



**MINUTES of
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (MEETING AS THE CRIME AND
DISORDER COMMITTEE)
14 MARCH 2018**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor M W Helm
Councillors	P G L Elliott, N R Pudney, S J Savage and Mrs M E Thompson
Substitute Member	Councillor R G Boyce MBE

898. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

The Chairman drew attention to the list of notices published on the back of the agenda.

899. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2017 be received.

Minute No. 571 – Chief Inspectors Performance Report

It was clarified that third bullet relating to ‘Solved Rates’ contained a typographical error and should state “...it was well *above* the national average”.

RESOLVED

- (ii) that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2017 be confirmed.

900. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs P A Channer, CC and R P F Dewick. In accordance with notice duly given, it was noted that Councillor R G Boyce was attending as a substitute for Councillor Mrs Channer.

901. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

902. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

903. CHIEF INSPECTOR'S PERFORMANCE REPORT

Chief Inspector (CI) Ronnie Egan, District Commander addressed the Committee and provided Members with a detailed update and highlighted the following areas reporting on the close work between the Police and its partners:

- Current crime – It was noted although there had been an increase in recordable crime for the District it was still one of the lowest levels in Essex.
- Sexual Offences – The change in figures reflected the national rise in this area and CI Egan outlined the main areas which had seen increases and commented on the number of historical incidents reported and their link to an increase in media report.
- Racially aggravated incidents had again seen an increase and CI Egan commented on the perceived increase in confidence to report incidents.
- Solved rates had decreased by 2% and Members were informed of the ongoing work to identify the reasons for this change, although it was noted that some related to an increase in the number of crimes being recorded. CI Egan informed the Committee that for the Maldon District over 25% of crimes were desk related and she explained how the investigation of these impacted on solve rates. This was an area for improvement for the Police.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – The Police were working with Community Protection Officers on number of schemes across the District to address anti-social behaviour issues. CI Egan provided a brief outline of these.
- Urban Street Gangs / Organised Crime Groups – Members were informed of the work undertaken as part of Operations Raptor (focusing on tackling key gangs and areas of concern), Scorpion (focussing on organised crime groups) and Swift (tackling the supply of drugs in and around Promenade Park). It was noted that information from residents was key to identify and map activity. Members were also informed about 4pPlans which worked with partners to tackle organised crime.
- Vulnerability – It was noted that a Hidden Harms Team had been established for the north of the county to support a number of issues and how work to engage with victims was ongoing. CI Egan reported that the Police had a dedicated officer dealing with child sexual exploitation cases. In a recent change Standard and medium risk hate crime were now being investigated by Community Policing Teams.
- Community Policing – CI Egan reported on the ongoing tasking of work to ensure focussed action against existing and emerging threats.

The results from a recent Public participation survey would form a key area to developing engagement work. CI Egan provided should of the results of the survey and advised that she was happy to share these with Members. Work was ongoing across all levels to better engage and provide confidence to the public.

Support from the Special Constabulary had increased across the District and Members were advised of the benefits of this including the number of hours completed in January 2018. A Parish Special scheme was being promoted alongside rural community builder workshops. It was noted that that volunteer section was a valued and key element to Police work.

In response to a number of questions raised by Members they were provided with the following additional information:

- CI Egan agreed to provide details of the percentage of racially / sexually aggravated incidents not progressed following initial investigation. Members were advised that this was an area where the Police were looking to improve the services to victims. It was reiterated that incidents report were taken very seriously.
- Gun crime – Members were advised that there were no such incidents in Essex relating to gun crime in schools.
- Knife crime – CI Egan reported on the work being done with schools and the regular campaigns (Operation Sceptre) to raise awareness of the danger of carrying knives. The Committee were informed of the continuing education, awareness and enforcement (including the Crime Prosecution Service) work including partnership working with Trading Standards, retail outlets and charities.
- In response to a suggestion regarding using flyers / leaflets to promote Police work, CI Egan outlined some media campaigns by the Police to inform the public. They were happy to work with the Council to identify ways to further increase public awareness.

In response to a question regarding including a leaflet with annual Council Tax bills, Director of Customers and Community advised that unfortunately the billing had been completed.

The Chairman thanked CI Egan for attending the meeting.

Councillor H M Bass joined the meeting during this item of business.

904. MALDON DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee received the report of the Director of Customers and Community detailing progress of activities undertaken by the Maldon Community Safety Partnership since the last meeting of this Committee and highlighting the strategic priorities being proposed for 2018 / 19.

It was noted that five key priorities had been identified and were set out in the report. Members' particular attention was drawn to the priority 'tackling rural crime and strengthening communities' which was applicable to the Maldon District in light of the crime trends seen in the past few years.

The most recent Essex Police performance summary (to January 2018) was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Community Safety Partnership Manager presented the report and provided Members with update on a number of areas relating to the Partnership set out in the report. In addition to the report the following information was provided:

- Council Tax - The Policing precept for Council Tax in 2018 / 19 had increased. Members were informed that this was explained in a leaflet included with the annual bill sent out by the Council. It was advised that an element of this will go towards community policing and a report on this matter would be brought to a future meeting of the Community Services Committee.
- Working with youths - It was noted that Essex Police were continuing to work closely with schools, and continue to measure the impact of early interaction with young people. Members were informed of ongoing work with St Giles Trust to highlight the risk of involvement with gangs or organised crime groups. Educational work to raise awareness had been well received and had also been carried out with teachers, professionals, and parents.
- CCTV - CCTV systems at Maldon High Street, Maldon Promenade, Burnham-on-Crouch and community centres at Brickhouse Farm and West Maldon were being renewed this summer and a pilot for these cameras to be remotely monitored in Chelmsford had been funded by the Community Safety Partnership.
- Street Pastors - Members were informed that Essex Police had started working with Maldon Churches. At present there were six churches interested in providing street pastors, focusing on working with young people around the High Street and the Prom. It was noted that the possibility of School Pastors was also being considered.

In response to a number of questions raised by Members they were provided with the following additional information:

- Officers outlined ongoing Police work and its links with Churches within the Maldon District and advised that if any churches were interested in working with them they would welcome this. This also applied in respect of schools.
- CCTV - The Director of Customers and Community advised that CCTV systems initially put in were for Maldon District Council sites and to monitor antisocial behaviour within the town. In response to a question regarding CCTV in Burnham-on-Crouch replicating a similar system to that in Maldon, Officers advised that would continue to work with local Partners to identify future needs and action these accordingly.

905. ESSEX POLICE RURAL CRIME STRATEGY

The Chairman introduced Chief Inspector (CI) Ian Gennery of the Gypsy, Traveller and Rural Engagement Team (GTRET). CI Gennery gave an overview of the Essex Police Rural Crime Strategy and drew a number of key areas to Members' attention, including:

- Definition of Rural Crime - Members were advised that there was no national definition of rural crime, however in Essex this was defined as any crime which occurs within a rural location.

- Rural Affairs National Strategy 2018 - 2021 - It was noted that the National Police Chief had finalised the development of a national strategy for providing a safer rural community. This is expected to be launched in July 2018.
- Essex Police Rural Crime Strategy – As part of the 2017 refresh of this document work had been undertaken with key partners to inform the way in which the Police tackled crime and Anti-social behaviour in the rural environment. A copy of the Strategy was circulated to all present at the meeting. It included an updated vision and aims for improved policing within rural areas.
- Working strategies – Mention was made at this point to ongoing operations including hare coursing and caravan thefts. In respect of caravan thefts the Committee noted the success of a text alert system by the public to identify crime. By way of an example of ongoing operations, Members were advised of Operation Buzzard which brought together traditional police work and the use of technology such as drones to combat crime.
- Key Areas – Particular attention was drawn to the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme to which Maldon District Council was a key partner and had been accredited for 10 years.

A copy of the information provided is attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes. CI Gennery welcomed Members' comments on the Strategy and how the Police and the Council could work together to continue improving the rural crime within the District.

In response to a question, CI Gennery commented on the recent Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) installations in the District and provided Members with examples of successful operations involving these cameras. Members were reminded to report any suspicious activity to the Police.

It was noted that the Police actively campaigned in respect of rural crime and CI Gennery made specific reference to the strong farmer's network in the District.

The Director of Customers and Community advised that Council had been asked to comment Police expenditure and additional resources. The Council had responded in support of the Rural Crime Team and commented that there should be an increase in the availability of ANPR cameras in Police vehicles.

The Chairman informed the Committee that CI Egan would shortly be moving into a new position within the Police and CI Gerry Parker would be taking over. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked CI Egan for all her work and assistance and wished her every success for the future.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50 pm.

M W HELM
CHAIRMAN

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Presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee) on 14/03/2018 by Chief Inspector Ian Gennery.

Maldon DC March 2018

Over 72% of the Essex Police area is classified by the Office of National Statistics as “rural”.

Certain types of crime/incidents are more common in rural areas and some crimes, such as agricultural machinery theft are almost uniquely rural.

The impact of crime and disorder on victims and communities can be greater in rural areas where there are fewer local amenities and support services and people can feel more isolated and vulnerable.

