



**PFCC Uttlesford Public Meeting**  
**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022**  
**Saffron Walden Town Hall**

Panel Members

Jane Gardner, Deputy Police Fire and Crime Commissioner

Chief Inspector Colin Cox, Essex Police

G/Manager Terry Povey ECFRS

**Update from Jane Gardner, Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

**DPFCC Jane Gardner** began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and giving a brief update on the work the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) has been doing, as well as updates from the police and fire and rescue service.

While enforcement work is still important, with more investment we are pushing for a strategic change to prevention. We do this by reducing the risk of people becoming victims by reducing vulnerability in our communities. Jane thanked the public for their support in the investment programme which has led to Essex Police becoming the biggest it has ever been.

The fire and rescue service have been working extremely hard in the past few months. Although we had a lovely hot summer, this meant that the ground was drier, and the risk of fire was greater. The Control Room received 5,792 calls during July alone. So, we continue to thank the fire and rescue staff and firefighters for the incredible work they do.

Domestic Abuse is the largest cause of harm in our county, accounting for 19% of all recorded crime. I chair the Southend and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Partnership, and I am proud of the recent campaign that we have done with the Change Project. Which has led to a big increase in people referring themselves for help.

There has been some good news in relation to Rural Crime, with a reduction of 2.4% offences in Essex. This is a positive step in the right direction but there is still a lot of work to be done. We continue to ask people to report crime when they see it so that the police can map out hotspot areas and deploy resources to the right places. However, unauthorised encampments have gone down by 70% which is great. We are currently working on a new Rural Crime Strategy and will be sharing that with you all very soon.

## Questions from the audience

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| <p>Q1 – It seems that training for special constables has come to a standstill. We know that we have a new recruit that has been waiting for an attestation for months. What can be done about this?</p>          | <p>Jane Gardner (JG) – advised she attended the last Specials review board and confirmed colleagues in policing were currently reviewing processes to help bring the scheme forward and to make special constables more available alongside other duties that they do in parishes. JG attends Specials attestations regularly, so knows they are happening. She agreed to take this specific issue back and find out more.</p> <p>Ch/Insp Colin Cox (CC) – committed to chase up with the Specials Command to see what the blocker is and how we can free that up.</p> |
| <p>Q2 – 1. I am unforgiving of the PFCC for hiding the police station behind a wall in Saffron Walden. It should be there for people to go and see how policemen work, for children and the community to see.</p> | <p>JG acknowledged the comment and stated that she had visited the area on a number of occasions including the launch of the town centre teams. After the first public meeting here, she spent some time working with the town council, in terms of what more could be done to make the community feel more supported.</p>   |

2. The cost of the commissioner's office is greater than £2 million per year. The reason I say this is because we pay Chief Officers a lot of money, they should be running the police service without having a political barrier in the way. Its ridiculous to have another layer of administration before we get to our chief officers.

3. I feel like we are isolated out here in Uttlesford. When it comes to policing and other aspects of the ambulance services. We get treated like we are out on a limb.

In terms of governance, the PFCC is not operationally responsible for policing - that is the gift of the Chief Constable. Police have full responsibility for how they deploy their officers. The PFCC sets the budget, the strategic direction of the service and employs the Chief Constable.

In terms of the cost of the office is not £2 million, it's around £1.25 million. You can find all of our costs on our website as we have to be transparent about that. Before this current governance structure, there was a larger governance structure in place in the Essex Police Authority. Which was very significant in its costs and the number of people in that office. What this new governance structure did, when the first ever PCC was elected, was reduce those costs. Because what everyone wants to see is more money going into the front line than into the governance structure.

JG stated she was sorry that the resident felt out on a limb as she knew Ch/Insp Colin Cox and his team and the Fire and Rescue Service put a lot into community safety and engagement. But it is important to listen to people in this hall and if that's how you feel then more needed to be done to reach out to the public.

