

<b>3 December 2020</b>		<b>ITEM: 6</b>
<b>Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Council Funded Police Officers</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> Grays Town Centre, Ockendon, Tilbury Town centre, Stanford Le Hope and Purfleet	<b>Key Decision:</b> N/A	
<b>Report of:</b> Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Cheryl Wells, Strategic Lead, Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Resilience		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Julie Rogers, Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an outline of the activities and successes of the Council funded additional Essex Police Officers, deployed as part of the Town Centre Team (TCT) within Community Policing in Thurrock, during their first year of operation.

The Council recognises that anti-social behaviour has always been a key priority for residents, and in January 2019, The Leader, within his Portfolio Holder Report announced that revenue surplus funding of £750k be committed to provide additional police officers over a three year period, recognising resident concerns and their request to have an increased visible police presence.

Since this commitment, in March 2019 the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) also announced additional Police Officers and the introduction of Town Centre Police Officers patrolling our borough, with effect from July 2019 when 7 Officers were introduced in Grays, South Ockendon and Stanford Le Hope.

This team has provided increased visible policing and their priority is to tackle ASB in our busiest areas, protect the vulnerable and tackle crimes against businesses. Following this success and the benefit to our local community the Council committed the Thurrock Funded Police officers to extend the Town Centre Police team in January 2020 to Tilbury and Purfleet.

The Covid-19 pandemic has prevented some of the planned activity of the TCT, however these resources have been diverted to enforce latest Government guidance in relation to Covid-19 and to provide an assurance and presence in our larger footfall areas.

The roles are dedicated to work within the key town centres to provide a proactive response to emerging crime trends and appropriate local issues as identified by the command team. Directly supporting each of the Essex Police 4Vs priorities, namely: Victims, Violence, Visibility, and Vulnerability. The key purpose is to promote public confidence and to take a dynamic and flexible approach to Community Town Issues.

## **1. Recommendation(s)**

**That the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

**1.1 Note the positive approach taken by this team to community engagement.**

**1.2 Promote the work of Town Centre officers to their residents to improve public confidence in local policing and encourage reporting of concerns.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 The Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner for Essex Police announced that a proportion of the uplift in front line police officers in Essex would be dedicated to town centre policing within the county. In July 2019 the Thurrock Town Centre team went live and consisted of 1 Sergeant and 7 Constables. The towns covered within this initial allocation of officers were Grays, South Ockendon and Stanford Le Hope. All designated towns along with the number of officers allocated to them were determined by the Essex Police strategic change team. The criteria used for this determination was based on the recent recorded crime and ASB data per 1000 residents of each town. Following discussions between Thurrock Council and Essex Police representatives an additional 4 Constables were added to the Thurrock team to cover Tilbury and Purfleet. These additional officers joined the existing Town Centre Team in January 2020 and are funded by Thurrock Council.

2.2 The Council recognise the importance of multi-agency working with Essex Police in order to address the concerns of the community, by tackling ASB and gang related violence in the borough and by building confidence through increased presence of uniformed officers. Residents were reporting to the Council and police that they were not seeing good visibility of policing and therefore they had reduced confidence in the commitment of agencies to tackle their concerns and reverse the trend in increasing reported violent crime. Residents also perceived an increase in ASB, which was not reflected in reported crime stats.

2.3 Following the implementation of town centre policing teams, it was agreed that Council funded officers would be best placed complimenting this team and their work in the most vulnerable areas of the Borough: Tilbury and Purfleet.

2.4 When fully resourced the TCT comprise of 1 sergeant and:

Grays	3 PC's
South Ockendon	2 PC's
Stanford Le Hope	2 PC's
Purfleet	2 PC's
Tilbury	2 PC's

This team reports to the Community Safety Inspector for Thurrock and are in addition to an establishment resourced Community Policing Team of 15 Community Police Constables, 11 Police Community Support Officers and 2 Sergeants.

2.5 Main Duties of the TCT are:

- To support businesses and local authorities, create a safe town centre and increase public confidence by preventing crime and disorder.
- To provide a visible presence in the local town community and resolve local town issues by adopting a partnership and problem solving approach.
- To work alongside other teams that investigate crime and address violence in the High Streets.
- Working alongside partners to tackle long-term patterns, series and issues as a team.
- To provide attendance at incidents where necessary and appropriate.
- To conduct intelligence led, proactive and problem solving activities to reduce, resolve and detect vulnerability in the High Streets. These vulnerabilities include County line drug dealing, Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) linked criminality and other similar issues linked to wider crime problems.
- To proactively focus on retail crime and the development of stronger partnership working to help reduce retail crime.
- To adopt leadership and participation (where appropriate) of Night Time Economy (NTE) problem solving approaches in partnership with other departments and community partners.
- To manage public facing websites and use social media, as appropriate, to promote and support the work of the Town Centre Teams to increase public confidence.

2.6 Through these actions, the aim is to:

- Reduce the threat, harm, and risk to our communities
- Improve public confidence
- Create safer communities
- Support business growth

2.7 The measurable outcomes are:

- Number of arrests
- Stop searches
- Intelligence Reports Submitted
- Investigations completed
- Number of CPN/CPW (Community Protection Notices and Warnings) issued

2.8 As of the end of September TCT officers have:

- Made 82 arrests
- Carried out 82 operations in specified areas
- Conducted 150 stop searches
- Conducted 278 separate engagement specific visits to local businesses  
*\*this activity has been significantly affected by Covid restrictions*
- Attended more than 400 incidents
- Submitted 159 intelligence reports
- Investigated over 110 criminal offences
- Have issued 32 separate CPW/CPN's and secured 23 court convictions  
*\*some additional cases from this period have yet to be heard at court.*

2.9 Notable examples of TCT activity and joint activity with Thurrock Council:

2.9.1 Officers from the Thurrock TCT having worked closely with other departments assisted in educating officers in the use of community protection warnings and notices to allow investigations to be fully investigated and deliver positive results for victims of crime. This has recently resulted in a juvenile male, Ned WALL, being arrested following a breach of a community protection notice and other offences. Along with a prolific offender Kelly Martin being banned from Grays High Street and surrounding areas due to other prolific offending and antisocial behaviour.

2.9.2 In July 2020, following reports of a Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) in Dilkes park TCT officers responded and within minutes were on scene with the two juvenile victims who sustained injuries following an unprovoked attack with weapons. This allowed for expedient safeguarding and scene management to allow officers to fully investigate the incident and identify 3 suspects.

2.9.3 In September 2020, officers responded to reports of five males fighting in Derwent Parade South Ockendon, within minutes two males were identified

and arrested for Affray. Without the prompt response from the TCT officers the offenders could have easily made off and never been identified.

- 2.9.4 As part of regular offender management Thurrock TCT have implemented Operation Wantage. The main aim for this operation is to obtain and secure Criminal behaviour orders (CBO's) against known and prolific Thurrock Nominals especially ones who frequent the five town centres, but also to allow the Local Policing Team (LPT) and other departments' access to information, intelligence and evidence to secure CBO's against other offenders
- 2.9.5 In September 2020, officers from the Thurrock TCT received reports of a male aggressively begging in the High Street in Grays. TCT officers increased patrols in the location, identified the male, and following interactions with the male and based on the information/evidence obtained the male was arrested and subsequently charged with begging and obstructing a constable. The male is currently awaiting trial for both offences.
- 2.9.6 Op Agnes was a joint Community Police Team (CPT) TCT and Thurrock Council operation in response to waste carriers in the district with a specific emphasis on road traffic matters and the possible theft of materials. This operation was initiated following feedback received from residents/councillors around this type of activity in the district and the associated incidents/offences. These joint patrols and activity are fed back to the community via both Thurrock CSP and the local police social media accounts. As a result of previous ongoing joint working with Thurrock Environmental Enforcement officers they were named Team of the Year at the prestigious Keep Britain Tidy Awards 2020 with a representative from the CPT also in attendance at the ceremony.
- 2.9.7 Op Adaminaby has been a joint CPT/TCT and Thurrock Council operation in response to ASB in the district with a specific emphasis on the use of nitrous oxide canisters in public spaces. This operation was initiated following consistent feedback received from local residents around this type of activity in the district, the associated ASB and following the trial period has been awarded additional funding to extend its duration as well as other local authorities interested in replicating it. Since the start of these joint operations there have been 32 fixed penalty notices issued, 1 person arrested, 10 community resolutions for possession of cannabis issued and 37 community protection warning notices issued.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

#### **3.1 Summary of Activity Delivered by TCT funded officers from Jan 2020 to September 2020**

- 3.1.1 It should be noted that these 9 months have presented a unique challenge to policing our communities due to the global Coronavirus pandemic. Whilst we have seen a decline in acquisitive and violent crimes there has been a significant increase in reporting of anti-social behaviour and a need to

respond to the changing guidance in relation to Covid-19 restrictions has resulted in additional demands on all areas of policing. The policing response to the Covid-19 situation has required a flexible and sustained approach and it must be acknowledged that the overwhelming majority of the period covered in this section occurred within Covid -19 restrictions.

3.1.2 The 4 Council funded Town Centre officers started on the 27 January 2020 and were deployed to Purfleet (2 officers) and Tilbury (2 officers), see appendix 1 for geographical beat areas. Their specific performance indicator returns from the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 to the end of September 2020 are:

- Made 18 arrests
- Carried out 21 operations in specified areas
- Conducted 32 stop searches
- Conducted 10 separate engagement specific visits to local businesses  
*\*this activity has been significantly affected by Covid restrictions*
- Submitted 56 intelligence reports
- Attended more than 140 incidents
- Investigated over 35 criminal offences
- Have issued 10 separate CPW/CPN's and secured 3 court convictions  
*\*some additional cases from this period have yet to be heard at court.*

3.1.3 In July 2020, officers from the Thurrock TCT attended Purfleet Garrison following reports of a cherry picker being dumped in a wooded area nearby. Officers quickly arrived on the scene and following checks discovered this belonged to GAP hire and was stolen from a local Travis Perkins yard, with an estimated value of between £140,000 and £160,000.

3.1.4 In June 2020, Essex Police received reports of a large gathering in one of the car parks located on the Garrison Estate in Purfleet. This gathering had been advertised on social media as a street party and included the use of external amplified music equipment, resulting in a significant number of people attending the location with multiple reports of ASB being received from residents. This gathering was in contravention of the national Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time. There was also additional concern that further gatherings might be organised for the location, which would then potentially increase issues for residents and emergency services. In response to this officers from the TCT increased visible patrols of the location and also conducted an in depth investigation to identify the organiser of the gathering so that appropriate action could be taken. Following this investigation the organiser was identified along with apparent plans to hold further events. Officers from the TCT initiated and arranged for the organiser to be spoken with by officers where he was served with a Community Protection Warning (CPW). The CPW outlined a number of restrictions that were being placed on him in respect of preventing any further gatherings and as a result the planned future events were cancelled and no further gatherings took place on the estate.

3.1.5 ASB in Tilbury, specifically within the town centre was of concern for both Thurrock Council and local police officers. In order to manage and reduce this localised ASB, officers from the local CPT and TCT engaged in a partnership tasking and information sharing process with the CSP, Housing Team, CCTV Enforcement, local schools and representatives from social care. As a result of the partnership approach, a number of individuals causing ASB in the area were identified with potential enforcement, diversion and safeguarding options discussed and agreed. Over the course of a number of months and via this holistic approach a number of individuals that had been persistently causing ASB within the community improved their behaviour and subsequently reduced the required interactions with statutory services.

### 3.2 Priorities for Delivery to March 2021

- Continue to enforce latest Government guidance in relation to Covid-19.
- Visibility remains a key priority of the Chief Constable and our residents. The recent introduction of two Community Safety and Engagement Officers (CSEO) within the District will work with the TCT to raise their profile and awareness of their activities.
- Working with the Business Crime team and CSP ASB Officer pursue Criminal Behaviour Orders for Repeat Offenders in Grays Town Centre and improve it as a safe environment to shop in.

### 3.3 Long term Priorities for Delivery to January 2024

3.3.1 The long-term priorities for delivery in relation to the Town Centre team are based on the above core principles of:

- Increasing visibility of policing
- Increasing the public confidence in policing
- Reducing reported crime and ASB within the town centres in the district.
- Identify and take enforcement actions in relation to persistent offenders.
- Increase joint partnership working and patrols with statutory partners.

3.3.2 The Police Public Perception survey is used to establish, at quarterly intervals, the current perception of police among local residents in key identified areas. The Thurrock district results for Q4 2019/20 have shown a decrease in perception levels in all but 2 areas when compared to the same period in 2018/19. There are a number of potential reasons for this – including the National and Local reporting on the tragic event on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 in Thurrock, the impact of COVID-19 and the relationship of the Police and Public in enforcing Coronavirus Regulations Act. It is too early to say exactly what the decrease is attributable too. However, it is worth noting there are some improving areas around public perception and that is an increase in the public feeling informed about local policing. Essex Police have this year invested in local Community Safety Engagement Officers (CSEO's) who work closely with the local CSP in trying to improve confidence in the local area and promote the work they are undertaking. In addition, a decrease was seen in

those who felt crime and ASB had become more of an issue in the last twelve months.

The focus of the engagement strategy for 2020/21 will be cognisant of the areas where decreases were identified. Not accounting for changes within statistical tolerance levels the two areas that saw the largest decrease as comment above were:

- 21.8% decrease in the satisfaction with the level of policing in the local area
- 19.1% decrease in the perception that police in the area are doing a good/excellent job

3.3.3 Improved performance around Public perception was seen in the following areas:

- 5.2% increase in the perception that the community feel very/fairly informed of what Essex Police are doing in the local area
- 6.6% decrease in people who thought that Crime/ASB had become more of an issue in the area in the last 12 months

3.3.4 The Thurrock district has significantly decreased its engagement activity as a result of Covid-19. However, when restrictions are lifted it is hoped engagement activity can be increased. In the meantime, other ways of engaging with the residents of Thurrock are being sought such as the Partnership Q&A with the Tilbury Resident's Facebook group and the Community Safety and Engagement Officer (CSEO). Periodic reviews of engagement activity utilise feedback from the community, partners, persons/staff taking part and the quarterly Public Perception Survey results.

