



Police Fire and Crime Commissioner January 2019 Update

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Review of 2018

It's been a year of great change in many respects for both Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS). We have seen a change in the leadership of both services, with the appointment of Ben-Julian Harrington as Chief Constable and Jo Turton as Chief Fire Officer. Ben-Julian succeeded former Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh who led Essex Police successfully for five years. Jo took over from Adam Eckley who managed the Service through a difficult period and supported it to become the first service in the country governed by a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. We are currently delivering on a number of initiatives including shared use of the estate, joint procurement initiatives and a collaborative approach to repeat callers.

As we produced our vision for policing in the Police and Crime Plan in 2016, now work has begun on developing the strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service over the next five years. Consulting with our partners and with ECFRS employees we have produced a list of priorities which are currently out for public comment in a survey which runs until 15 January 2019. We will analyse the results and use them to shape the strategy taking the service forward. You can give your views by filling in a survey online via this link www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/FireRescuePlan Hard copies are also available from local libraries or on request from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on 01245 291600.

We have just published the Annual Report for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service which you can read in more detail here: <http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Fire-and-Rescue-Annual-Report-2017-2018-FINAL.pdf>

One of the key findings from the Police and Crime Plan was that the people of Essex wanted more local, visible and accessible policing. Following months of rigorous training, 150 new officers are now either beginning or due to begin active duty across the county. I wish them every success in their careers and thank them enormously for the contribution they will make to help keep the people of Essex safe and increase public confidence. The number of Specials working in Essex Police has risen sharply over the last year after a successful recruitment campaign resulted in a further 122 joining the ranks. There are now 475 Specials in post and Essex has the second largest and fastest growing Special Constabulary in England and Wales. There is still work to do to reduce crime and the fear of crime and this is always ongoing with hopes to increase the number of police officers further in 2019.

We have just published our Annual Report on the Essex Police and Crime Plan, which measures progress made over the last financial year in meeting its priorities and the work still left to do. You can view the report here: <http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/PFCC-Accounts-2018.pdf>

In 2017-18, overall crime in Essex increased by 11.2%, against a national rise of 15.3%. The demands on policing and the nature of crime is ever changing. Increasing levels of online crime, a rise in reporting of crimes such as domestic abuse and non-recent sexual abuse and the need to support other forces dealing with recent terrorist incidents and indeed mount extra activities locally due to the changing national threat level, are some of the additional pressures that have had a very real impact on policing in this county. While pressures have grown, funding in real terms has remained restrained and Essex Police remains one of the tightest funded police forces in the country.

In addition to recruiting extra officers, Essex Police have looked at other ways to reduce the pressures and have made major progress in delivering our Mobile First programme which allows officers to record incidents on their phones rather than having to go to a desktop in a police station. We should see the benefit of this next year as more officers are freed up to allow them to be even more visible within your communities. We have also increased our partnership working with other accredited organisations who assist with intelligence gathering and can deal with certain low-level crimes without involving the police. This strengthening of community policing has been hailed as an example of best practice by the Home Office.

Our newly established Violence and Vulnerability Framework also sets out how we can work best with our partners to beat violent crime in the county. The framework brings together the work across Essex to stop our young people getting involved in crime and reduce violence in our communities. I strongly believe that partnership working is the way to deliver better and more efficient community safety to everyone and this is where the benefits of joint governance of our police and fire and rescue services together with more integrated working practices cannot be overstated.

The long hot summer put extra pressure on our firefighters as they dealt with an increase in incidents caused by the dry conditions.

In September we welcomed twelve new wholetime firefighters after they had successfully completed 14 weeks of intensive training. They are based at stations across Essex and will be followed by further wholetime squads who will be trained and deployed across the county in the coming months. We have had 68 on-call firefighters join the Service, bringing the total number to 499. I would like to wish all of them the very best in their careers and thank them for their contribution to improving the safety of the public. The fire service has done a great job over the past year working on fire prevention with the community and in schools and our joint safety messages can gain a much wider reach working in partnership with the police. Jointly badged police and fire education teams have already reached more than 300,000 children since their introduction in September 2016.

So as we start 2019, we will be looking to build on the progress already made in tackling the priorities identified in the Police and Crime Plan, and we will finalise the Fire and Rescue Plan in the light of the results of our public survey to create the right priorities for the Fire and Rescue Service and drive those forward. We will continue to seek out more innovative ways to maximise the impact of the talented and dedicated people who work in both services so we have even safer communities in which we can all thrive.

