

# **Report to Stronger Communities Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 15 September 2020**

**Portfolio: Housing and Community Services -  
Councillor H Whitbread**



**Subject: Bi-Annual Report on the work of the Council-funded Police Officers**

**Officer contact for further information: C Wiggins (01992 564122)**

**Democratic Services Officer: J Leither (01992 564756)**

---

**Recommendations/Decisions Required: None**

- (1) That the Communities Select Committee receives a six-month report on the work and range of operations of the Council's funded Police team.**

## **Report:**

The Council continues to fund the employment of an additional Police Sergeant and 2 Police Constables to supplement existing local policing resources. The team were incepted in July 2018 with an initial 3-year contract, which has now been extended for a further two years. The team are tasked in-line with District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities which are identified through the Annual Strategic Assessment and aligned with the priorities set by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (PFCC). As well as working to those priorities, the team can be requested, via a tasking process, to support any Council department where there is an identified threat, harm or risk to staff. A service level agreement is in place to prevent abstraction of the officers except in extreme cases or high priority incidents. This also covers staff sickness and extended training periods through credit to the Council from Essex Police.

A joint tasking has been implemented on a fortnightly basis, in line with police tasking in which current tasks and new requests are reviewed. To date these tasks have included:

- High-visibility patrols in North Weald following a burglary spike. The team intercepted a perpetrator near to the scene of a recently reported burglary. The offender was sentenced to 4 years in prison for 2 burglaries in the district.
- Execution of a no-bail warrant on behalf of Planning. This was deemed as not a priority warrant for Essex Police but through the tasking process was able to be advanced by the team.
- Service of a business closure notice on a premises in Waltham Abbey being used to supply sexual services during COVID-19 lockdown.
- Joint working with Housing to investigate and enforce a problem property in Waltham Abbey which was the centre of ASB and drugs use/supply. The team served a Community Protection Warning followed by a Community Protection Notice. The incidents ceased from that point.
- In response to a spike in high value vehicle thefts highlighted through local tasking the team implemented Operation Moonstone. In the first week this resulted in the arrest of 3 suspects in a 'mission' vehicle and the recovery of two recently stolen Land Rovers in the district.
- Support to the Council with the application and service of a closure order in relation to a 'Mansion Party' venue in Roydon linked to violence and disorder.

When not deployed on tasks the team are assigned patrols in areas identified through risk terrain mapping which focus on areas of high-risk and high-harm crime and ASB. The team are highly skilled and have a great depth of knowledge of criminal behaviour and crime patterns in the district. Through the use of ANPR and intelligence analysis, the team have been able to pro-actively plan patrols and specifically target criminality in the district. This is unique from other district policing teams in that the agreement permits the team time to focus on specific community safety problems. This has resulted in significant arrests, high-value vehicle recoveries and disruption to criminal activity in the district.

As well as nurturing strong relationships with ANPR and intelligence teams within Essex Police, the team have established strong bonds with teams from the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary and regularly share intelligence and work collaboratively across all agencies. The team were deployed on Operation Moab on several occasions prior to COVID-19 with colleagues from Chingford Police and had a number of positive results against criminals using routes between Waltham Abbey and Chingford to commit crime in both areas. There are future plans, COVID-19 permitting, to resume the joint working with the Met Police.

Some highlights from the team's activity outside of the tasking process:

- Arrest of male in possession of a large kitchen knife in Waltham Abbey. During a foot chase the offender discarded the knife into the garden of a care home.
- Arrest of a male driving a car recently stolen in a burglary who was actively committing shoplifting offences at the time of arrest.
- Recovery of a recently stolen vehicle in a 'chop-shop' and arrest of three offenders who were in the process of dismantling a stolen Mercedes Sprinter van.
- Arrest of three males linked to numerous burglary and robbery offences in the district in a stolen vehicle.

On top of 'daily business' the team have also been local lead for three election processes to date and also took the lead for planning and executing the policing plans around Halloween 2019, Remembrance Day and the Epping Christmas Market. The team will deploy again this year but clearly there will be significant new challenges in 2020.

District crime levels were affected by COVID-19 but the team have remained fully operational throughout and during the initial lockdown, made full use of the COVID legislation, mainly to target offenders who were already linked to other crimes. The issue of penalty notices was used as a disruption tool. The team have supported the Council with information sharing and deployment to any relevant COVID-19 breaches. Working in conjunction with the Council early intervention has been taken against a number of 'Mansion Party' venues in the district.

The last quarter has seen Essex Police post Community Safety Engagement Officers (CSEO) across the county. The Epping Forest CSEO is embedded with Community Resilience. The CSEO is tasked to work within the Community Safety Hub taking a lead on problem solving, working with partners and the community to reduce crime, ASB and protect people from harm within the district. This is done by supporting the CSP and Community Policing Team by ensuring that both have available all relevant information from police / joint agency systems and intelligence relating to local priorities. The CSEO will lead on promoting public participation and building trust and confidence in policing through engagement and collaboration with partners and the public. This is an innovative key role and the benefits to both organisations are already evident.

The Essex Police YTD figures are included in Appendix 2. Key figures below:

Offence Type	District	Force
Theft of Motor Vehicle	-25.4%	-22.2%
Burglary	-25.7%	-23.1%
Business Robbery	-30.8%	-40.0%
Personal Robbery	-19.0%	-21.1%
Anti-social behaviour	+17.1%	+7.4%
Shoplifting	-21.6%	-22.1%

**Reason for decision:** There is no decision related to this report.

**Options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Consultation undertaken:** A range of consultation was undertaken prior to the Council's decision to fund the additional police officers and this included with Nottinghamshire County Council, who had already funded a police team.

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Key Decision:** N/A