In relation to police station location - the benefits of closing outdated and aging police stations was so more money could be invested in front line officers and improving engagement and visibility. Buildings may offer reassurance, but they are incredibly expensive to maintain.

CC- The Uttlesford lodge hub opened in 2016, with 30 police officers based there. The old police station was not fit for

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|  | <p>purpose for a number of reasons. A lot of work and investment have taken place to move resources across from Braintree, allowing for an increase in over 50 officers working out of the lodge.</p>  |
| <p>Q3. One of the main complaints you had back at the last meeting was that no one ever responded to thefts. The current government have said that we will get a policeman at every break-in or theft that goes on. How viable is that really?</p> | <p>JG – This will be down to the Chief Constable as to how he will deploy his resources. It is likely there will be targets attached to that. This is something the Chief Constable with the PFCC will be having conversations about, and how we can achieve that.</p> <p>CC – The Chief Constable has sent out clear guidance that officers will attend every burglary. If CID are unavailable to attend, then the local policing response team will attend. We are working on a borderless response plan for burglaries. In relation to thefts, they are slightly different and cover a wider scope. So certain theft will be risk assessed by the Crime Bureau and they will deem if there are any solvability factors.</p> |
| <p>Q4. Why is it if someone is arrested in Saffron Walden, they have to go to Chelmsford custody? Leaving the area uncovered and taking up valuable officer time. You have shut down so many hubs and cells.</p>                                   | <p>CC- In relation to custody, the force operates at a specific radio channel. If someone is arrested, the officer will call up on that particular radio station and they will ask for clearance at the nearest custody centre. We haven't had operating cells in Saffron Walden for many years due to the upkeep.</p> <p>The biggest commitment for us, is usually mental health crises as officers need to find bed for people to go to, which might be in A&amp;E. So, it is usually a non police matter that takes up more police time.</p>  |
| <p>Q5. Across Essex, 19% of crews have failed their fitness test? Don't you think that is too strict? You are losing experienced people. An 18-year-old and 60-year-old shouldn't have the same fitness test. Can this be looked into?</p>         | <p>Terry Povey – The fitness tests firefighters are given are the national standard ones. Extensive research has been done to see what the acceptable standard would be. The idea is that fire-fighters need to get the right amount of volume of air into their lungs. Whatever their age, firefighters are expected to all</p>   |

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|  | <p>have the same fitness level. When we do our tests, firefighters have a choice of what test they take to reach the right V02 standard. The Service has a fitness team that works with firefighters if they don't achieve the required outcome.</p>   |
| <p>Q6. We believe we don't get value for money from the precept, there is little visible policing here. Service is task orientated, often Uttlesford police officers are being sent over to Colchester and Chelmsford. Why are we paying our council tax for our police officers to deliver services in other areas?</p> <p>People in Saffron Walden do not report crime that takes place here. Arson, cars being damaged, catalytic converted thefts – there is no police response and the impact on victims is huge. I also hear rumours that landowners get a better service when it comes to police response, just because police are focused on rural crime. Rural crime should include people who live in rural areas.</p> | <p>JG- In terms of rural crime, it is not just rural landowners that receive a service from policing its anyone who lives in rural communities.</p>  |
| <p>Q7. One role of the PFCC is to hold the Chief Constable to account – In March this year Essex Police have had a Chief Superintendent and a Superintendent suspended for having misconduct whilst on duty and there has still not been a misconduct hearing. How is this being investigated over at the PFCC office? Does this concern you?</p> <p>Even if officers are disciplined and dismissed, there is no intelligence on the system if an officer was to go and work at a youth group. I don't think the systems are fit for purpose.</p>  | <p>JG- The PFCC holds the Chief Constable to account and as this is a live investigation it would not be appropriate to comment on.</p> <p>The PFCC has a structure of meetings, minutes of which are all available on our website for transparency purposes. Whether that's a strategic board for policing, performance and resource boards meetings, or scrutiny board meetings for professional standards.</p> <p>The Chief Constable in Essex is rightly tenacious about professional standards of staff and police officers. Everything is investigated appropriately. Some matters are referred to the</p> |

