

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2017  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING  
AT 7.00 - 8.30 PM**

- Members Present:** Y Knight (Chairman), R Baldwin, A Beales, K Chana, L Hughes, A Mitchell, D Sunger, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, W Marshall (Tenants and Leaseholders Federation) and A Yaman (Epping Forest Youth Councillor)
- Other members present:** R Brookes, H Kane, S Kane and J Lea
- Apologies for Absence:** G Shiell (Vice-Chairman), S Jones, B Surtees and S Stavrou (Deputy Leader and Housing Portfolio Holder)
- Officers Present** J Chandler (Assistant Director (Community Services)), C Wiggins (Safer Communities Manager), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer) and V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer)
- By invitation:** Chief Inspector L Basford (Essex Police District Commander)

**27. 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.

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

It was noted that Councillor J H Whitehouse was substituting for Councillor B Surtees.

**29. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the notes of the last meeting of the Select Committee held on 5 September 2017 be agreed.

**30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Member's Code of Conduct.

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

Members received a presentation on current policing and crime issues in the District from Chief Inspector L Basford of Essex Police.

The District Commander for the Brentwood and Epping Forest area outlined the current level of policing. This comprised ten police constables and seven support constables for the whole district, who covered community issues and were split into two shifts – early and late. There was a local policing team at Loughton that operated

on a 24-hour basis, 7-day coverage and handled 999 emergency calls and 101 calls. This team investigated local investigations and lower graded crimes, such as common assaults. The CID criminal investigation team operated on a 24 / 7 basis. There were specialist teams that covered serious crimes, such as violent burglaries, trafficking and serious assaults; domestic violence; road / traffic police; armed response police (for the County); and an Operational Support Group (marked and unmarked). The Police fed intelligence to these teams and the Community Safety Group, but these were not under the direct control of the Police.

Domestic violence, which included violent crime, was responsible for 34 per cent of all crime, which was why there was a dedicated team that looked at this specific issue. Domestic violence had seen an increase of 20 – 25 per cent with 404 more crimes reported during April – September this year than for the same period in 2016. More people were coming forward to report crimes but violent crime was increasing. There were 206 more crimes where officers sustained injuries. Officers wore body cameras, which had resulted in better prosecution rates. Certain individuals seemed to give no forethought to the consequences of their actions and violent crime was increasing. He cited that last weekend, twelve police officers were assaulted, one quite seriously. However, there were 170 less reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) recorded than for the previous year. The Chief Inspector questioned if members of the public were under-reporting on ASB or were their genuinely less incidents, if so this was good as most forces had seen an increase. The Government's Home Office had changed the crime recording standards in April this year for burglary, and split it to cover 'burglary residential' and 'burglary business / commercial'. Looking forward, he hoped to be able to give clearer figures next year.

On recent ASB incidences that had happened in the District, he explained that at Hillhouse, there had been an element of under-reporting, hence by the time the Police became involved later on, there was more of a problem that had to be dealt with. On Halloween night 40 to 50 youths had congregated in Epping, so extra officers were deployed, sixteen to the High Street and four to other areas – Buckhurst Hill / Chigwell, Theydon Bois and Waltham Abbey. In Epping a number of individuals were arrested for ASB when they targeted the public and police officers. Every one of these individuals had now been identified with the help of the community safety team CCTV footage. The Chigwell based road team from a traffic and crime viewpoint recently issued 400 penalty points in one 8-hour period for driving infractions, which included use of mobile phones, non-use of seatbelt and other road safety breaches.

In light of the current trend of national threats by terrorism, there were on-going training exercises to tackle this hazard. The Police had listened to the public's reports of ASB by individuals using motorcycles / mopeds and were researching tactics to combat this problem. The work of the Council's community safety team and their partnership with the Police had helped in the conviction of an individual for human trafficking offences, who was now serving six years in prison.

The Police were looking to raise public awareness of issues from crime prevention to hare coursing, and cited two public events attended, the Farmers' Market in Loughton and at the supermarket in Ongar. The Police had also visited thousands of residents over a weekend to encourage crime prevention by giving advice on how to secure their houses against burglary. The Police also co-ordinated the volunteer Police Cadets and there were also 500 special volunteers across Essex helping out on these events.

Chief Inspector Basford then took questions from members.

Councillor D Sunger said he had received complaints from residents who often had to wait 45 minutes to get through to an operator when they had dialled 101. Ch Insp Basford replied that over a 24-hour period the wait was around 4 – 5 minutes, but conceded that in the evenings and certain days, e.g. Halloween, then the 101 line would be very busy.

Councillor A Mitchell asked if the Police responded to burglaries to which he replied, all burglaries, but the response time depended on the circumstances, and if a burglary was in progress, then 15 minutes (the emergency national standard).

Councillor R Baldwin asked what the Police were doing to ensure that speed cameras were operational and were digital cameras used? He acknowledged that a third were not active and would probably be reviewed every year. He would do a separate reply on this.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked how many officers were based at Loughton and that she had received a resident complaint about the Police's lack of interest when reporting a low-level ASB incident. He replied that there were seven constables and seven PCSOs, which were specifically for community policing, and that they should handle all ASB reports. The public could call into the community hub, staffed by two day officers, and which the Council also worked with, as it was a two-way process of sharing intelligence. Alternatively email:

[EppingCommunityPolicingTeam@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:EppingCommunityPolicingTeam@essex.pnn.police.uk)

Councillor K Chana asked if it was worth reporting crimes. The Ch Insp replied that the Police were stretched but he worked with the resources that he had. He said that if crimes were not reported unless they knew then he could not factor in resources and move forward. Residents could email him with their concerns and he would try to address emails as honestly as possible.

Councillor A Beales asked if the Police did much work with schools and youth groups to encourage children that it was ok to report incidents to the Police. He replied that the Police and Fire collaboration was well set-up to deal with school issues. He said he thought there should be police officers working with schools, but he did not have the resources. The Police were taking small steps and using support groups, such as the volunteer police cadets and youth councillors. He was looking at what other forces did nationally and would take this on board for the Epping Forest District.

Councillor Knight asked if full size electric bikes were legal motors that needed to be taxed and have an MOT, to which he replied yes.

Councillor H Whitbread praised the Police for their performance on Halloween night which had experienced walking home from the station and their presence had given her reassurance. She asked about the work being done on residential patrols and what role did special constables (SCs) play. He replied that SCs were usually aged from 18 to early 20s. Residential patrols were a response based action and that they monitored how / where to deploy foot patrols.

Councillor R Brookes had been contacted by someone who parked near a station and the vehicle interfered with and left threatening notes on the windscreen. He said he would take details of this from her after the meeting. She also asked what was being done about intelligence on drug taking reports at the Roding Valley car park. He replied that they collated these reports and then assessed the action required through the Hub. There were actually more drug driving offences than drink driving.

Councillor J Lea commented on a recent fireworks incident in a local Waltham Abbey shop and queried if there was enough CCTV to enable catching the instigators. Community Safety Manager, C Wiggins, replied that Waltham Abbey Town Council managed the CCTV and to speak to the Town Clerk. If the shop was being targeted then she advised speaking to her afterwards.

Councillor S Kane asked what the Council could do to help the Police more in combating the increase in ASB with individuals who lacked a fear of being caught, and could the Council help on low level enforcement issues. He replied that better sharing of information between the Police and the Council could help tackle ASB. Also some police forces were receiving local authority help on enforcement matters.

Councillor H Kane asked for advice when youngsters on bikes swerved into the paths of oncoming vehicles and caused accidents. He replied the driver would not be at fault and that dash cameras were a vital source of information for self-protection and to show incidences of bad driving and ASB. There was also a dedicated website that footage of these incidences could be reported to.

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Basford for speaking to the members.

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

The 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. Supporting 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. Epping Forest CSP consisted of a mix of statutory and voluntary sector bodies, including Essex Police, Epping Forest District Council, Essex Fire and Rescue, the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), the National Probation Trust, Trading Standards and Voluntary Action Epping Forest. Other agencies were also invited to attend, including local Town and Parish Councils, The Corporation of London (Epping Forest), Epping Forest College and representatives from Health.

Representatives from the Council's Community Safety Team (CST) participated in Essex Police District Tasking meetings on a fortnightly basis to assist with the response to any emerging issues within the district via a call conference facility. This was to be improved by the installation of a video conferencing facility within the CST offices. Hot desking facilities were also provided within the office for external partnership officers. Essex Police had also implemented a daily call briefing with the CST to review significant incidents over the previous 24 hours. In January 2017 police radio communications were installed in the CST office, which had increased the effectiveness of the councils' CCTV systems, to communicate directly with Essex Police Force Control Room. The combination of these actions had achieved a very positive effect in respect of coordinated working and highly effective intelligence sharing between Essex Police and the CST.

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 CST 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. The Crucial Crew annual scheme facilitated the participation of 1,500 primary school pupils in year 6 in interactive scenarios to raise their awareness of personal health and safety both at home and in the community. The J9 Domestic Abuse initiative, which had

been running in Essex for over five years, was expanded across the County and rolled out to all Job Centres during 2016 – 17. The CST also worked with other organisations, such as Essex Trading Standards when it monitored the sale of fireworks by retail outlets to underage customers.

**Agreed:**

That the Annual Report be noted.

Councillor J H Whitehouse congratulated C Wiggins for receiving a prestigious award from the Essex High Sheriff in March 2017 for her work in the development of this initiative.

