

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee – 14th July 2016

Public Questions

Question from Mr Webb to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning & Public Protection Services

Question 1

“In January 2016 monthly target of crimes for theft from burglary, theft of a cycle, theft from a person, criminal damage, common assault, wounds, robbery, was not met. What policy and strategies will be implemented by Southend council and the police to reach the target and help Southend residents to prevent and avoid these categories of crime?”

Answer

Over the last 12 months we have seen an above average rise in recorded crime. Both vehicle crime and dwelling burglary have increased, but recent trends are promising, particularly in respect of dwelling burglary where targeted initiatives (investigation and predictive policing) have seen reductions over this last quarter.

However, violent crime continues to increase particularly violence with injury and violence without injury in line with our most similar group and the national trend. The Community Safety Partnership is leading initiatives to reduce the violent crime associated with night time economy (amounting to about 8% of violent crimes) and offences in York Road, a local hotspot area.

Domestic Abuse makes up about 30% of all violent crime and multi-agency partnerships are in place to prevent and reduce offending and risk. The new Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Team are working together to target those at high risk of harm from domestic abuse.

Violence with injury offences has shown a gradual decline over the past 6 months (for both adults and children). Violence without injury includes crimes such as harassment and malicious communications. Both of these offences have risen dramatically over recent years and a significant proportion involves use of technology and social media; those in their 20s make up the largest proportion of victims and perpetrators. Essex Police will shortly be launching an online media campaign to increase awareness and understanding of criminal offences that can be committed through digital technologies, the potential consequences and outline acceptable behaviours.

Data on crimes per 1000 population as presented within the British Crime Survey statistics doesn't allow for the 6 million visitors the town has each year, more than the majority of districts to which the town is compared across the country.

In the context of this answer, Southend remains a safe place to live, work and visit and the Community Safety Partnership is dedicated to ensuring that we work effectively and efficiently to reduce crime over the coming years for the safety and security of all residents.

Question from Mr Webb to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Community Support Services

Question 2

“What is the policy and performance target of the Council in terms of time in responding to questions and is the percentage being met?”

Answer

The Council publishes its standards for managing telephony, email and postal communication on its website.

For telephony, the target response time varies as per the nature of if contact subject matter but, for general calls to the switchboard, the performance this year to date is 84% of calls answered in 20 second against a target of 80%

For email and on-line contacts the council aims to respond to 100% in 5 working days or sooner and is achieving 100% performance

For post (typically complaints) the council is currently responding to 82.4% within 10 working days against a target of 85%