Essex Council Leaders' Letter Highlights Concerns Over London Homeless Being Placed in County

A letter signed by every Essex council leader highlighting concerns about families being re-housed from London into the county has been sent to senior politicians in the capital.

Agreed by the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group, the letter raises 11 issues which have been highlighted by housing officers across the county.

Issues include a lack of communication between London authorities and Essex councils informing them of people being moved into the area, families being placed in inadequate housing, and the impact on local services.

It also warns of cases where families have been moved far away from support networks such as friends, family and jobs, meaning their situation can actually worsen.

The Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group includes all 12 district and borough councils, Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock unitary authorities and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The letter, which has been sent to the Mayor of London and the leaders and directly elected mayors of each of the London Boroughs, also details some positive steps to resolve the concerns raised and also invites politicians on both sides of the county divide to work together to lobby government on related national issues.

Neil Stock OBE, Leader of Tendring District Council and chairman of the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group, said the actions of some of the London Boroughs had been despicable.

He said: "We understand why people want to come to Essex, which is a fantastic place in which to live, work and visit, and we don't want to stop people moving to the county.

"However, this needs to be in the right way and because people want to move here, not because they are being forced to or financially encouraged to by their London council as way of removing a problem.

"So far efforts by individual Essex councils to draw this to the attention of London Boroughs and the Mayor of London have largely been ignored, which is why as a group of leaders we have taken the decision to send this letter.

"We now hope that those in power in London sit up and take notice, and work constructively with us to resolve these issues."

Roger Hirst's statement following national police funding announcement

Following the national announcement on police funding, Roger Hirst, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex said

“I welcome the announcement on police funding for 2019-2020 and appreciate the support from the Minister and the Treasury to mitigate the cost pressures faced by policing nationally. This extra support means that any money raised locally can be spent locally on policing in Essex.

“People know how stretched policing is. They want more officers and as I believe they are willing to pay more to get them. I recently ran a survey to test whether the public were willing to invest more in Essex Police. We had a strong response with over 71% of people willing to pay more and more than two thirds of these were willing to pay an additional £20 a year, or even more.

“Last year because of the extra money raised through the policing precept and efficiency savings achieved by Essex Police, we were able to recruit an extra 150 officers. These officers have been recruited, trained and are being deployed in communities over the next few weeks.

“The announcement today should mean we are able to do at least the same again, or more, next year.

“As we consider our position for next year, we need to ensure that any additional money raised is spent wisely and goes towards making a real difference, locally in our communities.

Essex has fastest growing Special Constabulary in England and Wales

The number of Specials working in Essex Police has risen sharply over the last year after a successful recruitment campaign resulted in a further 122 joining the ranks.

There are now 475 Specials in post. Out of the 43 forces in England and Wales, Essex saw the largest growth in numbers from March 2017 to March 2018. Together they contributed a total of 15,424 hours of policing in October.

Special Constables are volunteer Police Officers. They have the same police powers, uniforms and equipment as regular Police Officers but do not get paid. They are reimbursed for expenses.

Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex, Roger Hirst, said,

“The Special Constabulary is an extremely important part of every police force and makes a vital contribution to policing nationally. I am delighted that here in Essex we have been able to attract so many people into the role. Specials are a highly valued part of our policing family and I thank each and every one of them for the time they give to help keep people safe.”

To become a Special Constable, you must first pass competency and fitness tests and then a thorough vetting process will begin. Once cleared, candidates must complete 20 days of classroom based training before they can be attested. Two types of training sessions are currently offered:

Intensive – Monday to Friday for four weeks

Alternate Weekends – Every other Saturday and Sunday for 20 weeks

A volunteer police officer has the same powers as a paid police officer and that carries with it the same expectations in terms of standards and public service. If you believe you have the skills, ability and professionalism to police the community fairly and impartially, you can visit the Essex Police website for further information and to download an application form: <https://www.essex.police.uk/join-the-police/special-constabulary/>

Watch the video to see Special Sergeant Dan Atkinson out and about in his role with the Gypsy, Traveller and Rural Engagement Team (GTRET). Dan has been a Special for three years and was based in Colchester before joining GTRET six months ago.