

# Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2024



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# Epping Forest District Community Safety Partnership Foreword

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This year I have taken on the portfolio for Community Health and Wellbeing and with it the opportunity of being elected Chair of the Community Safety Partnership. It has been excellent to be part of such a well-established partnership and be part of the great work that has been happening across the district. Witnessing fundamental partnerships that have formed in a bid to help residents feel safer in the communities that they live, work and visit.

Collaborative working with statutory and voluntary partners is a strength of the partnership and in the last eighteen months the biggest initiative the CSP has ever led as a partnership is The Home Office Safer Streets Initiative. In August 2022 working closely with the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner we were fortunate to be awarded £338,000 of Home Office funding, in addition to this EFDC provided match funding of £169,000. Focused on Ninefields in Waltham Abbey the project has seen improved CCTV, Street lighting, landscaping, fly tip campaigns, new secure bin stores, a new children's playground and youth education and provision. Various teams across the Council as well as external partners have worked together to make the project a great success and make a real difference to the residents.

This year, we have run successful operations around Child Sexual Exploitation in the district. Education and early intervention is vital to ensure we are safeguarding the young people that live and visit our district. Early intervention for young people is something that I am passionate about, we have educated our communities to look out for the signs to ensure children remain safe. We have also been working with young people giving them key messages on keeping themselves safe, messages have delivered through the annual crucial crew event, which this year, returned to a classroom-based scenario rather than the previous two years of holding it online.

Going forward into 2023-24 our priorities will change in line with the emerging community safety trends and will be:

1) Working to reduce ASB in public places with an emphasis on:

- Youth nuisance
- Improved partnership visibility
- Designing out crime

2) Working to drive down serious acquisitive crime focusing on:

- Burglary
- Robbery
- Theft of motor vehicle

3) Supporting vulnerable people

4) Continuing effective partnership working, in order to meet emerging local threats and issues.

The strategic priorities will enable us to continue to protect our most vulnerable residents, detect and deter crime and work effectively with our partners, continuing to share vital

information. The CSP is in an excellent position to deliver community safety initiatives that really matter and can make a difference to the district's residents.



**Cllr. Smruti Patel**

Community Safety Partnership Chair

## Community Safety Partnership

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The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced Community Safety Partnerships to provide a multi-agency response to crime and the fear of crime within communities. They support the work of the police and other statutory agencies and are widely considered as the most effective approach to finding joint solutions to local community safety issues.

In Epping Forest District the responsible authority group is made up of;

**Essex Police**

**Epping Forest District Council**

**Essex County Council**

**Essex Fire and Rescue Service**

**The Probation Service**

The Community Safety Partnership has a statutory responsibility to:

- reduce crime and disorder
- protect the community

- reduce reoffending
- combat the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances
- help people feel safe

However, the delivery of the community safety agenda is not restricted to the agencies identified as responsible authorities. The partnership includes and works with other agencies and voluntary sector groups including Neighbourhood Watch, Crimestoppers and Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF).

The work of the CSP does not replace the work of the police or the day-to-day business of the organisations involved, instead it is a channel for agencies to work together, delivering against agreed priorities, co-ordinating resources, achieving efficiencies and value for money.

The Strategic Board of the partnership meets on a quarterly basis and much of the work emanating from the CSP is undertaken and led by the various departments in the Council including the Community Resilience Team and the Community and Wellbeing Team.

### **Strategic Assessment**

Each year the CSP is required to produce a Strategic Assessment (SA) about crime and disorder levels in its area. This will be circulated with the CSP annual report.

## **CSP Budget 2023-24**

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<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Funding received</b>
<b>Police Fire Crime Commissioner (PFCC) - core funding</b>	<b>£19,268</b>
<b>Epping Forest District Council Community Safety Budget – Match Funding</b>	
<b>Sanctuary Scheme</b>	<b>£2,500</b>
<b>Violence &amp; Vulnerability</b>	<b>£2,000</b>
<b>PFCC’s Office Op Minerva</b>	<b>£10,000</b>
<b>Home Office/PFCC – Safer Streets Budget (2022-23-24)</b>	<b>£336,000</b>
<b>EFDC Safer Streets Match Funding – 2022-23</b>	<b>£169,000</b>
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>£</b>

# Local Profile

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Epping Forest district is a mixture of rural and urban areas and stretches northward from its boundary with Greater London right into the heart of rural Essex.

