

**Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Tendring Public Meeting, Tuesday 14th June 2022
Clacton Town Hall**

Panel Members

- PFCC Roger Hirst
- Tendring District Commander T/Ch/Insp Rob Bell
- Tendring DC Cllr Lynda McWilliams – Portfolio Holder for Partnerships
- Ian Davidson – Leader Tendring County Council
- Quentin Sage, Clacton Station Manager
- Howard Midwood, Station Manager for Manningtree, Brightlingsea, Wivenhoe and West Mersea.

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. Burglary, ASB and robbery figures were reducing compared to pre Covid figures from 2019. Crime figures quoted in reports were from reported figures, which in the past had not been anywhere near accurate, but following a lot of work by police, a review by HMICFRS showed a marked improvement in reporting.

Investment had also been made into the force control room and 101 system and the average wait which had been hours long was now down to around 5 minutes. However, this was expected to rise again as calls increased following Covid as life returns to normal.

The areas of crime that needed improvement were tackling drug related violence, and gangs and county lines. The crimes were linked to serious harm and murder and a lot of investment was being made, including collaboration with central govt. Hot spot policing, more police working with communities on the streets and using modern technology to map crime are ways to tackle crime that's happening, but it is also vital to put in the prevention work to stop young people being groomed into gangs. The work that is currently being done in schools, in the community and in hospitals means the 13,14,15 and 16 years olds being engaged and worked with now will hopefully prevent them from becoming gang members aged 20.

Domestic Abuse is still no-where near it needed to be and accounts for roughly a third of all crime 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.

Questions from the audience

Question 1 – Currently there aren't enough visible police officers engaging with young people on the streets, and consequently young people are hanging around committing crimes. Wouldn't it be better for officers to regularly patrol so they gain intelligence, get to know the young people and prevent them committing crime in the first place?

A - PFCC Roger Hirst agreed more visible policing was important in tackling ASB. There were now town centre teams in over 25 towns as well as more investment in young people engagement officers.

Question 2 - What are EP doing about speeding in the district as it is a real issue? There is no longer Speed Watch in Tendring, no visible roads policing and meanwhile the streets are being used as race tracks and there have already been a number of accidents. Will the police and Essex County Council do anything to deal with this serious issue.

A - PFCC Roger Hirst agreed that local Speed Watch groups had not been well handled and it was necessary to get groups up and running again. Ch/Insp Rob Bell agreed that speeding is an issue, but that there were other factors to include such as dangerous driving, drug/drink driving and the use of mobile phones. Tendring Police do conduct a number of speed enforcements as their Specials are trained in Trucam use, which is a mobile speeding camera. While carrying out these hotspot operations it does mean local people driving at 35mph in a 30mph are also caught, which creates a lot of bad feeling, so have to walk a fine line.

However, police are keen to do more about road safety and will continue to deploy Specials and PCSOs to use Trucam and download the data. Roads Police will also conduct roads operations in the area. Police are also in contact with residents around noisy exhausts and are working on an operation regarding drifting, organised meets, etc – we are working on it, and we speak to Roads Policing to get them into Tendring on a regular basis but rest assured that police take the issue extremely seriously.

Action: RH to speak with ECC / Highways re speeding cars and restrictions to put in place around Oxford Rd, Frinton Rd, Esplanade etc as they are all full of speeding traffic and no police in sight.

Question 3 – what is happening with looking after the mental health of children in schools as there have been some young people sadly taking their lives while others are really struggling.

A – Ch/Exec Tendring Council Ian Davidson stated it was a sad fact that Tendring has second worst suicide in country, and Colchester has 3rd worst suicide rates. Work has started with primary school children in Tendring and their parents to identify issues early. ECC and the local care commissioning group have invested to extend it to further schools due to the success.

Question 4 – Suicide figures, did the panel agree there are more men aged between 45 and 55 who commit suicide?

A – Ch/Exec Tendring Council Ian Davidson advised that suicide was a subject area he was

very passionate about and was driving the agenda of preventative work. While middle aged men and younger women were statistically more likely to commit suicide, it wasn't as simple as statistics as rates and gender and age differs in each area and will have a range of contributing factors. He spoke about the work being carried out by ECC looking at suicide figures in Essex – to analyse the type of suicide factors – age, location, socioeconomic, etc. He reiterated there was a lot of work being done around the tragic figures and that the development and investment in preventative work would continue.

Question 5 - is there an EP policy around e-scooters and would they support the legalisation of them?

A – PFCC Roger Hirst advised that the evidence he heard is that too many people were injured per km travelled due to e-scooters. Tragically, a death occurred that day in Harlow. E-scooters will not help reduce death and will only add to the number of people killed and seriously injured on Essex roads. In his personal view they will not be legalised. Ian Davidson advised that Tendring objected to an e-scooter trial due to the number of injuries. Presently there were a lot of young people using them who don't seem aware they are illegal and should not be ridden on pavements.

Insp Martin Richards discussed the operational summary of how police deal with e-scooters. Local policy in place but he stated it was problematic as when they apprehend a child on a scooter and take them back to the parents, the parents aren't supportive. Action: RH needs to liaise with the Chief Constable to have clarity on how EP approach e-scooter education.

Question 6 - If I see somebody on an e-scooter riding illegally, how do I take a photo, can I report it?

A - EP you can take a photo anywhere in public. But it will be difficult to identify them and also if you are seen taking photos of a child it could be problematic. If you are seeing people doing it at the same time of day in the same place it is helpful to report through 101 whereby it will be sent through to local policing.

