwell. After some time he noticed that there was blood around the person and they had not moved. He removed the blanket and noticed swelling to the face and blood in one ear. Martin Dines was cold to the touch and described as stiff, and was later declared deceased at the scene.

One women and two men have been charged with murder and are due to face trial on October 22, 2018.

### **Operation Dominion**

The Major Crime team adopted the investigation of a series of burglaries and aggravated burglaries in Colchester between March and August 2017.

The burglaries escalated to aggravated burglaries focussing on women on the Greenstead Estate, Colchester. At almost all of the locations the offender had drawn a symbol and left messages to the police on the walls. The offender was in possession of a knife at all three of the aggravated offences and at two of these offences he tied the victims up at knifepoint.

Connor Ashton was identified as a suspect and he was charged with a total of 13 burglaries, 10 dwelling burglaries and three aggravated burglaries. Ashton pleaded guilty to two counts of aggravated burglary and six counts of burglary. On the 16/08/2018 Ashton was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment plus four years on extended licence.

### Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Data

#### **Colchester Crime Comparison**

**The table below sets out the crime figures for Colchester, comparing reports for 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 with 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 for the Colchester district and the Force.**

Areas of note for Colchester district:

- All crime has increased by 16.8% (2320 more offences).
- Violence without injury has increased by 18.7% (379 more offences).
- Stalking and harassment has increased by 51.8% (563 more offences).
- Sexual offences has increased by 30.4% (132 more offences).
- Dwelling burglary (pre- Apr 17 def.) has decreased by 9.0% (52 fewer offences).
- Theft of a vehicle has decreased by 13.6% (38 fewer offences).
- ASB incidents have decreased by 2.4% (130 fewer incidents).

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Crime/Incident Type	# offence		# diff	% diff	District vs Force % pt diff	Per 1000 Pop.*	District vs Force Per Pop* diff	# offences		# diff	% diff	Per 1000 Pop.*
	Colchester 12M							Force				
	2017	2018						2017	2018			
ALL CRIME	13806	16126	2320	16.8	5.5	86.4	7.5	127797	142199	14402	11.3	78.9
Violence with Injury	1674	1726	52	3.1	0.1	9.2	1.6	13355	13754	399	3.0	7.6
Violence without Injury	2024	2403	379	18.7	-2.4	12.9	2.7	15210	18419	3209	21.1	10.2
Stalking and Harassment	1087	1650	563	51.8	-18.3	8.8	0.7	8606	14634	6028	70.0	8.1
Sexual Offences	434	566	132	30.4	14.7	3.0	0.9	3319	3839	520	15.7	2.1
Robbery	116	168	52	44.8	38.2	0.9	0.1	1420	1514	94	6.6	0.8
Residential Burglary	-	745				10.4	-1.8	-	8788			12.2
Business and Community Burglary	-	422				2.3	0.3	-	3602			2.0
Dwelling Burglary (pre-Apr 17 definition)	575	523	-52	-9.0	0.7	7.3	-1.7	7146	6451	-695	-9.7	9.0
Other Burglary (pre-Apr 17 definition)	500	644	144	28.8	30.8	3.5	0.2	6061	5939	-122	-2.0	3.3
Theft from a Vehicle	547	542	-5	-0.9	-1.1	2.9	-1.5	7976	7990	14	0.2	4.4
Theft of a Vehicle	279	241	-38	-13.6	-27.3	1.3	-1.3	4127	4691	564	13.7	2.6
Theft from the Person	148	190	42	28.4	7.4	1.0	0.1	1358	1643	285	21.0	0.9
Theft of Pedal Cycles	458	412	-46	-10.0	6.7	2.2	1.0	2702	2250	-452	-16.7	1.2
Shoplifting	1165	1435	270	23.2	19.9	7.7	2.0	9865	10192	327	3.3	5.7
Other Theft	1304	1372	68	5.2	4.3	7.4	0.1	12953	13069	116	0.9	7.3
Criminal Damage (incl. arson)	1547	1832	285	18.4	15.6	9.8	1.0	15478	15918	440	2.8	8.8
Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents	5385	5255	-130	-2.4	1.3	28.2	1.0	50859	48973	-1886	-3.7	27.2

