

8 September 2022		ITEM: 6
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Council Funded Police Officers		
Wards and communities affected: Tilbury Town Centre, and Purfleet	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Michelle Cunningham - Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: Cheryl Wells - Strategic Lead, Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Resilience		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers - Director of Public Realm		
This report is Public		

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.

This Town Centre Team, since their inception in 2019, have provided increased visible policing and their priority is to tackle ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) in our busiest areas, protect the vulnerable, and tackle crimes against businesses. Following the initial success of this team and the benefit to our local community the Council committed funding to extend the Town Centre Police team in January 2020 to Tilbury and Purfleet.

The roles are dedicated to work within the key town centers (see *Appendix 1*) to provide a proactive response to emerging crime trends and appropriate local issues as identified by the command team.

These teams directly support 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 issues in our towns.

1. Recommendation(s)

That the CGS 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.**
- 1.3 Support the decision to carry out a review of the funded Town Centre Police Officers, as is good practise with all council contracts**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Council recognises that anti-social behaviour has always been a key priority for residents, and in January 2019, The Leader, within his annual Portfolio Holder Report announced that an additional 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.
- 2.2 Initially the Council was planning to implement a team of officers, including a Sergeant for three years. Following the announcement from the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner (PFCC), that a proportion of the uplift in front line police officers in Essex would be dedicated to town centre policing within the county, in consultation with Essex Police it was agreed to review plans and align them with the broader Essex Police structures.
- 2.3 In July 2019, Essex Police introduced the Thurrock Town Centre Team which consisted of 1 Sergeant and 7 Constables. The areas for Town Centre Policing were determined by the Essex Police Strategic Change Team. The criteria used for this determination was based on the recorded crime and ASB data per 1,000 residents of each town. Within this initial allocation the towns covered were Grays, South Ockendon and Stanford Le Hope.
- 2.4 In consultation with Essex Police it was agreed that the Council funded officers would be best placed complimenting the Town Centre policing team in the most vulnerable areas of the Borough at that time, Tilbury and Purfleet. The Thurrock Council funded officers, of which there are 4, joined the existing Town Centre Team in January 2020 and are funded until February 2024, within the £750k allocated budget.
- 2.5 Following a review of the data the officers for Stanford Town Centre area was expanded to cover Corringham Town Centre in March 2021.
- 2.6 This team reports to the Community Safety Inspector for Thurrock and are in addition to an establishment resourced Community Policing Team of 18

Community Police Constables, 10 Police Community Support Officers and 2 Sergeants. When fully resourced the Town Centre Team comprises of 1 sergeant and:

Grays	3 PC's
South Ockendon	2 PC's
Stanford Le Hope and Corringham	2 PC's
Purfleet	2 PC's funded by Thurrock Council
Tilbury	2 PC's funded by Thurrock Council

2.7 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.

2.8 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

2.9 For the 3 months ending July 22 the Town Centre Teams all areas:

- Attended 106 incidents
- Made 26 Arrests
- Spent 717 hours on patrol

- Recorded 30 of investigations
- Conducted 74 stop and searches
- Had 44 results at court (excluding July data)

2.10 For the 7 months ending July 22 the funded Town Centre Teams achieved:

	Tilbury	Purfleet	Total
No of incidents attended:	110	34	144
No. of arrests made:	8	4	12
No of hours on patrol:	459	267	726
No of Investigations recorded:	21	18	39
No of Stop searches conducted:	47	6	53
Court results:	27	25	52

2.11 Public Perception

Key indicators from the Essex Police Public Perceptions Survey are shown below comparing pre TCT introduction to latest data. The results represent the combined sample of interviews across each year. The annual sample size for the survey is 7,710 Essex residents – approx. 550 annually from each of the 14 Districts.

Survey question	Q4 19/20	Q4 21/22	Change
Confidence in local policing (% strongly/tend to agree)	52 %	71%	+19%
Essex Police understand the issues that affects your community (% strongly/tend to agree)	58%	55%	-3%
Essex Police are dealing with crime & ASB (% strongly/tend to agree)	42%	50%	+8%
Confidence in receiving a good service from Essex Police (% very/fairly confident)	60%	72%	+12%

2.12 Case study provided by the Town Centre Team officer for Purfleet

Op Smile- Garrison Parade- PC PLOM

Op Smile was an ASB and drug dealing operation generated by PC PLOM on the Thurrock Town Centre Team.

The operation was designed to combat the ASB specifically around the Garrison parade shops, “The Green,” and surrounding roads.

The Thurrock Town Centre team worked multiple shifts in an attempt to reduce crime rates and ensure the Purfleet community felt listened to.

On the dedicated shifts, Op Smile had 2 arrests, multiple stop searches, traffic tickets, and Community Resolutions. PC PLOM issued 5 Community Protection Warnings and 2 Community Protection Notices for ASB. The operation also generated many more intelligence reports which were entered onto the police system. Although Op Smile was related to specific days, PC PLOM continued to patrol and assist the Local Policing Team and BTP (British Transport Police) with outstanding enquiries which were received from residents in Purfleet.

1 male has since been charged, early 2022, with possession and intent to supply class A & B X2 (cocaine and cannabis), Concern in the supply of drugs X2 and possession of a bladed article. This male will be going to trial in Crown Court next year.