Covering an area of 131 square miles, the key population centres are the commuter towns of Loughton, Chigwell, and Buckhurst Hill, as well as the market towns of Epping, Waltham Abbey and Ongar. Some areas of the district have relatively good transport links with both the M11 and M25 motorways running through the area. Mainline railway networks run south to London and the Central Line tube has eight stations in the district. However, in rural areas there are accessibility issues for some without private transport, especially in outlying villages.

# Performance Summary Highlights

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## Engagement

This is a highlight of some of the work that the Community Safety Partnership has completed this year.

## Operation Community

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Essex Police Launched Operation Community in April which is a monthly day of activity and action across all 10 policing districts, delivering enhanced neighbourhood policing community engagements and crime prevention. The operation is proactive, bringing all teams, officers, staff, partners and volunteers together. It centres on engaging and listening to all our communities and taking positive, proactive steps with our partners to deliver community safety action, responding to the public, preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and investigating all concerns to achieve the best outcomes for our communities.



Through community meetings a main theme identified by the police was speeding concerns in rural communities, and therefore several of the monthly deployments have been tailored towards addressing this concern. Over the year a number of speed check days have been conducted in Sheering, Roydon, Nazeing, Dobbs Weir, Epping Green, Epping Upland, Theydon Bois, Ongar, Fyfield. These have resulted in numerous tickets being issued to offenders, as well as driving awareness courses, and in less serious cases education/advice given.

On one of the deployments in Roydon a vehicle was stopped as it was visibly in an unfit state due to a smashed windscreen, when stopped it had bald tyres and numerous other defects, and no MOT. The vehicle was seized due to being in an unroadworthy condition. The driver was also conveying passengers in the boot of his car, had no licence or insurance, and so was prosecuted for multiple offences.

On another deployment in Nazeing a police vehicle picked up a stolen vehicle tracker activation which was located with assistance of NPAS and a chop shop was located with a recently stolen high end Mercedes inside awaiting to be dismantled.





These deployments have not all been speeding related – they have also been used to target ASB concerns in Debden, Waltham Abbey and Ongar, with additional patrols and engagement stalls being conducted by Police and EFDC to provide a joint approach to tackling the reported concerns. The deployment in September was the final one of the year (due to Halloween and Christmas operations taking over the following months)



and was the “big bang” event to finish off 2023, with multiple deployments throughout the day targeting key priorities such as domestic violence, hate crime, burglary, robbery, wanted offenders, ASB, sexual offences, organised crime, VAWG, night time economy and drug and alcohol violence. Epping Forest District had support from all teams within the West of Essex Police as well as CSP, and across one single day:

- 64 hours of foot patrol in robbery hotspots of Waltham Abbey, Chigwell, Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Epping with 20+ victims spoken to.
- 575 speed checks in rural areas, 11 persons processed for excess speed.
- 2 arrests during plain clothed robbery patrols of tube stations for possession of class A drugs and imitation firearm.
- 3 domestic violence perpetrators located and arrested.
- ASB engagement stall at Chapel Road assisted living accommodation.

- Hate crime stall on Epping High Street which identified new racist graffiti offences that were swiftly removed.
- 62 college students spoken to by child abuse officers around consent and sexual offences, with 50 personal alarms being issued.



- ANPR deployment resulted in 1 arrest, a cloned vehicle seized, a stolen motorbike recovered, 3 speeding tickets, and assisted at an incident where a police officer was being assaulted.
- “Walk with Us” stall in the evening at Loughton Tube Station providing safety advice and items to the public and completing safety questionnaires. Over 75 people spoken to and 23 questionnaires completed.
- 8 checks at licensed premises, resulting in licensing officer conducting follow up visits at 2 locations due to positive cocaine wipes when testing.



# Crucial Crew

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Crucial Crew is an interactive safety and health and wellbeing initiative based around key life skills that targets Year 6 pupils to prepare for secondary school. Crucial Crew teaches children how to tackle dangers and challenges they may encounter in everyday life and helps prevent them, in a very interactive way, becoming involved in crime. It also supports the health and wellbeing of students through physical activity, nutrition and addressing mental health.

This year, the Community and Wellbeing Team invited 6 primary schools year 6 students. There were a total of 199 children across the three days.

There were six different scenarios for the children:

- Essex Highways: Road Safety
- Red Balloon Foundation: Online Safety
- Mind in West Essex: Mental Health
- Safer Places: Relationships
- Youth Unity: Nitrous Oxide
- EFDC: Fitness & Nutrition

Following feedback from providers and schools the project was deemed very successful and the project was highlighted as extremely beneficial to the pupils. This is the first year since 2019 that Crucial Crew has returned to its original format. Feedback from schools is that they prefer this format.

# Awareness weeks

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## ASB awareness week

This year, Epping Forest District Council joined a national campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and keep people in Epping Forest safe. Resolve, the national organisation for ASB and community safety, lead the campaign each year. The aim of the campaign is to bring all agencies in the community together to help tackle anti-social behaviour in communities.

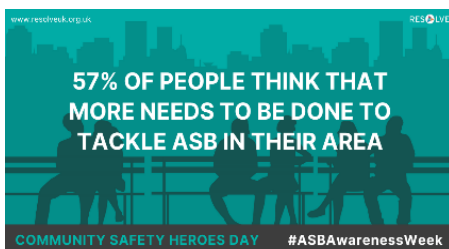
Running from July 3 to 9, **ASB Awareness Week 2023** aimed to encourage communities to take a stand against ASB and highlight the actions that can be taken by those experiencing it.

Epping Forest District held community safety days at locations across the district:

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 The Broadway, Debden

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Buckhurst Hill

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Ninefields, Waltham Abbey



Results from the days include:

- Hate crime advice given
- Crime prevention materials handed out
- Proactive clearance of graffiti in all areas
- Individuals that were wanted arrested by the police
- Door knocking, giving residents leaflets on how they can report anti-social behaviour and Crimestoppers.

## Hate crime awareness week

Hate crime awareness week was from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023. This year the hate crime awareness stall was on Epping High Street. This location was picked due to a spate of racial graffiti on the high street. The event was attended by members of the public, advice was given on what hate crime is and how to report it should you be a victim of a hate crime. During the week the Essex Police Hate Crime officer was offering free training to all members of the community.



## Community Engagement events

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### Broadcast Junior

Broadcast junior is an interactive workshop presented by Arc Theatre, the workshop tackles current issues that young people may face, such as; chatting online, TikTok dares, going to meet people alone, current social media platforms and their dangers, coercive behaviour, sexting and grooming. The workshop also covers where to seek help and support should you need it.

In 2023 the workshops were delivered to years 5 & 6's within Waltham Abbey funded by the Safer Streets Project. 434 pupils saw and engaged with the workshop. The feedback was excellent with one statistic being "95% of the children said they would change the way they use technology after seeing Broadcast Junior".

In January 2024, 14 schools (1034 pupils) across the district will be receiving the workshop for their years 5 & 6 students.

## Stay safe and well

Stay Safe and Well events (aimed at the older community) consist of presentations from partners, such as Police, Fire, Ambulance, Pharmacists and Crimestoppers. Health checks and vaccinations are offered to people that are attending. Attendees have an opportunity to visit the partner stalls to gather more information about staying safe and an interactive performance 'School for Scammers' is presented to give attendees information on how not to be scammed and to help prevent them becoming victims of fraud.

This year, Stay Safe and Well events were held at Limes Farm, Chigwell, Debden and Buckhurst Hill, with 2 more booked for 2024. All events were extremely successful attracting over 150 attendees. Feedback from the event included that, after attending over 94% of the audience felt more confident about keeping safe at home and 96 % felt that the theatre production had given them more knowledge to avoid being scammed in the future.