**Other Districts – All Crime offences and per 1000 population:**

District	ALL CRIME	
	Offences	Per 1000 Pop.
Basildon	16601	90.5
Braintree	9469	62.7
Brentwood	4828	63.2
Castle Point	5321	59.3
Chelmsford	13257	76.1
Colchester	16126	86.4
Epping Forest	10613	81.5
Harlow	8224	95.6
Maldon	2764	43.6
Rochford	3823	44.6
Southend-on-sea	17334	96.4
Stansted	1745	
Tendring	12765	89.5
Thurrock	15119	90.5
Uttlesford	4210	48.8

All Crime

Colchester District all crime rate peaked at 23.2% over year on year in September 2017 (an increase of 1,260 more offences at that time).

Whilst the all crime comparison rate (2016/17 to 2017/18) still reflects as an increase, it has been evident a positive downward trend in all crime has been occurring month-on-month over the cumulative year to date.

This is a very encouraging all crime reduction trajectory with a deficit reduction of 8.7% noted (261 fewer crimes) over the rolling 12 months from September 2017 to September 2018 currently.

This downward trend is also evident concerning violence with injury crimes in Colchester, with a deficit reduction of 2.1% (18 fewer crimes) over the cumulative year to September 2018.

It is worth noting that the all crime rate increase (and deficit reduction) is against the backdrop of context relating to a number of key factors. Colchester is the fastest population growing district outside of London with an estimated population of well over 200,000 and expanding. The increase in public confidence to report crimes has been

evident with police and partners providing more and more support, help and avenues for people to do so, particularly through on-line availability. Changes made by the Home Office in the type of incidents that are recorded as crimes: for example, offences of malicious communications (such as abusive text messages, emails or social media posts) which were previously recorded by the Home Office as non-crime investigations are now classified as harassment which has seen stalking and harassment offences increase by 51.8% (563 more offences) as a direct correlation.

### Violence without Injury

Violence without injury has increased by 18.7% (379 more offences). This follows a 33.4% (818 more offences) increase difference from the previous year period. Whilst an abatement in the volume of crimes is evident in this offending category from the previous 12 months, this area of violence against the person continues to increase. The violence without injury crime classifications have been expanded by the Home Office to include the various wide range of offending circumstances associated to malicious communication and harassment crimes. This has contributed to the volume of offences recorded within this area of violence without injury crimes, with a noticeable increase in social media harassment and stalking crimes occurring.

Around 50% of all violence without injury crimes committed in Colchester are associated to domestic abuse and domestic related incidents. These relate to harassment and malicious communication crimes where on-line social media platforms provide the perpetrators avenues to pursue a course of unwanted communication which causes the victim distress, alarm and fear. This can also include controlling and coercive behaviour and stalking. This offending category also includes crimes of common assault. The offence of common assault can be committed without even touching another whereby it involves 'any act by which a person intentionally or recklessly causes another person to apprehend immediate unlawful violence' (assault without injury).

**Operation Amsterdam** is a Colchester Police and partner engagement, education, prevention and enforcement plan designed to tackle Violence without Injury offending in the District. Introduced in April 2018, the operation provides a coordinated multi-agency response to reducing offences related to violence without injury victims, locations and the perpetrators. Intelligence-led and working closely with our Domestic Abuse Investigation Team (Juno), the operation focuses heavily on the prevention of offences (education and outreach) whilst proactively identifying those perpetrators, locations and vulnerability areas which are persistently concerned.

The operation aims to 'break the cycle' through sustained intervention and delivery of long-term support solutions. This involves regular engagements with Colchester educational establishments (University and Institute) covering domestic abuse, internet dangers and on-line malicious communication awareness programmes as well as collaboration with the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service delivering education presentations covering cyber and stalking dangers within schools.