The businesses and residents have seen a significant impact within the community from the response from the Thurrock Town Centre Team and feel that the spirit and safety has been restored.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 There are no comparable ASB or crime stats by ward at present due to the periods of enforced restrictions put in place due to the pandemic which resulted in a reduction in crime and an increase in ASB – due to the inclusion of reports in relation to breaches of lockdown restrictions.
- 3.2 Current issues:
- Currently the TCT Officers in **Tilbury** are working with the Roads Policing Unit to implement Op Savage to address the concerns being raised by residents and members in relation to the anti-social driving of motorbikes around Civic Square and surrounding area.
 - TCT Officers in **Purfleet** continue to work with Housing Officers to identify those causing a nuisance on the estate and particularly around the shops
- 3.3 Of the non-funded areas **Grays** Town Centre remains the area of highest footfall, business crime / ASB and risks in relation to gang related activity and violence against women and girls.
- 3.4 As of August 2022, the dedicated funded Police officers are:
- Purfleet: PC 80067 Alexander Grimsey and PC 81502 Callum Matthews
 - Tilbury: PC 76882 Adam Walker and PC 81492 Charis Moss
- 3.5 The contract and funding expire in February 2024, as with any contract, it is always good practise to review, considering changes over time in Essex Police and Thurrock Council to ensure it is still meeting the needs of Thurrock residents and presenting good value for money.

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.
3. To ensure continued need, best practise and value for money.

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

5.1 Residents and businesses alike continue to highlight a desire for more visible policing

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 22/23:

3. Violence and Vulnerability: tackling gang related activity and offensive weapons to reduce drug driven violence
6. Tackling Community Based Anti-Social Behaviour and Safeguarding Victims
8. Safer Streets through increased visibility and community engagement
9. Tackling offending

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:

- Reducing drug driven violence
- Preventing business crime, fraud, and cyber crime

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

The additional police officers continue to be funded from the reserve created from the members' surplus until February 2024.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Mark Bowen**
Interim Head of Legal

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 must 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 Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder and Impact on Looked After Children

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):

N/A

- 9. Appendices to the report**

1. Maps of areas policed

Report Author:

A/Chief Inspector Terry Fisher - Essex Police

Michelle Cunningham - Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager

Appendix 1: Maps of areas covered by TCT

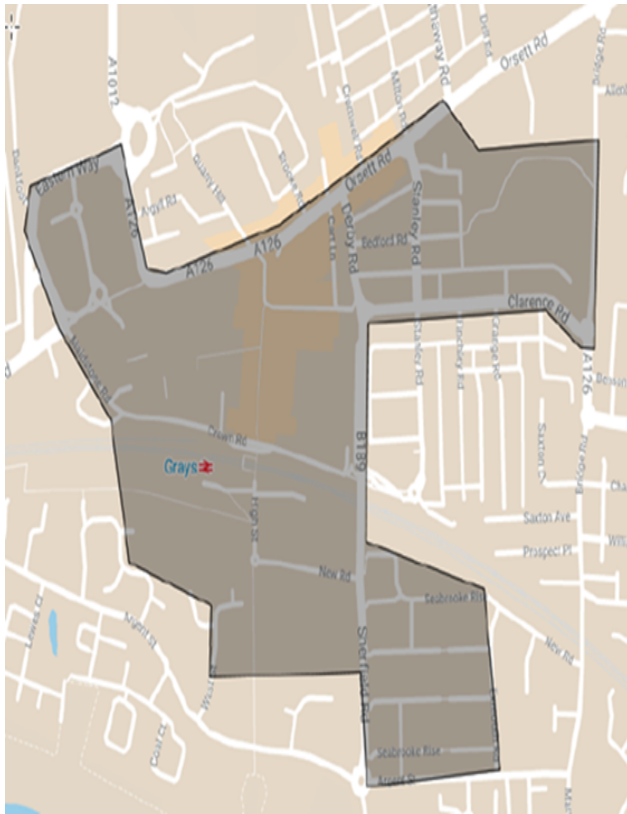
Purfleet: funded



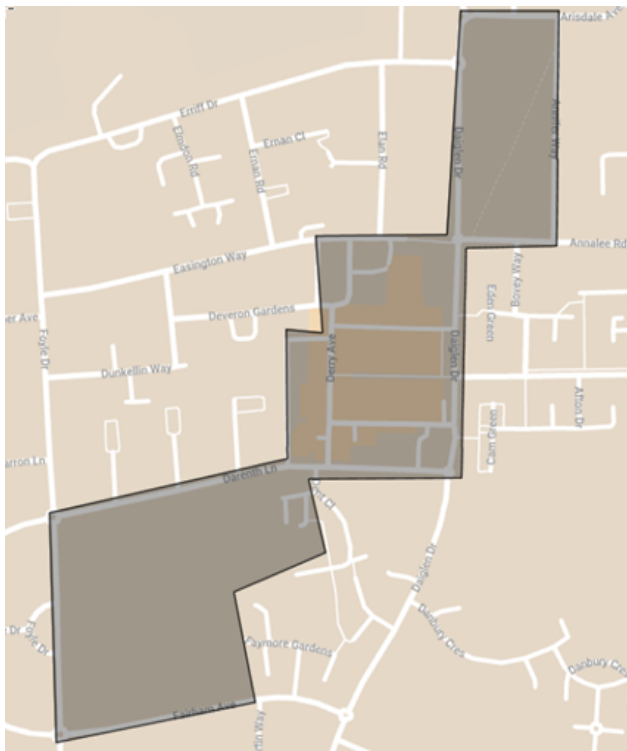
Tilbury: funded



Grays:



South Ockendon:



Stanford Le Hope and Corringham:

