

Essex Business Crime Strategic Board

MINUTES

Thursday 28th January 2021, 11.00am – 12.30pm Teams Meeting

Attendees:

Roger Hirst - Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex
CI Terry Balding – Essex Police
Darren Horsman – Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement, Essex PFCC
Denise Rossiter – CEO, Essex Chambers of Commerce
Lucy Childs – Events Coordinator, Essex Chambers of Commerce
Sonia Peirson – Estates Manager, DP World London Gateway
Perry Woolner – I&C Team Manager, Wave
Simona Daniel – Development Manager, FSB
Lee Hammond – Head of Security, East of England Co-op
John Moran – Minerva Fire & Security
Derrick Hidden – CEO, The Green Block
Iain Palmer – Head of Revenue Protection & Security, Trenitalia c2c
Stephen Cook – Head of Human Resources, Wilkin & Sons
Darren Hyde, Managing Director, VIP Security

In attendance:

James Palmer – Head of Prevention & Protection, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
Les Hawkins - Specials Supported Policing Coordinator, Essex Police Specials
Jenny Brouard – Citizens in Policing Manager, Essex Police

1. Welcome & Apologies

B-J Harrington – Chief Constable, Essex Police
Dean Border – Chair, Essex Chambers of Commerce
Emma Thomas - Comms & Engagement Manager, PFCC
David Burch – Director of Policy, Essex Chambers of Commerce
Jane Gardner – Dep. Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex
Samantha Johnson – Head of Security Compliance, London Stansted Airport

DR welcomed all of the Board Members and introduced a new Member to the Board, Darren Hyde the Managing Director of VIP Security.

DHy introduced himself to the Board with an overview of himself and his company. VIP Security has been established for nearly 32 years and covers all aspects of physical, personal and systems security. DHy has over three decades of experience in security as well as being a police officer in the Metropolitan Police service for 12 years. Can provide a realistic view to the issues surrounding security to the Board.

- 2. Minutes of Last Meeting:** Minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2020 were circulated in advance, reviewed and approved. These will also be available to view on the Essex Chambers' website.

Matters arising – none

- 3. Update from CI Terry Balding on Business Crime Team** – TB updated the Board with two presentations, the first was an overview of crime in Essex and the second was an update on the Business Crime Team. Current circumstances have had an impact on the original intentions for the Business Crime Team but has also highlighted the team's role as a conduit between local businesses, Essex Chambers of Commerce and Essex Police and assisting in the recovery plan.

Business Crime Key Findings November 2020 – Since August 2020 the daily number of offences has remained lower than the average for the previous four years despite the relaxation of Covid19 restrictions. 20.6% reduction for Business related crime including shoplifting, criminal damage, vehicle offences and arson. There has been a 27.2% reduction in crimes relating to the retail industry specifically. Covid19 has changed the whole landscape of business crime recording.

Business Crime Team Update – The Team has been operational for just under twelve months. TB outlined the Team's delivery plan which is to establish a network between businesses and the Police, share best practice crime prevention tips with businesses, support local policing teams, reduce fuel theft in Essex and reduce violence towards business employees.

During the pandemic the Team have been working with businesses to ensure the compliance with closures and regulations. Working with local authorities, trading standards and working in partnership and engaging with businesses rather than just enforcing the regulations. The Team wants to engage businesses with the recovery plans, TB asked the Board for any suggestions they may have on how the Team can best help with recovery post Covid19. The team have also been sharing national emerging themes for the National Business Crime Centre with businesses such as attacks on pharmacies & NHS equipment, attacks on 5G infrastructure and 'Spitting' offences against retail workers.

The Team's first priority is to establish and develop a network of business groups to act as a conduit for Essex Police to communicate and engage with business communities. This is being achieved via a monthly newsletter providing emerging crime prevention advice, growth across their social media platforms and two Q&A engagement events, one facilitated by Essex Chambers of Commerce in December and another by the Federation of Small Businesses in January. The Team have published a Business Security Guide book which is ready for distribution subject to the relaxation of Covid19 restrictions.