Police also now have at their disposal Domestic Violence Protection Orders which last 28 days and afford victims a short-term level of protection through court defined conditions allowing the victim to be supported in moving away from the offender.

Where prosecutions are successful for domestic abuse we regularly apply for restraining orders on behalf of victims to give them court defined conditions and the reassurance that if it is breached, a criminal offence in its own right occurs that police can take action on.

### Sexual Offences

Over the past 12 months, sexual crime in Colchester District has increased by 30.4% (132 more offences). This follows a 14.2% increase (58 more offences) the year before.

It has been evident that an increase in sexual offences has occurred with respect to reports made by third party informants who wish to remain anonymous, acting in the interests of the victim without the victim knowing the police are being notified.

The police continue to adapt operational activity to target both the identified offenders and the locations of highest incidence. This process continues to evolve with the current development of predictive crime mapping. Specific operational activities have been set up where a trend has been identified, using high-visibility options to suppress criminal activity and supported by covert activity to secure evidence and target known offenders.

Officers from the Management of Sexual and Violent Offenders Team engage in communication with identified individuals, often calling on them to remind them that they are of interest to the police who are monitoring their movements. A full range of other tactics is also employed to ensure that the few people who commit these serious offences are arrested and brought to justice. The police Public Protection Unit based at Colchester, work with partners such as Probation to continue to manage offenders whilst in prison and on their release, with the aim of preventing re-offending.

There has been an increase in reports of serious sexual assault both across the county and nationally since a number of high-profile cases have been reported upon by the media. It is believed that people have become more confident in reporting these types of offences. Of all the sexual offences reported, only a small number of offences are committed by strangers. Essex Police has taken proactive steps to ensure the processes governing the recording of sexual abuse are robust. The force has encouraged the reporting of crime and teams have made access to services for victims easier. Working closely with partner agencies, the force adopts a positive approach that encourages victims to report crime. Crimes recorded as sexual assault include a number of different offences that are all of a sexual nature.

Police continue to work closely with statutory and voluntary sector partners to identify those children who are at most risk of sexual abuse and those locations where abuse is most likely to take place. Through the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) partnership, we are able to identify these children and the locations, targeting specific action to both safeguard and reduce the risk of further offending.

Dwelling Burglary

This year we have seen reduction in Dwelling Burglary offences in the Colchester District. This has come about due to a number of initiatives put in place which focus on raising awareness and multi-team working.

Year to Date (1st April - 12th Sep)	Offences Recorded	Solved Rate
2018	240	10%
2017	271	16%
2016	211	9%
2015	318	8%

A real success has been the District 'Fusion' Model in that CID and officers representing all the various Policing Teams at Colchester, work together to target burglars. This offender focussed approach to dealing with Dwelling Burglary involves officers from our Integrated Offender Management Team, CID, Intel, local policing teams and force analysts all work together to gather intelligence, disrupt and convict persons who commit dwelling burglary. We apply an 'Achilles Heel' approach to stop these persons from offending.

Examples include a prolific offender who was disqualified from driving. The offender was targeted through 'Fusion' and stopped driving a vehicle. He was arrested and probation recalled him to prison due to being on licence for other burglary matters.

Burglary Business

**Operation Ohio**

Operation Ohio is a Colchester District Police focused operation in response to the noticeable increase in business related burglary within Colchester Town Centre since June 2018. A year on year increase difference of 79.3% (46 more offences).

The premises targeted are on the whole, independent retailers and therefore any crime results in significant disruption and potential loss of livelihood. Through a variety of policing tactics supported by the local tasking process, Operation Ohio has resulted in 14 arrests being made to date, resulting in 14 charges and either subsequent appropriate bail conditions or remand in police custody to court.

To date, three people have received significant custodial sentences.

Building upon these positive results, Colchester Business Against Crime (COLBAC), Colchester Borough Council Town Centre CCTV and other relevant partners are working closely with police to coordinate both maximum crime prevention measures and offender detections. Long term solutions with regards to our most prolific offenders are being sought to prohibit the behaviour, and control access to various parts of Colchester.

