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Southend Public Meeting  
23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018  
18.30 - 20.00  
The Civic Centre, Southend on Sea

Panel Members

Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) - Roger Hirst  
Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (DPFCC) - Jane Gardner  
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service - Matt Hughes

As Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) Roger Hirst has had responsibility for the governance of Essex Police since being elected in 2016. He took on responsibility for Essex County Fire and Rescue in Oct 2017 following a decision by the Home Secretary to approve a local case for change. As the PFCC he is held to account by the Police and Crime Panel.

The pressure on policing has become more challenging in recent years and although Southend as a district has experienced an increase in crime that is below the national average there has still been an increase. Essex Police have invested significantly in public protection and in a time of decreasing budgets this has meant a shift in resourcing away from local policing. The PFCC has committed to getting more local, visible and accessible policing.

Improvements to the 101 service are ongoing. Where possible people are urged to use the 101 service online [www.essex.police.uk](http://www.essex.police.uk) but always phone 999 in an emergency. While we have invested more in the number of force control room staff it still takes too long to get through and more investment is needed.

The PFCC has been working hard along with the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCCs) to argue for extra funding for policing nationally. In late 2017 The Home Office has agreed to increase funding by £450m for 2018. Part of this money will come from a council tax precept increase of around £1 per household per month. This should result in 150 extra officers across the county. There are also plans to invest in aging custody suites. A detailed plan of how the money will be used will be prepared for the public on a district by district basis. Three quarters of the funding will be spent on local, visible policing.

Chief Inspector Neil Pudney introduced himself as the new district commander for Southend. He had come from being a Detective Chief Constable in the local area and was looking forward to the challenge. He believed it was important to get the basics right and work

closely with members of the public and agencies to get results. He was looking forward to continuing the values he held as a community police officer 23 years ago.

#### Questions from the audience

Questions	Answers
<p>The council would like to see more visible policing. Would the PFCC be amenable to Specials working in the borough if the council sponsor them? It would be good to have a special in each ward.</p>	<p>The PFCC has put together an active programme to increase Specials within the force. There have been over 1000 applications and if the local council is prepared to sponsor a Special they will commit those officers in the local area. Some parish councils are already doing this.</p>
<p>It was noted that a senior officer with Essex Police had recently been found guilty of three counts of misconduct but would still be keeping his job whereas lower ranking officers had been dismissed for less. Can the commissioner say the correct process has been followed?</p>	<p>Although the PFCC could not comment on the individual case as he was not involved he can confirm that the process was followed as per the law.</p>
<p>How many officers are needed to make the streets safe in Southend?</p>	<p>Around 280 officers across the county would be good and it would also be useful to be able to use algorithms to identify patterns of crime.</p>
<p>What are the plans for the Fire and Rescue service in Southend?</p>	<p>The Fire and Rescue Service cover around 1500 calls a year between Southend and Leigh. They also participate and instigate a lot of community engagement. Although they are operational they are also looking at prevention.</p> <p>There are 4 full time watches at Southend and Leigh and 4 on call around the district. Currently there is a recruitment plan in place and new firefighters have been taken on in the area.</p> <p>The aim is to put in place a more mobile work force. If the Southend crew are out on a call for 30 minutes the service will have another pump from another area to cover. This forms part of the 2020 plan which is available on the Fire and Rescue website <a href="http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/">http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/</a>. They have hired 12, another 12 are coming with 16 in the future.</p>
<p>What does Essex Police think of the reports</p>	<p>It is good citizens want to get involved in</p>

<p>of Guardian Angels in Wickford. Is it good or bad? What are you going to do about it?</p>	<p>making their community safe. Citizen's have the right to make a citizen's arrest but it would be better if they volunteered through the police service as a Special where they had the powers of a police officer. There is also the option to become an active citizen. Volunteers can be the eyes and ears of their community but would urge them not to get physically involved. CI Pudney noted how the police family was widening and there were great public service voluntary schemes that work in tandem with the police.</p>
<p>Human Trafficking has been rising significantly in Southend and the homeless community in particular are being targeted. What safeguards are being put in place to help these groups?</p>	<p>Essex Police has an excellent modern slavery officer who carries out a considerable amount of work across Essex and Kent. Her role is to raise awareness with officers across the counties. Around 270 girls have disappeared in Essex which is a horrific number. This type of crime comes under the hidden harms that the general public don't see. Essex Police have dedicated teams dealing with these issues and helping the most vulnerable. There was recently one of the first prosecutions in Essex for a Romanian woman who had been trafficked. CID officers have specific training on dealing with human trafficking and officers will go out in the community looking for victims. We need to be vigilant and encourage the public to report anything suspicious they come across.</p>
<p>What will Essex Police do if they lose their skill set in human trafficking? And where is the service now in respect of protecting the vulnerable and with training for officers?</p>	<p>In 2015 Essex Police had a scathing a report about protecting exploited people and there was extensive dialogue with HMICFRS on how could we get better. At that time no force in the country was outstanding. Since then the service has significantly improved and Essex is now rated as good. Investment has been made in better technology and training and we are now spending more than our peers across England and Wales. We will not take any resource out of it.</p>
<p>The community feels that the police have become distant – what difference will the new budget make to Southend?</p>	<p>Currently looking at what each district will have and will come back to the public. While 150 new officers won't change things completely it is a good start. Safe communities are the bedrock. This is an incremental shift.</p>
<p>Would the police consider working with Siemens on CCTV for the area as their</p>	<p>Technology is really very good now and using CCTV with ANPR can be really</p>

<p>technology was very good?</p>	<p>effective. Our surround a town days can catch all sorts of criminals. Would definitely use technology to get ahead of certain criminals such as large scale fly-tipping, stolen vehicles and theft etc.</p>
<p>Technology might help police catch people but will it help build safer communities? There was violence in the town centre with young people displaying challenging behaviour and what are we doing to work with young people?</p>	<p>In no way was the PFCC suggesting replacing officers with technology. Technology can be used to join up intelligence so officers have time to make arrests and look at preventative policing. With a tighter budget we have had less resources focusing on community policing. What is required is for the crime not to happen in the first place.</p> <p>Interaction between communities and police is so important. We are doing a lot of work around support and prevention such as using family mosaic to help with homeless people and getting them off the streets. Essex Police were looking at giving the best service they can and using digital services can help.</p> <p>A recent initiative took place in Southchurch park where the OPFCC Restorative Justice team, Essex Police and local people helped make a no go area a place people could use. There is also a small pot of money that we can invest in local initiatives such as street pastors who work on the streets to help those in need. There was also work carried out with Gangsline involving training professionals and reaching out to communities proactively.</p> <p>Firebreak has been running for 10 years where students are invited to do a cadetship in the fire service which makes them feel valued. Some cadets have even gone on to become firefighters themselves.</p>
<p>Faith groups help a lot with the communities would the PFCC support that.</p>	<p>The PFCC would agree with that and would be happy to come to Southend and meet with faith groups. Update – the PFCC attended a multi-faith meeting on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2018.</p>
<p>Westborough residents association asked what advice would police give local residents to tackle drug dealing.</p>	<p>Residents were urged to report all incidents as it is vital to record crime and gather intelligence. However small it is this type of intelligence is what helps put together a picture of criminality and allows specialist teams, such as Op Raptor, crack down on drug dealing.</p>

<p>Shoplifters are not being prosecuted – why is this?</p>	<p>There is no police policy to not prosecute shoplifting. However what would be more effective is to work with traders to design out shoplifting. Some traders prefer to keep stores as they are – but those who have adapted their stores have had great results in driving down the number of incidents.</p>
<p>Is the fire service comfortable with the aerial ladder platforms being dispatched from Chelmsford? Are you comfortable with this?</p>	<p>One of decision in the 2020 programme was to change the crewing of aerial platforms. The service is very mindful of high rise incidents as there are 20 in the area – but it is better to have two pumps there in attendance. After Grenfell firefighters in Essex visited 1,000s and 1,000s of households with safety advice and reassurance. Aerial ladders are rarely used in rescues and tend to be utilised as a water tower. The fire at a local school had resulted in an aerial platform being requested and this worked well.</p>
<p>What plans are in place to boost confidence in police</p>	<p>Essex Police are having far higher percentage of incidents being reported. Now people are more willing to come forward and report a range of crimes from ASB and Domestic Abuse. The police needed to be better at getting good news stories out to the public.</p>
<p>In respect of the recent knife amnesty, what else are Essex Police doing to help with this.</p>	<p>The knife bins have been a huge success. The increased use of stop and search has also had a positive impact on gang related crime. Officers are concentrating on where they believe weapons are being carried and when they catch somebody we make sure we put them in front of the courts as soon as possible.</p> <p>In Southend our community safety priorities are around knife crime and violent crime. We are addressing these with stop and search tactics as well as education in schools.</p>
<p>Residents have raised concerns over incidents including a female resident who had been victimised by a local man but no action had been taken by police. In another incident a shop owner had a fight in the shop and when he went outside to get an officer was told the officer could not help as he was on his own.</p>	<p>Ch/Insp Pudney requested to speak to the resident after the meeting to gather more details.</p>
<p>Organised Crime Gangs (OCGs)</p>	<p>OCGs are a problem in Essex and Kent as</p>

<p>What are you doing in terms of OCGs and are they significant in the area?</p>	<p>there are county lines that run from London and Merseyside into the county including Southend. Police try to disrupt these wherever possible but the actual head of the gang is only known to 1 or 2 people and this makes it difficult to get them. Though we are having successes and have recently secured convictions against the heads of OCGs. The organised crime group panel meet regularly and work with partners to plan how we can disrupt OCGs whenever and wherever possible.</p>
<p>Who is responsible for upholding the law in the town with cyclists on the pavement? A resident had reported persistent issues but had been made to feel a nuisance.</p>	<p>The public should never be made to feel as if they are a nuisance. ASB can also be the responsibility of the council as the police have an agreement with councils to take those crimes on. Council officers can be given powers to arrest and issue notices.  The Community Safety Partnership manager agreed to talk to the resident after the meeting.</p>
<p>The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) drops cases and will not prosecute – is this an issue as far as police are concerned.</p>	<p>The police work closely with the CPS and we can decide to appeal if we think that is the right course of action. We will do that when we need to. At times it can be that more evidence required and we can often secure this.</p>
<p>Do police think publicans should be more careful about serving drinks to very drunk patrons?</p>	<p>Police do work closely with bars and other businesses in the night time economy (NTE). This includes licensing checks. We like to work closely with business owners to discuss issues, stop repeat offenders and keep people safe.</p>
<p>Proceeds of Crime Act fund - why is it so small?</p>	<p>It is an endowed fund. The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 allows police to confiscate or recover the proceeds of crime from a criminal</p>
<p>Where are the rough sleepers being displaced to?  To what extent are we monitoring where they are being displaced to?</p>	<p>Police work closely with agencies and Family mosaic are recently got involved as are local churches. With help from voluntary organisations we can definitely do more.</p>