
Local Policing Support Unit

**Essex Business Crime
Strategy
Development & Delivery**



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Unit: Local Policing Support Unit

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**ESSEX
POLICE**

Protecting and serving Essex

Business Crime - Essex Perspective:

Essex Police records approximately 24, 000 commercial crime offences a year. This makes up between 17-20% of all recorded crime in the force area.

Retail crime (mainly shoplifting) accounts for approximately 40% of commercial crime with the remainder being a variety of offences including fraud, damage and other theft offences (which, together with shoplifting, make up approximately 80% of all commercial crime).

The average annual value of property stolen and damaged is £20,000.

The East of England Cooperative society is the organisation with the largest number of commercial crimes, and also the largest number of shoplifting offences (this reflects a national trend with Co-Op stores).

Tesco has been the most frequent victim of all other commercial crime.

In 7 districts¹ the top 5 premises make up over a quarter of all commercial crime offences in that district

Background

Essex Police has had a Business Crime Strategy since 2013, however, it was written by the police for the police and although it acknowledged the role of partnerships such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses etc., there was no involvement by partners in its development.

Essex were one of the first forces to adopt the NPCC definition of business crime ("**Any criminal offence that is committed against a person or property that is associated by the connection of that person or property to a business**") and to tag incidents accordingly² and has been invited to join the working group hosted by the NBCC to work with the Home Office to create guidelines and mandatory rules regarding business crime (see footnote 2).

Business Crime was coordinated via the PCC's Business Crime Forum, however, due to the size of the issue and fluctuating membership, this was not as effective as, for example, the PCC's Rural Crime Forum, where the core membership has been in place since 2012.

This forum was replaced in 2018 by the Essex Strategic Business Crime Board. Chaired by the Essex Chambers of Commerce.

¹ Castle Point, Colchester, Epping Forest, Maldon, Tendring, Uttlesford, Stansted Airport

² This is not 100% accurate due to entry errors. The NBCC is working with the Home Office to make the definition of business crime a formal measurement with clearer Home Office guidelines and mandatory rules. This will ensure consistency across Forces and allow for clearer allocation of resources. This may see "Business Crime" as a mandatory keyword on crime reports

Following the successful refresh and re-launch of the Essex Police Rural Crime Strategy in 2017, the OPFCC, Essex Police and the Strategic Board are keen to see a similar focus on Business Crime.

The revised strategy will align with the [Modern Crime Prevention Strategy](#) and [the Policing Vision 2025](#), meet stakeholder needs and expectations and will be used as an engagement tool with business.

The Strategic Board has met 3 times and some of the issues raised include;

- a perceived lack of understanding of business crime by the police
- a lack of engagement at local level (particularly regarding local Business Against Crime Partnerships)
- a lack of police resources
- a perceived failings in the criminal justice system

Businesses also cited that crime prevention measures such as target hardening could be an intensive investment and that businesses were prepared to accept a level of loss.

The Strategic Business Crime Board are asked to assist in the review of the existing strategy (Appendix 1) in order for it to incorporate the views of the business community and to ensure that it reflects the concerns and aims of that community. The development of the strategy will be a key driver in developing the remit of the Business Crime Unit which will be the key delivery mechanism for the strategy.

Delivery

The Essex Police LPSU working with the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) and The Federation of Small Businesses, is attempting to reinvigorate the Business Against Crime Partnerships at district level, supported by the uplift in Community Policing Teams and the creation of Town Centre Teams due to the uplift in the Policing Precept.

The introduction of the Gypsy, Traveller and Rural Engagement Team (GTRET) in 2017 to support the delivery of the Essex Police Rural Crime Prevention Strategy demonstrated the benefits of a team of staff who are Subject Matter Experts in their particular field and the positive impact on public reassurance and confidence in reporting.

The GTRET do not attend every unauthorised encampment or rural crime incident, but they do form the primary link between partner agencies and local policing dealing with such matters, provide engagement and facilitation between such agencies and the public and provide expert advice and oversight to long term issues.

The Business Crime Unit will perform a similar function for the business community.

The Essex Police Business Crime Unit;

The aims of the Business Crime Unit will be;

- to reduce the volume of crime and ASB being committed against business
- to continue to bring offenders to justice
- to increase public confidence in Essex Police

The creation of such a unit would meet all 6 of the [Modernising Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines](#) being developed by the College of Policing and the Home Office for which Essex was a pilot force³.

LPSU would be the logical “home” of such a Business Crime Unit due to the department's primary role as liaison between Essex Police and all partners and statutory and non-statutory bodies involved in the prevention of crime and disorder and its current function as liaison/ facilitator for the Strategic Business Crime Board.

The increase in the policing precept has allowed the funding of 5 posts;

- 1 Sergeant who will be based in the LPSU at HQ
- 3 PCs who will be based within the LPAs (within the Community Safety Hub structure)
- 1 dedicated analyst, based within the Performance Assessment Unit

The funding for the unit means that they will not Go Live until early 2020, however, the LPSU is in discussion with the Force Growth Programme regarding the feasibility of recruiting the Sergeant earlier (possibly late 2019) in order for that officer to assist with the development of the Business Crime Strategy and the recruitment and training of the remainder of the team.

The primary function of the unit would be to work closely with police departments and other agencies tasked with the reduction of crime and disorder (including counter terrorist protective security) in order to support the delivery of the Essex Police Business Crime Strategy by developing and implementing tactical options, interventions, projects and initiatives to address criminality, crime and disorder issues.

We also need to consider future and emerging challenges such as;

- Funding and Resources
- the growing population of Essex
- the changing nature of crime

This would include the analyst to identifying crime trends and hotspots in order to target activity and resources.

³

1. Engaging communities
2. Solving problems
3. Targeting activity
4. Promoting the right culture
5. Building analytical capability
6. Developing officers, staff and volunteers

The members of the team will be expected to develop subject matter expertise in order to assist Local and Community Policing Teams and specialist departments (such as SCD regarding Modern Day Slavery and Organised Crime Group involvement in business crime) to reduce crime and disorder and increase confidence in policing within the business community.

This expertise would be disseminated to the wider Essex Police community and key partners (Community Safety Hub membership, Crime Stoppers, Community Safety Partnerships, Trading Standards etc.) to address specific crime types and issues.

This will include providing regular input to officers and staff regarding crime prevention in line with HMICFRS and College of Policing recommendations.

The unit will work with partners and key stakeholders in public and voluntary sectors to address business crime in Essex via a nationally recognised methodology incorporating the 4 key elements of PIER; Prevention, Intelligence, Enforcement and Reassurance (see **Appendix 1**);

Measuring Success

The Business Crime Unit's success can be measured across 6 key areas:

1. Increasing the number of positive disposals for business crime and ASB
2. Reducing the number of repeat victims of crime within the business community
3. Increasing the amount of shared intelligence and identified best practice
4. Conducting masterclasses with partners/ other forces/the business community to identify "what works" (including business led financial investment in crime prevention initiatives)
5. A measurable increase in satisfaction and confidence in the business community (including enhanced visible of policing in business crime areas)
6. Developing partnership working and communication (focussed on crime and ASB prevention)

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LPSU

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Appendix 1: Essex Police Business Crime Strategy



Business Cr

Appendix 2: PIER

- **Prevention**

- Identify opportunities for early intervention to prevent crime and deter criminality
- encourage businesses to engage with, or set up, business and industrial watch schemes or action panels via their local EWLO to share information and intelligence around offenders, trends and crime series
- via the new Business Crime Board and other forums/ media provide timely information and crime prevention advice to prevent businesses becoming victims of crime, thereby improving confidence in policing
- improve use of technology and information sharing to identify individual and organised criminality and to share intelligence
- provide training and support to businesses and partners to promote intelligence sharing and proportionate intervention
- provide training and guidance to Essex Police staff receiving initial reports of crime, ASB or suspicious activity to ensure they understand the impact such incidents can have on the business community
- develop opportunities to offer training for partner organisations so that they can better understand this work and be better placed to add value
- identify repeat and vulnerable victims and prioritise activity towards them, ensuring that policing teams are visible and easily accessible
- promote the Active Citizen/ volunteering/Special Constabulary agenda within the business community

- **Intelligence**

- routinely "flag" business crime incidents for ease of recognition and analysis
- identify hot spots and repeat victims and set intelligence requirements around key offenders
- develop information sharing regarding current crime hot spots with the business community to improve crime prevention awareness, vigilance and to encourage intelligence on known offenders

- ensure that all relevant information reaches our staff via local briefings and ensure they are aware of the requirement to focus on business crime (including the completion of impact statements)
 - work with the Integrated Offender Management Team (IOMT) to explore all opportunities for diversion and enforcement
 - undertake analysis of business crime and links with Organised Crime Gangs particularly for high value crimes (e.g theft of plant)
 - ensure that our Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) partners are fully briefed and able to share intelligence in a timely fashion and explore expansion of the CSAS within the business community
 - ensure that those involved in the Citizens in Policing agenda have a clear communication channel to provide intelligence and information
 - enhance our collection of community intelligence through working with partners and other organisations, such as Crime stoppers
- **Enforcement**
 - increase visible presence (both Police and partners) in identified hot spots and around areas of repeat victimisation
 - actively encourage the business community to report crime, particularly those crimes that have historically been under reported, by promoting 101, on-line reporting and ensuring call-handling staff are adequately trained to identify business specific issues
 - encourage appropriate proactive use of Stop and Search powers in hot spots and around areas of repeat victimisation
 - encourage the use of alternative resolutions for low level, first time offences (e.g. Community Payback, Community Resolution) to allow greater focus and proactivity around offenders
 - consider a business version of the Rural Officer's Companion to assist with the identification of business specific offences and to offer appropriate guidance to Officers.
 - **Reassurance**
 - use the Special Constabulary and volunteers (e.g. Active Citizens) to help increase visibility and accessibility of policing within the business community
 - make sure that opportunities to meet with Essex Police and the PFCC for Essex are communicated to those who could benefit
 - make best use of communication channels (including traditional media, electronic communications, events)

