



MANNINGTREE TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES

Minutes of the Police Public Meeting

**held in the Large Hall, Venture Centre 2000, Lawford on
Wednesday 16th January, 2019 at 6.30 p.m.**

Present: Cllr. R. Stocks (Mayor) Cllr. L. Lay-Flurrie
Cllr. S. Richardson Cllr. M. McClarnon
Cllr. J. Taylor

In attendance: R. Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
J. Gardner, Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
A. Hook, Head of Performance and Scrutiny Police
G. Keys, Group Manager, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
Inspector D. Deex, Tendring Community Policing Team
County Cllr. C. Guglielmi
District Cllr. A. Coley
40 members of the public
Mrs. L. Djuve-Wood (Clerk)

1. Introduction by Ruth Stocks, Mayor of Manningtree Town Council

Cllr. Stocks welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that there would be updates from the panel members before the meeting would be opened up to questions from members of the public.

2. Update from Mr Roger Hirst, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, Inspector Darren Deex, Tendring Community Policing Team and Mr Greg Keys, Group Manager from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Hirst explained that he would give a brief update on the bigger picture across the county and how that relates to Manningtree and surrounding areas and then Inspector Deex would give an update on issues affecting policing in the local area. Mr. Keys would then give an update on what is happening in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Mr Hirst started by saying that he took over the joint governance of the Police and Fire and Rescue Service in October 2017 and that they are now working closely together, particularly on community support projects such as visiting schools and safe and well-being visits. They are also able to save money by joint procurement of software for the back office and sharing some of their premises. In addition, they are increasing the use of fire stations as places for police drop-in, which gives police officers somewhere to go for a break as well as increasing the visibility of police officers to the public. He emphasised that despite the joint governance, police and fire and rescue services would not be merged but would remain separate services with separate powers.

He went on to talk about the budget. They have been negotiating with the Home Office, the Ministry for Housing in Local Government and with the Treasury over funding packages for policing and for fire and rescue for this year. It seems to have been very successful. They have been offered a match-funded deal similar to last year. Last year's deal resulted in a £450m national budget which went a long way. Demands have continued to increase and this year's national budget will be £950m, where half is being sourced from council tax and the other half from government funding. The council tax route works well as it ensures that money is being spent in Essex.

Last year Essex spent their increase on recruiting an additional 150 police officers who have all been trained and are now being deployed and due to arrive by the end of March 2019. If approval is given from The Police, Fire and Crime Panel to put through a £24 local council Band D property increase for the financial year of 2019/20 for the policing portion, another 215 officers can be recruited plus another 50 police staff to support them. Such an increase will get Essex up to over of 3,200 police officers across the county. If you include the improvements made from investments of previous assets disposed of in to new technologies, it means that police officers can spend more time on the road without having to return to police stations to complete forms. This in turn means that a 3,200 strong force is actually equivalent to a 3,600 strong force in terms of what they can do, when compared to before the cuts started. This should

in turn assist in reducing the increased rate of violent crime, domestic abuse, gang crime and anti-social behavior.

The Internet is the big challenge. There has been a phenomenal rise in online crime, including online fraud, child sexual exploitation, racial and disability abuse. Effectively online crime is now almost as big as all other crime put together. More money needs to be spent tackling online crime including developing programmes that can monitor such crime.

Mr Hirst was pleased to report that whilst demand on policing was rising, it was actually going down for the Fire and Rescue Service, with the number of house fires as well as traffic collisions having reduced over the last few years. The Fire and Rescue Service have been able to do more prevention and protection work to help people be safe rather than having to respond to a constant increase in demand. The proposal for the Fire and Rescue Service precept for this upcoming year will be 3% to ensure wages rise in line with retail price inflation. Mr Hirst finished by handing over the microphone to Inspector Deex.

Inspector Deex started by talking about where resources come from and where they are based in the district. He explained that they have a local team in Tendring which is based in Clacton with another team based in Harwich who cover 24/7 and who provide the emergency and priority response officers. Inspector Deex currently runs the community policing team based in Clacton which is made up of Police Officers and PCSO's plus another 15-20 Special Constables. They deal with community and longer-term problem-solving policing in the district.

In terms of crime, statistics versus perception of crime does not normally match. The internet, in particular social media, can unfortunately aid in spreading fear of crime making it sound as if there has been a massive increase in crime when in fact the opposite is true.

Statistics for Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley and Lawford show that all crime has increased to just under 6% for the year to date compared to just under 10% for the rest of the Tendring area. Violence without injury offences are up by approximately 36%, which includes stalking and harassment crimes where there has been a change in the Home Office crime recording standards, which in turn has had an impact on the sharp increase in these types of crimes across the entire county as well as nationally. Dwelling burglary has seen a significant decrease by 42% for this area. Violence with injury has seen a slight increase but is much lower than the figures for the entire county. Theft of vehicles has decreased by nearly 40%, other burglary such as shed burglary is down by around 30% and antisocial behaviour is down by around 3%. A lot of the police force's work is spent on so-called hidden crime such as domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, missing children and mental health sufferers.

The force has had to adapt how they work, including the use of technology which allows the force to get out and be more visible. The force is trying to engage more actively with the community by running Coffee with Cops events, local community meetings and working closely with the Community Safety Partnership in Tendring. A Street Action Day has been arranged for the 30th January 2019 for Manningtree where the police will be going out with partners such as the fire service looking at local needs for local people. Police officers have started using the local fire station in Manningtree as a base from which to work.

Inspector Deex emphasised the importance of reporting crimes when they happen and stated that any intelligence and information about crimes can be shared with the police anonymously.

Mr Keys introduced himself and informed the public that he is responsible for the North East Group of the Essex Fire Service which includes 16 fire stations, including search and rescue capabilities, covering Maldon, Colchester and Tendring. Staff at the Manningtree station is often engaging in community safety initiatives with collaboration constantly improving. In terms of the wider group there has been a number of changes and Manningtree will be getting a new off-road appliance to replace the current one, as per a review done a few years ago. In terms of performance, Manningtree has excellent availability and attendance, with the North East Group as a whole being the highest achieving group of stations in the service. Finally, Mr Keys said that he was looking forward to hearing any questions members of the public may have regarding the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Mayor, Cllr. Stocks, opened up for questions from members of the public.

3. Questions from members of the public

Q: Regarding the increase in people with mental health problems, there have been initiatives of mental health practitioners joining police cars. I was wondering if this is happening in Tendring?

Inspector Deex replied that that yes, they have what is referred to as a street triage team which was set up a couple of years ago. The street triage car is a police vehicle which will be resourced with a police officer, special constable and a mental health practitioner, meaning they have immediate advice on hand when responding to a mental health incident.

Q: Whilst we no longer have Mistle Police Station - it had a blue lamp outside which meant it was visible, and it is visible policing that we are concerned about. The sooner you can get a blue lamp outside the fire station the better as that will send a message to both local people and those coming from outside and may act as a deterrent.

Mr Hirst said he thought a blue police light outside the fire station was a good idea and stated that this has been done elsewhere.

Q: When you were first elected you said you were aiming for 350 special constables?

Mr Hirst was pleased to inform everyone that Essex currently is the second largest constabulary in the country and the fastest growing, that they now have over 500 special constables and are aiming to recruit more. He said not only do we have an increase in specials but the ones who are volunteering are volunteering more hours also. Inspector Deex stated that they have got a fantastic special constable contingency in Tendring who carry out some fantastic work including automatic number plate recognition operations, assisting with drug warrants and taking statements. Mr Hirst said they are still recruiting specials. Currently there are 26 councils in the county who have decided to sponsor a special constable in their local community and once trained they will serve predominantly within their dedicated parish.

Q: Firefighters in Manningtree do a great job, but you are probably aware that we have the worst bottleneck at Manningtree Station, and I have had conversations with firefighters who have been unable to get to the fire station to be deployed within the requested time they have been allowed. Is there any way that they can be issued with some form of siren, that first responders have, to show that they are on-call firefighters and to allow them to overtake without causing road rage?

Mr Keys said that congestion is a growing problem in several stations and is something they are aware of but they would not expect and would not support anybody using a blue light or signage on their vehicle to allow them to overtake traffic. Signage is sometimes used if parking near a fire station is proving an issue. He said they are aware of some difficulties in Manningtree, particularly crossing the river but it does not seem to have too much of an impact at the moment.

Q: It is great having the fire station as a base for on-duty police officers to call in to, but is there any chance that people could actually go and talk to them there? Particularly elderly people who cannot get about much?

Inspector Deex explained that on one hand this would be difficult to achieve as they may not want the public to know when the police officers are there but on the other hand he can see the benefits of saying "hello we are here." Coffee with Cops was recently introduced and is a very good mechanism for engaging with the community. This could probably be advertised better however, as currently they are relying heavily on social media and possibly not putting up enough posters. He said he does not think there will come a point where members of the public will be invited into the fire station, however, Coffee with Cops could be developed better ensuring they are accessible to the community.

Q: Is it possible to have Coffee with Cops at a more accessible venue in Manningtree?

Inspector Deex stated that they are reliant on the venues and do make contact with them, he'd be interested in speaking to any members of the audience who own a café in Manningtree.

Q: Can the police store their fire arms, tazers and pepper spray at the fire station?

Inspector Deex explained that whereas an armed police officer can use the fire station there is no facility

at the moment to store that type of equipment. A firearm safe cannot be installed as there are a number of health and safety issues attached to it. He said we need to be mindful that we need to take the collaboration project one step at a time.

Q: Manningtree fire station is being used as a pilot project in Essex, what does Mr Hirst propose to do in the future regarding crime deterrents in Manningtree? Do you have any other ideas for us?

Mr Hirst welcomed the question regarding what else can be piloted in Manningtree. The next item on the list of things to try is probably more to do with road safety. They may be looking for partners who are keen to qualify using the TruCam kit which is the step-up from Speed Watch actually giving you a ticket when speeding rather than just a letter. They are looking at giving TruCam and its associated powers not only to local authority created officers but also perhaps to selected community speed watchers. This is something that could possibly be trialed here. They will probably also be doubling the size of the rural team, who are a central team ensuring there is a consistent approach across the county to rural crimes.

Q: Can Manningtree have a small unit of police officers allocated to it to patrol on public buses and increasing high visibility? Such a pilot project has been done in Plymouth very successfully.

Inspector Deex said that police officers do not need bus passes to use public transport. He said he hadn't heard of the Plymouth trial and that whereas he would have a think about it, he cannot see this idea working in the local area. Mr Hirst said he would have a look at the project in Plymouth to see if there is anything they can learn from it.

Q: Several years ago there were several discussions about having an ANPR camera permanently placed on either the Essex / Suffolk border or some other gateway, are there any hopes of that happening? This would have proved especially efficient when there was a big spate of robberies and break-ins a while back in Manningtree.

Inspector Deex stated that the ANPR camera has been in place since October but that the location will not be disclosed. It is a really good attribute to have for this area as there are some really good road network connections, particularly into Suffolk.

Q: Regarding the specials, it is good news that you have achieved what you have. I have got two issues with specials - anyone who has a licence to be a doorman or security guard cannot be considered, is that still the case and if it is what are you doing about it?

Inspector Deex explained that he did not know about the licence issue but that he suspects it will be due to a conflict of interest. Mr Hirst said they wouldn't want any specials to exercise their specials powers on the door of a nightclub.

Q: My question relates to the monitoring of both the Police and Crime Plan and also your own business plan for the collaboration with the Fire and Rescue Service. As you know I was very supportive of that. The shortfall was not going to be as big as the savings were and there was going to be a surplus by the end of the 10th year, or the 5th or the 6th year. Are there plans to reinvest some money into all services and are the priorities that were added to the plan being monitored and reaching expectations?

Mr Hirst stated that regarding the local business case for change, which was a joint governance paper produced between the police and fire and rescue services, whereas the big target over 10 years was £30.8m, the joint governance model would probably realistically give them between £15m and £23m. He said in order to get near the £30.8m figure they would need to go for the single service employer model bringing the two services together, which is not what they want to do. He said he was pleased when looking at the progress made so far. There are some big financial savings to be made from the joint procurement of software systems, joint use of training facilities but they take some time to put in place.

The Police and Crime Plan is monitored regularly. Members of the public can go on to their website on a monthly basis to look at the measures identified and progress made. When the plan was first put in place each one of those measures were deteriorating, however Mr Hirst stated he believes that seven of them are now improving, including road safety and antisocial behaviour. However, there is still a lot more to do. They are now working on the fire and rescue plan which is the parallel plan to the police and crime plan.

Q: There is a definite lack of young people at the meeting tonight. Whether they could not be

bothered or whether they feel quite safe, what are your thoughts on that?

Mr Hirst said they do not get many teens at these sorts of meetings and that they have done some analysis on what people like. He said he is determined we need public meetings like this as some people find them very useful but the reality is we reach young people via social media. He said we need to ensure we get the balance right. We need to do some written media, we need to do some social media, we need to do some face to face meetings and we need to use the press including radio and television. Inspector Deex added that he monitors the Facebook Live sessions for Tendring police which is changing the way they engage with the community.

Q: Do the projected savings outweigh the shrinkage in the grant fund revenue and do you have any plans for what to invest that in?

Mr Hirst said that the savings and the efficiencies they are making through the joint collaboration are not to be taken out of the service but are to be reinvested. The main part of reinvestment is in prevention and protection work, working more closely with the communities as well as protecting vulnerable people. Where there are concentrations of deprivation you also tend to have more crime and you tend to have more accidents and emergencies and we need to get into those communities and we need to help the poor. From the Fire and Rescue Service point of view, there is the issue of the outstanding revenue support grant which the government has announced will go at some point, by this year it will be down to £6.9m so around 10% of the total fire and rescue spend. Mr Hirst stated that he'd like to think that they have the time to deal with that through ongoing savings and efficiencies investing in technologies, productivity, time management structures, effective working and ongoing improvement thinking.

Q Regarding Special Constables, there are some who would like to remain in their areas, are there any policies on this?

Mr Hirst said that if local specials will be sponsored by their local parish then they will be deployed in their local area. There are some specials who volunteer because they want to go to other areas and they need to be accommodated as well. Inspector Deex said as Community Policing Inspector for Tendring, he talks to his specials about the geographical policing concept and ownership of local areas.

Q: What should we do if subject to telephone fraud?

Inspector Deex advised to report it to Action Fraud which has been set up to take some of the pressure off the police service and who are specialists on these types of fraud and activity. If you have been unfortunate enough to fall foul of the scam and have lost money that will be referred to the police eventually for investigation. If you have not fallen foul you should still report it so that Action Fraud can monitor what is happening.

Q: If I have a very vulnerable neighbor, either with mental health issues or elderly, and I notice there are people entering their home and I have no evidence they may be trying to cuckoo them, what do I do?

Inspector Deex said that if you have any concerns about a neighbor, particularly one with mental health issues or elderly or someone with a medical condition, please contact the police. Cuckooing is where a criminal identifies a vulnerable person and moves into their house to conduct their drug dealing activity or other criminal activity, it is usually accompanied with the use of violence and threats.

Q: I have a question to Darren about the figures of recorded crime. All I would say is to be quite cautious of that data as is it recorded crime only. I attend lots of meetings with charities and I get told of people who have been victims of crime but who have not reported it, or alternatively they tried to report it but didn't get a response and gave up, or alternatively they got through to the Crime Bureau and because of the turnover at the Crime Bureau have been advised they have not been a victim of crime when they clearly had been a victim of crime. Therefore, there may be a great underswell that is not being reported. When asked why they have not reported a crime, they often say they don't have a relationship with the police and that the police have no relationship with the local community. The police have distanced themselves from the community, and I understand why, it is inevitable, but you lose that connection with the community and basic level of intelligence. Identifiable police officers are needed in the community who people trust and who know their environment.

Inspector Deex responded that whereas statistical figures of crime are not entirely accurate, as there are always going to be crime that is not reported, non-reporting is not unique to this area. The statistics are recorded crime year-on-year. However, the police can only go by recorded crime and whereas they

always encourage members of the public to report crime, they cannot be expected to do something about a crime if it is not reported. He went on to say that why people do not report crime is the biggest question, and probably the most challenging one that they face. The 101 system is raised at every single meeting that he attends and there have been attempts made at making it better. He said the 101 staff works very hard responding to several thousand calls on a daily basis and it is very difficult. They now have online reporting and they always encourage people to use this reporting mechanism if they have access to the internet to free up the phone lines to people who do not have access to the internet. Regarding the Crime Bureau issue, the police force carries out a fair amount of desk-based investigations now where they ask a number of questions about a crime. If based on the answers there is no likelihood of the police solving that crime then it will be recorded but they won't be sending police officers out to investigate further.

Mr Hirst followed up by saying they know that there is a chunk of crime that isn't reported. What they are doing now that they weren't doing before is also doing their own survey across the county using an external firm to try and track to see how much underreporting there is. They feedback they are getting is that unreported crime is reducing. He said they will need to keep on monitoring unreported crime as if it starts increasing again it shows that they are losing that bond with the local communities. Crime statistics in Britain are currently amongst the lowest in developed countries, and looking at the way we are policing in Britain, it's a really good model.

Q: Regarding Special Constables, we used to have jointly sponsored PCSO's, we are now being asked to sponsor specials. I am concerned you recruit someone locally, once they become a special in their local area, they then need to drive to Clacton to pick up their equipment. If there is no police vehicle available, they will be driving back in their own vehicle. Can they actually carry a section 5 firearm in their own vehicle? Are you monitoring the amount of time they are working bearing in mind the European Working Time Directive should they have another job that they go to as well?

Inspector Deex explained that if you've got business insurance on your personal vehicle then it is treated as a police vehicle whilst you're on duty so cannot see any issues with carrying a section 5 firearm. It would be different if they are leaving the firearm in the car unattended. Mr Hirst stated they are alert to the amount of hours someone may be working and are trying to monitor it.

Q: The system whereby special constables are having to travel up to an hour to Clacton to book on and an hour to Clacton to book off seems highly inefficient to me. Are there any innovations that could be brought which would mean they could book on and off remotely in Manningtree?

Mr Hirst agreed that this makes common sense but they have yet to find a solution to this issue.

Q: It is very good news about the increased police officers, and I am sure people would be happy to pay more for the service if we were getting more. I wonder if the inspector could make it a little bit more real for us and tell us if I rang you at 2am tonight and reported a burglary, how soon would somebody come, would they come and how many would come? Am I right in thinking there is no response time as per what your fire and ambulance colleagues have?

Inspector Deex said that yes, we do have response times. The current emergency response time for a rural area is attendance within 20 minutes, for an urban area it is 15 minutes. We aim for an 85% target in attending jobs. He stated that it is important to remember that officers are not stationary in Clacton and Harwich, but that they are out on patrol and on the road so response times depend on where they are at any given time. Mr Hirst went on to say that one of his jobs as Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is to monitor response times, and that the emergency response times for the police is not something they have on the radar at the moment as an issue that needs addressing.

Q: Whereas Coffee with Cops is a great idea, they do all seem to be in the morning, can an evening be done instead of all mornings?

Inspector Deex said that they have thought about it but that they can never please everyone unfortunately.

Q: Please can you advertise the fact that people can report crimes online?

Inspector Deex said that he will advertise on Facebook and twitter. Mr Hirst said that they are doing a major campaign about that when they complete the renewal project of the online reporting system in the spring of this year.

Q: I am here as a business owner and we have crime on a weekly basis and we lose thousands of

pounds a year. We do get police come out and speak to us once it has been reported but it then seems to go no further than that.

Inspector Deex said he believes that sometimes police need to get better at providing feedback. Regarding shop crime and shoplifting they sometimes charge people or give out warnings and that is not always fed back to the victim. He stated that with the spate of burglaries that happened in Manningtree in 2017, they have successfully prosecuted a subject who went to prison. If they have the leads to follow up they will carry out further investigations. Hirst added that they are now also catching people partly through ANPR. The road policing team are currently pushing a project called Extra Eyes where they encourage members of the public to have their little dash cams and if they catch someone misbehaving on that to upload the video via the online reporting mechanism.

Q: What do one do if one finds a piece of jewellery or other item? Whereas we used to take it to Mistley Police Station, what do we do with it now?

Inspector Deex said that whereas they used to take lost property in, the reality was that most lost property was never recovered by the owner. You can still report it to the police in case the owner gets in contact with them.

Q: Are you doing anything within schools? Do you have one of your Coffee with Cops events with students on their own?

Inspector Deex said that whereas they used to have school officers, the Fire and Rescue services have now picked up some of this work. In addition, some special constables get engaged ins school activity and the police also works closely with other community safety partners. The Clacton Campus university recently hosted a Coffee with Cops session.

There being no further questions the Mayor thanked all participants for their input and closed the meeting at 8:10 p.m.