

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2018  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES  
AT 7.00 - 8.42 PM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	H Whitbread (Chairman), J Lea (Vice-Chairman), K Chana, S Heap, S Heather, L Hughes, A Patel, C Roberts, D Roberts, D Stocker, D Sunger, J H Whitehouse and M Owen
<b>Other members present:</b>	S Stavrou, S Kane, H Brady, R Brookes, J Jennings, A Lion, G Mohindra, D Wixley and S Bakalov (EF Youth Councillor)
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	A Beales and A Mitchell
<b>Officers Present</b>	T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), M Chwiedz (Senior Project Manager), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and C Wiggins (Safer Communities Manager)

**33. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

**34. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (MINUTE ITEM 39 - 23.7.02)**

It was noted that Councillor M Owen substituted for Councillor A Beales.

**35. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the notes of previous two meetings of the Select Committee held on 4 September 2018 and 24 September 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

**36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared by members of the Committee in any item on the agenda for the meeting, pursuant to the Council's Code of Conduct.

**37. ALAN HALL - DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES**

The Chairman expressed thanks to Alan Hall, Director of Communities, for all his help and service to the Communities Select Committee over the years and wished him a happy retirement.

**38. PRESENTATION FROM ESSEX POLICE'S DISTRICT COMMANDER**

Members received a presentation on the current policing and crime issues in the District from Chief Inspector Lewis Basford, District Commander for Brentwood and Epping Forest Community Policing Team. He answered a number of questions that had been sent to him by Members.

Mental Health

What was the Police's approach to dealing with offenders and suspects with mental health problems and what were the pathways used by the Police to help and deal with such people?

Chief Inspector Basford advised that mental health issues had increased significantly on the demands of the Police. All officers were being trained in restraint techniques specifically designed to restrain people in a mental crisis, these techniques were developed between the Police and the NHS. Furthermore, anyone detained under S.135 or S.136 warrant must be transported in an ambulance unless transport in a Police vehicle was authorised in extreme conditions. Patient dignity was at the forefront and this would enable ambulance staff to assess the medical needs of the patient and any issues that might arise or be masked by other factors such as alcohol or drug abuse.

A Police officer was not the best placed professional person to help people who suffered with mental health problems, neither was dealing with an acute health crisis the best use of a police officers time and skills. The Police should not be filling gaps in mental health services. New procedures were being put into place around dealing with people suffering a mental health crisis. A pilot scheme was taking place in Essex with Police officers and mental health nurses attending incidents together. This would help to provide better information and advice to better serve the person in crisis which will in turn improve relations between the Police and mental health staff and would reduce the number of unnecessary detentions under S136.

There was now a Liaison Diversion team in every custody suite across the District, seven days a week twenty-four hours a day, as there were still a number of offenders that needed support to divert them and prevent them from progressing to a crisis stage.

The SIM project was a pilot in Essex following the success of the Hampshire Constabulary which brought together mental health professionals and Police officers to intensively support service users who were struggling to manage high frequency and high risk behaviours. The Police officer along with the mental health nurse professional would engage with identified patients as a combined approach. The role of the Police officer was to reinforce to the patient acceptable boundaries and consequences by way of investigation/prosecution through the criminal justice system should they commit offences.

Retention and Recruitment

What was the retention and recruitment issues for frontline Police officers and the current numbers of Police officers covering the Epping Forest District and the recent forecast and trend?

Chief Inspector Basford advised that retaining Police officers in the District was challenging because of the close proximity of the City of London and Metropolitan Police's more favourable salary scheme and shift patterns. Essex Police were looking at changing shift patterns which might help to stem the tide of experienced officers leaving.

In the last three months Essex Police had seen six experienced Police officers from Loughton leave to join either the Metropolitan Police or the City of London Police for a £5,000+ increase in salary and better shift patterns. These vacancies were being

backfilled by the recruitment process which was established by the last Chief Inspector.

#### Anti-Social Behaviour

Members asked for an overview of anti-social behaviour in the District, particularly over the summer months (compared to last summer).

Chief Inspector Basford advised that there had been a reduction in anti-social behaviour calls over the summer and closer working with British Transport Police around criminals who were coming into the district on the Central line and with a better visible Police presence. The criminal activity in Loughton and Buckhurst Hill had risen in June but all of the other months were on par with last year.

#### 101 and 999 response times

What were the current services levels and response times for handling 101 and 999 calls?