Question 7 – a resident recently saw a lady outside shop knocked over on the pavement by e-scooter and was taken to hospital. Could there be posters put up posters in shops and other places stating “do you know e-scooters are illegal?”

A - Ian Davidson advised that was a really good idea and something they would be adopting it.

Question 8 – a resident had £7k worth of tools stolen from their premises. Despite police saying they would attend no officers turned up or even bothered to investigate. It's frustrating to be told police will attend and then there is no follow up whatsoever.

A PFCC - this is not the service that we would like or that is acceptable. Police should respond to thefts of £7k and for vehicle thefts. These are not satisfactory outcomes and police need to do better. There is a lot that can be done around preventing burglary and theft and we know reports and intelligence can help build up a pattern.

Question 9 - Vision Zero aims to reduce fatal accidents to zero by 2040. Can we be reassured of robust and extremely visible policing of speeding and anti-social driving

and not just by specials. Especially on our fast roads. A133 and A120 are racetracks. It needs visible and robust policing.

A – Ch/Insp Bell advised traffic officers from Woodham will come up to Tendring on a regular and he was also in discussion about the Extra Eyes scheme with SERP. PFCC added there was also significant investment in ANPR.

Question 10 - – Are the fire service recruiting? Have you managed to recruit on-call?

A – the on-call recruitment has been really effective. They all go through training and we are on schedule to run 10 courses a year instead of 4. The PFCC added lockdown provided a good opportunity for on call firefighter recruitment but with people getting back into employment it may slow recruitment.

Advance questions sent in by members of the public who could not attend

Q - Pier Avenue in town centre has restrictions for vehicles. Why is there no cameras there to stop the vehicles speeding around there and parking? I regularly hear the noisy exhaust cars going around in a circuit at speed during the day and cars parking illegally, but I haven't seen any enforcement measures?

A - Please see speeding and nuisance traffic question 2 above. It was agreed to look at the area along with other roads in the area that were raised as concerns.

Q Teenagers in Clacton where promised a number of times to renew a Skateboard park, as the present one was unsafe to use, this now being an Olympic sport, and of course stop teenagers doing wrong things, can the Tendering Council please do something right for a change, and help teenagers in this town.

A – Tendring Council have confirmed the skater park has been approved and work will begin as soon as possible.

Q - Why are the police no longer interested in car/van theft and property break-ins?

A – see response in meeting notes above. Police should respond to break ins and thefts and investigate where possible. All dwelling burglaries should have an officer in attendance.

Q - we keep hearing about the increase in the numbers of Police Officers in Essex yet Clacton seems to never have a police officer available ,even the Police Station seems to run on short shop hours whatever happens around Clacton the police seem to be incapable nowadays, last night I saw 3 Police cars parked bumper to bumper on the seafront at around 00.45 am with not a policeman in sight, totally unfit for purpose.

A – Clacton has a dedicated Town Centre Team, Community Policing Team and a Local Policing Team and has cover 24/7, seven days a week, 365 days a year. If there were cars parked bumper to bumper on the seafront and no police in them, the likelihood is there were dealing with nan incident nearby on foot. Police cars are not parked randomly and left there.

Q Why are there only 7 police officers for the whole of the Clacton, Harwich Brightlingsea area.

A – the figures are not right. Tendring Community Policing Team has 1 inspector, 3 sergeants, 18 community constables and 17 PCSOs and 4 Children and Young People Officers. In addition, it has a Local Policing Team which provide response cover 24/7 comprising 5 inspectors, 10 sergeants and 80 constables.

There are also 35 Special Constables who are fully warranted officers.

Tendring also has a criminal investigation department (CID), A Domestic Abuse Investigation Team. The district also uses additional officers for specialist operations from the OPC Command team and Serious Violence Unit who support on road safety initiatives, knife crime, drugs and weapon possession and county lines and gang related activity.

Q - Could the police do something about the speed of the traffic in Frating, especially the Motor bikes who drive like maniacs. There is going to be a very serious accident here very soon. The limit is 40mph. The noise and speed is very scary.

A – Following extensive discussion at the meeting around how dangerous speeding in Tendring is, this has been added to the list of areas of concern for future operations. See Q2 above.

Q – Can more be done to stop the continuous disregard of our local speed limits? On The Street & Harwich Road in Little Clacton many drivers must doing at least 45/60 on the 30 mph roads. Can police do more in terms of speed enforcement?

A – Please see Q2 speeding response above

Q – I'd like to know why police are wasting their time setting up speed traps to catch law abiding motorists doing 35 in a 30 – instead of doing something useful such as patrolling town centres and dealing with actual criminals

A – Please see Q2 speeding response above.

Q – As a motorist, I don't want to hurt a cyclist, scooterist or pedestrian. But if they have no lights or High Visibility clothing, I feel a lot of the blame lies with them. And, as far as cyclists are concerned, I thought the law demanded lights in poor visibility.

A – Since the change in the Highway Code in January 2022, motorists now have greater responsibility for being aware of other road users. Please see here for more information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

Preventing deaths and serious injuries on Essex roads is a priority in Roger Hirst's Police and Crime Plan and by encouraging road users such as cyclists, bikers and horse riders to be more visible is welcomed, although this does not apply to pedestrians crossing roads. It is illegal to cycle on a public road after dark without lights and reflectors.