



PFCC Southend Public Meeting
Monday 11th July 2022
Southend Civic Centre

Panel Members
PFCC Roger Hirst,
Ch/Insp Ian Hughes, Essex Police;
Ch/Supt Waheed Khan, Essex Police;
TDI Rob Maile, Essex Police;
Kerry Taylor, Southend Station Manager, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service;
Jon Gurel, Southend Community Safety Manager

Notes from the meeting

Introduction - PFCC Roger Hirst gave an overview of the current state of policing and crime in the county including thanking the contribution by the public made through council tax which has led to growth in officer numbers which should reach around 3500 officers by August 2022. With lockdown well and truly over Burglary, ASB and robbery figures were reducing compared to pre Covid figures from 2019.

Investment in police is continuing and we are looking at achieving 3669 soon with a target of 3750, the biggest Essex Police has ever been. Southend is a key focus area for investment and has benefited from operations such as Op Union and hot-spot policing which aims to tackle issues such as ASB, knife crime and gang fights before they escalate.

In other forms of crime, Domestic Abuse is still no-where near it needed to be and accounts for roughly a third of all serious violence and 40% of homicides. In many cases victim support is getting better, we know the scale of the problem but need to work more with perpetrators to help

divert them. Working with those “at risk” seems to be going well but it is not yet at the scale to bring DA down. More needs to be done around violence against women and girls as 85% of victims are female.

Road safety is also a real issue as more people die and are seriously injured on Essex roads than all other crimes in the county put together. Speeding, using mobile phones and drink/drug driving all contribute to the issue. Investing in roads policing and carrying out speeding operations was vital in helping to prevent speeding and saving lives.

<p>Q- OP Union where police and partners work together to keep Southend safe throughout the summer has been working well. However, the cruisers are still an issue where they race up and down the seafront, have over loud exhausts and tinted windows and number plates. Some are clearly modified in a way that could be dangerous. What can be done to prevent them acting in an antisocial and dangerous manner. Is this something Roads Policing should be more involved in?</p>	<p>A – C/I Ian Hughes advised he was fully aware of the issue. Southend had attracted cruisers for over 50 years and as part of the Op Union arrangements there are roads policing officers dedicated to speaking to and educating drivers and where applicable enforcing. Work was being done with the council about longer term solutions including cameras that can pick up excessive exhaust noise and illegal numberplates.</p>
<p>Q – Shoebury high street is suffering from vehicles speeding excessively. With little or no police presence there to prevent them is there something the community could do?</p>	<p>A – C/I Ian Hughes – unfortunately police resources are finite so fully support community support through initiatives such as speed watch and they are always looking for new volunteers. IH asked to meet with the resident after the meeting to share details.</p>
<p>Q – See a lot of motorbikes doing wheelies and e-scooters riding on pavements. Does the PFCC agree with them?</p>	<p>A – PFCC – is not personally convinced e-scooters are safe but will have to wait for the outcome of the government evaluation. C/I Hughes – trying to manage e-scooters is a challenge as it is not any particular demographic responsible. Often it is a case of education as scooters are motor vehicles and you need a license, insurance etc. If education doesn’t work, then can enforce. J Gurel advised there will be a new public space protection order for the city centre which will incorporate action against e-scooters which will also include media campaign and education as well as enforcement.</p>

<p>Q – How is the rise in fuel prices affecting the emergency services?</p>	<p>A – PFCC advised it had a huge effect on finances, but that was why it was so important to continue investment in tech which enables officers and emergency staff to do their job more effectively. This includes completing paperwork on smart phones meaning police can spend more time out and about in the community and using technology to look at hotspots and being more smart about planning and where to deploy officers effectively.</p>
<p>Q – Shoebury East Beach has a 2 day festival planned for August, but the resident was concerned there was adequate planning in place as a recent triathlon had resulted in chaos in the town. Moreover a lot of residents were unaware it was actually happening.</p>	<p>A – C/I IHughes advised it would have gone through the safety advisory group which comprises a panel of services and agencies and will look at the impact of the event on roads, fire services, ambulance, police and licensing. John Gurrell agreed to share the updates and planning of the event with resident post the meeting so they can sure with other residents and raise any concerns they may still have.</p>
<p>Q – Are burglaries and thefts being investigated as a lot of times it seems like a crime report is closed without any officers turning out?</p>	<p>A – C/I IH stated all investigations have a ‘solvability score’ which includes are there fingerprints, CCTV, witnesses etc. If there is nothing to go on, then it will be closed. However, all dwelling burglaries should be attended by an officer or Scenes of crime officers. It is still very important that all crimes are reported as this can help police form a pattern of crime which can assist in helping to apprehend perpetrators.</p>
<p>Q – Are the fire and rescue service equipped to deal with a heatwave?</p>	<p>KT – Absolutely geared to deal with hot summers. We plan for short term, medium term and long term so we have the right people in the right places when they are needed.</p>
<p>Q – Did the rate of burglaries reduce because people were home during lockdown?</p>	<p>PFCC – yes, the lockdown undoubtedly impacted the reduction. However, rates were coming down prior to lockdown and have continued to fall since, which is good news.</p>
<p>Q – Did the services see a rise in mental health cases during lockdown</p>	<p>PFCC - it was not reflected in statistics, but the pandemic undoubtedly had an effect on people’s mental health and was incredibly tough on people.</p>

	<p>C/I IH – the challenges from policing was understanding the level of hidden harm that was happening as victims were unable to access their usual care providers and agencies. It might take awhile for this to show in mental health referrals.</p>
<p>Q – Is CCTV a good substitute for policing?</p>	<p>C/I IH. It's definitely not a substitute but can be fantastic in detecting hotspots, recording crime and also provides evidence for crimes committed that can be used in court. Other districts wish they had a similar level of CCTV as Southend as it can be such a valuable tool in helping officers deploy and keeping crime down. The operators are amazing and do a fantastic job at helping to keep our streets safer.</p>
<p>Q – Southend has had its share of serious violence, drug gangs and knife crime. What is being done to tackle it?</p>	<p>A – TDI/RM - Op Raptor is the name for the team that deals with gangs, drugs and weapons. Used to go for drug dealers at a street level but realised they needed to take out the perpetrators further up the supply train. In the past year the Raptor team have made 71 arrests and put 56 people in prison. The violence is still happening, but we are making significant progress. Southend/Rayleigh have the highest number of gang injunctions in the country. Three years ago, most of the drug gangs had been operating for at least two years or more so were really entrenched but now there are no gangs who have been operational for more than 3 months.</p>
<p>Q – There is a lot of parking by delivery drivers on pavements. What can be done to deter them?</p>	<p>C/I IH advised this will mainly be an educational piece. With the uplift in town centre team officers and the new public space protection order it will enable more capacity to deal with them. Will feed back to the town centre team. IG – there is also more signage planned for no cycling zones.</p>
<p>Q – is it possible to get some social media films out there around education of driving and parking and e-scooters so people can be better equipped to know the law and understand the impact their actions have on the wider public?</p>	<p>C/I IH – agreed it was a very good idea as any way in which we can reach the public is a good thing and we can also use schools and colleges to disseminate information.</p>

<p>Q – How has reducing crime and tackling fires improved under PCCs?</p>	<p>PFCC – there will soon be 900 extra police and burglary is down 13% and theft 15%. But although overall crime is down, more crime types have been introduced such as coercive behaviour and stalking and harassment which puts more pressure on police to solve. ECFRS have seen a 29% reduction in people killed from fires or on the roads, which us a great effort on the prevention side of things.</p> <p>The PFCC added that a huge thanks was due to all the service members who do all the hard work.</p>
---	--