**Achievements and Successes for Essex**

* Over the last eight years I have successfully increased investment in policing, to grow the force, increase visibility and accessibility of policing and help to prevent crime. Over the last eight years £100m per annum. This has been achieved because of increases in central government funding, increases in the local policing precept and significant improvements in the efficiency of the force enabling more funding to be directed to frontline services. With this extra investment we have successfully undertaken the biggest police recruitment programme in a generation.
* Essex Police now has an establishment of 3,755 officers, that is additional 905 officers since 2016, making it the biggest it has been in its 185-year history. This is well above the additional 800 that was committed to in the 2021-24 Police and Crime Plan.
* In the last year crime in Essex has been brought down by 6%, and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) down by 38%. Since my Election as Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in 2016, ASB is down 70%, Murder is down by 43% and Burglary is down by 43%.
* Essex County Fire & Rescue has been changed through my leadership of a strategic cultural change programme. HMICFRS has lifted the cause for concern over ECFRS culture. I continue to work with the Chief Fire Officer to ensure that the service remains 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.
* I have further invested in partnership working and by working with partners such as Safer Essex, Community Safety Partnerships and voluntary services Essex Police can take a long-term problem-solving approach that actively addresses the root causes of issues such as domestic abuse (DA), ASB and Violence Against Women and Girls.
* I have increased our investment in the Essex Police Serious Violence Unit and the Serious Crime Directorate and recruited a further 30 officers to these teams. This growth has had a significant impact over the last 12 months with the number of drug related homicides reducing from seven to three in the 12 months to March 2023. The Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) continues to develop intelligence and lead on enforcement activity against Class A drug supply networks. This enforcement extends from those involved in importation, local distributors and street level dealers within the county. Through this layered and targeted approach, utilising a range of overt and covert tactics, we are making Essex a more difficult environment for individuals and gangs to target vulnerable people through drugs supply.
* I have also significantly increased our investment in activity to prevent young or vulnerable people from being drawn into a life of crime, with a further £8.3m to be invested in prevention activity over the next three years. This extra investment is being used to tackle serious violence and drug driven harm linked to gangs and county lines for those under 25 years of age. This includes professional early help teams who work closely with schools to understand and intervene at earlier points with a child and their family. They work alongside the School Enrichment Project that works with young people in identified schools through activities that help them develop a positive relationship with trusted adults.
* The Fearless Futures / Knife Crime Violence Model is also being used across the county. These approaches use focused deterrence through tailored interventions in response to identified behaviours for high-risk individuals. They work with these young people to communicate the consequences of violence and offer support with positive routes away from crime. There has been an 8.3% decrease in the number of knife enabled crime offences in the 12 months to February 2024 compared to the previous 12 months.
* Domestic abuse accounts for 34% of violent crime in the county. It involves controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse. It affects an unacceptable number of victims, which is why breaking the cycle of domestic abuse is a priority. Essex experienced a 12.4% decrease in the number of recorded domestic abuse offences for the 12 months to February 2024 compared to the previous 12 months. This is a significant result and one that goes against the national trend.
* In the last year I successfully secured £503,000 in funding from the Home Office and invested this in support for survivors of sexual abuse and domestic violence in Essex. This means that we have been able to increase funding to organisations such as Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership, The Children’s Society, Wilderness Foundation, and specialist domestic abuse charities such as Safe Steps, and Next Chapter. I also contributed funding to services including £30,000 to the Community J9 Domestic Abuse Initiative, which brings training to residents who are keen to recognise domestic abuse and learn how to respond to survivors.
* I have made funding available to the Chief Constable to continue the programme of investment in dedicated officers in the Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams who work in collaboration with other partners to support high volume, repeat victims and tackle repeat perpetrators.
* With the Chief Constable, I reviewed The Claire’s Law process and officers are being encouraged to utilise the ‘right to know’ aspect where appropriate. Under Clare’s Law we now provide disclosure data on over 65% of enquiries.
* I have promoted a focus to deliver domestic abuse awareness campaigns including raising awareness for young people; recognising abusive behaviours and seeking support to change; older people’s awareness and support services; awareness of stalking behaviours and support services and increased community awareness through our J9 initiative.
* I have invested in the DAAWN project through the Essex Chamber of Commerce as this is cutting edge and specifically focused on working with small and medium size business in the county to raise awareness of domestic abuse and allow people to get help at an early stage in the workplace.
* I will speak out against male violence, abuse and misogyny against women and girls in any form. Partnership engagement is key in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and I have invested in a number of projects have been developed to promote collaborative working with partners including Essex County Council VAWG Charter; Southend, Essex, and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB); Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit; and Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPPA) and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and the Operation Minerva and the Essex County Council VAWG Mapping Programme. Minerva has so far resulted in the development of detailed local maps showing every hotspot road in the county where women are at increased risk of violence. Minerva Zones have been shared with the Safer Essex Partnership and Community Safety Partnerships who are working with partners locally and together partners are bringing together bespoke plans to tackle the causes of violence against women and girls in those locations.
* I also successfully secured £3.4m from the Home Office’s Safer Streets Fund, £5.7m in total including match funding, to make our streets safer, especially for women and girls. Together with local match funding from Councils and wider partners we have been able to invest in projects across Essex where local communities have told us they feel unsafe. Examples of such projects include the Bunny Walk area of Chelmsford and Grays Town Centre in Thurrock. Both areas benefited from significant funding through earlier rounds of this fund and have seen significant increases in local confidence as a result. Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey, Witham Town Centre, the Greenstead area of Colchester and Colchester Town Centre have received funding for a range of activity to improve the physical environment, promote community involvement, and create safer spaces. This includes investment in redesigning walkways, lighting, CCTV and activities to strengthen community engagement, including with schools, young people and businesses.
* My objective is to recognise and prevent the harm caused to victims and protect those who are most at risk of becoming the victims of crime. Over the last year, I have allocated over £5m to support victims. This is a significant increase compared to the previous year when I allocated £2.336m. My investment in victims’ services has been going up each year since 2016-2017 and reflects my growing efforts to provide the best possible level of support.
* I successfully applied for an additional £730,000 of funding from central government to bolster domestic abuse and sexual abuse services, including more funding for local IDVAs and ISVAs to support victims and survivors through the criminal justice process. Essex’s specialist sexual and domestic abuse support services continue to provide an excellent level of support to victims, with our specialist sexual abuse service reporting that, between December 2022 and the end of March 2023, 92% of those engaged in its community-based services felt more in control of their lives and 95% reported improved health and well-being. The single points of access for victims of domestic abuse and sexual abuse mean clearer and more consistent pathways of referral and support, meaning victims know where and how to access support and can expect the same level of service regardless of where in Essex they might live.
* I have invested additional funding to tackle rape, drug crime and vehicle theft and the operational tactics being deployed are beginning to work, with domestic abuse, sexual offences and violent crime all down in the last year. There is more to do, and I am committed to bringing these crime types down further.
* I pledged to have a focus on tackling Rural Crime. Essex Police currently has one of the largest Rural Engagement Teams (RET) in the country and through my continued investment, there has been a reduction in rural crime of 5.7% in the 12 months to February 2024 compared to the previous 12 months.
* Over recent years Essex Police has been very successful in tackling hare coursing, working with regional forces to provide a coordinated and targeted approach. As a result of this, there has been a 15.9% reduction in hare coursing incidents in the 12 months to December 2023 than the same period for 2022.
* The Rural Engagement Team continues to work closely with traveller communities across Essex ensuring a positive and proactive approach is undertaken in tackling crime, protecting victims, and supporting the vulnerable. Anti-social unauthorised encampments are dealt with robustly and as a result the number in Essex has continued to decrease year on year, dropping from 228 in 2018 to 66 in 2023 (a reduction of 162).
* Listening to the needs of rural communities, I introduced a Tri-Service Rural Community Officer pilot in the Dengie, which ran successfully up until March 2022 at which point it was extended following an evaluation showing the effectiveness of the scheme. I expanded this approach has with a second Tri-Service Officer appointed in March 2023 in Uttlesford. Tri-Service Officers works with partner agencies such as parish councils and the National Farmers’ Union, and put activities in place to keep people safe, reduce crime, raise the profile of all the services, and to promote health and wellbeing.
* 50 dog thefts were reported in Essex for the 12 months to February 2024, this is 20 fewer than 2020/21. Dog theft has been a key objective for me and consequently Essex Police is now fully integrated into the National Pet Task Force, tackling crime through review of all investigations, the introduction of a proactive ability to respond to intelligence, and joined up working with partners including Crime Stoppers, the RSPCA, and Dog Watch.
* I have built a culture of collaboration and continue to unlock resources to reinvest into our emergency services in Essex. Through Emergency Services Collaboration I have secured benefits (Net Present Value) over 10 years of £18.7m. This is against a target benefit of £15.4m by 2027. These savings are being reinvested in the services to help provide a more efficient and effective service and ultimately provide better provision to the people of Essex.
* I have undertaken significant work with the Chief Fire Officer to ensure the recommendations from the inquiry into Grenfell and the Manchester Arena Bombing are understood and implemented to ensure residents of Essex are kept safe.
* The Joint Education Team between policing and the fire and rescue service continue to provide a catalogue of safety education programmes for young people covering home safety, cyber safety, arson and hoax call prevention, knife crime prevention, gangs’ awareness, road safety, hate crime prevention, anti-social behaviour prevention and firework safety. Since the early stages of the collaboration, the number of young people engaged by these teams has grown by 55% while also delivering benefits of £1,582,214 (Net Present Value) over 10 years. Also in collaboration, the Collapsed Behind Closed Doors project, which means medical professionals can reach those in need of emergency attention quicker, reducing the likelihood of serious injury has improved the speed of response and has profiled cost savings of around £600,000 over a 10-year period.