The Chief Inspector replied that the current service response times for handling 999 calls averaged around 8 seconds from dialling to answer. The average response times for answering 101 calls was around 7 minutes, however, that 7 minutes was for the call to be answered, be put through to the correct department and then prioritised in order of urgency over other calls received.

The average response times to 999 emergency calls from taking the call to attending the scene was 15 minutes in urban areas and 20 minutes in rural areas. Essex Police hit 88% of all emergencies and the response times that failed were on the M25 and M11 motorways.

#### Current Crime Clear up statistics

What were the current crime clear up / detection rates and recent trends and the proposed strategies for improving detection rates?

The current clear up rates for crimes was 10% across the district compared to 12.5% across the force. However, the Chief Inspector explained this was mainly down to changes in crime recording methods in the district with one call often generating several crimes whereas before it had been logged as just one. An example of this would be a burglary where if somebody had entered your property when you were at home with 4 other members of your household then that could be recorded as up to 6 crimes, a burglary and 5 robberies. This would then affect the crime rate of solved crimes.

There was currently a business case being put forward for the introduction of 36 Youth Officers across Essex Police within the next 2-3 months. The Chief Inspector stated that he would report back to the Council at a future Select Committee meeting as this was something he felt strongly about.

#### Drugs Operation

Chief Inspector Basford reported on a major drugs operation that he had been involved with that morning. There were 176 police officers involved in the operation, 110 from Essex Police force and 66 from the Metropolitan Police force who gathered at the Metropolitan Police Sports and Social Club in Chigwell at 4am. It had been the

culmination of a six month operation and was jointly led by Essex Police's Operation Raptor Team who had acted on information from the community and targeted the county line drug dealing gangs in Loughton, Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell and Hainault areas.

In the dawn raid a number of addresses were targeted and a number of people arrested for drug offences, including the supply of Class A drugs. A large amount of cash was also seized and expected to be in the region of over £100,000.

Chief Inspector Basford described the operation as significant and stated that it netted not only local drug dealers but high-end suppliers as well. Those arrested were being questioned at locations across Essex and a number were due to appear before Chelmsford magistrates the following morning.

Chief Inspector Basford reinforced Essex Police's continued commitment to fighting gangs and individuals attempting to sell drugs on our streets. He confirmed that a Sky TV crew and two local journalists were invited to accompany the police on the operation and the footage would form part of a documentary due to air on Sky in the next week or two.

Chief Inspector Basford then took questions from members.

Councillor A Patel thanked the Chief Inspector for his presentation and specifically the detailing around the mental health work that the Police were doing. He advised that he had attended a joint health overview and scrutiny committee meeting for North East London and there was a presentation at this meeting about health based places of safety and that they were looking to downsize some of these facilities to make them more beneficial for residents. They were going down from 20 to 9 and would increase the staffing around them with more dedicated staff. What was the situation in Essex with the health based places of safety, where were they and where were they situated and were you looking to restructure them within Essex.

The Chief Inspector replied that the drive was to have places of safety in most Accident and Emergency departments (A&E) but the reality in Essex was mental health facilities were in Rochford, Harlow, Basildon or A&E. The reality was that there weren't really any places of safety outside of mental health facilities in Essex. We as the Police still had a duty of care attending A&E's with individuals as there wasn't that support available within the NHS. Over the next twelve months I would hope to see part of the PCC budget go towards improving places of safety.

Councillor A Patel stated that a fellow Buckhurst Hill Councillor had requested that a public meeting be held for the residents of Buckhurst Hill to discuss crime that residents were concerned with including:

- Knife crime;
- Burglary and theft;
- Children and young adults openly smoking drugs in the street;
- Rogue builders; and
- Parking on pavements.

The Chief Inspector stated that he wasn't supportive in attending the public meeting in Loughton due to a lot of issues currently fuelled by social media without true fact. He stated that he was open to attending public meetings but stressed that they must not be political and have a good cross section of issues.

Parking could be a Police issue when Civil Enforcement Officers did not have powers, for example in the Epping Forest District pavement parking was allowed but if a wheelchair or child's double buggy could not pass the vehicle safely on the pavement then this was an obstruction and was a Police issue. Parking on the pavement per se was not an offence in Essex, but the Metropolitan Policing area, where they had different bylaws, pavement parking was an offence. If there were any issues that you needed to report please provide pictures with evidence of the obstruction.

Councillor S Kane advised that this was an ongoing issue and he was in discussion with the North Essex Parking Partnership to share the enforcement with the Police and would look to enforce pavement parking obstruction.

The Chief Inspector advised that the problem they had with rogue builders was that they came from all over the country to deliver flyers that were branded with legitimate companies with the relevant websites but with a change of contact details. We work closely with trading standards and would urge anyone who had any suspicions especially around older people to report it to the Police.

Councillor Lion expressed concern regarding social media. There was a successful Neighbourhood Watch Group that operated in Chigwell with very good co-ordinators but my concern was that this generated a lot of hearsay on social media and was making residents very nervous about some of the information that was being fed to them. What could we do to improve the communications to residents and what was already being done.

The Chief Inspector advised that the hub was in place and the Facebook and Twitter accounts were now active and the sites were updated daily from Monday to Friday. We needed to educate those who were hosting these sites and needed to direct people to go to the Police Facebook and Twitter sites to ask and report their concerns. There were concerns about policing the District regarding social media as it was causing more fear and harm to residents. I would like to arrange a meeting and look at inviting people from social media groups to educate them as what was acceptable to post and what was not, so as not to cause unnecessary fear and upset to residents.

Councillor C Roberts asked what was the cost of funding for a Special Constable or PCSO and how local town and parish councils could fund PCSO's or Special Constables for their areas.

The Chief Inspector advised that the costs to put funding through for a Special Constable was approximately £2,500 per annum but stated that these were volunteers and could not say from where they would come. For a PCSO the cost was around £40,000 per annum and a Police officer the cost was £51,000 per annum. The preferred option was a Police officer as it would give me greater scope as they were not contractual. There were two parish councils that had recently contacted me regarding this matter and I will be arranging to meet them over the next couple of weeks.

Councillor Mohindra asked about modern slavery and if it was still an issue.

The Chief Inspector advised that the Police had a modern slavery co-ordinator. The Community Safety Manager advised that a lady came into the Civic offices to see housing and after a few disclosures it turned out that she had been groomed by social media in Lithuania and been brought over to this Country for a sham marriage

to a Bangladeshi man and he and his brother had forced her into prostitution and moved around the district. We spent all day with her and by 9pm that night she was being taken to a place safety.

The Chief Inspector stated that they were very active in the areas of modern slavery. Police officers were now receiving training and at least 2-3 shifts a month were spent on investigating and checking out places like car washes, nail bars and restaurants.

Councillor Stavrou stated that we were all aware of how overcrowded our prisons were and appreciated that the Police role was primarily to apprehend criminals, solve crimes and reassure residents that we lived in a relatively safe area. Could you advise if there was an official view on community payback and whether you think that this was a good or bad thing?

The Chairman added that she had recently had a conversation with a resident of Waltham Forest and the scheme they ran in Waltham Forest was to get offenders to clean up the graveyard.

The Chief Inspector advised that he had recently had a meeting with the community payback officer and advised that this was an active scheme running in this area, the right punishment for the right crime. I would like to explore how to get some funding for this scheme and we needed to get parish and town councils to advise what projects they had that needed doing.

The Chairman introduced Youth Councillor S Bakalov to the meeting and advised that the Youth Council had been actively involved in producing a survey regarding young people and drugs and that he would like to talk to the Select Committee about this project

Youth Councillor Bakalov stated that the Youth Council had collated a drugs project which had run for a year asking young people about their awareness of drug use in the area. The survey had been completed by 3,177 young people across the District and the findings were encouraging.

The national average of 11-16 year olds who had taken drugs was 24% compared to the findings of the survey which showed that there were 11.3% in the Epping Forest District. The decision of the 11.3% to take drugs was out of curiosity. It also emerged that 69% said that drugs were readily available on the streets.

Chief Inspector Basford asked Youth Councillor Bakalov to send him a copy of their survey findings and stated that he would be happy to come to a Youth Council meeting to talk to the Youth Council about drug awareness.

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Basford for his attendance and presentation to the Select Committee.

### **39. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

The Community Safety Manager, C Wiggins, introduced the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) over the last year. The annual report outlined the highlights and gave a flavour of what the Community Safety Team had accomplished during the year. It demonstrated the Council's commitment to the CSP and the work of Essex Police, whose area encompassed both Epping Forest District and Brentwood.

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were first introduced nationally in 1998, to provide a multi-agency solution in response to crime and the fear of crime within communities. They supported the work of the Police and other statutory agencies, this was considered the most effective approach to finding joint solutions to local community safety issues.

In Epping Forest, the responsible authority group, which had a statutory responsibility to reduce crime and disorder, protect the community, reduce reoffending, combat the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and help people feel safe was made up of Epping Forest District Council, Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue, Essex Community Rehabilitation Company, Essex County Council and the National Probation Service. However, the delivery of the community safety agenda was not restricted only to the agencies identified as the responsible authority group, they worked with various voluntary sector groups across the district.

