



ROGER HIRST'S MANIFESTO 2024

Manifesto 2024

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| My Plan for a Safer Essex | 3 |
| Getting Crime Down | 4 |
| KEY PLEDGES: | 6 |
| More local, visible & accessible policing | 6 |
| Drive down anti-social behaviour & crime | 6 |
| Beat knife crime and drug gangs and protect young people | 7 |
| Protect women and girls from violence and domestic abuse | 8 |
| Ensure vulnerable people are protected | 9 |
| Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to Zero | 9 |
| Fire & Rescue Service Reform | 10 |
| A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS | 11 |
| How we have done against My Plan 2021 | 11 |
| The Role of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner | 12 |
| HOT TOPICS AND OPINION PIECES | 13 |
| Local, Visible and Accessible Policing | 13 |
| Reducing Drug Driven Violence | 14 |
| Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls | 15 |
| Improving Safety on our Roads | 15 |
| Protecting Rural and Isolated Areas | 16 |
| Firearms Licensing | 17 |
| Encouraging Volunteers and Community Support | 19 |
| Cyber Crime, Business Crime and Fraud | 19 |
| Emergency Service Collaboration | 20 |
| Fire & Rescue Service Reform | 21 |
| Supporting our Officers and Staff | 22 |
| Environmental Strategy | 22 |

Roger Hirst Manifesto, March 2024

My Plan for a Safer Essex

More local, visible & accessible policing

- *Ensure the police are there when you need them. Deliver effective response and follow up all reasonable lines of enquiry.*

Drive down anti-social behaviour & crime

- *More hotspot policing and monitoring known offenders to prevent crime, including in our rural areas.*

Beat knife crime and drug gangs and protect young people

- *Take drugs and weapons off our streets and help young people get out of gangs.*

Protect women and girls from violence and domestic abuse

- *Invest in safer streets and bring more perpetrators to justice.*

Ensure vulnerable people are protected

- *More Safe & Well visits, and Community Safety Officers to identify risks and help people stay safe.*

Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to Zero

- *Tackle speeding and drink and drug driving. Better tech, better education, and better enforcement.*

Fire & Rescue Service Reform

- *Modernising the Fire & Rescue Service to reduce risk and keep more people safe.*

For me, safe and secure communities are the bedrock on which we build prosperity and wellbeing for everyone.

Getting Crime Down

As Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex I will ensure that Essex Police sees more investment in its capability to prevent crime and get crime down, and that Essex County Fire & Rescue is supported to protect people and prevent fires, flood hazards and road traffic collisions.

Essex Police is now bigger and stronger than ever before in its 185 year history. Over the last eight years as your PFCC I have funded the expansion of Essex Police by 905 officers, to 3,755, with the backing of the government's Police Uplift Programme and your support. As a result, crime is now falling. Last year, total crime was reduced by 6%, and anti-social behaviour (ASB) by 38%. ASB is now 70% lower than it was in 2016, and murder and burglary are both down by over 40%.

But this is just a start. The additional officers will enable the force to make a strategic shift to prevention, in line with our long-term vision. Through targeted hotspot programmes, through early intervention, identifying and protecting vulnerable people, and firm action to deal with known offenders and tackle drug gangs and County Lines, my aim is to see crime reduced by a further 40% over the next few years. Safer streets investments in CCTV, lighting and support groups will make our public spaces be and feel safer for women and girls.

Essex Police has become an innovative police service. Our police were the first in the country to pilot the ASB and serious violence hotspot tactics which have been so successful. We were the first to roll out a Violence and Vulnerability Partnership to divert young people from the risk of being preyed on by drug gangs. Under new legislation we had the first successful prosecution for dealing in nitrous oxide and the first one for cyber flashing.

The next phase will see further investment in technology. We will roll out live facial recognition equipment to take known offenders off our streets, and use Artificial Intelligence to take more offenders successfully through the courts.

To help allocate resources most effectively, I will encourage Essex Police to use crime harm scores, looking at concentrations and prevalence of crime as well as the level of harm from each offence. It is not enough simply to reduce the number of crimes in the county: we must also bring down the harm it causes.