**33. THE AGEING POPULATION STUDY ACTION PLAN**

The Assistant Director of Community Services and Safety, J Chandler, reported on the implementation of the impact of An Aging Population Action Plan. The Council had carried out a comprehensive study during 2015 / 16, which had generated over 40 recommendations for the Council and various statutory and voluntary sector partners to address. The resulting action plan was launched in October 2016 and this report provided an update on the progress of key areas of work. A consultation of over 300 local people aged 55 – 95 from a range of demographics and areas of the District focussed on three main themes which were:

- Health and Wellbeing;
- Living in the Epping Forest District (EFD); and
- Communication and Engagement.

Detailed progress was given on a 6-monthly basis on these recommendations under the three themes of which there were nine under Health and Wellbeing (H&W), twelve under Living in the EFD, and seven under Communication and Engagement.

Special mention was given on recommendation 1 under H&W on the Council's interaction with various support groups to improve support for older people through early intervention and (preventative) health improvement. On item 2, Dementia Action Alliance was now set up in the District, but more work was needed to look after the people with dementia in the community. On items 4 and 7, a new Active Living programme had been successfully set up in Waltham Abbey and Theydon Bois.

Under the Living in the EFD theme, for item 4 the Communities Director, A Hall, was looking into setting up a minimum 'Sheltered Housing Standard' for the Council's sheltered housing assets. Recommendation 7 to monitor when assisted bin collections had not been taken up was already recorded by the waste contractor for Neighbourhoods, so sharing of this information would be discussed.

The recommendations under the Communication and Engagement theme were to address the potential isolation of the ageing population and that it was important for such individuals to meet someone. Linking into community safety work, recommendation 5 dealt with the establishment of a network of older people to champion 'Resilience' across the District. Working through local parish and town

councils, the Council would link with them to help source champions for the 'Resilience Project'.

Councillor A Mitchell said that as the Careline and Telecare services was outsourced, where was the new provider's main office situated, to which J Chandler said she would let her know later.

Councillor J H Whitehouse said that there were various organisations for older people locally, like University of the Third Age (U3A), and what extent these were being mapped. She noted that J Chandler was talking about setting up new activities, but accessible transport was a big issue as not all older people were mobile and still drove. She commented on the decreasing bus service provision in the District on which she had received complaints from local residents about the unreliable service on some bus routes, and asked if some transport funding could be provided. She also asked if the Volunteers Essex website could be promoted. J Chandler replied that Community Services would be carrying out a mapping exercise on local organisations / activities. Essex County Council was currently reviewing community transport but the Council had not received any information back on this consultation yet. Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) did offer a community transport so she would see if they could be involved.

W Marshall asked if vulnerable people were identified and treated as a priority, to which C Wiggins replied, yes. CST did record any reports received. These were referred to the correct support services and VAEF to get an emergency report done. In respect to criminal activity e.g. from bogus officers, a great deal of support was offered to vulnerable people and support for victims.

Councillor R Brookes asked if they were involved in the referral of people to sports centres. J Chandler replied this was the case either via GP referral or for cardiac rehabilitation. Active Living activities was an alternative choice for those who did not want to go to leisure / sports centres.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked if an update would be presented at future meetings and it was noted that this was planned to be on a 6-month basis.

**Agreed:**

That the progress report be noted.

**34. GOVERNMENT'S PREVENT STRATEGY**

C Wiggins outlined the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy developed in 2011 to combat terrorism and terrorist activity in the UK. This had consisted of four main elements of work under the 'Contest' heading, which included:

*Pursue:* the investigation and disruption of terrorist attacks;

*Prevent:* work to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism;

*Protect:* improving our protective security to stop a terrorist attack; and

*Prepare:* working to minimise the impact of an attack and to recover as quickly as possible.

'Contest' covered all forms of terrorism and aimed to reduce risk to the UK, and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people could go about their lives freely and with confidence. The current threat to Essex was assessed as low, and that did not mean that the Council would neglect 'Prevent', but would need to keep this under

review as there was a balance that the CST and Essex Police had to monitor. The Council did on-going training for frontline staff and was about to launch an e-learning strategy and she was also a member of the Prevent Strategy Group.

**Agreed:**

That the report was noted.

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

The Terms of Reference were noted.

On the Work Programme it was noted that:

- Items (9), (10), (15), (16) and (17) would be dealt with at the extra meeting to be held on 11 December 2017;
- Items (11) Crucial Crew and (14) Summer holiday activity programme feedback would be deleted;
- Item (24) Ageing Population Study Plan would go forward with 6-monthly progress reports.
- Item (25) To receive a presentation from the Youth Council on the MiLife project its councillors had helped develop and trialled in schools. MiLife had a high profile nationally – J Chandler to co-ordinate.

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

The reports on items (8) Ageing Population Study Action Plan and (9) would go forward to the next O & S Committee meeting on January 2018.

**37. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that there would be an extra meeting of the Communities SC on 11 December 2017. The remaining meetings in the cycle would be held on 16 January and 13 March in 2018.