



**Harlow Online Public Meeting  
17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 19:00**

**Panel Members**

**PFCC Roger Hirst**

**DPFCC Jane Gardner**

**Ch/Supt. Ch/Supt Wilson**

**Insp. Insp Walker**

**Ch. Insp Ch/Insp Ross**

**ECFRS Group Manager Terry Povey**

**Challenges**

PFCC Roger Hirst – Covid-19 issues/restrictions. 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**

Acquisitive crime down allowing police to carry out drug interventions – great results.

PFCC Roger Hirst 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.

Funding and Recruitment of new officers continues. Still need more.

Survey re. precept.

### **Questions from the public**

**Q – a member of the public thanked the emergency services for their work throughout the pandemic.**

**Q – We need more police....what will you do to address this?**

**PFCC Roger Hirst** – at beginning looked at where spending money & found £5m to spend on front line. Stretch enormous. Had new crimes to deal with....on-line abuse/harassment, on-line fraud, child sexual exploitation, hate crime. Also domestic abuse increase/coercive behaviour. Under strength in neighbourhood policing....first place we invested, some from government most from precept increases. Community teams in market towns, rural engagement team; all successes. Now need to proactively work with other agencies, including in Harlow. More around preventing DA, drugs and knife crime. Had 2,850 police now 3,350 but we need to keep investing.

**Q – What being done about knife/violent crime? Prevention?**

**Ch/Insp Ross** – these are priorities for EP. Regular undertake preventative operations. Removing knives and proactive. Additional funding available so no impact on other teams. A proportion of Knife/violent crime connected to drug supply and work ongoing with vulnerability partnerships for preventative methods for groups of children through schools, community safety partnerships and children and young person officers which are as a result of the precept increases. Recently protracted covert operation which dismantled two large drug gangs involved in violent crime not just in Harlow but in the East corridor.

**Q - Work instigated around vulnerability and violence in last two years?**

**PFCC Roger Hirst** – Increase; violence and praying on young children and mental health issues, (cuckooing). Working with children's services youth offending services putting together a framework strategy. Went down well, government likes it and put in place Violence reduction units across the country. Got funding for this too. Set up VRU as partnership (EP, ECFRS, education, health, probation, youth offending and voluntary sector and faith groups.....i.e. being part of a 'good' gang). Needs targeting at right people with variety of approaches.....activities to keep children out of gangs, mentoring for those already in there, NHS picking up on youth knife injuries). Rolled out September, increase Stop & search etc and stopped increase in knife crime. Need to do more.

**Q – 101 – meetings attended not complimentary/difficulties – what current position?**

**Ch/Supt Wilson** – Acknowledged that performance was not great. Significant increase in 999 calls countrywide. Empowered public so more calls – positive. Challenge is getting harder but need better performance in non-emergency. It IS improving..... Average 101 answered within 2-3 mins which is good. Emphasis now on other platforms and the live chat launched recently on EP website allowed the public to speak to dedicated control room staff. Invested in internet site so you can report a whole manner of things and it is processed in same way as a phone call. 999 performance very good.

**Q** – a member of the public rang 101, answered in seconds and very helpful staff.

**Q – Elderly parents have a wood burner and want it on. Do the fire service advise how to get it checked.**

**Terry Povey** – Good idea to get it checked by a professional annually like a boiler. Advised to always use smoke detector as early warning system.

**Q – What proactive work are Police doing around ASB in Harlow, in particular Market Square.**

**Ch/Insp Ross** – Market Square is a concern for us. Working with businesses and the Community Safety Partnership. Push at partnership level and regular patrols with town team and council at different times of day. Long term approach is to improve environmental aspect of town. A current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in place enforced by council and police for drinking in public with fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued. One person arrested and put before court and fined. There is also work ongoing with charities for youths and re-housing. ASB dropped due to these patrols.

**Insp Walker** – Town centre teams are key to this. Small team but know the offenders and drugs and knife arrests and Community protection Notices which give directions and if breached, arrested and at court next day. Using these and other powers to make it a safer place.

