

RESPONDING TO **TODAY'S DEMANDS** PLANNING FOR **TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES**



Policing faces a number of significant challenges. Crime is changing, with domestic abuse, online stalking and cyber crime making the front line your front room. There are significant financial challenges, with Essex Police facing potential cuts of £63 million by 2019-20. Technology is altering the way criminals commit crimes. The public has changing expectations of how to contact the police. The consequence is that policing has to change.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh and I are proposing a number of significant changes to all facets of Essex Police to deliver a police force that is fit for the future. We want to make the Essex Police property estate fit for purpose. We want to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing. We intend to improve contact between police and the communities they serve.

Let me be clear. Some of the changes we are proposing we would be making regardless of the financial context. Essex Police's 80 buildings are in a poor state of repair. They require £30 million of maintenance work to bring up to standard and expenditure of almost £2 million a year just to maintain the current condition. Based on careful analysis the plan is to reduce the estate to 30 buildings strategically placed around Essex. The force also needs a Headquarters that is modern and fit for purpose both now and for the next 20 years, and we have the opportunity to deliver this.

Contact between police and the public must better reflect the way we live our lives. Very few people report crimes at police stations, and we must make it possible for members of the public to use secure online systems both to tell police about crimes and track the progress of investigations.

But some of the changes we are proposing are highly regrettable and will have a real impact on the lives of professional, hard-working, police staff and PCSOs. With around 83 per cent of the police budget spent on the salaries of police officers, staff and PCSOs, the financial cuts mean that Essex Police will have a smaller workforce.

Both the Chief Constable and I are determined that Essex Police must stay connected with the communities it serves. New Community Policing Teams will be created to work alongside response officers dealing with emergencies, detectives investigating the most serious crimes and specialist domestic abuse and public protection officers. The Community Policing teams will lead on:

- Problem solving around emerging crime series and hotspots, including high risk or repeat Anti-Social Behaviour
- Working with partners to address local issues
- Supporting the most vulnerable victims
- Policing the busy night life of our towns
- Engaging with local communities

Some of these changes are necessary and long overdue. Some are difficult and painful – especially as there are likely to be many fewer PCSOs and police staff serving their communities. I encourage everyone to join this autumn's engagement programme to raise local issues with Essex Police and help find potential solutions. In the face of hard choices, the Chief Constable and I are determined that Essex Police will continue to do all it can to keep our county safe both now and for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nick Alston'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nick Alston
Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex

