



**Tendering Online Public Meeting
22nd July 2020**

Panel Members

Roger Hirst

Jane Gardner

Insp. Martin Richards

Ch. Insp. Lily Benbow

Simon Dedman ECFRS

Cllr Lynda McWilliams

Jane Gardner – Introductions.

Roger Hirst – Role explained. Thanks to residents re. Covid-19. Challenge for emergency services, especially NHS. Thanked residents for abiding by restrictions and rules. Reiterated Covid rules. Challenge for police to police these rules. Down to each of us to assist.

Investments in officers and partnership working in last four years have helped. Fire Service amazing work assisting NHS with driving ambulances on blue lights and setting up temporary hospital – 4,500 call answered for health service. Public sectors throughout county co-ordinated.

Questions from the public

Q –ASB across district. Raven’s Academy public park – what can police and agencies do about drug taking and ASB in public places.

Lily Benbow – Incident reported to us in mid-June and in spite of other demands on us we responded to that call in 20mins. Number of people gathered, all friends and no victims. Group dispersed after police attended. Sympathise with residents near parks where ASB more frequent. We continue to work with our partners to try to reduce these incidents and to educate people. Not always young people. If we have grounds, we will use powers to stop and search, including for drugs. Dispersal powers can be used if need to. Op Zombie – frequent plain clothes work so you won’t always be aware police in attendance. One in Four arrest rates following over 70 stop and searches.

Q – From Jane Gardner – How do we make sure stop & search is proportionate?

Roger Hirst – Hot topic especially in light of BLM. Quarterly scrutiny report re. use and trends of stop & search and proportionality. Unsurprisingly, given make up of Essex population and breakdown of crime - 85% prisoners are male and this is same for stop & search; most are young white males. While relatively small percentage of BAME in county we still do stop & search more of those proportionally and I need to continue monitoring that to make sure it is not a trend. Incomers to county who get stopped & searched, balances the figures a bit. Proportion of those stopped & searched who are actually committing crime is proportionate – in other words, they are stopped for good reason.

Q – Recruitment – has Covid had impact for police and fire?

Roger Hirst - Expanding police but no need to expand fire at tis time. Make sure recruit right people to the right place. Not really affected by Covid. We've seen many people wanting to step forward and volunteer re. Covid and this applies to wanting to sign up to be a police officer or fire fighter. Issues with training now being done virtually. Specials doing more hours. Retain fire fighters doing more hours.

Q - Jane asked how recruitment of on-call fire fighters going at Dovercourt?

Simon Dedman – Promising. Appointed on-call liaison officers to recruit in Tendering. Fist on-call squad starting in December and second in December. Five others in recruitment process at Dovercourt.

Q - Jane asked is plan still to make Dovercourt a on-call fire station?

Roger Hirst – Yes. Recognise challenges for Harwich and Dovercourt.

Simon Dedman – March to June both appliances at Dovercourt running 90-100% availability even during Covid.

Q – Scramble motorbikes becoming nuisance in Frinton and Walton area – what can be done?

Lily Benbrow – aware of community concerns in spikes of reckless driving by motorbikes and scramble bikes. Because roads clearer some riders and drivers taking advantage of this. Working with our roads policing unit and Tendering district, specials and PCSOs. Some stats – 8 RPU deployed covering 1000. 385 offences. 321 excess speed. No seat belts and other offences. If you see or hear these vehicles, please report on-line or dial 101. Sometimes they've gone once we arrive. But we're making a dent with RPU, all alongside other challenges with Covid.

Q – What can residents do about neighbour shooting air rifle?

Lily Benbow – Not firearms expert. We come across air rifles and falls into ASB. I will look into that particular case. Appalling to have to put up with in your own home. Work with partners in council and we can take that case up.

Martin Richards – I'm an ex-firearms commander so may be able to assist with legislation. This is about curtilage, so if firing an air weapon and stays within your boundaries, not criminal although may be ASB. If goes beyond your property outside is something we would pick up. We take any firearms seriously.

Q – Beach in Clacton – water filthy, graded as 'poor' but families still swim in it. Can Tendering make signs more visible?

Lynda McWilliams – There are warning signs on beach updated prior to current season. Another sign going up soon. The design and size of those signs are set by Department of Environment (DEFRA) which we have to follow. All signs constantly reviewed. Tests on the water by DEFRA in 2019 at this beach resulted in either excellent or good readings on 70% of samples. Investigations continually taking place as to what problem has been.

Q – Dogs dying/jellyfish?