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|   | <p>Independent Office of Police Complaints and they will advise how to deal with it.</p> <p>The PFCC has one to one meetings with the Chief Constable and discusses the culture of policing nationally and what that looks like in Essex. It is imperative that the public have confidence in Essex Police.</p> <p>Police officers and the PFCC are vetted on a fairly regular basis. In terms of culture, it is important that in the force everyone feels they can whistle blow if they see something that's not right.</p> |
| <p>Q8. I called the press office to check the accuracy of story that was published on EP Uttlesford Facebook account. They said they had no information about this and I needed to contact the page. I went back to EP Uttlesford, and I got a response back with a correction to the story. It is laborious and not efficient process.</p> | <p>JG – Committed to take the comments back and talk to the Essex Police press office about that.</p> <p>Darren Horsman (Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement) – felt contact had improved with police particularly on district and community police social media channels. In previous years, police have faced criticism for everything being so centralised that local communities lost touch with their community officers.</p>   |
| <p>Q9. Can you tell me more about cross border cooperation?</p>   | <p>CC- The force control rooms will talk to each other about the nearest resources in the area. We work with Suffolk, they call us up to help and vice versa. In terms of rural crime, we work with Suffolk and Hertfordshire to tackle hare coursing. It's about coordinated cross border activity and we do joint operations.</p>   |
| <p>Q10. Is it right to call 999 for hare coursing?</p>  | <p>CC – Yes. If a crime is happening here and now call 999.</p>   |
| <p>Q11. The houses in Great Dunmow are growing rapidly. Please think about Dunmow when deploying resources. In the short term, Great Dunmow Town Council has money to invest in PCSO's. We would like to get some more info on recruitment.</p>   | <p>CC- Dunmow is growing and there will be a Town Centre Team, that will have two PC's, that go live this month.</p>  |

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| <p>Q12. Speeding in Saffron Walden? How is the 20pmh being monitored throughout the town?</p>                    | <p>CC – advised officers can do speed watch and speed enforcement. However, in his opinion speeding is a community issue. If we stop one driver, its not going to solve the problem. It is about educating new drivers and making sure people know how to stay safe on roads. Enforcement only works up until a point and its one tool of many. If we can slow the roads, we will slow all traffic.</p> <p>Essex Highways have a big part to play, and that’s where we engage with Parish Councils and push that up through Essex County Council. Everyone calls for speed cameras to be put up in the community, that is dealt with by Essex County Council.</p> |
| <p><b>Questions Received in advanced</b></p>   |   |
| <p>Q13. What are the most pressing needs of Uttlesford and how do they align to the priorities of the PFCC ?</p> | <p>CC- Speeding remains a constant concern for most communities and activity is conducted regularly with the Community Policing Team, the various Community Speed Watch Groups across the district and specialist officers from the Road Crime Team.</p> <p>The fear of crime remains a concern this is against relatively low crime numbers and significantly reduced anti-social behaviour incidents. This is where the focus should be on Crime Prevention and the Crime Prevention Strategy. Building stronger &amp; safer communities together.</p>  |
| <p>Q14. Why are police not reacting quick enough to crimes in the community!</p>                                 | <p>CC- Often this can be down to under reporting of crimes, residents will be quick to comment on incidents on social media platforms, where this can gain a lot of attention and also cause the fear of crime to increase. But will not necessarily report these through the various channels available.</p> <p>Any incident reported is graded based on Threat, Risk &amp; Harm and prioritised accordingly. If it is any incident occurring at the</p>   |

