

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 2 MARCH 2023
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES
AT 7.00 - 8.30 PM**

Members Present: J Lea (Chairman), J Lucas (Vice-Chairman), C Amos, R Balcombe, S Murray, D Wixley and S Yerrell

Co-opted Member: W Marshall

Other members present: N Bedford and C Whitbread

Other members virtually: R Brookes

Apologies for Absence: I Hadley

Officers Present: R Perrin (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer), J Gould (Interim Strategic Director), M Thompson (Interim Acting Service Director (Technical)), C Wiggins (Directorate Specialist – Technical Services) and S Mitchell (PR Website Editor) Chief Inspector Cooper.

Officers present virtually: J Leither (Democratic Services Officer)

32. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that this meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

33. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee noted that there were no substitute members.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

35. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

That the notes of the previous meeting held on 15 November 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

36. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference and Work Programme.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the following items would be added to the work programme for the new municipal year.

June/July 2023	Alternative operating model for the Epping Forest District Museum	J. Gould
September 2023	Safer Streets	C. Wiggins

37. PRESENTATION FROM THE DISTRICT COMMANDER FOR EPPING FOREST AND BRENTWOOD

The District Commander for Epping Forest and Brentwood, Chief Inspector Tina Cooper gave a presentation on the following items.

- Policing structure in the district
- The Force Plan 2022/25
- What community priorities were being delivered?
- Events held such as 'Walk with Us'
- ASB issues, actions, and outcome in Ongar
- Community Engagement events attended.
- Performance of the last 12-month period to January 2023
- Public perception survey results

The Committee asked the following questions.

- What was the differences between residential burglaries and robbery? Robbery was where someone used or threatens to use violence to take something from you and burglary was theft.
- Can you please take us through your cooperation strategy with the British Transport Police. The C/Insp advised that the police worked closely with bordering forces on a range of operations and events, whilst working with British Transport Police (BTP). If 999 or 111 calls were received, the police would attend and deal with the incident until BTP arrived and assist as necessary. There were several operations being carried out across the tube network at this time.
- What steps are and could be taken to deal with the central line being used by gangs travelling in the district? Information was shared with the MET and CCTV was monitored. In addition to the various operations running in relation to child sexual exploitation and knife crime. The Community police were also holding events outside tube stations.
- Is there any evidence of a gang culture developing in the Loughton area or other parts of our district? C/Insp Cooper advised that there was a difference between ASB and gang culture and that a lot of work had been ongoing with ASB. Currently, there was no evidence of a gang culture with the district.
- Could the Great Eastern Path walk through to Loughton station continue to receive community policing due to the obvious drug taking, the fear of using it for females and school pupils? It was noted that this area would still receive foot patrols and further night-time events would be arranged. CCTV had also been installed in the area.
- Would the Loughton Police Station reopen again as a fully functioning police station? There had been a number of factors which had affected the decision to either close stations or remove the front desk service. It was noted that Loughton Police Station was still a fully functioning police station and although the front desk had been closed, members of the public could use the yellow phone outside the building. This provided a direct line to the police.
- There had been issues with large vehicles/lorries using Broomstick Hall Road, Waltham Abbey as a cut through to the motorway. Vehicles have been seen

speeding, mounting pavements, and not adhering to the weight restriction. Is there anything the Police can do? The C/Insp advised that the road does have a weight limit of 7.5 tons, and the police could issue fixed notice penalties for these offences, although the weight limit does allow for large vehicles which may not be over the weight limit. The installation of cameras was not part of the Community Police Team remit, although this information would be passed onto the Roads Policing Team.