**Ch/Insp Ross** - CCTV, bollards etc. and long term plans and a business watch for more engagement with them.

**Q – Social media stating ECFRS recruiting. How long training?**

**Terry Povey** - 14 weeks for whole time firefighters. On call different. No set qualification but have a number of processes. On-line info available for fire fighters, on-call, call takers etc.

10 year recruitment freeze but since RH as PFCC now increasing numbers again and continuing this for next 3 to 4 years. If anyone lives at 5mins drive from Harlow station we're crying out for on-call.

**Q – Speeding – Community Speedwatch – importance of groups in helping communities?**

**PFCC Roger Hirst** – important element in keeping roads safe. Volunteers co-ordinated by local authority organised by ECFRS. Drivers get warning letters, not fines. Has a big impact. If minded to get involved, pick your own times and make a difference. Speeding, careless, dangerous, drink driving, using mobiles....kill more people than all other crimes combined including DV and drugs etc. If find a pattern, police can take action.

Pandemic caused suspension but starting again after lock-down, hopefully spring.

**Q – Areas of concern for speeding in Harlow. What are police doing about it?**

**Ch/Insp Ross** – Road safety is a policing plan priority. Roads policing speed checks (see social media), residential areas as well as main roads. Taking advice from public as to where to focus. Longer term can be addressed through county council for calming measures options. Links attached to meeting.

**Insp Walker** – regularly put out speeding operations on website. Take a look at ECC website as a place to make representations.

**Q – Covid – what approach police taking? Why breaches are not a small crime. Gatherings not attended?**

**PFCC Roger Hirst** – It's not a small crime as it's killing thousands of people. May not be doing very much but what you are doing can be very harmful. Reiterated rules.

**Insp Walker** – increase in calls re. breaches. Received additional funding to police the breaches. Use 4E approach. Are occasions when we can't attend due to emergency calls but it'll be followed up asap.

**Ch/Insp Ross** – Partnership with CST re. business breaches. One occasion couldn't attend a gathering and we weren't able to follow it up. Learned from it.

**Insp Walker** – A large unlicensed music event in Harlow we prevented from starting and ceased equipment.

**Jane Gardner** – importance of intelligence....able to stop before starting.

**Q – Cars caught in floods – what advice to ECFRS give?**

**Terry Povey** – Don't drive through flood water. People drive familiar roads, see it flooded and think it's ok. Water must be lower than lowest wheel nut as otherwise starts to effect brakes. Biggest issue is locating cars caught in rural floodwater. App called 'What Three Words' use by all blue light services. Press App and it gives location. Not just personal safety it can be expensive – we save you but not the car. Can dial 999.

**Q** – When police task officers, why not walking patrols anymore?

**Insp Walker** – Various teams, Community Policing Teams (CPT) do walk. Harlow big place so not always seen. Town centre more visible. Response team in vehicles as answering 999 calls. Rural areas covered too. Publicise on line too.

**Ch/Insp Ross** – Priority Tasking days when additional teams are in sent out into high crime ASB areas on foot.

**Insp Walker** – CPT – regular street meets in shopping areas, engage with community and concerns. Will be back once lockdown over.

**Jane** – Thank you from public for collecting and wrapping presents for vulnerable children in area.

**Q** – **Should have had elections but Covid prevented that. What achieved in this extra year.**

**PFCC Roger Hirst** – Increases in police numbers. ASB action. Partnerships. DV partnerships working – reacting to and preventing (i.e. working with perps). Pilot in Colchester – finding people at risk of doing DV including behavioural therapy. Reduce DV by 70-75%. Rolling it out – expensive so targeted and specific. Violence and Vulnerability partnership – presented to minister today who is impressed with our targeted approach. Safer Essex Road partnerships successful. Reduced deaths/injury on roads by 40%. We have to have a target of 0% - working with ECFRS, police, councils, motor manufacturers.