Neighbourhood Policing will be strengthened as more of our new officers complete their training and can be deployed in our communities. Now we have the resources, we must ringfence our Town Centre Teams and Community Policing Teams and make sure they are able to crack down on burglary, on car theft and on shoplifting, and keep our residents safe in each of our communities. This means more visible policing, with more police on the streets. Our Rural Engagement Team must be strengthened further to support our isolated communities and make sure our successes in reducing unlawful encampments, hare coursing and equipment theft are not eroded. I will ensure that Police and Fire & Rescue continue to protect those in rural areas and keep businesses safer and free from crime. Making our roads safer is important to all of our residents. Working through the Safer Essex Roads partnership, both Police and Fire & Rescue must act to implement Vision Zero, our programme to reduce road deaths in Essex to zero by 2040. Driver education will improve skills on the road, and new technology will ensure enforcement against those who will not learn.

Community involvement matters so much in keeping our county safe and making sure the emergency services are plugged in to what makes a difference to residents' lives. Volunteers play a vital role. We now have the second largest Special Constabulary in the country, but we can do more to bolster our Community Specials, and I will.

The positive impact of crime prevention and solving more crimes is increasing levels of public confidence in the local police. In the latest quarter, our independently run public perception survey found that confidence among local communities in Essex Police is running at 77%, only slightly lower than the highs seen during the Covid-19 pandemic. To make our county safer we must make a strategic commitment to prevention, a shift in main effort from rapid response into a model of targeted prevention and early intervention, in both Policing and in the Fire & Rescue Service. We need to help and protect those who are vulnerable and at risk, deliver effective interventions based on evidence, and work in partnership with our communities to identify where people are most exposed and keep them safe. Safe communities are the bedrock on which we build prosperity and wellbeing for everyone. Please give me your support, and together we can get crime down.

Roger Hirst

KEY PLEDGES:

More local, visible & accessible policing

Ensure the police are there when you need them. Deliver effective response and follow up all reasonable lines of enquiry.

- Essex Police is the biggest and strongest it has ever been and we must use that to ensure that visible policing is delivered in local communities.
- We must ringfence our Town Centre Teams, Community Policing Teams and the Rural Engagement Team and Business Crime Team, and make sure these units are out on patrol and solving problems in our communities.
- Increase our targeted hotspot patrols to deal with anti-social behaviour and serious violence.
- Allocate resources to deal with Neighbourhood Crime, with a focus on burglary, car theft, drug dealing and shoplifting.
- Significantly improve all routes of access to policing, with a particular focus on the 101 non-emergency call line and digital public access. A better response will encourage reporting and allow more effective planned interventions.
- Provide better feedback to victims, boosting confidence and improving police legitimacy.
- Grow all forms of volunteering and community engagement, from cadet programmes to becoming a Special Constable or an On-Call Firefighter.
- Continue to work with rural communities and farmers to understand their challenges and to increase their policing presence to tackle all forms of rural crime including hare coursing, unlawful incursions, equipment theft and fly-tipping.

Drive down anti-social behaviour & crime

More hotspot policing and monitoring known offenders to prevent crime, including in our rural areas.

- Drive down all crime types through prevention and early intervention, targeted on people and places through the better use of data and intelligence and a clear evidence base.

- Ensure anti-social behaviour and serious violence is dealt with more swiftly by increasing targeted hotspot policing, with 15 ASB and 15 SV hotspots in 2024.
- Crack down on illegal drugs that blight communities, dealing with drug-dealing on our streets and expanding the use of drug-testing on arrest.
- Strengthen our Community Safety Partnership hubs to encourage local ownership and leadership of community-led solutions and provide public reassurance, reduce harm and protect the vulnerable.
- Identify and protect vulnerable individuals and groups from the exploitation and harm caused by drug supply and use, and misuse of alcohol.
- Roll out live facial recognition equipment to take known offenders off our streets, and use Artificial Intelligence to take more offenders successfully through the courts.
- To help allocate resources most effectively, I will encourage Essex Police to use crime harm scores, looking at concentrations and prevalence of crime, and reduce the total level of harm in the county.
- Work with the Levelling-Up Town Boards in Clacton, Canvey Island and Harlow to make communities safe in those areas and help them thrive.

Beat knife crime and drug gangs and protect young people

Take drugs and weapons off our streets and help young people get out of gangs.

- Build on the success of the Violence & Vulnerability Partnership, taking a public health approach to addressing serious violence, investing in activity proven to work and focussing on keeping young people free from crime and intervening early to help steer them to a successful life. This will include:
 - A programme of education to inform groups within communities on risks, support and guidance relating to issues around serious violence.
 - An early help offer, in partnership with schools, social care and a range of organisations - to identify and respond earlier when a young person is at risk of gang involvement.
 - Target knife crime, with the aim of reducing emergency hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object by over half and non-domestic homicides by over a third by 2031.
 - Deliver activity which keeps young people away from areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in County Lines drug

dealing. Commission programmes in schools and youth groups, provide mentoring and behavioural change interventions, and have youth workers in A&E.

- Ensure relentless enforcement and pursuit against knife crime offenders operating in Essex. Work with the National Crime Agency and use local intelligence and stop & search to take drugs and weapons off our streets.

Protect women and girls from violence and domestic abuse

Invest in safer streets and bring more perpetrators to justice.

- Put victims at the heart of all we do, ensuring support services such as Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors are tailored to meet their different needs and enable people to build resilience and live safely.
- Work with schools to educate young people on healthy relationships and risky behaviours.
- Use our Safer Streets Fund to invest in public space initiatives that women and girls tell me would make them feel safer. Improve lighting, CCTV and safety in our town centres and key hotspots where women and girls feel at risk.
- Support initiatives such as the SOS/Night Bus, Ask for Angela, Purple Flag and All Bar None, to help women and girls be safer in the night time economy.
- Build on our successful Reflect and Change Programmes that seek to break the cycle of domestic abuse by working with perpetrators to change their behaviours.
- Work with the Criminal Justice System to ensure it is effective in holding domestic abuse perpetrators to account and delivering positive outcomes for victims.
- Raise victim confidence in reporting by working across the criminal justice system to increase successful conviction rates, particularly for rape and sexual assault, using a victim-centred approach to gather evidence and build the case.
- Continue to increase confidence in policing by ensuring Essex Police deal robustly with inappropriate behaviours.
- Monitor the use and effectiveness of legislation and processes in managing offenders, such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders, Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Stalking Protection Orders.
- Ensure Essex Police support Clare's Law and respond promptly to requests for disclosure of previous domestic violence offending.

Ensure vulnerable people are protected

More Safe & Well visits, and Community Safety Officers to identify risks and help people stay safe.

- Make a shift in main effort toward prevention in both Police and Fire & Rescue Services.
- Invest in more Community Safety Officers to identify risks and help people stay safe.
- Increase Safe & Well visits undertaken by the Fire & Rescue Service to ensure the more vulnerable and isolated in our communities remain safe and supported.
- Work in partnership and share data to identify and safeguard those most vulnerable to fraud and to being repeat victims.
- Work with partners and wider law enforcement to identify those targeting the vulnerable through fraud and seek to bring them to justice.
- Work across the criminal justice system to reduce delays in court hearings to ensure that more perpetrators of crime are brought to justice.
- Champion the rights of victims, including their right to be referred to services that are tailored to support their needs, for example Restorative Justice and Mediation Services.
- Ensure our services adhere to the Victims Code, that sets out the minimum level of services that victims can expect from criminal justice agencies.
- Push for more powers to commission criminal justice services and bring together agencies to improve Offender Management.
- Support victims of human trafficking and modern slavery including sexual exploitation and continue to promote close working with the UK Border Agency, the National Crime Agency and national and regional partners to support victims and bring perpetrators to justice in a timely way for victims.

Improve road safety and reduce road death in Essex to Zero

Tackle speeding and drink and drug driving. Better tech, better education, and better enforcement.

- Working through the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP), both Police and Fire & Rescue must act to implement Vision Zero, our programme to reduce road deaths in Essex to zero by 2040.

- With partners in SERP, invest in prevention programmes to deliver driver education to support behavioural change, such as the Fire Bike scheme and Community Speed Watch, and improve skills on the road.
- Work with the motor industry to improve vehicle safety.
- Invest in new technology, including Artificial Intelligence, to ensure enforcement against those who will not learn.

Fire & Rescue Service Reform

Modernising the Fire & Rescue Service to reduce risk and keep more people safe.

- Continue to invest in our workforce by extending programmes of training and development, helping them to take on more activities around prevention and protection.
- Extend skills-based pay progression to reward those taking on additional responsibilities.
- Modernise the Retained Duty System, allowing more flexibility so hours available match the times of greater risk, and invest in recruiting and supporting our On-Call crews.
- Ensure pay and progression make the service an employer of choice to people of all characteristics and backgrounds.
- Make sure that our internal resilience model will support the service through times of disruption.
- Expand Fire Protection and Enforcement activities making buildings across Essex safer and implement the Risk-Based Inspection Programme Plan.
- Increase further the number of Home Safety visits carried out by fire crews and do more joint Safe & Well visits with other agencies.
- Drive forward the ambition for every home to have a working smoke alarm.
- Do more to educate drivers and improve driver behaviour across the county, working through SERP, to reduce harm on our roads and implement Vision Zero.
- Enhance the multi-agency approach to responding to incidents of flooding and preventing it from happening in the first place.
- Renew technology to make the service more efficient, effective and fit for purpose.
- Invest in environmental technology and electric vehicles.

A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS

- Roger has funded the expansion of Essex Police by 905 additional officers since 2016. Essex Police is now bigger and stronger than at any time in its 185 year history.
- **Getting Crime Down:** in the last year crime in Essex has been brought down by 6%, and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) by 38%. Since 2016, ASB is down 70%, Murder by 43% and Burglary by 43%.
- There is more to do, particularly around Rape, Drug Crime and Vehicle Theft. But even here our new investment and tactics are starting to work, with Domestic Abuse, Sexual Offences and Violent Crime all down in the last year.
- Essex County Fire & Rescue has been changed. It is now a better place to work and is providing a better service to the public, with more house fires prevented, and businesses and vulnerable people protected.

How we have done against My Plan 2021

- **Investing in an extra 400 Police in three years:** we have expanded by 537 officers.
- **Get Crime Down:** Crime is down by 6% in the last year, and by 7.5% from pre-Covid levels.
- **Keeping roads safe:** the number of people killed or seriously injured is down, and we have committed to Vision Zero.
- **Supporting the Specials:** we now have the second largest Special Constabulary in the country.
- **Protect rural and isolated areas:** hare coursing and equipment theft have been halved, and unlawful encampments reduced by three quarters.
- **Crack down on violence and drugs:** hospital knife admissions have been reduced by 25%, and drug-related murder by 70%.

The Role of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

- The Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner is the bridge between Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and the Public. Key responsibilities are:
- Appointing, and if need be dismissing, the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer.
- Setting the strategy for the Police and Fire & Rescue Services in consultation with the chief officers and the public.
- Setting the budget for the services, currently £480m combined, and setting the council tax precept to fund them.
- Holding the services to account, via the chief officers, for their performance of their duties to the public.
- Both the Chief Constable and the Chief Fire Officer in Essex have complete operational independence as enshrined in statute and in our constitution.

HOT TOPICS AND OPINION PIECES

Local, Visible and Accessible Policing

Neighbourhood crime may be down, but it is not yet beaten. Burglary, car theft, drug dealing, shoplifting and anti-social behaviour (ASB) disrupt people's lives. Essex Police have introduced Town Centre Teams, have boosted Community Policing Teams and built the Rural Engagement Team and Business Crime Teams. We must make sure these units are ringfenced and out on patrol in our communities.

Targeted hotspot patrols are proven to reduce ASB and serious violent crime (SV), and reduce harm. In 2024 we will invest £1.6m in 15 ASB and 15 SV hotspots. These will receive frequent 15-30 minute foot patrols, from Police and from Council enforcement officers, delivering 30,000 more hours of visible policing a year. So far our hotspot interventions have helped reduce ASB by 70% and high harm crime by 38% from their peaks.

Dealing with known offenders prevents them from perpetrating more crime, and we will strengthen our targeted offender management.

Safer Streets investment in CCTV, better lighting and landscaping, signposting and local community support groups make both our town centres and isolated and residential areas much safer and available for more people to use. So far we have invested £4m in these schemes, plus £1.7m match funding from local partners, and I have set aside a further £3m for new schemes next year. The work of voluntary groups such as the Street Pastors is invaluable in helping vulnerable people and reducing harm on our streets, and we will continue to support them.

Working with local councils and other agencies through our Community Safety Partnerships we must target our resources where they will make the most difference locally. And we must invest more in the force control room, especially the 101 non-emergency call system, to make sure victims get a better service, not only in the time taken to answer the call, but in the quality of the service they receive. We must also ensure that victims receive more and better feedback on how their crime is being handled, and with what success.

Modern policing knows how to deal with neighbourhood crime; I will make sure Essex Police have an unrelenting focus on getting it down. Neighbourhood Policing will be strengthened as more of our new officers complete their training and can be deployed in our communities. Now we have the resources, we must ringfence our Town Centre Teams and Community Policing Teams and make sure they are able to crack down on burglary, on car theft and on shoplifting, and keep our residents safe in each of our communities. Our Rural Engagement Team must be strengthened further to support our isolated communities and make sure our successes in reducing unlawful encampments, hare coursing and equipment theft are not eroded. I will ensure that Police and Fire & Rescue continue to protect those in rural areas and keep businesses safer and free from crime.

Reducing Drug Driven Violence

Our three-pronged approach to dealing with drug violence is succeeding in bringing harm down: working with the National Crime Agency to bust international drug gangs, using stop & search and local intelligence to take drugs and weapons off our streets, and through the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership protecting young and vulnerable people from gangs while we deal with the hardened criminals who prey on them. We take a public health approach to crime, focusing on keeping young people free from crime and early intervention to help steer them to a successful life course. The activity funded by the partnership works with people vulnerable to being groomed into gangs, County Lines and drug driven violence. The projects also target gang members and help them step away from a criminal lifestyle. I support the use of Serious Violence Reduction Orders and the implementation of Homicide Reviews for death by offensive weapon. The introduction of Rapid Homicide Reviews in Essex has led to a significant improvement in how Essex Police prevent murder.

Hospital knife-wound admissions are down 25% since 2018, and drug-crime related knife homicide is down 70%. In 2023 Essex Police rolled up 453 Organised Crime Groups, up from 99 in 2019. But we can and must do a lot more. The evidence is that the programme we started in 2018 will take ten years to really make a difference, and change our society. We must see it through. At the same time, we can tighten our laws and toughen enforcement. I am pleased that our lobbying together with Anna Firth MP and her colleagues has had machetes banned. And Essex Police was the first force in the country to successfully prosecute under the new legislation against dealing in nitrous oxide. We must find ways of dealing with new threats, such as the one presented by powerful and deadly synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. In the meantime, the Firebreaks courses

delivered by Essex County Fire & Rescue Service will continue to keep young people out of harm, and we must develop our youth interventions further.

Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls

Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls is a key priority for me as Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and for Essex Police. We are having some success, with sexual violence down by 12% last year and domestic abuse by 15%. The number of successful rape prosecutions has increased threefold. But there is much more to do. We are investing in making our streets safer, with more CCTV, better lighting, and awareness campaigns. Our Minerva system for mapping where women are particularly vulnerable and at risk has received national recognition. We share the information with local community safety partnerships and make joint local interventions. And in the nighttime economy, we support the SOS / Night Bus, Ask for Angela (which allows women to ask for support in bars and clubs) and Purple Flag and All Bar None schemes. Longer term measures involve work in schools, helping young people reflect and understand the effects of harassment and abuse.

No woman should feel unsafe in her own community. I will spend time listening directly to women affected by violence against them to discuss and understand what we can do differently, and I will act on this. I will continue to work hard with other agencies to encourage survivors of abuse and violence to come forward and will invest in specialist support services to offer the support that they need and to help them move on, while at the same time robustly targeting offenders to break the cycle of violence against women. I will increase investment in support services such as counselling, advocacy and therapeutic support and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors as this has proved invaluable in providing support when needed and in preventing these crimes happening. We have established a steering group for Violence against Women and Girls under the Safer Essex Partnership. We all need to work together to help women to be safe and feel safe, to be respected and to live their lives free of fear. I will speak up to condemn male violence against women.

Improving Safety on our Roads

There is more we can do to reduce the number of people killed and injured on our roads. Over the last few years we have worked together with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) to educate drivers better, and enforce more effectively against bad and criminal

driving. The number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads in Essex has been brought down by 40%.

But criminal and dangerous driving still kills more people in this county than all other crimes put together.

Together with SERP we have committed to Vision Zero, with the aim to stop people dying on our roads. That will mean more Roads Policing and investment in better speed cameras and upgrading Automatic Number Plate Recognition tracking, to improve enforcement. It will also involve an increase in driver awareness programmes, to make our drivers safer, and a revision to the county's Speed Management Strategy to make our roads safer. The SERP agencies will be co-located so they can operate more effectively. I will lobby the vehicle manufacturers to roll out active safety technology to reduce driver error.

I will work with Community and Voluntary Sector providers to invest in behaviour change and support programmes for drivers caught driving under the influence of drugs, as this offence continues to increase and now exceeds those caught for the offence of drink-driving.

More police patrols and working with Fire & Rescue and other agencies will educate and protect all road users, such as through expanding the Fire Bike scheme and continued road safety awareness for children and young people through the Joint Education Team. I will continue to support Community Speed Watch, which reduces risk around key areas in our local communities and does so much to educate drivers.

Dash-cam evidence from other road users can help us identify drivers who need remedial education. I will invest further in technology to enable the police to process the increasing volume of video evidence, through such programmes as Extra Eyes.

I welcome the move by the government in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act to increase the maximum sentence for death by dangerous driving to life imprisonment.

Protecting Rural and Isolated Areas

The establishment of the Rural Engagement and Business Crime Teams, working closely with our rural and business communities in Essex, have created greater resilience within

those communities, preventing crime and protecting and safeguarding the vulnerable across the county. They have helped keep rural businesses safer and more free from crime.

I will look to make further investment in fighting rural crimes, including hare coursing, unlawful incursions, and fly-tipping, as well as theft of major plant and equipment. The government's new legislation to make aggravated trespass a criminal offence has reduced damage and disruption to rural lives and businesses. Unlawful incursions have been reduced by three quarters relative to where they were eight years ago, and hare coursing and plant theft have been halved. We must ensure that these gains are built on, and not eroded.

Vulnerability and isolation are significant issues in rural communities, and I will ensure Police and Fire & Rescue work more closely together to protect those in rural and isolated settings through joint advice and support. The Tri-Service Community Officer pilot in Maldon and Uttlesford has brought clear benefits. We need to refine the model and develop it so as to prevent crime and reduce vulnerability in rural communities. We must invest time and energy better to understand the specific nature and impact of domestic abuse in rural communities and identify and implement initiatives that will prevent and tackle it.

Firearms Licensing

Firearms, Shotgun and Explosives Licencing (FSEL) is an important police function which ensures public safety while allowing legitimate users to go about their business and sport in the knowledge that their activity is well-regulated.

It has been important to me to ensure that legitimate users have a good quality service here in Essex. Legitimately held firearms are only extremely rarely used in crime.

When first elected to this role in 2016, I met with a situation where FSEL certificate grants were taking an average of 44 weeks and there were over 5,000 shooters on temporary certificates. This was clearly a risk to the legitimate ownership of firearms and shotguns. I am pleased to say that, at my request, the Chief Constable instigated a review of the situation and rapidly implemented a plan to resource the unit properly and improve the situation. We made that investment, and since then the average time required for a grant has been around eight weeks. For historical reasons, there was a bulge in the number of

renewals every fifth year. This would have happened in 2022/23. Through good planning and engagement with users, Essex Police instituted a voluntary scheme which brought 1,500 renewals forward into 2021/22, and avoided a recurrence of significant delays.

I am pleased that, as of my latest review of the performance of Essex Police FSEL this January, the average time taken to grant both firearms and shotgun certificates in Essex is one month. This is the third best performance in the country, after Warwickshire Constabulary and the City of London Police. We have only 3 temporary licences outstanding, and only 168 people waiting for their certificate to be granted.

Essex Police published service level standard is to grant or renew a certificate within 90 days. This is well within the current national Authorised Professional Practice guidance of 17 weeks. The team currently has sufficient resources to deal with the volumes anticipated during 2024 within the force's published service level standard, which ensures that each applicant is thoroughly assessed but in a timely fashion.

We also have a well-established Firearms Licencing Advisory Group (FLAG), which meets several times a year and is attended by representatives of users and registered dealers, including BASC. I attend myself when I can, normally at least once a year, to hear the concerns being expressed and monitor progress. It last met in January 2024.

Licensing fees have not kept pace with inflation or pay rates in recent years, and the government is reviewing the statutory charges to ensure that FSEL is properly funded. In the meantime, I will ensure that the necessary funding continues to be subsidised from the police budget.

Reading through the guidance the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) have provided on their website, they are well aligned with my published plans and actions. I have met personally with BASC several times over the course of my incumbency, and look forward to doing so again if I am successful in seeking re-election. I commit to continuing to provide Essex Police with the resources and check they have the structures in place to ensure public safety and support legitimate firearms and shotgun users.

Encouraging Volunteers and Community Support

Our support for the Special Constabulary has meant that a large number of residents have come forward as volunteers, and we now have the second largest Special Constabulary in the country after the Met. A large number of parish and town councils are keen to use our Community Specials programme, and there are also a growing number of Employer Supported Specials. I aim to see our Special Constabulary growth success continue, with a Special Constable in every Town and Parish, growing the Community Specials programme, and one in every major business.

Volunteers are not only welcome in the Special Constabulary. There are important roles filled by our Active Citizens programme. I will also continue to support Neighbourhood Watch, who are a vital component in driving out crime; and look to develop Farm Watch and Pub Watch further. Both Police and Fire Cadets help our young people find positive and exciting roles in our community; we need to get the groups back up and running properly following the disruption from the Covid lockdown.

We will work with young people to understand the particular risks and challenges they face, working with youth councils and voluntary groups. I will also focus on helping young people understand how they can support the communities that they live in, through engaging in positive activity such as the Fire Breaks sessions on what it means to be a firefighter, and through Police and Fire Cadets. The government has pledged £500m investment into youth services, and I will work to make sure that delivers for young people in Essex.

Cyber Crime, Business Crime and Fraud

The growth of the internet has seen a surge in crimes against businesses and individuals. Fraud is now the largest single crime type in the country. At the same time, the internet has also seen growth in Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and grooming. We need to implement the tighter legislation around online platforms and publishers, and to invest in cutting edge technology to track and eradicate on-line and cyber-crime.

I support the establishment of the new national cyber-crime force and want to see a robust ethical framework for safe use of Artificial Intelligence and biometrics in the pursuit of crime.

I welcome Essex Police's Business Crime Strategy, and the establishment of the Eastern Region Cyber Resilience Centre, and will support them in helping keep businesses safe.

Emergency Service Collaboration

As the first area of the country to bring Police and Fire & Rescue Service under joint governance, it was always my vision that closer working between the Police and the Fire & Rescue Service would unlock significant resources to deliver better emergency services in Essex. Under joint governance, I have profiled over £18m of efficiency improvements to date from collaboration, all of which will be reinvested into the frontline. This is ahead of our original target of £15.3m, when we brought both services under joint governance. As the joint governance model and ways of working continue to mature, the potential for even better joint working between Police and Fire & Rescue is substantial, whilst at the same time keeping them as distinct and separate and maintaining the unique identity and function of each service.

I will continue to strive for joined-up prevention and community safety work to build on our successes to date, such as the Joint Education Team who reach nearly 150,000 children a year through visits to schools.

I will utilise the significant estates of both services and I will seek to pool capital budgets to improve efficiency through partnership and to provide improved public safety.

We will bring together the Fleet Services of both Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service in single workshops at Boreham, ensuring that our people have fit for purpose facilities and can keep critical assets on the road to keep Essex safe.

We will complete the investment in the co-location of a new-build police station in Harwich and Dovercourt alongside the fire station on the current site.

I will continue with my programme of opening up fire stations as drop in facilities for policing colleagues.

I will also pursue the delivery of a shared control facility to support both services to maximise capacity, capability and resilience.

I will also roll out the Tri-Service Community Officer model to prevent harm and reduce vulnerability in our rural communities.

I will continue to maximise the benefits of the collaboration between Essex and Kent Police through the shared service model. This works well, and I will build on this and

explore other opportunities to develop a shared service model across the East of England with other willing partners in Police and Fire & Rescue, and possibly other agencies. I will continue to work at a national level to review the national funding formulas and get a fairer deal for Essex.

Fire & Rescue Service Reform

His Majesty's Inspectorate of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services has lifted the Causes for Concern on Essex County Fire & Rescue Service's culture and on its Protection Service. We have embedded significant cultural change in the Fire & Rescue Service, building on values defined with our workforce which have changed behaviours. Working with the Fire & Rescue Service, I have overseen the introduction of better and targeted training programmes, a new recruitment programme, a fresh approach to identifying and developing talent and skills, and new policies for discipline and complaints. We have invested in expanding our fire protection and enforcement activities, promoting best practice and regulation, increasing building safety audits and inspections to make buildings across the county safer.