- Could the police install a fixed speed camera in Theydon Bois? The Community Policing team did not have any authority over this issue, but it would pass the request over to the Roads Policing Team.
- What information do the police give to victims of car theft? It was noted that car owners could consider using trackers, faraday pouches or steering wheel locks. The police also provided further information on their social media platforms.
- What were the Community Policing Team doing about rural crime above and beyond the dedicated rural officer? It was noted that any specific concerns should be raised with the rural officer and that advice should be reassuring. The police were introducing Operation Brazil which used DNA water to assist with the identification of stolen property particular in relation to stolen property in rural areas.
- How does the Epping Forest Community Policing team support the rural areas of the district? The Community Officers had uncovered several chop shops in rural locations and through regularly meetings with the police, they would be tasked with looking at issues within the rural areas of the district. The Specialist Technical Services Officer advised that Operation Brazil would be supported by the Community Policing team and later this year Horse Watch would be introduced. Officers would be attending a meeting with regards to the rural crime strategy, although it was recognised that there was a lot of work to do in this area.
- Could the parishes fund a special constable just for the parishes? Officers would take this back and investigate.
- What would be the signs of a gang culture developing? The C/Insp advised that robberies, stabbings, gun crime more arrests for weapons offenses, more general violence, increased use of Section 60 - Stop and Search being used, County Lines and younger child being arrested would be indicators. Although, she assured members that there were no known organised crime gangs in the district.
- Could the police provide further information what they were doing with online fraud and deception targeted at older people? It was noted that officers do visit sheltered housing communities and events had been held at Waltham Abbey, Epping and a further one planned for the eastern area of the district to further promote this issue.
- How did the Community Policing Team work with the London City Constables in relation to the Forest? The C/Insp advised that she had not yet met with the London City Constables, so was unable to give any further information, although a future meeting had been arranged.
- What were the Community Policing Team doing about the persistent ASB issues in Sainsburys on the Broadway? There had been ongoing work and Sainsburys had been assigned a dedicated officer. Alongside this work a community protection warning had been issued to a persistent beggar and a criminal behaviour order had been issued to a prolific shoplifter in the area which had banned him from the area.
- Do the police engage with Epping Forest Campus – New City College? Yes, they have worked with the college on a number of projects and have recently

held a week of events, which goes towards student's public service qualification.

- How were the roads for speed watches chosen? It was noted that the police acted on the information from members of the public or if there were recurring accidents, as well as random checks.
- What percentage of weapons were confiscated from people at the tube station during one of your checks? The information was not available, but officers would advise the committee at a later date.
- Could officers give any further information on an incident that occurred at Loughton Station a couple of weeks ago? Unfortunately, the Community Policing Team Officers were not aware of an incident but would investigate this and provide members with further information.
- How did members of the public report incidents that were caught on their dash cameras? C/Insp Cooper advised that the footage could be upload onto [Report a road traffic incident | Essex Police](#)

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Cooper and the other officers in attendance.

38. BI-ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL-FUNDED POLICE OFFICERS

The Specialist Technical Services Officer, C Wiggins presented the six-month report on the work and range of operations of the Council's funded Police team.

The funded police team continued with the following primary functions of supporting functionality of Epping Forest District Council departments/teams; providing 'added value' to the district in supporting the Community Policing function; and targeting action against criminality in the district. By the end of 2022, the police team had accepted and completed thirty-nine tasking requests during that year.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update on the work of the Council-funded Police Officers.

39. EPPING FOREST COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT, ANNUAL REPORT AND PLAN ON A PAGE

The Specialist Technical Services Officer, C Wiggins presented the Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership (CPS) Annual Strategic Assessment, Annual Report and Plan on a Page.

The Community Safety Partnership was required to complete an annual Strategic Assessment which was used to direct and guide their activities, under the requirements as responsible authorities, of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The Committee asked the following question.

- Did the policing structure referred to in the Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2022 relate to Epping Forest District only? Yes, and all officers were based at Loughton Police Station.
- Could it be explained why only 21 out of 31 state primary schools booked onto the Crucial Crew event week in 2022. The Specialist Technical Services Officer advised that this was probably due how it had been provided during

the pandemic, although officers were relaunching the event, which would be based at the Civic Offices.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership Annual Strategic Assessment, Annual Report and Plan on a Page.

40. DOMESTIC ABUSE & DOMESTIC ABUSE WORKPLACE POLICIES

The Specialist Technical Services Officer, C Wiggins presented the Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Workplace policies.

The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) was launched in 2014 and was managed by Standing Together. EFDC aspire to achieve a DAHA Accreditation to support residents and staff in providing a positive, safe environment and encouraging them to have the confidence to approach the council at a time of need.

The policies set out the Council's commitment to take efficient and effective action to deal with all reports of incidents and explains how the council would provide support tailored to the needs of the individual, working in partnership with specialist services to provide a coordinated response.

The Committee asked the following question.

- Would these policies apply to Qualis? The Specialist Technical Services Officer advised that Qualis would have their own policies, although the policies would be shared as they formalised the services already being delivered by the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee had no further comments and noted on the Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Workplace policies.

41. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted that the date of the next meeting would be 21 March 2023.