

ROGER HIRST

Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner



Manifesto Commitments

March 2021



My plan for a safer Essex

Please note - many of these photos in this Manifesto were taken before Social Distancing measure were in place.



My plan for a safer Essex

Roger Hirst Manifesto

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

We will fund an additional 300 police officers, on top of the 500 we have expanded by over the last five years. Burglary, theft and anti-social behaviour were coming down even before the Covid-19 pandemic struck and must be brought down further. Domestic and sexual abuse and harassment must be tackled, so that women and girls are safer and do not have to live in fear. I want to see a continued crack down on drug-driven violence and gangs, so that we can protect the vulnerable people these gangs prey on and deal with the hardened criminals who profit from them. Cyber-crime must also be reduced.

Making our roads safer is important to all of our residents. We must see more patrols, and work with other agencies to educate and protect all road users. I will continue to support Community Speed Watch, who as volunteers make such a difference to keeping speed down across our county. Fire & Rescue have a role to play here in driver and rider education, especially in working with younger people.

Community involvement is so important 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. I have delivered on my promise to increase our Community Specials. We now have over 500 Special Constables, making us the second largest Special Constabulary in the country. There will be more to come.

Rural communities can be particularly isolated and vulnerable. We have established a Police Rural Engagement Team, who have made a real difference to how we police in rural areas, and are now trialling a Tri-Service Community Officer to help protect people and reduce risk. I will ensure that Police and Fire & Rescue continue to protect those in rural areas and keep businesses safer and free from crime.

To make our county safer we need to make a strategic commitment to prevention, a shift in main effort from rapid response into a model of targeted prevention and early intervention. 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.

Roger Hirst

Getting Crime Down

The Conservative Government's 20,000 Officer Uplift programme will deliver over 300 additional officers for Essex, on top of the 500 we have already hired. Essex Police will be larger and stronger than it has ever been.

In the last five years we have made big changes to local, visible and accessible policing. The increase in Community Policing Teams has been a great success. Key areas of investment have included the establishment of Town Centre Teams, increasing the numbers in Local Policing Teams, Public Protection officers, Roads Policing and Children and Young People officers. 68 officers in 25 new Town Centre Teams have strengthened the connection between local communities and the police, working with partners in a highly visible way to reduce ASB, crime and improve reassurance.

Crime across the county is down by 12.5% in the year to end February 2021. Burglary is down 36%, with vehicle and other theft offences also down over 30%, and robbery has fallen 22%. Possession of weapons is down 19%, and violence with injury has been reduced by 14%, although stalking and harassment has risen 10% and hate crime by 13%. The number of people apprehended for trafficking of drugs is up by 32%, largely as a result of a step up in planned police interventions. In the year before the pandemic started, burglary and robbery were down 14%, anti-social behaviour 11% and theft 8%.

The positive impact of crime prevention and solving more crimes is increasing levels of public confidence in the local police. In the first quarter of 2020, our independently run public perception survey found that confidence among local communities in Essex Police had increased significantly to 81% - the highest level ever reported since the survey began 3 years ago, and is now still running at over 75% despite the Covid-19 pandemic.



Further Investment in Crime Prevention

We will make further investment to prevent crime through neighbourhood policing. Building on the success of our Community Safety Partnerships, where local councils and voluntary groups work in partnership with police, there will be more targeting of hotspots and known offenders to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. Next year new Disruption Teams for our district policing areas will act as problem-solving teams, intelligence led to deal with local crime in your area.

To help allocate resource most effectively, I will encourage Essex police to use crime severity scores, looking at concentrations and prevalence of crime as well as the level of harm from each offence.

Following on their success in reducing crime since their introduction in 2019, we will look to make continued further investment in Town Centre Teams.

Investment in new technology has played a big part in getting more police out on patrol and visible in our communities. We will invest more in developing mobile apps for officers to have better connectivity. We will also further improve the accessibility of police via internet and social media, and the feedback which can be provided to communities and victims.

Police also need the best technology to keep themselves safe and be effective. I will continue to support investment in Taser, and in Body-Worn Video.

One area which promises long term benefits in improving community safety is designing out crime. Where we are consulted on new roads and developments we should make clear how safety and security can be improved, and I aim to have Police and Fire & Rescue included as statutory consultees on major new developments and to input to Essex design guidance.



Reducing Drug Driven Violence

I will help Essex Police and partners crack down further on violence and drug gangs. That will mean working with the National Crime Agency, which is being strengthened by central government. It will also mean further investment in the serious violence unit, so that more County Lines drug gangs will be rolled up. I support the use of Serious Violence Reduction Orders and the implementation of Homicide Reviews for death by offensive weapon.

Our Violence and Vulnerability Unit will protect vulnerable people from gangs while we deal with the hardened criminals who prey on them. We need to 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. I welcome the government proposal for a duty on public sector bodies to cooperate to reduce serious violence. Projects across Essex, focused on reducing serious violence, benefited from over £2m of funding last year thanks to the work of the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership.

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 will work with the government to deliver a new and more effective addiction strategy, so more people enter treatment and recovery and lives are saved. We can improve the quality of addiction and substance misuse services, and match them to local demand; and tackle the criminal justice journey of addicted offenders, including those given drug-treatment by courts and those who receive prison-based treatment.



Protect 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 and 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. I support the government's proposed legislation to make aggravated trespass a criminal offence, which has been shown in other countries to reduce damage and disruption to rural lives and businesses. We also need a transit site for temporary accommodation for travellers.

Vulnerability and isolation are significant issues in rural communities, and I will ensure Police and Fire & Rescue work closer together to protect those in rural and isolated settings through joint advice and support. I will look to develop the new Tri-Service Community Officer pilot so as to prevent crime and reduce vulnerability in rural communities.



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 will commit to Project 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. 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 in technology to enable the police to process the increasing volume of video evidence, through such programmes as Extra Eyes.

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

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 over 500 Specials, up from just over 300 four years ago, and 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 as soon as the Covid lockdown permits.

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.

Protecting Vulnerable People and Supporting Victims of Crime

My motivation to break the cycle of domestic abuse in our County remains as strong as ever. I welcome changes to the Victims Code that sets out the minimum level of services that victims can expect from criminal justice agencies. I will continue to 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. Whilst we have made progress, there is still much more to do.



I will have an even sharper focus on promoting awareness of domestic abuse, protecting and supporting victims and their children and I will invest further to strengthen the support that is available for them.

I will invest time better to understand the specific nature and impact of domestic abuse in rural communities and I will invest in initiatives that will prevent and tackle it.

I will continue a programme of investment in policing so that there are dedicated officers working with high volume repeat victims and repeat perpetrators to break the chain of offending, violence and harm.

I will push for more powers to commission criminal justice services and bring together agencies to improve Offender Management.

I will support victims of human trafficking and modern slavery including sexual exploitation and will continue to promote closely working with the UK Border Agency, the National Crime Agency and national and regional partners to support victims and bring perpetrators to justice.

I will invest resources into policing for the delivery of activities essential to preventing the harm caused by high-risk sexual offenders.

I will work with the criminal justice system to 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.

I will seek the early introduction of electronic tags with GPS tracking devices for perpetrators of domestic abuse and related offences, such as stalking, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse and coercive control, upon release from prison to better protect victims and address the behaviour of offenders.

I will continue to invest in capability and capacity to focus on prevention initiatives such as programmes in schools to educate our young people on what risky behaviours are and what a healthy relationship looks like.

I will continue to work with other agencies to jointly invest in programmes of behavioural change for perpetrators that aim to break the cycle of abuse and repeat offending.

I will drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all agencies in the sector with the aim of bringing more perpetrators to justice and reducing repeat offending.



Violence against Women and Girls

No woman should feel unsafe in her own community, but the sad truth is that many do.

No women should feel scared or be threatened going out, meeting friends or walking home, but the reality is that many do. This abuse, harassment and violence should not be happening. Women should not be scared to live their lives, to walk around their communities or simply be who they are. We all need to work together to help women to be safe and feel safe. To be respected.

To live their lives free of fear. I want women to be appreciated for the difference they make and the positive impact they have on our society. I will not tolerate male violence against women. The number of rapes and sexual assaults that lead to a successful conviction is woefully low in Essex and this needs to change. I want victims to feel confident to report crime and policing culture needs to support them through the criminal justice system. Alongside this, I want to see stronger investigations being undertaken that then lead to more successful prosecutions.

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 work with partners across the criminal justice system with the aim seeing more perpetrators charged and brought to justice.

I will increase investment in support services such as counselling, advocacy and therapeutic support and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors as this has proved invaluable in providing support when needed and in preventing these crimes happening.

I will invest time and money in working with schools to educate our children to create a culture where male violence against women is unacceptable.


I will work with the police and partners to look at ways to reduce the fear that women feel in their communities. I will encourage the use of measures to make public space free from abuse and harassment for women. I will continue to 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. Together, we will also apply to the government's Safer Streets Fund to improve lighting, CCTV and safety in our town centres and key hotspots where women and girls feel at risk.