The Business Crime Team aims to support local and community policing teams to deliver effective business crime policing. The Team has been responsible for implementing nine Criminal Behaviour Orders for prolific business offenders. The offenders contributed to sixty-two offences in Sept & Oct, offences dropped to just six offences in Nov & Dec after the CBO had been issued. The orders include supportive requirements such as attending addiction support services. The Team also work with cross-border and neighbouring police forces to identify prolific business crime offenders. PC Plakhtienko identified a gang involved in thefts from supermarkets whilst off duty and successfully identified and apprehended offenders. They now face multiple charges across three forces.

Curries has been hit during lockdown with thefts of mobile phones. The Team helped to identify an gang behind the attacks and shared this information across all Curries stores across Essex. Through the work of Katie Roberts, the analyst on the Team, they identified high crime and Anti-Social Behaviour at a national news agents' chain in Thurrock where CCTV was being repeatedly damaged. The Business Crime Unit made multiple visits to the premises to provide the management with advice and support. Created Operation Smile in partnership with Thurrock Council ASB team and the town centre team, utilising targeting patrols, information sharing, identification of suspects and arrests. The Team also promoted the Employer Supported Policing scheme to the company and two senior staff members are intending to join up. The targeted news agents have highly praised the work of the Business Crime Unit.

Due to the Business Crime Unit's campaign, there was a significant decrease in fuel theft in September rising in October. Longer analysis is needed to establish the effectiveness of the campaign. Good collaborative working relationship with Morrison's and Tesco in the rollout of the campaign.

The Team's goal was to create conflict management workshops in order to help businesses reduce violence towards staff, due to Covid19 these plans have been put on hold. The Team have created a campaign 'Open for business, closed for crime' with the aim to encourage the reporting of crime and high-quality investigation. TB explained Essex Police Threat Harm Risk Matrix used to ascertain how and what crimes get investigated. The campaign will be delivered further and in conjunction with the Business Security Guide.

TB discussed the future of the Team and his aim going forward to create a webpage solely for the Business Crime Team. This will provide businesses with a place to go to receive up to date information and download support packs. TB aspires for every Essex business to be aware of the Business Crime Team and the help on offer to them, currently the Team's profile is relatively low in the county but hopes this will change. The Team will continue to support and assist Essex Businesses to recover post Covid19, having witnessed the impact felt on companies in other regions the Team are keen to develop a strategy to prevent this from happening in Essex. TB is open to suggestions from the Board for this strategy. The Team will also continue to support and grow Employer Supported Policing and the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.

DHy thinks that the promotion of CSAS will be good for the community as well as private security firms like his. VIP Security are accredited within the scheme but feels that more could be done through further promotion. TB informed the Board that one of the PCs on the Business Crime Team was a trainer on CSAS and will report back to them after the meeting. TB is also keen to work with DHy and the Chambers to help promote the scheme along with Jenny Brouard. DHy wants to know what accredited businesses can do in order to support Essex Police. RH support what TB and RHy have said about CSAS and pointed out the success of the scheme within the public sector, over 500 employees who are accredited. Agrees the scheme needs to be pushed further. DR to provide DHy details to TB to follow up on the points raised after the meeting. JB also happy to get to discuss CSAS with DHy after the meeting.

DR asked if there was a measure of Business Crime Units across the country to garner information from other Teams who may have been operational for longer. TB to go back to her with requested information from the National Business Crime Unit. TB knows that Cornwall and Devon police forces are in the process of setting up their own team and

feels that Essex are ahead of the curve as forces are realising the importance of having these dedicated units.

DHo pointed out the decreasing number of business crimes and asked TB whether he thought this was solely down to Covid19 restrictions or whether there was an opportunity to keep these levels down, a structural change as apposed to a temporary change? TB agreed that Covid19 is having an impact but also that the strategies and style of Essex Police is working and will help to maintain the lower crime figures. TB repeated that this will also be achieved through the recovery strategy and welcomed suggestions from the Board on how best the Team can support businesses.

SD has noted the lower reports of physical crimes from her membership but has noticed a big increase in Cyber Crimes and scams and asked TB if there were any statistics to support the growing threat. TB accepts that Cyber Crime and scams are getting more sophisticated and prevalent and they are working to put things in place to combat it such as the introduction of a Reginal Resilience Unit. DR will speak to SD about the launch of the Cyber Crime Board that aims to help support businesses in this matter and encourage them to report and be more open about the attacks they experience.

4. Work in progress for the next 12 months and Communication & Partnership - DR asked the Board how can the Board improve and stand out from other similar organisations.

DHy emphasised the importance of marketing, communication and keeping Businesses informed of the work done by the Business Crime Team and the help available to them. The Board should be open to the reality that Business Crime has on companies and work as a funnel to filter these issues back to other Members of the Board.

DHo now there is an established Business Crime Team operational for 12 months there is great opportunity to build back better for when Covid19 restrictions are lifted, especially around areas such as the high street. Continue to build the network of businesses with a structured strategic approach.

RH agrees and emphasised the importance of communication in order to get businesses to participate and understand how, working together, we can reduce incidence of businesses crime. As the Police Fire & Crime Commissioner RH is working with colleagues across the country and in November set up an Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC) and a National Business Crime Forum. The APCC has raised the issue with Kit Malthouse, Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service, who fully supports the work. RH would like to see part of the Safer Streets fund, being launched on 28th January 2021, focussed on business. The APCC successfully launched the Keep Christmas Kind campaign focussed around safe guarding employees during the festive period which raised public awareness of the violence towards workers and encouraged the reporting of incidence to the Police. DR proposed to RH to invite Kit Malthouse to attend a Board Meeting.

DR suggested to utilise the Essex Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses as business organisations to run campaigns for Essex Police to increase communication and get the message out there.

JP asked TB as the Fire & Rescue Service and partners what can they do to support the communications going out from Essex Police? They are routinely in 4,000 businesses annually as part of their protection activity, is there anything they can do to

support the Business Crime Team when they are interacting with businesses? TB is very enthusiastic about the potential to share communication from the different services and will talk with JP outside of the Board meeting to discuss ideas.

IP spoke of the relaxation of Covid19 restrictions as Summer approaches and the importance of creating messaging to show people travelling to Southend that it is safe to do so and raise awareness of business crime. IP suggested it would be beneficial to have a joint communication campaign to do so. IP also mentioned the increase last year of unlicensed music events and the importance of monitoring and restricting them. Stressed the importance of encouraging families to come to Southend and the benefit this will be to businesses. TB in the process of creating a strategy, with the help of Essex Chambers & FSB, to combat unlicensed music events like Mansion House parties. Making businesses aware of what they may be renting their premises out for, including industrial units. Develop a campaign on how businesses can prevent themselves becoming victims of unlicensed music events.

DR to meet with TB, DHo & RP to discuss the campaigns and strategy going forward.

DHo proposed an action to expand and work on the Building Back Better campaign to present at the next Board meeting.

JM suggested an accreditation scheme for businesses to sign up to similar to Secure by Design.

5. Discussion around Employer Supported Policing and expansion of Specials Role into Business Crime Team (Jenny Brouard/Les Hawkins)

The Board was joined by Jenny Brouard and Les Hawkins to give an update on Special Policing in Essex. JB is the Citizens at Policing Commissioner at Essex Police responsible for working in partnership with organisation and the CSAS scheme, working with companies such as VIP Security. Works with DHo on Volunteer Police Cadets. Is also responsible for overseeing Police Support Volunteers, Essex Watch Liaison Officers, Neighbourhood Watch and over the last four months has taken over as lead for the Special Constabulary. They have merged the Special Constabulary with the Citizens in Policing team which has proven to be very beneficial and means they can really embrace Employer Supported Policing and open up opportunities for those in other schemes to help combat business crime. Essex Watch Liaison Officers are linking into the Business Crime Unit directly, promoting the Team and sharing their monthly newsletter. Pointed out the huge potential there is for the Special Constabulary and Citizens in Policing teams to support and promote the communication, campaigns and work done by the Board and Business Crime Unit. Essex's Special Constabulary is recognised as the top scheme of its kind nationally.

LH, Special Supported Policing Coordinator, gave a presentation to the Board explaining what Employer Supported Policing is and the work they do. Essex Police were the first force in the country to employ someone full time to lead and promote the scheme. Employer Supported Policing scheme has been very successful in Essex, the MET Police have taken their lead from Essex along with many other forces who look to Essex to devise their own business plans. ESP is a Home Office scheme and is similar to the Ministry of Defence scheme with Military Reservists, where employers allow their employees to have paid leave to perform their duties. However, where businesses will be aware of Military Reservists not many businesses have heard of ESP scheme. Unlike the MOD scheme where they can

state how much leave an individual must have in order to perform their duties the ESP scheme is completely bespoke to business. This flexibility means that businesses of all sizes can join the scheme. There is no contractual obligation for a business they just register their company to the scheme and state how much leave they can offer. Special Constables are local volunteers who have full police powers and have the same responsibilities as Police Officers but complete their duties in their spare time. Their training is tailored initially as there isn't the same opportunity to provide them with the 20-week training the Police Officers receive. There are many transferable skills that employees can bring to their business having been learnt from their time volunteering, which is a benefit to employers. Skills include; conflict management, leadership, problem solving and effective communication. ESP works to promote a business's Special Police Officer and the work they are doing in the community as good news stories. It's been proven that people who volunteer enjoy improved physical and emotional health they also feel a sense of achievement and satisfaction which can all be an asset to a business. In 2020, ESP Officers gave 206,809 hours of volunteering policing, this is almost 26,000 8 hour shifts. Essex Chambers of Commerce have played a big part in helping LH to register businesses to the scheme. Since LH started his role in 2017, he has registered 27% of all business nationally, he attributes a large portion of that percentage to the opportunities given to him by the Chambers.

LH asked the Board if they would be interested in registering for the scheme and then allowed to come into the business and recruit members of their staff. LH also asked SD if there was an opportunity to approach the FSB members in order to target smaller businesses. SD is keen to work with LH on this.

LH invited PW to speak about his experience volunteering as an ESP Officer. PW works for Wave, the water retail arm of a joint venture between Essex & Suffolk Water and Anglian Water and has been an ESP officer for twenty-nine years. Wave provide PW with 10 days a year paid leave to fulfil his duties. PW works as part of the Road Crime Team covering the whole county and focused mainly on the A12 and A127. Completed courses and has the same level of qualification as Essex Police colleagues. Sees the opportunities afforded to him by being an ESP Officer as a privilege. Works closely with county triage, PW is the driver for Mental Health Nurses attending to call outs. Licensed Counter Terrorism Search Officers working with disaster victim recovery.

SD wondered whether the Job Protection Scheme would offer businesses the opportunity to access the ESP scheme as there are currently a number of employees not working due to Covid19. Would employees be allowed to get involved in the scheme if they are furloughed? LH confirmed there would not be an issue as the ESP work would be voluntary. PW commented that there has been a noticeable increase in the hours as people have more time to give.

DHy asked LH if it was still the case that members of his staff who are SIA frontline licensed staff are unable to become an ESP Officer. LH confirmed this is correct under national guidance due to potential conflict of interest but potential for office-based staff to become ESP Officers, this would be judged on an individual basis.

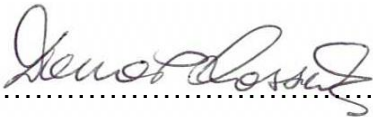
SP asked if people have a choice in the rolls that they are assigned to within ESP, for example those who are retired, could they choose an administrative roll over a more physical role? LH explained that the training would be the same for all ESP Officers as it would be for other Police Officers and would include an aspect of 'on the beat' training. There are then opportunities to specialise in certain fields that would best suit their skills but is focussed more towards frontline work. LH recommended

Citizens in Policing for those who wish to do more administrative rolls. JB added that there are now over 200 Police Support Volunteers who also do this work. For example, retired bank managers who use their transferable skills and knowledge to volunteer for the Police's Fraud Unit. RH highlighted that there is no age limit to becoming a ESP officer.

6. AOB

DR invited all Board Members to attend the Cyber Crime Conference on 16th April from 8.30am – 10.30am. Has secured Chief Inspector of Essex Police to speak at the conference and is hopeful for RH to also speak, RH is prohibited from speaking at the event unless the election date for the PFCC is moved.

7. Date and location of next meeting: TBC via Teams.

Signed 

Date ...16.02.2021.....