This dedicated operation and focus will be supported by the newly formed Colchester Town Centre Policing Team ('Team 10') to maintain both business engagements, encourage reporting and improve confidence with our policing response.

In September 2018 to date a deficit reduction of 50.1% in burglary business has been achieved. Through application of this operation we have seen a sharp impact and downward trend in offending but are not complacent and will sustain the work required to maintain long term reduction.

### **Essex County Fire and Rescue Service** **Structure and Resources**

Operationally, Essex County and Fire Rescue Service divides the county into four geographical working groups. Colchester is part of the North East Group, which extends from Maldon to Dovercourt and also includes the Dengie Peninsula.

In the Colchester area there is a Fire Station in the town itself, which is crewed by wholetime firefighters, along with on-call stations at Tiptree, Wivenhoe and Manningtree.

Wholetime firefighters are based at and mobilised from a Fire Station while on-call firefighters often have other jobs and respond to calls from home or their place of work when they are on duty.

The stations house a variety of appliances from general purpose to those with specialist hydraulic and aerial capabilities.

The North East group's Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) is based at Colchester Fire Station and is called to attend incidents involving height or where firefighters would benefit from being able to work from a higher level, such as a fire in a roof space.

An off-road firefighting vehicle (called a Pinzgauer) is based at Manningtree Fire Station. This was used particularly commonly during the hotter summer months as firefighters tackled fires in fields and other remote locations.

Also based at Lexden (adjacent to our Service fleet workshops) are our Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) crews. USAR are mobilised to incidents including structural collapses and serious road traffic collisions – they specialise in finding and freeing people who are trapped.

Two watches make up USAR, a service which is funded centrally by government.

There is a team of 45 wholetime firefighters and fire officers based at Colchester Fire Station in Cowdray Avenue. 13 on-call firefighters are based at Manningtree, 13 at Tiptree and 12 at Wivenhoe. 17 technicians are also based at Urban Search and Rescue, though a number of these are slightly higher than establishment.

### **Statistics**

Between August 1, 2017 and July 31, 2018:

- ECFRS responded to 15,340 incidents across the county. 7367 of these incidents were deemed potentially life-threatening. 50% of these were responded to in under 10 minutes.
- Firefighters at Colchester Fire Station attended 1253 incidents. Of these 418 were fires and 367 were to provide a specialist service such as assisting at a road traffic

collision, dealing with hazardous materials, water rescue and making an unsafe building stable.

- Firefighters at Tiptree Fire Station attended 134 incidents. Of these 40 were fires, while 46 were to provide a special service.
- Wivenhoe firefighters attended 89 incidents. 31 of those were fires, while 22 were special services.
- Manningtree firefighters attended 69 incidents. Fires made up 26 of these, while special services were provided at 19 incidents.
- Our Home Safety Officers carried out 869 home safety visits across Colchester. During these visits 1062 regular smoke alarms and 87 smoke alarms for residents with hearing impairments were installed.

### **Recent notable incidents**

On 9 August, firefighters from Manningtree were proceeding to an incident when they were involved in a road traffic collision.

While travelling in the station's Pinzgauer – a vehicle designed for off-road firefighting – the vehicle overturned. No other vehicles were involved in the incident.

Fortunately, the injuries to the four crew members were not life threatening. Two were able to exit the vehicle before the remaining two were freed by Suffolk firefighters. One firefighter suffered a broken arm but was soon released from hospital.

### **Community events**

Last Saturday (6 October), the annual Colchester Fire Swim took place at Colchester Leisure World. A total of £7,900 was raised by more than 500 participants.

The event was the 37<sup>th</sup> year it has taken place and is arranged by firefighters. Money raised by sponsors and participants goes to the Fire Fighters Charity and a range of local causes, which are chosen by a committee. To date, £536,200 has been raised by the event.