Lynda McWilliams - No incidents reported to us. Social media campaign re. jellyfish. These are common on British coasts. Keep reporting as this will help us keep updated on what's going on.

Q – What is impact of Covid had on the ability of the ECFRS to respond?

Roger Hirst – Higher than usual perhaps because on-call officers not been able to do day jobs so about 10% more available to respond to calls. Checks on home safety is harder due to social distancing rules.

Simon Dedman – Impact on home safety but slowly coming back but now carrying them out especially if particular risk to the resident. If someone feels they need home safety visit, please still contact us through website.

Q – Is pushing road, drugs and car theft wasting police time as time and again cases dropped through lack of evidence?

Roger Hirst – Yes, very much worth it. They're all a blight on our society and we know that those committing road crime are some of most lethal in our community. National figures road crime kills a couple of thousand people a year, compare that to terrorism which worst recording was 35 in a year. Taken seriously – Essex had 40 died and 1000 injured. These are individual that are hurt and families who have suffered a tremendous loss. More drug driving than drink driving. The drink driving message seems to have got across and fewer people are doing it. Drug driving is on increase, partly due to drug wipes being effective. They are killing people, not victimless crime. Drugs different effect on drivers and may not be aware at time or in the morning that not fit to drive. Need to work closely with other agencies such as car manufacturers to make cars safer, e.g. sensors. Most serious accidents involve irresponsible drivers speeding and killing cyclists and pedestrians – hopefully sensors of the future will auto slow the vehicle down.

Q – Clacton Custody – why tendering officers being used to transport arrested people around county as Clacton closed?

Lily Benbow – Closed in January (2020), temp but still remains the case. Challenge to have Sgts to staff them and correctly trained.....highly skilled as looking after vulnerable people and takes a lot of training. We were set to re-open April but Covid meant not able to continue with the training and so behind in schedule. Default custody in Colchester which takes time. Working hard to get Sgts trained in custody. Don't have a date to give yet but not too distant future.

Roger Hirst – Custody is part of our improvement programme over the next few years. Need to make investments. First at Southend. Cells have to be safe and well provided for as we need to make sure people brought to proper justice. Not everyone in

cell is a criminal – e.g. mental health sufferers. Good learning from Covid – doing more using video e.g. Southend for remand hearings at court.

Q – The government announced pay rises – come out of existing budgets or new tax hike?

Roger Hirst – Crisis needs Keynesian response which the government are doing. Switched to help us through this crisis with huge amount of borrowing. Uncomfortable answer is the pay rise will come from this borrowing. Both emergency services doing a great job and an increase acknowledges this. Key thing to get economy going again. We live the lives we lead because we live in a county where our structures in society work well. Before crises employment highest ever been which generates wealth which pays for public services which makes all our lives better. Hard work for us all.

Q – Dispersal orders – Raves – can police use DO to stop these?

Lily Benbow – Yes. Two types of legislation we can use. In last four years no rave parties in tendering. But can use Public Order Act or ASB Act (disposal orders). Includes preparation on social media and in private groups. Sometimes see plans for pop-up raves.....let us know, as this powerful legislation allows us to seize equipment and vehicles and turn people away. Had some good successes elsewhere in Essex.

Quick Fire

Q – Who should people contact if interested in becoming on-call fire fighter?

Simon Dedman – Online shows stations recruiting. Website given.

Q – what role can community speed watch play in reducing speeding?

Lily Benbow – Key members we lean on to support us. Great results. If want to volunteer, sign up. Partnership at its best.

Roger Hirst – I do this and can see impact, especially outside schools where parents really appreciate it.

Q – Coffee with Cops, if not virtually?

Martin Richards – We do but not during Covid. Not virtually but have done FB chats.

Q – community safety partnership – can they do more and if so what?

Lynda McWilliams – We can always do more. Recently I joined the CSP with our health and well-being board. First meeting recently and productive.

Q – Got another year due to Covid – what is your vision for that policing in that year?

Roger Hirst – Fire and Rescue Plan runs to 2024 as started later there and just translated that into an interim risk management plan which is being launched now. Policing Plan achieved a lot in four years including more officers, rural team etc. Now extended and two things now outstanding - First to follow up on supporting victims of domestic abuse. DA is a third of everything EP does. Now need to look at how to roll out Colchester pilot initiative to rest of county to deal with DA perpetrators to stop them. Second is drug related violence – county lines – key focus of this year. Supporting young vulnerable victims targeted by county lines, including fire service activities (Fire Breaks) and NHS A&E cases.

Jane Gardner – Thanks and further questions will be answered in next few days on-line. Covid rules reiterated.