Despite the consistent fall in the overall level of recorded crime in the last 10 years, it has been evident at engagement events such as;

- Farmers' Action Panels
- the PCC's Rural Crime Forum
- and via public correspondence

that people within rural communities believe

- that crime is rising
- that rural policing is being sacrificed in favour of urban areas
- and feel increasingly insecure within their own neighbourhood

Difficulties with 101, a perceived lack of understanding by the police of rural crime and a decrease in visible policing have deterred crime reporting with members of the rural community demonstrating the attitude of:

“what’s the point in reporting it?”

This was confirmed by anecdotal evidence from the National Farmers Union via member meetings and similar input from the Country Landowners' Association and the volume of complaints being received at district level and via the OPCC.

The 2015 **National Rural Crime Survey** highlighted;

- the **financial impact** of crime on the rural economy
- the **fear of crime** as increasing
- a **low satisfaction** rate of police performance in rural areas

- and crime in these areas as **underreported**.

The NFU Mutual Rural Crime Report 2017 identified the cost of rural crime in 2016 to be **£39.2m**

The PFCC for Essex has acknowledged these issues since the post was introduced and the PFCC's Rural Crime Forum has been in place for over 5 years.

This forum brings together the police, key partners and the rural community to look at the specific issues affecting these areas and identify actions to address them.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) recognises the impact of rural crime and has Wildlife and Rural Crime portfolios led by senior officers in conjunction with expert partners and the national NPCC **Rural Affairs National Strategy 2018 – 2021** is currently being finalised with a view to an official launch in July.

Essex Police has been strongly involved in the development of this strategy due to our focus on rural crime, including the development of our own strategy.

Our own and the draft national strategy have the following aims;

- Safer rural communities
- Enhanced public engagement
- Increased public confidence in the police
- Empowered communities
- Strong partnership working
- Raised profile of rural affairs
- Embedded rural focus into policing culture

Essex Police has had a Rural Crime Prevention Strategy since 2013.

It was written by the police for the police and although it acknowledged the role of partnerships such as Community Partnerships and Farm Watch, there was no involvement by partners in its development.

The Strategy was scheduled to be updated **last** year (2017) and we saw this as an opportunity to involve the support and guidance of our rural communities and key partners led by the Essex Rural Partnership to inform the way in which we tackle crime and ASB in our rural environment.

Our Vision, contained in the strategy is to **actively strengthen our response to fighting crime in rural areas through the effective use of;**

- policing resources
- partnerships
- and working **with** our rural communities

Crime Prevention is everybody's responsibility and this strategy reflects that principle

By working together and through consultation with other key partners, Essex Police, the ERP and the OPFCC have established our aims and our priorities

Our aims are:

- to reduce the volume of crime and ASB being committed in rural areas
- to continue to bring offenders to justice
- to increase public confidence in Essex Police

Needs and issues for **communities, businesses** and the **environment** are different and **our priorities** reflect this, and include;

Communities

- visible and accessible policing; having a recognised place to go for advice/reporting
- maintaining a police and volunteer presence in rural areas
- recognising the exaggerated impact of crime caused by isolation
- working to address speeding and road safety
- working to provide an effective and efficient 101 service

Businesses

- Recognising the impact of theft (of vehicles and equipment) on business operations and finances in rural communities

Environment

- Working to reduce ASB and fear of crime and improve personal safety
- Working to deter and detect fly tipping
- Working to deter and detect Hare coursing

We will achieve our aims by **means** of:

- innovative problem solving
- devising practical solutions to identified local problems
- effective partnership working

- supporting victims of crime
- improving crime prevention

And trying to do some of that in different ways, for example; **Operation Buzzard** brings together traditional police work and new technology, using our drones to deal with unlawful traveller encampments and hare coursing.

Rural Crime is often thought of in terms of theft of;

- plant
- livestock
- metal
- oil
- or damage to property

however our strategy incorporates **all crime** and the wider issues impacting on rural communities.

There is no National definition of Rural Crime, accordingly the definition varies considerably between police services.

The Essex Police Strategy considers Rural Crime to be:

Any crime committed in a rural location, or where the victim is specifically targeted because of their connection to, or involvement in, the rural community, economy, or area.

By clearly **defining** rural crime we will be able to fully understand the

- Volume
- Distribution
- nature
- and frequency

of these offences and compare our performance against our most similar forces.

Through **analysis** of this data we will be able to focus our resources into the areas of greatest need and develop innovative solutions to tackle the issues.

Our Teams will engage with our repeat and vulnerable victims, offering advice, support and developing crime prevention and reduction plans to enhance public confidence and satisfaction in areas that have historically considered themselves neglected in favour of urban centres.

Through focused, visible policing at a local level, we will:

- reassure rural communities
- deter crime
- gather (and share) intelligence
- bring to justice those who commit crimes in rural areas

This strategy has been informed by consultation with a variety of stakeholders

As a result of this consultation, we will place particular focus on:

- continuing to work closely with partners
- developing Farm and Rural Watch
- continuing to host Rural Crime Awareness Days and similar events
- making the best use of established and new communication links
- enhancing our use of **social media** to share intelligence and good practice
- working closely with Community Safety Partnership Hubs
- maximising the benefits and opportunities of volunteering and community involvement
- sharing Intelligence and good practice with enforcement agencies and other partners.
- developing a public-facing rural publication which brings together advice and information pertinent to rural areas (**This document which was created with the assistance of the PFCC's Rural Crime Forum has already been created**)

We launched the strategy at a very well supported event in November 2017 at Stow Maries Aerodrome.

The strategy is led by the Local Policing Support Unit (LPSU) which is the HQ department that the new Gypsy Traveller and Rural Engagement Team (GTRET) sits within.

Historically, we were one of the few comparable forces to have no full time Rural Policing Team.

Of 53 Police services¹, only 13 have dedicated rural teams (including Essex) and we **now** have one of the largest as in October 2017, with the support of the OPFCC and the personal support of the Chief Constable, we established the

¹ The 43 home office forces in England and Wales, the British Transport Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, MOD police, RAF Police, Royal Navy Police, Police Service of Northern Ireland and Police Scotland.

G-TRET to support delivery and enhance our existing work with our rural communities.

The team consists of 1 Sergeant and 4 Constables, including the existing Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer (Sgt Downes) and existing Wildlife Heritage and Rural Crime Officer (PC Long) and we are working with the Special Constabulary and members of the PFCC's Rural Crime Forum to recruit, initially, 4 Special Constables to support the work of the Team.

The Team works 7 days a week and **works closely with Community Policing Teams** in each district to tackle crime and ASB in rural communities.

It is notable that since the launch of the strategy and the new team, Essex has fallen from **3rd** (where it has been for 3 years) to **7th** in the national table of theft of farm equipment.

We will also, via the Citizens in Policing Team, support the **increased use of volunteers** such as Active Citizens drawn from, and working within, our rural communities.

Creating and launching the strategy is obviously only the start.

Delivery and implementation of the strategy will be supported and assisted by;

- working with partner organisations,
- using established relationships
- and by developing new ones

Delivery will utilise the support of, and consult with, key partners to influence future direction and delivery of the strategy particularly:

1. The Rural Crime Forum (RCF) which is chaired by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC).

This forum will monitor the strategic developments in line with the Rural Crime Strategy and act as a conduit between the rural community, the PFCC and the Police.

2. The Essex Rural Partnership (ERP)

which is a non-statutory body, working to raise the profile of rural Essex at a local, national and EU level.

The ERP brings together a wide range of organisations from

- the public
- private
- and voluntary sectors,

to coordinate action on the major economic, social and environmental issues facing rural Essex.

The ERP has been a significant contributor to the development of this strategy and will be a key partner in its successful delivery.

We will work with partners and key stakeholders in public and voluntary sectors to address rural crime in Essex via a nationally recognised methodology the 4 key elements of;

-
- **Prevention**
 - **Intelligence**
 - **Enforcement**
 - **and Reassurance**
-

which are detailed in the strategy.

We have also considered future and emerging challenges such as

- Funding and Resources
- the growing population of Essex
- and the changing nature of crime

and these are detailed in the strategy.

We will measure the success of this strategy across 4 key areas:

1. The number of positive disposals for rural crime
2. A reduction of repeat victims of crime in rural areas.
3. Conducting masterclasses with partners/ other forces to identify “what works”
4. A measurable increase in public satisfaction

we will also expect success to be recognised through:

- the provision of crime prevention advice available to rural communities
- an increased confidence in policing rural areas
- a decrease in the value of rural crime (NFU Mutual report)

- increased engagement and membership of Farm and Rural Watch schemes
- the amount of shared intelligence and identified best practice

Partnership working has been key to developing the strategy into the product we have today.

To deliver the strategy we need to continue to work in partnership

At the launch of the strategy, the Chief Constable promised

- Visible
- Targeted
- proactive policing

and asked for the public to help by reporting incidents and take steps to prevent themselves from becoming victims of crime through a variety of means from basic security measures to joining farm and rural watch schemes or by volunteering as Special Constables, active citizens or watch coordinators

We would like to use this meeting to explore how the partners here today can work with us to give the best result for the rural communities of Essex and those who work in and visit them.