The service has been able to prevent more fires, and the number of people killed or seriously injured across the county by fire or road traffic collision has continued to reduce. This is very good for the people of Essex, but there is still more to do.

We must continue to build on the achievements to date whilst also driving for greater productivity in the service. The introduction of the Dynamic Deployment model has increased response fire cover to nearly 98% in the last year; now we need to refine how to deliver it cost-effectively. Recently ECFRS has won the *iese* Gold Award for Fire & Rescue Service of the Year 2024, and reached the Silver level of the Inclusive Employers Standard.

Overall I will support the government's initiatives to improve the professionalism of the Fire & Rescue Service, invest in its people and refine its governance so as to keep our residents safer and reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured. We look forward to the establishment of the national College of Fire & Rescue.

Supporting our Officers and Staff

The officers and staff of both Police and Fire & Rescue deserve our thanks and gratitude for the work they do every day, putting themselves at risk in order to keep our residents and communities safe.

I support the Police Covenant which has created a statutory duty on the government to do more for both those currently serving and those retired, as well as their families. I have also pushed for an increase in the protection offered them by law, and am pleased to see that the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act has doubled sentences for Assaults on Emergency Workers.

I will continue actively to support and invest in the provision of health and wellbeing services for the Police and Fire & Rescue workforce acknowledging the difficult and challenging situations they may and do experience in the course of their duties.

I want to see a supportive culture across both Police and Fire & Rescue. That means an increase in diversity, with an inclusive recruitment and development strategy so that people from all segments of our community can aspire to serve the public through these services.

Environmental Strategy

As Emergency Services are funded publicly from Central Government and revenue raised locally, it is vital that they act as leaders in innovation to reduce their impact on climate change and in turn reduce costs. The risk of extreme weather events, such as flooding and heatwaves, is increasing pressure on our emergency services and damage to our ecosystems. In collaboration of Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, I have produced an environmental strategy, to ensure that both organisations are aligned with other blue light services to reduce their carbon footprint and expenditures on budgets. The effects of climate change are becoming more prevalent and are experienced first-hand by our emergency services as they respond to weather-related incidents. Flooding requires a response from the Fire & Rescue Service to pump water away and heatwaves lead to an increase in wildfires and the likelihood of drought. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service reported a 67% increase in wildfires during the heatwave of 2018; and the heatwave in the August Bank Holiday 2019 led to a doubling in the number of incidents. Drought could lead to little or lower water pressure and as a consequence reduces the ability to maintain normal firefighting capabilities. These risks tend to also heighten public tension, increasing demand of the police service to maintain public order. It is therefore

imperative emergency services collaborate to mitigate the risks, and increase the UK's capacity for resilience to climate variability and change. Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service are responsible for one of the largest and most populated counties in the country.

Essex has complex industrial sites, densely populated urban environments and remote rural areas including 350 miles of coastline with ecologically important mudflats and salt marshes. Essex covers 1,400 square miles with a population of 1.85 million. Both organisations have a number of assets contributing to the carbon footprint, all of which need to be managed efficiently to preserve finite global resources. There are a number of key changes and challenges required to continue the reduction in carbon emissions for both services. The very nature of our 24/7 service leads to a unique set of challenges. The buildings require facilities to be available 24/7, and fleet vehicles vary in size and require the ability to respond to incidents rapidly. I will therefore be a leader in trialling and evaluating new technologies which have the potential to reduce our carbon footprint, to conserve natural resources for future generations.

Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service carbon footprint by 38% using a 2008 baseline; Essex Police by 40% and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service by 28%. This is largely attributed to advancement in technology in building plant and vehicles over the past decade. Furthermore, the power sector has significantly decarbonised in recent years contributing to this reduction. I will comply with the Government's target of bringing all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. To reach this target significant investment is required in both building and vehicle assets.

New technologies will be adopted that fulfil operational duties and will be approved in an adequate timescale to fulfil the net zero target. Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service will continue to collaborate by sharing research and knowledge into new technologies, along with keeping in contact with other Police Forces and Fire & Rescue Services. The direction of travel required to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 will be a challenge, nonetheless one I am determined we will meet.