## Youth Clubs

### **Limes, Chigwell**

Youth Unity commenced working with EFDC to provide a youth club at Limes Farm, Chigwell in 27 January 2023. They began the club with 4 young people attending on the opening night. This now has reached more than 30 young people attending each Friday evening. They listen to the needs and requirements of the young people to adapt what resources and activities are needed, such as, boxing, basketball, football, computer games, arts and crafts, cookery. They also apply diversionary activities such as anti-bullying and social media advice. They work with the local police, who have attended sessions to engage with the young people. They work in partnership with other organisations such as the local Limes Farm Community Group, Chigwell Parish Council, and Rev'd Lorraine Smart of St Winifreds Church, Chigwell. The vicar supports them weekly by attending the club and working with young people who wish to do quieter activities. The Limes Farm Community Group received Active Essex funding to carry out a Let's Cook programme with a group of the young people, teaching them to cook affordable meals for their family and were able to take the equipment, such as an air fryer, home at the end of the programme.

Youth Unity have been proactive in applying for funding to ensure the sustainability of the youth club and have received funding from the CSP, Active Essex, Chigwell Parish Council and are awaiting an outcome on their VVU funding application.

The Youth Club gives local young people a regular place to go to on Friday evenings, which makes the area a safer and nicer place for the residents to live.

### **Ninefields, Waltham Abbey**

Ninefields youth group runs every Thursday evening during term time with an average of 10-15 young people attending weekly. During 2023 the young people had many diversionary activities provided for them: The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust come in to deliver a session on first aid, how to use a defibrillator, the recovery position and what to do in life saving

situations. Essex police delivered a session on knife crime, anti-social behaviour, criminal behaviour and how to report a crime. 3 Self-defence classes were delivered where young people were taught how to defend themselves and what is illegal to carry as a form of self-defence. Baloo the ex-police dog paid a visit to help promote mental wellbeing and encourage discussion around disability. A 6-week food education project funded by Active Essex was delivered where young people learnt to cook healthy and cost-effective meals. At the end of the course the young people took their air fryers and equipment home. Six boxing sessions were delivered by Youth Unity.

In addition to the Thursday youth club, Essex Youth Service support a youth club at the same location on a Tuesday. Essex Youth Service and Zinc Arts have sought funding for a further youth provision in Waltham Abbey near Highbridge Retail park. This will enable the young people in that area to have access to a youth hub.

### **Sheering Parish**

Due to reports of anti social behaviour and drug use/ dealing, Essex Youth Service will be delivering outreach in the Sheering village and Lower Sheering area. The youth service will be supporting Zinc Arts to set up a Youth Hun at Sheering village hall. The youth hub will be due to start on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Essex Youth Service will continue to run the outreach project until the youth hub is created- and beyond if necessary. The club will run on alternate Wednesdays and Fridays and will be open to year 7 and above. The Youth Service will arrange to support with staffing, for a table tennis and table football. Funding has been received from Asda for resources and food.

### **North Weald**

Essex Youth Service have been working closely with the North Weald neighbourhood watch lead regarding concerns of ASB and drug & Alcohol use in the area.

Essex Youth Service has been working with Zinc Arts to set up a youth provision in the area. There has been a proposal submitted to North Weald Council for support with the youth provision. Zinc Arts has received a small amount of funding, they will be delivering a cooking project in the Queens village Hall with the support of Essex Youth Service staff and resources. Other funding options have been explored, the Youth Service are awaiting confirmation.

## **Prevention**

### **Crimestoppers Zones**

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Epping Forest District was the first in the county to introduce Crimestoppers Zones. There are currently three zones in the district, Limes, Chigwell, Ninefields, Waltham Abbey and Oakwood Hill, Loughton. The aim of the zones are to focus on promoting Crimestoppers as a means of reporting in a concentrated area. In all three zones there have been numerous leaflet drops, social media campaigns including targeting advertising, road signs with Crimestoppers details on and various community engagement days.

The below chart show data of how many reports Crimestoppers received pre and post installation of the zones.

	2022	2023
Limes, Chigwell	8	15
Ninefields, Waltham Abbey	71	86
Oakwood Hill, Loughton	7	10



## Sanctuary Scheme

The Sanctuary scheme is a victim-centred service installing security measures in and around properties to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to live safely in the property of their choice. Many victims of domestic abuse are reluctant to move home, away from their support networks. To move often means their children have to change schools and leave their friends. Sanctuary schemes aim to make it possible for victims to remain in their own home and feel safe.

The Sanctuary scheme in Epping Forest District supports all residents regardless of their housing tenure.

Safe Partnership are commissioned by Epping Forest District Council to deliver the Sanctuary scheme for the district.

Safe Partnership was founded in 1987 by John McCarthy and has been working hard to help victims of domestic and sexual abuse in England and Wales

On behalf of Epping Forest CSP they secure the homes of victims of domestic abuse and vulnerable victims of crime.

Feedback from a local resident that have used the Sanctuary scheme;

*"I was referred to an officer to discuss the opportunity of me accessing the Sanctuary Scheme due to being at threat of violence from a neighbour. The officer passed my details to them, and I was contacted very quickly. Within a few days the representative from Sanctuary visited my home. First, he discussed any potential entry weakness points, and we agreed what protection measures would suit my property and need. He installed security alarms on all windows that could be easily accessible to an intruder. He also fitted more locks and protection on my front door. He took his time to walk around my whole home and made other suggestions of what we*



*could do to protect our home. We had recently bought and installed an alarm system, so he didn't need to support us with that. I am extremely thankful to EFDC and the Sanctuary Scheme. The measures put in place in my home has increased our feelings of safety hugely".*

Referrals to date:

Year	Referrals
2021/2022	19
2022/2023	18

## Safer Streets

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In August 2022 Epping Forest District Council was successful in a bid to the Home Office for £338,000 Safer Streets round 4 which was match funded by Epping Forest District Council with £169,000.

The project focuses on the environment, increased CCTV, diversionary activities, healthy relationships, community safety and bin store improvements.

Details of the original bid and progress updates are available to access here: [Safer Streets funding for Ninefields estate - Epping Forest District Council \(eppingforestdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/safer-streets-funding-for-ninefields-estate)

[Ninefields Estate safer streets project - Epping Forest District Council \(eppingforestdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/ninefields-estate-safer-streets-project)

We were able to deliver the CCTV element of the project at a reduced cost and were able to utilise the savings identified to improve lighting in the area in Autumn 2023. This issue had been highlighted in conversations with the local community during engagement days. These improvements will contribute towards improving the feelings of safety within the area.

The Safer Streets end of project report will be available in March 2024 and will outline all achieved through the project.

## Child criminal and sexual exploitation (CCE &CSE)

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### Operation Makesafe

Operation Makesafe has been active as a national operation for several years, as an initiative designed and implemented to help owners and employees within the hotels and hospitality sector identify potential victims of child exploitation and, to understand how to appropriately report concerns to the police to ensure intervention prior to any child or young people coming to harm.

In Epping Forest it has have implemented in response to police and partner agencies identifying that child exploitation related crimes are being committed at hotels across the county.

A plain clothes officer will go into a hotel with a police cadet requesting a room for a couple of hours. During the interaction with the hotel staff clear and obvious signs are given that the young person is involved in sexual exploitation. The operation is based on the hotel's response to the situation. A full debrief is given on the night to the hotel and all staff are welcomed to come to the training sessions to learn more about the signs to spot and what to do if they come across anyone that looks like they are being exploited.

During 2023 there has been two operations that have run, with more planned for 2024.

## Operation Henderson

Operation Henderson is a joint initiative being run by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board, Southend Safeguarding Children Partnership and Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership, British Transport Police, Essex Police, the Violence and Vulnerability Unit, Greater Anglia, C2C, TfL, The Railway Children, The Children's Society, Social Care and local councils. It aims to raise awareness of the vulnerability of young people to exploitation and abuse at stations and transport networks in parts of Essex.

Research and local data have shown transport networks are used by vulnerable young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and trafficking. Young people often gravitate towards stations because they are traditionally busy, anonymous places that also provide some form of shelter and access to food and drink. Bus and rail networks can also be used by offenders to traffic young people for the purpose of sexual and criminal exploitation.

