



**Castle Point Online Public Meeting
21st September 2020 at 19:00**

Panel Members

Roger Hirst

Jane Gardner

Ch/Supt. Ewan Wilson

Ch/Insp David Miles

Cllr Godfrey Isaacs

ECFRS Manager Dave Barnard

Challenges

PFCC Roger Hirst – Covid-19: Challenge for emergency services, especially NHS. Thanked residents for abiding by restrictions and rules. Challenge for police to police these rules. Down to each of us to assist. Fire Service assisting NHS with driving ambulances on blue lights and setting up temporary hospital.

Ongoing trends

PFCC Roger Hirst - Events to reduce RTCs not interrupted.

Drug related violence and domestic violence continue and on-line exploitation, some unreported. Working hard with partner groups to support these vulnerable people.

Recruitment of new officers continues.

Questions from the public

Q – Fire Service – Have practices changed during Covid-19 and what changes have you had to make?

Dave Barnard – Assisted NHS with driving 19 fire-fighters ambulances on emergencies. ECFRS driving instructors trained ambulance workers to drive them on non-emergency calls which freed up response drivers.

Had to adapt to keep employees and public safe. RA every activity & worked with representing bodies to reach agreement on every change.

Sending additional response to incidents. E.g. Hazardous materials officers sent to every incident where likelihood of officers coming into contact with Covid-19 to assess incident and decontaminate.

Set up hospitals, delivered aid, set up temporary wards and morgues.

All dynamic and RA to ensure safety.

DPFCC Jane Gardner asked Roger Hirst to comment on Essex Resilience forum and response to Covid.

Roger Hirst – ERF explained. Co-ordination and tactical groups formed around finance and equipment etc.

Q – Drug Dealing – How to police respond to reports of drug dealing. Seen and reported but police don't attend. What's point of reporting if nothing's done?

Ch/Insp David Miles – Currently occurring and reports of past dealing – RA as to how respond. Convert into intelligence report and researched along with previous incidents, speak to informant. Operation FALCON focus on county lines and dealers. Op. Raptor do this county wide too.

Encouraged people to report to add to this intelligence. Had some good ones over last few months resulting in warrants and disruption. Just because public don't see immediate police presence, there are overt and covert activities going on.

Cllr Godfrey Isaacs - Community safety partnership in Council working with police. Police hub in council offices. Community Safety Officers liaise with police directly for intelligence. Reiterated public to report to add to intelligence. Recent cross-border intelligence led to work on a county line.

Q - Villa Park Benfleet – used to drug use & ASB & Rubbish everywhere: Could park be monitored more?

Cllr Godfrey Isaacs – Once police arrive, they leave the park. Can't agree with police sitting in park waiting for something to happen because it won't then happen. Rubbish – email council.

Q – Fly-tipping in trees in Villa Park – encouraging youngsters to set fire to it.

Dave Barnard – huge increase during restrictions when civic amenities closed – these now open and can make appointments. Fire service being called to these fires – this is a valuable response that is then not available to deal with life-threatening incidents. Urged anyone who feels this is acceptable to think about this. Fire service proactively engage with councils when fly-tipping reported to them.

Cllr Godfrey Isaacs – Drain on resources. Canvey tip open and no queues. Anybody witnessing this can ring council and 99% are recovered within a day and searched to find names and addresses and take action. Please report it.

Q – Disconnect between police and public. 101/999 too remote. What can be done to improve two-way communication between police and those reporting crime?

PFCC Roger Hirst – A few years ago when the squeeze on public services was awful, police had to prioritise the high-level crime, homicide, rape, violent assaults. This depleted the community presence which is a problem, not engaging with public over long period of time not knowing what is going on and what problems are, we can't keep ahead of it, can't do problem orientated, problem solving policing, planned intervention and preventative policing, which is the most effective kind of policing.

This is what we've managed to reverse following the increase in money – thank you to public of Essex in supporting this increase. Paid for first 350 recruits and then with government funding we have 500 more officers, have doubled size of community teams, town centre teams into 23 major towns of county, including Canvey and now also have a rural team which is double the size. Making sure we're in touch; each district has an engagement team.

Working closely with partners; the council and ECFRS. Chief Constable prepared to delegate sufficient powers to partnerships so they could set the strategies for community policing teams for each of the districts. We now want to do more of this throughout the county.

We need to also make sure were more accessible through other mediums. 999 excellent but for emergencies. 101 started with problems with waiting hours, this is now down to 11-12mins even before lockdown. May be better now during lockdown as less going on.

Investment made in on-line reporting service, please use it. If you're not keen on computers but can do it, I appeal to your better nature to use it as you'll be freeing up traffic on the 101 lines for those people that cannot use computers. We also have a live-chat service.

Ch/Supt Ewan Wilson – Explained role: FCR and resolution centre.

Tension between emergency calls and important but not urgent calls. Thirst from public to contact us by telephone but this use creates bottleneck and so more demand to develop other mediums to also make us more accessible. We now have an easily accessible on-line reporting site where you can report any type of crime or incident. These are picked up by dedicated teams in the same way as phone calls. We have a live chat service via internet site where automatically connected to a live messaging system with FCR staff; the same staff who answer telephones. It is a really quick way of getting advice, help and support you need. Keen to promote this and lots of training provided, especially during lockdowns. Please spread the word.

Resolution Centre team look after reports of crime and will investigate the less complex crimes (not minor necessarily). Get quick service and crime report number.

We also need to listen. RC also has responsibility to contact victims back. Good feedback from victims.

Q – Cllr Michael Fuller asking how police going to enforce rule of six? [re. Lockdown]

PFCC Roger Hirst – Senior police asked for a simplification as hard to enforce previous rules and hard to prove what families were present. We've seen consequences of that infection rate. Comments of numbers and new rules etc. We'll stick to four Es which successful here – Engagement, Explain, Encourage, Enforcing. Not as robust as other areas and there was pushback from public. The Four Es measured, proportionate, considered system really works. Some hotspots need tightening, such as Epping Forrest. Thanked public for their support.

Ch/Supt Ewan Wilson – Essex led way with Four Es and other forces following. It's the right way to go about this public health emergency, not just a police issue. Commitment needed from our officers and their measured, proportionate, considered response meant we rarely had to resort to the Enforcement stage. Convinced strategy stands us in good stead. Danger still out there and as a community we cannot be complaisant.

DPFCC Jane Gardner – How many Covid fines given out approx?

Ch/Supt Ewan Wilson – None this weekend as didn't need to and that's the point of the Four Es strategy. Can't give a figure but it is low; due to police using Four Es and public taking rules seriously.

PFCC Roger Hirst – since beginning to the rule of six the figures were 2000 engagements with people, a couple of hundred fines and only a couple of dozen arrests.

DPFCC Jane Gardner - Changing Pathways – Domestic Violence - thanked them for their work in supporting victims.

Q – A resident complained of two hour wait at tip.

Jane Gardner – I think that's the same for all of us, they have to keep themselves and all the public there safe too.

Godfrey Isaacs – Depends on what time you go. Explained his use of tip as quick and efficient.

Q – Speeding – a resident asked what can be done about vehicles travelling at 70mph on Benfleet Road (30mph) and another Q re. vehicles racing on Canvey Island, particularly Ross Common Way.

Ch/Insp David Miles – During lockdown increased level of ASB and speeding likely due to open roads. One area we received lots of reports on was Ross Common Way and we put a dispersal order there to disperse the cars. Working with other partners to gather intelligence and researching social media for illegal gatherings/events in order to proactively prevent this. Other roads include Sadler's Farm roundabout, Hadleigh town centre also policed and check regularly for hot spots. It has decreased but still present. Continue to gather intelligence, speed cameras, proactive and visible presence. Understand impact this ASB has on public.

Cllr Godfrey Isaacs - Small team of speed watch around borough. Concerning but all public need to abide by speed limits. Local Highways ECC along with Borough, police and partnerships meeting to try to resolve this as a joint venture. May ease off in Winter. Other issue Video of people standing on pavement watching vehicles on Ross Common Way. so all partners seeking to help police to enforce the criminal proceeding taking place.

Roger Hirst – Delighted to hear re. Speed watch. Out with them a couple of weeks ago. So important. Speeding is a crime, drink driving, using mobile phone – kill more people than any other crime. More so than the death of 39 immigrants – truly awful but speeding, using mobile phone etc. kill more and if you know someone who does it tell them to stop.

Quickfire Round

Q – What can we do about Untaxed vehicles, no insurance, no MOT noisy exhausts? Ch/Insp David Miles – Really good vehicle seizures recently. On FB put photos of these on back of low-loaders. We are proactive about it and we deal with offenders robustly, seizing their vehicles which will likely be crushed.

Q – How can people apply to become an on-call firefighter? Dave Barnard - All vacancies advertised on ECRFS website; Recruitment. Majority have a few vacancies. If interested in Canvey, go on-line and Station Manager there will help.

Q - How can we keep people who report crime more updated on a regular basis? Ch/Insp Ewan Wilson - Now subject of all managers in EP – part of how we monitor and manage performance. Every police officer is now measured in terms of how effective they are at keeping victims updated and is a central theme that determines whether a police officer is doing what he should be. Looking at measures to make that communication easier. Now using other mediums other than phone, i.e. emails so victims will be asked for their preferred method of contact. Looking at self-help, so can go on-line for update on your crime thereby leaving the officer time to continue with investigation. Being developed Nationally now.

Q – School drop offs – double parking and children can't use pavements. Could consideration be given to this area being permit holders only? Cllr Godfrey Isaacs – Yes. There is a process, the residents need to compile a list and over 50% agree. Send pack to Cllr Isaacs and he'll pass on to council. There is a charge for permits, this is currently £25.

Q – Due to Covid, you got extra year in role and created an extension to your police and crime plan; what are your key priorities for your next period? PFCC Roger Hirst – Looking forward to May elections. Making sure this has not been a 'fallow year'. Together with CC and CFO and their teams, went through where we are with our planning. The Fire and Rescue Plan fresh enough as only few years old. Just launched the new prevention risk management plan on the back of it so we know where we are with this.

Become more reflective of our community with encouraging minorities communities and women to see the fire service as a good career choice.

Policing side – real challenges in County – Drug related violence, county lines from London, Birmingham and Liverpool. Other priority is Domestic abuse and we have plans in both cases.

Re. Drugs – Violence and Vulnerability unit put together on the back of a strategy designed with our partners; the County Councils, the Boroughs, the Districts and the Unitary authorities, with Social Services and with Health. Three-pronged approach – the really tough stuff where we are using our SCD to deal with ‘the head of the snake’; operation recently clamped down on big organised groups where 150kilo Cocaine seized, 22 arrests and several charges and several million pounds of cash. On street activity by police – stop & search, also taken weapons and drugs off street from the lesser criminal. Violence and Vulnerability round table which I chair working with the Education, Health, Councils, Social Services, churches, faith groups, voluntary groups to put programmes in place for young and vulnerably young people to make sure they don’t get involved in first place. E.g. given of person in A&E with stabbing.

Re. Domestic Abuse – Important work in Colchester recently testing how we deal with perpetrators to stop them doing it again. Great work over last four years supporting victims of DV who are now more confident in coming forward.

Cllr Godfrey Isaacs – Commented that the plan is worked on together not just by PFCC, CC and CFO but through panel of workshop panel working on all plans.

DPFCC Jane Gardner -added the plans do go through an extensive consultation to make sure reflecting what public want.