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|   | <p>time it will be allocated out in line with this process. If a crime is reported which has already occurred this will be recorded by the Resolution Centre, where an assessment will take place regarding its solvability. If there are Threat, Risk &amp; Harm matters then this will be allocated out to be progressed.</p>   |
| <p>Q15. Please can we have a bigger regular police presence in Great Dunmow ? Drug dealing is happening at the top of the Downes and in Godfrey way and there is often trouble with Youths around our lovely duck pond</p>  | <p>CC- In September the Braintree and Uttlesford DPA moved away from 2-hub operating model (Braintree &amp; Saffron Walden) to a 3-hub model (Braintree, Saffron Walden &amp; Dunmow). This essentially means that response officers and Community Policing Team officers are based and operate from Dunmow and Saffron Walden.</p> <p>This month will also see the launch of a new Town Centre Team (2 Constables) located and operating out of Great Dunmow.</p>  |
| <p>Q16. We have reported several acts of criminality in Star Lane, Dunmow, particularly concerning our cars. We have been able to pinpoint the time within an hour, even minutes on 2 occasions but despite there being a cctv camera, nothing has been done. Also drug dealing occurs outside a hairdressers by the Co-op.</p> | <p>CC- In the last 6 months there has been 2 incidents of vehicle damage reported for Star Lane, one was in April the other more recently in August. Whilst this is not high numbers the distress this can cause to victims' crimes along with the impact and cost for repairs is unacceptable. With the implementation of the New Dunmow Town Centre Team this month, it will ensure a greater policing presence and focus within Dunmow. These officers will be tackling this type of behaviour and holding those who commit it to account.</p> <p>In relation to drug dealing CPT officer and CSAS from Uttlesford District Council are visiting every business in Great Dunmow as Part of Business Crime Week (Week Commencing 19th Oct) and I would encourage all resident to voice concerns in order that they can be highlighted and addressed. This would include working with the officers, the new Town Centre Team and partner agencies.</p> |



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| <p>Q17. I am a resident unfortunately living along this B1256 horrendous road, in a so called 30 mile limit speed zone, in Takeley, which on more occasions than complied with is more like a motorway with speeding vehicles everything from, cars, motorbikes and lorries, totally unacceptable some of these vehicles travel at I would 60 + mph, Here in a village with children, often walking to and back from school on a narrow footpath with speeding vehicles almost 'sucking' them into the road. I hate walking on the footpath it's very very scary feels so dangerous which of course it is. Never mind the mini roundabouts that vehicles should give way to on their right, so often accidents and people using their horn in anger because of a near miss. Seen this over and over again. So, a plea let's have any time if the day some speed cameras To slow down and appreciate speed kills lives.</p> | <p>CC- Whilst the local community team regularly conduct speeding enforcement along with specialist officers from the Road Crime Team. Enforcement is simply one tool that should be utilised to tackle this issue, the others are engagement, education and designing the problem out permanently. Enforcement will only deal with a single driver at a time but does not solve the ongoing problem.</p> <p>We continually have new generations of drivers and if we can make alterations to the layout of our road networks meaning vehicles have to travel slower (traffic calming measures) then this solves the issue before it even starts.</p> <p>Education is through multiagency operations with the Community Safety Partnership and Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) and schools' engagements with new / young drivers.</p> |
| <p>Q18. From Parish Councillor in Takeley and the village closest to Stansted Airport, where residents and businesses are suffering from airport parking issues that is getting worse daily.</p> <p>Entrepreneurial illegal businesses are appearing on line. Offering services to pick people up from their cars, taxi to airport and ferrying them back after their holidays. Leaving the cars to stand in queues in the streets all over Takeley – sometimes for many weeks. Many obstructing driveways and blocking junctions and some causing a very real danger on these roads.</p>  | <p>CC- The Community Policing Team are engaging with the Uttlesford District Council regarding these concerns being raised relating to the alleged 'unregistered' business and its operating practices.</p> <p>As for the recent fatal accidents I am not able to comment on these are they are live ongoing investigations, suffice to say that they are being investigated by detectives from Serious Collision Investigation Unit.</p>  |

The council have been in touch with County Highways and North Essex Parking Partnership as their enforcement Team cannot enforce on public roads.

Last Monday there was the second fatal crash in Parsonage Road in three weeks. A road closest to the airport by minutes. What can be done about this?