



**MINUTES of
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (MEETING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER
COMMITTEE)
26 FEBRUARY 2026**

PRESENT

Chairperson	Councillor S J N Morgan
Vice-Chairperson	Councillor P L Spenceley
Councillors	J R Burrell-Cook, L J Haywood, A M Lay, C P Morley and E L Stephens

513. CHAIRPERSON'S NOTICES

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the general housekeeping arrangements.

514. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor V J Bell.

515. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 October 2025 be approved and confirmed.

516. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

517. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairperson advised that in accordance with the Council's Public Speaking Protocol, one request to speak had been received from Mr Ian Wardrop, who wished to address the Committee on behalf of Wickham Bishops Parish Council.

Mr Wardrop highlighted the Parish Council's concerns regarding the procedures for letters sent out by Essex Police to drivers identified speeding through the Parish's Speedwatch campaign, particularly why drivers registered out of the County were not receiving letters. Chief Inspector Aaron Homatopoulos and Sergeant Matt Dalby from Essex Police both responded to the concerns raised, highlighting that, due to resource constraints, priority was being given to speeding offences within the County. Incorrect vehicle registrations were also identified as a factor contributing to increased resource demands, as further research was often required, creating a backlog for the team.

During the discussion that ensued, it was clarified that where a person queried a letter for reasons such as an incorrect vehicle registration plate or because the vehicle had not been in Essex at that time, this required further investigation, as there were concerns regarding the possibility of cloned vehicles.

518. MALDON DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee received the report of the Chief Executive reporting the progress of activities undertaken by Maldon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) since the last meeting held on 9 October 2025.

The Chairperson introduced Mr Clarke, Community Safety Manager (CSM), and Ms Syder, Community Engagement Team Leader and Mr Rayner, a member of the Community Engagement Team.

The most recent Essex Police performance summary (to January 2026) was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Community Safety Manager (CSM) took Members through the report and gave a short presentation, advising that the proposed priorities for the year 2026 / 27 had not yet been confirmed. The Officer made particular note of the proposed priority “Promoting road safety and challenging irresponsible driving” and the possibility of receiving more resources for this as the police had adopted this priority under their strategic assessment. The Council had received funding from the Police and Fire Commissioner for public safety, and the resulting consultation had been used on a number of projects including safety for girls, skatepark procurement in Maldon, the West Maldon Community Centre, Riverside and Promenade Parks and the design of the Secret Garden. The Officer then went on to describe the projects that had been undertaken in the District.

Members then discussed the report, asking questions on the projects, to which Officers provided responses, including:

- **How the sites were selected for TruCam:** There were already some specific areas that had been identified. Trained to look at areas through vision zero which is a partnership with Billericay. However, Officers had free rein to operate where required, provided it was safe to do so.
- **On water safety:** They had been looking at delivering a campaign in partnership with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and the Safer Essex Road Partnership focusing on water safety.
- **On if suicide by young men was being addressed:** A lot of the work that had been done focused on the farming community. Additionally, the public living room work that had been done was more focused on women and dog walking, and work had been undertaken around suicide prevention which it was hoped would continue. It was acknowledged that it was a big public health risk and there was a need to target and put resources into that area.
- **On the clarity of the resolution from public cameras:** The Officer stated that the resolution was very good and they were very pleased with the performance of the cameras.
- **On the lighting in Promenade park:** There was a big project in the coming financial year to replace lighting in Promenade Park. As part of the work they were looking at areas that needed additional lighting.

- **How businesses could get involved in sponsorship:** Campaigns would be launched in the spring, contacting businesses and community groups, for example leisure centres, parks and public houses. If a business had indicated that it wished to sign up, it would be supported as there was a shared interest in keeping customers and staff safe. Officers were looking for Maldon to have a more community approach to safety.
- **On issues at Hoe Mill Lock:** Last year was not as bad as previous years, partly because of work done with South Essex Parking Partnership and Essex Waterways who own and manage that area. Patrols were being used to address parking issues, and information sharing and work to tackle anti-social behaviour and deter day-trippers had resulted in very few new complaints over the previous few months.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities thanked the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner who had funded speed awareness in certain hotspots in the district.

The Chairperson thanked the CSM for his report and presentation.

RESOLVED that the current progress of the initiatives taken by the Community Safety Partnership to date be reviewed and noted.

519. POLICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Chief Inspector (CI) Aaron Homatopoulos, Chelmsford and Maldon District Commander from Essex Police introduced himself.

CI Homatopoulos drew Members' attention to the Essex Police Performance Summary report, appended to Agenda Item 7 – Maldon District Community Safety Partnership Update. He reminded Members of the current Local Community Policing structure and highlighted the Force Plan 2024 – 2026. He provided a detailed presentation and highlighted the following areas:

- **Maldon Performance Summary** - Over a twelve-month period to January 2026, the Maldon district had seen a decrease in all crimes. However, there had been a slight increase in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) reporting. The solved rate for all offences had increased. Burglary dwelling and burglary non-dwelling had seen a big reduction in crime. Looking at the statistics Maldon was the lowest crime district in all of Essex.
- **Public Perception survey** - The CI stated that confidence in the Police had been surveyed at the lowest it had been in a long time in the Maldon District, and they were looking at ways to improve that perception.
- **Tackling community issues** - The Police alongside Community Safety Partners and Maldon District Council had worked on various community issues including; ASB, drug dealing, community engagement and vehicle crime. The CI highlighted a joint operation between Maldon District Council and the Police to combat speeding in the district.
- **Application of Priorities in Maldon** - Priorities were being applied to ASB with a review about how it was being managed across the force. ASB risk assessments and gradings were undertaken with an emphasis on personal nuisance and environmental ASB. The Police were targeting vehicle theft and identifying perpetrators and ASB vehicle use and speeding. Community engagement with local primary and secondary schools, colleges and youth clubs was taking place, including the delivery of weapons awareness

presentations explaining the dangers of knife crime and possession of offensive weapons. The Police continued to develop new initiatives to support mental health and wellbeing.

- **Successes in Maldon** - Arrests in the district over the past 12 months were highlighted, with a breakdown of the numbers for all the different related offences excluding arrests from specialist departments such as investigatory teams.
- **Community Engagement** - The CI highlighted a number of events that the Police had been involved in and the benefit to the District. The Policing team were actively encouraging the community to report matters to build intelligence around what is happening in the community to allow the team to respond to concerns.
- **Burglaries reduced in 2025** - The last 12 months had seen a reduction in reported Residential Burglary offences with 11 less offences recorded. This underlined the close work done by the Policing team with partners, Neighbourhood Watch and the community to educate the public around prevention and property security.
- **Vehicle Crime** - Theft from motor vehicles had seen a reduction of 77 offences and theft of motor vehicles a decrease of 14 offences from the previous year.
- **Tackling Speeding** - The focus had been to drive down casualties on the roads and reducing anti-social driving. The Maldon Policing team had reacted to speeding complaints across Maldon District. Working alongside partners including highways, Community Safety Partners, Safer Essex Roads Partnership and local Councillors speed checks had been carried out to reassure the public, deter drivers from speeding and help to keep the public safe.
- **Examples of proactive drugs related enforcement** - Regular proactive drugs warrants were being conducted with a recent conviction of a known drug dealer. Alongside this two search warrants for the ward area had been executed with a positive outcome.

Following the update and in response to questions from the Committee, CI Homatopoulos provided the following information:

- **Drug-driving offences:** There had been an increase in the focus on drug driving especially over the Christmas period. The Policing team undertook stop checks with drug swiping and there had been an increase in the rate of detecting these offences.
- **County Lines:** The Policing team had not identified any County lines activity within the Maldon district.
- **Measures on arson prevention:** The Police and Fire Education Team provided education on fire awareness to secondary schools. The Community Safety Partnership Manager advised that the Joint Education Team, made up of Police and Fire services, had provided a report on which primary and secondary schools were engaging in fire awareness. The report also highlighted that primary schools learnt about the Great Fire of London whilst secondary schools focussed more on ASB. Specific problems were targeted through patrols.
- **Dealing with counterfeit notes and use of Pub Watch:** CI Homatopoulos stated that reporting was the key to solving these issues and sending the information that had been obtained through Pub Watch was essential. The Policing team could act as the link between the Pub Watch schemes in the Maldon and Chelmsford districts. In terms of prevention the team provided

'Let's Talk' events and engagement days to help raise awareness and give advice over the issues with fraudulent currency.

The Community Safety Partnership Manager spoke about a package that was to be trialled in Chelmsford called 'Shop Safe'. 'Shop Safe' was a system of data sharing and use of radios to help quick communication between areas, even those remote areas. He advised that if the trial was successful they would look at rolling it out in the Maldon District.

- **Hate Crimes:** Sergeant Dalby highlighted that the small increase in hate crimes was isolated to an individual repeating this behaviour.
- **Policing over the Football World Cup:** CI Homatopoulos reassured Members that the Police had an operation in place under which additional resources would be allocated during the World Cup. In addition, education initiatives would be rolled out to help reduce any incidents.
- **Reporting crimes through the website:** CI Homatopoulos stated that he understood that the reporting on the website could be difficult for some people but he encouraged Members to also send reports into the policing email inbox. He reminded Members of the 'Let's Talk' events where the local communities could speak to the policing team in person.

The CI confirmed that there was a team that dealt with the Single Online Home and that feedback from the Committee would be passed onto them.

The Chairperson thanked CI Homatopoulos for his presentation.

There being no other items of business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

S J N MORGAN
CHAIRPERSON