The CSP did not replace the work of the Police or the day-to-day business of the organisations involved, they were a channel for agencies to work together. The Strategic Board of the Partnership met quarterly and much of the work that emanated from the CSP was undertaken and led by the Council's Community Safety Team.

In July 2018 the District Community Safety Hub opened. The Hub saw the Council's Community Safety Team working alongside three Council funded Police officers, which created stronger links between the Council and the Police. The Safety Hub was a first for Essex and was being watched closely by other local authorities across the UK.

The Community Safety Manager advised that the CSP had launched a Twitter account and a two-weekly newsletter which was available to the public and advised a more timely detail of the work of the Community Safety Team.

Councillor H Whitbread stated, In terms of community engagement, you advertised your email address online, therefore would it be preferable to report Anti Social Behaviour (ASB), to the CST or the Police. The Community Safety Manager advised that all cases of ASB should firstly be reported to the Police where it would be recorded. The sort of ASB situations the CST would deal with would be for example do we need to remove a bench, was it a crime generator, that was where the CST came into their own strength.

Councillor Patel stated that the work of the CST was fantastic and long might it continue and asked what would the CST like Councillors to do to enable you to do more in the community. The Community Safety Manager stated that it would be helpful if Councillors could get the message out there to residents to report all crime, no matter how small they thought it was to the Police and not advertise it on social media. If residents didn't want to ring 101 they could report any incident online.

Councillor Patel asked, in terms of the work of the CST, what was the extent of their engagement with Parish and Town Councils. The Community Safety Manager replied that A Belgrave, Clerk of Chigwell Parish Council sat on the Community Safety Partnership Board and the team spoke to Parish Councillors on a regular basis. We try to support and give advice to any Parish or Town Councils that contact us and were currently advising Chigwell Parish Council with regard to CCTV that they were installing. She also advised that she would be willing to attend another meeting of the Local Councils' Liaison Committee to advise them on the kind of work that the CST were involved with.

**AGREED:**

That the Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership be noted.

**40. CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2023 - PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 & Q2 2018/19**

The Corporate Plan 2018-2023 was the authority's key strategic planning document. The Plan laid out the journey the Council would take to transform the organisation to be 'Ready for the Future'. The plan linked the key external drivers influencing Council services, with a set of corporate aims and objectives, grouped under three corporate ambitions.

A Corporate Specification for each year (previously called the Key Action Plan) detailed how the Corporate Plan was being delivered through operational objectives, with those in turn linked to annual Service business plans.

The success of the Corporate Plan was assessed through the achievement of a set of benefits, each measured through one or more performance indicators, focussed on what the Council achieved for customers. Strategic Board, Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committees had overview and scrutiny roles to drive improvement in performance and ensure corrective action was taken where necessary.

Councillor H Whitbread asked why there were so many actions and measures which fell into the red zone.

The Performance Improvement Officer explained that:

- Red indicated a performance indicator below target or an overdue action based on the deadline date;
- Amber indicated a performance indicator that was unassigned;
- Green indicated an element that was on target or had been completed; and
- Blue indicated that there was data missing.

Councillor A Patel stated that KPI's were yearly observations based on yearly statistics and asked if they could be broken down to quarterly statistics as the Select Committees were unable to influence any changes if they were required.

The Performance Improvement Officer advised that she was aware of this and was liaising with Officers to review the procedure.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Select Committee reviewed and noted the progress of the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 – Performance Report Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 progress in relation to its areas of responsibility.

**41. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 30-YEAR PLAN**

The Housing and Property Service Director advised that the report on the supplementary agenda was self explanatory and asked the Select Committee to consider the quarter 2 update to the Housing Revenue Account 30-Year Plan 2018/19 and provide any feedback to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Service Director for Housing and Property accordingly.



**RESOLVED:**

That the quarter 2 update to the Housing Revenue Account 30-Year Plan 2018/19 be noted.

**42. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee reviewed its terms of reference for the current municipal year and current progress towards the achievement of its work programme for the year.

The Chairman advised the Select Committee that there was currently a consultation running on the Select Committee framework for implementation in the next municipal year, she urged them to look at the consultation and make their views known.

**43. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chairman confirmed that she would make a brief summary of the meeting's progress to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding:

- (a) The Essex Police District Commander's presentation; and
- (b) The annual report of the Community Safety Partnership.

**44. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Communities Select Committee would be held on 15 January 2019 at 7.00pm.

This page is intentionally left blank