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 partners in Epping Forest came together for the operation. The operation was held at Loughton tube station. 75 people were engaged with, which includes, taxi drivers, bus drivers and commuters. Highlights from the operation include:

- Posters with reporting details put in local businesses.
- 16 Year Old Female was given a CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) Card.
- Taxi Drivers were provided with reporting stickers for Taxis and were going to increase this by provided them to another taxi office in the local area.
- Spoke to many groups of young people who advised they don't always feel safe travelling on train. Officers gave them the BTP text number.
- QR code was given to all members of public where they could find out further information and how to report concerns of CSE
- Information provided initiated conversations around child exploitation between members of the public.

# Enforcement

## Op-Sceptre

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Op-Sceptre is a national operation to target knife crime offences across the country, and consists of a week of action led by police but utilising partners to achieve positive outcomes, conduct proactive work, and enforcement of offences. There have been 2 deployments across the year, one in May and one November, and the following activities were conducted across the weeks:



- Test purchase operations in shops utilising police cadets to try and obtain knives.
- Market trader checks to ensure that items being sold conform to legislation around prohibited weapons.
- Knife arch operations at tube stations and busy footfall areas.
- ANPR deployments targeting suspect vehicles.
- Targeted foot patrols concentrating on areas with recent knife crime offences.
- Weapons sweeps.
- School/college talks.
- Engagement stalls.
- This also linked in with “Op-District” run by the community policing team whereby college students on public services course work with the police for the week and provide information to residents around knife crime legislations. They then return and collect any surrendered items or weapons that people want to have disposed off.

All of these activities resulted in the surrender/finding of hundreds of weapons, hours of additional joint patrols and engagement, several arrests and intel reports being submitted.

# Op-Claymore

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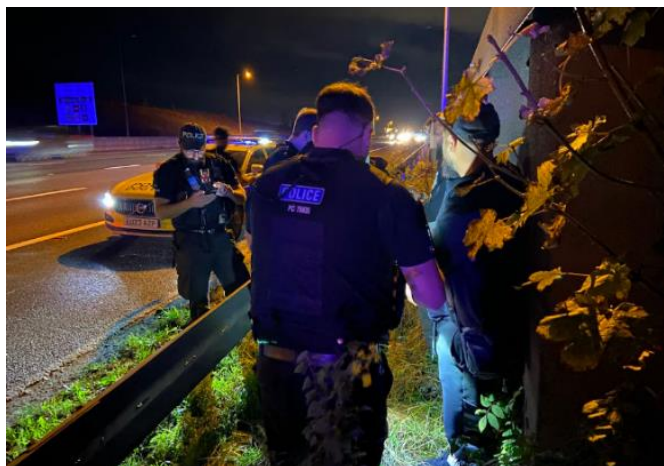


Operation Claymore is Essex Police-led but also involves officers from Hertfordshire, the Met and the National Police Air Service (NPAS). The cross-force team track down vehicles believed to be involved in crime using hits from automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras, with a particular focus on areas in and around Harlow and Epping Forest. They are supported by specialists from our Dog, Roads, and Community Policing teams, as well as

the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU).

Highlights of the most recent deployment included the arrest of three men after a Bentley Bentayga stolen from Cambridgeshire was pursued and stopped on the M11, and two men being arrested after the pursuit of a stolen Toyota Aygo in Harlow ended in the occupants crashing and attempting to escape on foot. There were also arrests for theft of a motor vehicle, drug driving, going equipped to steal, possession of class B drugs, and ABH.

Over the course of the night, officers arrested 14 persons for an array of offences, conducted 13 stop searches and recovered nine lost or stolen vehicles. The EFDC Community Safety Team took part in the most recent operation and were personally responsible for the arrest of 2 males for burglary and assisted to locate 3 other males who made off and were arrested for theft of motor vehicle



PC Baggley of CST assisting in the search and arrest of a burglar

offences. They also conducted a stop search on a male who had in his possession specialist items for stealing motor vehicles and arrested him for going equipped, before ending the night assisting to locate a suspect who had fled from a stolen motorbike after a pursuit.

This is the ninth time the three forces have worked together on Claymore with the operation leading to 67 arrests, 130 stop searches, 32 vehicle seizures and the submission of 100 intelligence reports.

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