Dog Theft

We must do more to help protect your pets: that is the message that I have heard loud and clear from you. Essex has a low number of reported dog thefts, but those are just the ones which are reported. We know from our recent survey that there are many people who witness or suffer dog theft, and we need for them to report this too. Police need the intelligence, even if each crime cannot be resolved, so they can plan how to stop it. And even those few which are reported are too many for those directly affected. Whilst I am pleased to see the positive way that Essex Police has responded to the increased public attention on this subject, more needs to be done to protect our pets.

I will seek to better understand the true extent of dog theft in our county by talking to you and animal charities, while at the same time working with Essex Police to understand the complexities of how this crime is recorded and how this might be appropriately simplified to provide a more accurate picture of dog theft in our county and enable them to respond better.





I will introduce campaigns to increase awareness of dog theft and promote prevention activity so that you all know how to keep your dog safe and protected, including the use of secure and tamper proof harnesses with gps tracking, microchipping your pets and being aware of the risks of leaving your dog unattended or out of sight when out, in a car or even in an insecure garden.

I will also work with the Home Secretary and input into the review of dog thefts which she has started: to promote the need to change how pet theft is recorded, to strengthen the law and introduce tougher sentences that provide robust deterrents for those who commit or who are thinking about committing this crime.

Business Crime, Fraud and Cyber Crime

The growth of the internet has seen a surge in crimes against business 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 see 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 Alternative Intelligence and biometrics in the pursuit of crime.

I will ensure that Essex Police works with the planned National Crime Lab to develop the evidence base for effective interventions.

I welcome the publication of Essex Police's Business Crime Strategy, and will support them in helping keep businesses safe so we can build back better as we come out of the pandemic. We need to help keep shop workers safe.

Supporting our Officers and Staff

The officers and staff of both Police and Fire & Rescue deserve our thanks and gratitude for their outstanding performance through the Covid-19 pandemic. Both services have kept their core functions running smoothly, despite the daily challenge of frequent contact with the public and the pressures on the workforce from sickness, isolation and Covid-secure procedures. They have gone beyond that to support the NHS, with firefighters driving ambulances and helping handle the increased death rate, and police explaining and encouraging compliance with the regulations designed to keep us all safe, and of course enforcing where necessary.

I support the proposed Police Covenant which will create a statutory duty on the government to do more for both those currently serving and 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 bill will double 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.

Fire & Rescue Service Reform

I am proud that 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. The service has shown itself well able to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, not only delivering on its own obligations but also supporting Ambulance and the NHS. We owe its officers and staff a debt of thanks for that.

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.

I will continue to build on the achievements to date whilst also driving for greater productivity in the service. The activities of the service can be broadened to prevent more hazards and help vulnerable people stay safe, without needing to revise the national role map, and while we maintain and improve our very good emergency response service.

I will invest 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.

Firefighters can do more on prevention activities, increasing the number of Home Safety visits carried out by fire crews and doing more joint Safe & Well visits with other agencies.

I will drive forward the ambition for every home to have a working smoke alarm.

The Fire & Rescue Service already work well with other agencies to effect entry and rescue people trapped behind closed doors. We can do more with them to help keep people safe from slips, trips and falls and other hazards around the home.

There is more which can be done to educate drivers and improve driver behaviour across the county, and working through SERP the Fire & Rescue Service has a role to play in this.

I will work with the Fire and Rescue Service, Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and other emergency services to explore and implement a joint approach responding to incidents of flooding and I will invest in Fire & Rescue activities that raise awareness of flooding and prevent it from happening in the first place.

I will continue to invest in our workforce by extending programmes of training and development, helping them to take on more activities around prevention and protection. I support the government's initiatives to raise professional standards in the Fire & Rescue Service and develop a national training college.

I will invest in recruiting and supporting our On-Call crews.

I will ensure that our internal resilience model will support the service through times of disruption.

I will renew technology to make the service more efficient, effective and fit for purpose.

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.

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 £11m of efficiency improvements to date from collaboration, all of which will be reinvested into the frontline. 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 200,000 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 invest 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, and I will deliver on my commitment to see a joint fleet workshop to bring together the skills and experience in both services whilst ensuring that our people have fit for purpose facilities and can keep critical assets on the road to keep Essex safe.

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 bring greater focus to what more we can do in collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service. The pandemic has demonstrated that there is an appetite for this by the way in which, for example, the Fire & Rescue stepped up to drive ambulances and support vaccination centres. We will learn from the experience of the pandemic, there is so much more that we can do together to benefit the people of Essex.

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.





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 **Conservatives**

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