3.3.5 The results of the public perception survey are routinely shared and discussed upon release at executive partnership meetings within the Community Safety Partnership and at the Thurrock Independent Advisory Group (IAG). The results are presented by the district police representative and are then open to scrutiny and discussion by the partnership members and public representatives present at each respective meeting. These results are incorporated into the Thurrock CSP Engagement Plan and Strategic Assessment document as well as include in the community's cohesion work that is undertaken by the CSP in respect of hard to reach groups.

3.3.6 Following the easing of Covid-19 social distancing measures and the 'rule of 6' the district plans to re-integrate face to face engagement with our focused street meets, include a re-launch of 'Coffee with Cops', along with the partnership pop up events that have previously been conducted with Thurrock CSP, proving to be very popular when conducted previously. These types of engagement events are well established in the district, however there will be an increased emphasis on the Town Centre Teams and the additional council funded teams in Tilbury and Purfleet.



- 3.3.7 Since the inception of the Town Centre Team, a total of five defendants have successfully been remanded to prison either pending trial or following sentencing.

**Case Study:** Of note is the case of Darren Tubby. Tubby is a prolific offender within Grays Town Centre and has subsequently committed a theft series of over 15 offences within a space of two weeks. The Town Centre Team identified the impact Tubby was having on local businesses and community confidence within the town centre and started to plan a long-term problem-solving operation to prevent Tubby from offending.

Tubby was released three times by the courts after appropriate applications were made to remand and the Town Centre Team subsequently applied for a Criminal Behaviour Order to prohibit Tubby from entering Grays Town Centre.

Tubby was successfully remanded, thanks to a joint approach between the Town Centre Team and Thurrock Council, and a three-month interim closure order was successfully obtained on his home address.

Tubby received a custodial sentence for the offences that the TCT had charged him in relation to and he was issued with a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO).

Subsequently Tubby has received an additional custodial sentence for breaching the conditions of his CBO.

- 3.3.8 As of Oct 2020 the dedicated Police officers are:
- Purfleet: PC 77994 Bran Butcher & PC 78568 Nicole Plom
  - Tilbury: PC 77725 Ayden Dedman & PC 78933 Richard Harris

### 3.4 Summary

The key challenges faced by the TCT for the coming year are to:

- Balance the policing of Covid-19 with operational need and the delivery of priorities outlined above for 2021.
- Continue to provide additional visibility in areas of high footfall and provide reassurance to communities.

## 4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 These recommendations are made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:

1. Provide members with an insight as to the remit of the team, their progress and some of their key successes.
2. Enable members to understand the value they bring to our residents and promote their work to improve public confidence and provide reassurance.

## 5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 We have received regular positive feedback since the launch of the teams as residents and businesses alike have been asking for more visible policing and it is great to be able to deliver.

## 6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 This team of officers is central to delivering Thurrock Council's priority of:

**People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

This means:

- High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
- Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
- Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

- 6.2 This supports the following Community Safety Partnership Priorities for 20/21:

2. Tackling Violence and Vulnerability, including Gang Related activity
3. Local Community and Visibility

- 6.3 These additional officers support Essex Police's focus on:

- Victims
- Visibility
- Violence
- Vulnerability

- 6.4 They will deliver on the following priorities of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex:

- More local, visible and accessible policing
- Cracking down on anti-social behaviour
- Tackling gangs and serious violence
- Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm

## 7. Implications

### 7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**  
**Assistant Director of Finance**

The additional police officers continue to be funded from the reserve created from the members' surplus.

There are no other wider specific financial implications arising from the report

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**  
**Assistant Director of Law and Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. It should be noted however that whilst there is close working between the Police and the Council, individual operational decisions in respect of potential criminal activity have to be assessed on the evidence and on the basis of proportional policing / enforcement.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**  
**Community Development Manager**

Additional policing will have a positive impact on reducing inequalities within our deprived communities

## 7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

This report will help the Council and its Partners ensure that they are delivering on its commitments to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

## 8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

To find out more on the work of this team Follow Essex Police (Thurrock) on;  
Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/EPThurrock/>  
Twitter - <https://twitter.com/thurrockcpt?lang=en>

## 9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 - Maps of areas policed

### Report Author:

Inspector Paul Ballard, Essex Police

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