

# East Herts Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2017-18



**East Herts**  
Community Safety Partnership



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# Introduction

This is the tenth strategic assessment compiled by East Herts Community Safety Partnership (CSP) as required by the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The assessment establishes current and future crime, disorder and substance misuse issues within the district and makes comparisons with other areas within the county, across the region and, where appropriate, nationally.

The analysis focuses on crime types considered to be a risk and considers the community safety issues currently affecting the district using local intelligence, countywide strategies and national trends.

Decisions about community safety priorities for the coming year are made on the basis of risk levels, local intelligence, engagement and national trends.

# Recommendations

East Herts CSP will adopt the following priorities for 2017-18.

- 1. Protecting vulnerable people**
- 2. Keeping crime low**

The East Herts CSP action plan will run from April 2017 to March 2018 and reflects the benefits of pooling partnership resources to achieve common goals.

# Data sources

The principle time period used in the Assessment is 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2016. Where data has not been available from that time period, the timeframe has been stated.

- Hertfordshire County Council, Joint Protective Services
- Hertfordshire County Council, Services for Young People, Service Development and Innovations
- Hertfordshire County Council, Strategic Partnerships (Domestic Abuse), Health & Community Services
- iQuanta
- NDTMS

Where comparisons are made within this report against other CSP's within Hertfordshire, 1<sup>st</sup> indicates the lowest number of offences and 10<sup>th</sup> the highest. Where comparison is made with the Most Similar Group (MSG), 1<sup>st</sup> indicates the lowest number of offences and 15<sup>th</sup> the highest.

# Methodology

This assessment reflects upon a variety of data and information:

## Crime risk matrix

A risk matrix was used to identify the most significant crime demands within the district. Each crime type was scored against five criteria, including percentage change, county position, and county change, to achieve a final risk score of high, medium or low. The crime areas identified as high, medium and with significant increases have been analysed within this assessment. Only recorded crime was risk assessed in this way. A risk score of 1 is low, and 10 is high.

## Crimes per 1000 of the population

Further consideration was paid to the proportion of people affected by the different crime types, regardless of the risk score identified, as described above.

It must be noted that no level of crime experienced is acceptable, and it is not possible to compare like for like as the scale of crime varies depending on its nature, harm to property, person or community, and the experiences of crime will vary from victim to victim. The CSP treats all crime as serious, but also considers the crime types that are impacting on the majority.

With this in mind the CSP has reflected upon the proportions of the East Herts population experiencing different crime types and the relationship of this against whether the crime has increased or decreased and where East Herts features with the other 9 districts/boroughs across the county.

## Partnership data

In addition to the crime data analysed, the document reflects on other partnership data.

## Local intelligence

Throughout the document local intelligence is considered, detailed in boxes. We have also considered the outcomes of recent consultations and community engagement.

## National trends

Many of the issues addressed by community safety partners is prompted by national trends, either through new legislation, policy or learning from other areas. These trends are also considered throughout the document.

## Vulnerability

Considering all of the above resulted in one of the priorities to protect vulnerable people. Assessing an individual's vulnerability is achieved in many ways by different service providers addressing and responding to range of safeguarding concerns, varying in complexity.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks neighbourhoods by their score which is constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights. The seven domains are: barriers to housing and services; crime and disorder; education, skills and training; employment; health deprivation and disability; income; and living environment. The crime and disorder domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation.

This priority relates to the wider community safety picture which suggests demographics, circumstances, locations, local knowledge and intelligence can make people vulnerable to crime. The CSP aims to protect those considered vulnerable.

# East Herts Profile

East Herts is one of ten districts and boroughs in Hertfordshire and covers approximately 184 square miles (a third of the County) with five market towns and more than 100 villages and hamlets. It is the largest of the ten areas, offering a blend of rural and town living.

The population of East Herts was calculated to be 144,700 by the ONS in their 2015 mid-year estimates.

The proportion of non-white British people in East Herts at the time of the 2011 Census was 9.75%. The proportion of non-white British people in the whole of Hertfordshire at the time of the 2011 Census was 19.18%. The only ethnic minority of significance in East Herts was 'white other' at 4.04%. All other ethnic groups were 1.2% or less.

Data from the 2011 Census shows that East Herts is predominantly Christian, although the percentage has decreased since the previous Census. Analysis of the figures indicates the following main categories in the district; Christian 62.7%, Muslim 0.7%, Hindu 0.4%, Jewish 0.3%, Buddhist 0.3% and Sikh 0.1%. Of those answering this question, 7.3% opted for 'not stated'.

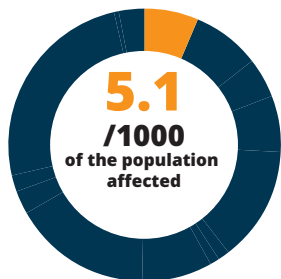
## Crime Profile

In 2016 there were 6963 recorded crimes in East Herts. This was a 12.3% (764 crimes) increase when compared to the previous year.

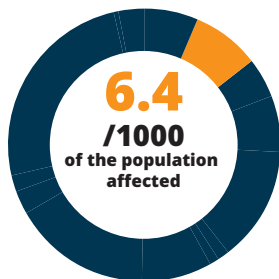
The table shows the district rank and risk score for all community safety recorded crime types.

| Crime types                 | 2015 | 2016 | Volume change | % Change | East Herts rank in county (1/10) | Risk Score |
|-----------------------------|------|------|---------------|----------|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>High risk</b>            |      |      |               |          |                                  |            |
| Possession class A drugs    | 37   | 66   | 29            | 78.4     | 6/10                             | 5 High     |
| Alcohol related crime       | 661  | 745  | 84            | +12.7    | 6/10                             | 5 High     |
| <b>Medium risk</b>          |      |      |               |          |                                  |            |
| Drug trafficking class A    | 46   | 32   | -14           | -30.4    | 9/10                             | 4 Medium   |
| Violence against the person | 1439 | 1870 | 431           | +30.0    | 3/10                             | 5 Medium   |
| Domestic abuse              | 674  | 920  | 246           | +36.5    | 5/10                             | 3 Medium   |
| <b>Low risk</b>             |      |      |               |          |                                  |            |
| Burglary dwelling           | 339  | 318  | 21            | -6.2     | 3/10                             | 2 Low      |
| Vehicle crime               | 554  | 531  | 23            | -4.2     | 2/10                             | 1 Low      |
| Drug possession – other     | 216  | 218  | 2             | 0.9      | 3/10                             | 1 Low      |
| Theft from shop             | 664  | 752  | 88            | 13.3     | 5/10                             | 3 Low      |
| Anti-social behaviour (ASB) | 2585 | 2837 | 252           | +9.7     | 1/10                             | 2 Low      |
| Night-time violent crime    | 1485 | 1548 | 53            | +4.2     | 3/10                             | 1 Low      |
| Drug trafficking – other    | 18   | 20   | 2             | 11.7     | 3/10                             | 2 Low      |
| Serious sexual offences     | 127  | 140  | 13            | +10.2    | 3/10                             | 3 Low      |
| Theft from person           | 96   | 76   | 20            | -20.8    | 2/10                             | 1 Low      |
| Hate crime                  | 126  | 136  | 10            | +8       | 2/10                             | 2 Low      |
| Burglary other              | 431  | 329  | 102           | -23.7    | 6/10                             | 1 Low      |
| Criminal damage             | 858  | 946  | 88            | 10.3     | 1/10                             | 3 Low      |

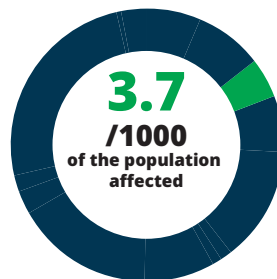
The information below shows the proportion of the East Herts population affected by the risk assessed crime types. The largest proportions of the population affected were those experiencing ASB with 19.6 per 1000 of the population, followed by violence against the person affecting 12.9 per 1000 of the population and night time violent crime affecting 10.7 per 1000 of the population.



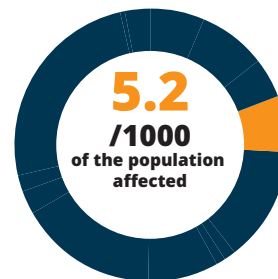
Alcohol related crime



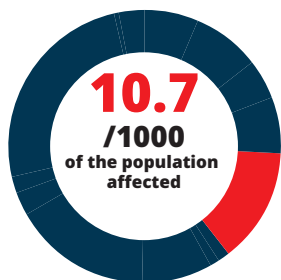
Domestic abuse



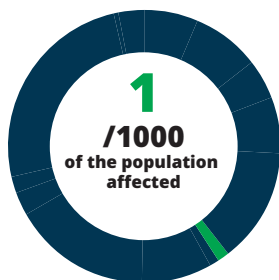
Vehicle crime



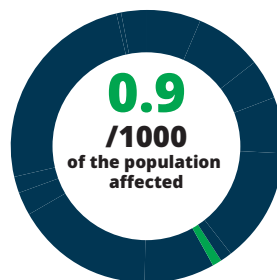
Theft from shop



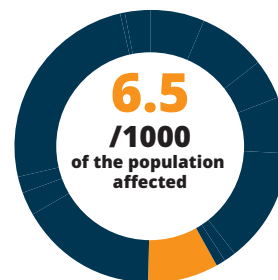
Night-time violent crime



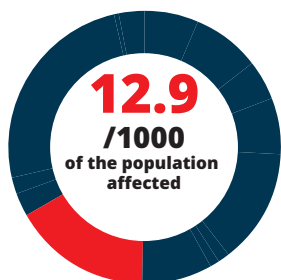
Serious sexual offences



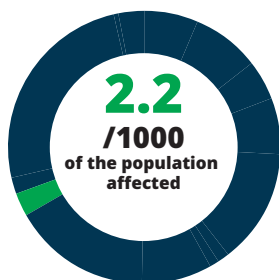
Hate crime



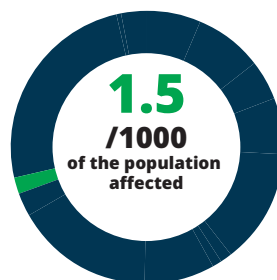
Criminal damage



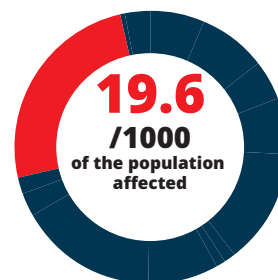
Violence against the person



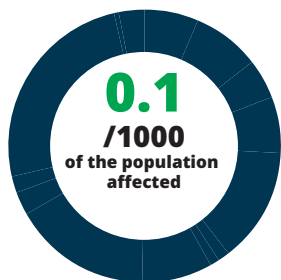
Burglary dwelling



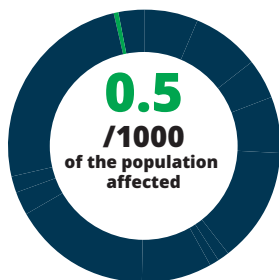
Drug possession - other



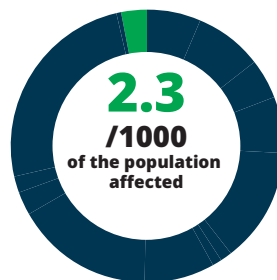
Anti-social behaviour (ASB)



Drug trafficking - other



Theft from person



Burglary other

Hertfordshire Consideration  
county comparison

6 and above

High

3-5

Medium

1-2

Low



# Priority 1: Protecting vulnerable people

## Domestic Abuse

### Domestic Abuse offences

Over the period stated there was a large percentage increase in domestic abuse offences (37%) when compared to the previous year; up from 674 to 920.

East Herts currently sits 4/10 within the county for the rate of offences, with 6.59 offences per 1000 population.

The numbers of non-crime domestic incidents recorded have increased by 7.4% (54 offences) up from 729 last year to 783 in the current period. MSG comparison data for domestic abuse is not available on iQuanta at CSP level.

Bishop's Stortford reported the highest number of domestic abuse crimes with 250 offences, followed by Ware with 247 offences and Hertford with 239.

Bishop's Stortford Central recorded the highest count of notifiable domestic abuse offences (excluding non-crime incidents) with 97 offences which was 9 more offences than the previous year (+7.7%). Bishop's Stortford All Saints recorded the second highest with 71 offences; this was an increase of 34 offences (+91.9%).

The most prevalent crime types for notifiable domestic abuse have been assault-occasioning ABH with 299 offences, followed by assault common – without injury (254). To date 204 (22.2%) of the 920 offences have been detected.

#### Partnership Update

The upward trend in reported domestic abuse cases maybe due to continual partnership working with an increase in third party reporting centres, the use of the domestic abuse helpline and Hertfordshire's Sunflower website.

## Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARACs): Number of repeat cases

The county-wide total number of MARAC repeats dropped between the two reporting periods by (-45) from 346 to 301. East Herts had the lowest rate of repeat domestic abuse cases across the county (0.13 per 1000 population).

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child abuse which has become a national and local priority. Whilst prosecutions for child sexual exploitation can be brought under provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 there are suggestions nationally that a large number of crimes against children and young people are not reported, often because the children do not realise they have been exploited and therefore experienced a crime.

CSE referrals to Halo have decreased by 18% from 37 in 2015 to 19 in 2016. East Herts is currently 2nd in the county for the number of referrals.

# Alcohol misuse

## Alcohol Related Crime

East Herts experienced a 12.7% increase in alcohol related crime during 2016, with 745 compared to 661 offences in the previous year (2015) and currently sits 6/10 within county, with 5.4 offences recorded per 1000 population.

Hertford Castle reported the highest number of alcohol related offences during 2016 (149 offences), which accounted for 20% of the overall total. Bishop's Stortford Central reported the second highest with 93 offences.

The top streets for offences of alcohol related crime were Fore Street (41), followed by Parliament Square (29). A large proportion (68.6%) of alcohol related offences occurred between the hours of 21:00 and 05:00 which suggests a link to the night time economy.

The top offence types were Assault – Occasioning ABH (269 offences), followed by Assault Common without Injury (158 offences). To date 213 (28.6%) of the 745 Alcohol Related Crime offences have been detected.

### Partnership Update

In March 2017 the East Herts Community Safety Partnership compiled a scrutiny report on the night time economy within the district. Crime trends were evaluated against the partnership responses in place. Overall, the night time economy in the major towns is well managed. Creditability was placed on prevention measures such as the role of CCTV, taxi marshals, Street Pastors, Pubwatch and town link radios. The findings will support a district wide CCTV review, consider the need and accessibility for cameras within taxis, explore the continuation of taxi marshals and encourage the use of new resources to help positively manage the night time economy. These actions are reflected in the CSP action plan 2017-18.

## Clients in Structured Alcohol Treatment - over 18s

Comparing the data periods from January 2016 to December 2016 and July 2014 to June 2015, the number of adults in structured alcohol treatment in East Herts has decreased from 147 to 98 individuals. It is not known if this is due to a reduction in need, or a decrease in provision.

## Clients in Structured Alcohol Treatment - under 18s

The total number of young people in structured alcohol treatment has dropped from 33 in the period Aug 2014-July 2015 to 8 in the period January 2016 to December 2016. Anecdotally, a significant proportion of the young people A-DASH see who predominantly use cannabis, say they do not like the taste or effects of alcohol. This supports national data to say that alcohol use in young people is reducing.

# Drug misuse

## Clients in Structured Drug Treatment - over 18s

Comparing the data periods from January 2016 to December 2016 and July 2014 to June 2015, the number of adults in structured drug treatment reduced from 271 to 208. The county had a reduction of 399 clients between the two periods (2004 to 2005, 17%). The largest count decrease (63) was experienced by East Herts. It is not known if this is due to a reduction in need, or a decrease in provision.

## Clients in Structured Drug Treatment - under 18s

Comparing the data periods from January 2016 to December 2016 and August 2014 to July 2015, the number of young people in structured drug treatment reduced from 20 to 18. The overall county figure showed of 20%.

# Rogue trader crimes

Countywide prevention work to protect vulnerable people from rogue traders suggests the majority thought to be at risk are the elderly or individuals who live alone. The average age of victims from 2014-2016 was 66.

Comparing the data periods January 2016 to December 2016 and August 2014 to July 2015 East Herts saw an increase of 4 incidents of rogue trading and was fourth highest for all incidents in the county. Reviewing the countywide picture suggests the more rural districts are more prone to rogue trading.



# Priority 2: Keeping crime low

## Possession of Class A drugs

Possession of class A drugs featured as high risk.

During 2016 there were 66 offences for possession of class A drugs in comparison to 37 offences during 2015. The top beat for possession of class A drugs in 2016 was Hertford Castle with 33 offences, followed by 18 offences in Parliament Square of which 12 were from Blackbirds Public House, and 12 occurring in Dowsett Lane for which there were a number of arrests on the same date as part of a targeted police operation (Operation ALOA).

### Partnership Consideration

These high levels are a result of the police carrying out operations and can therefore be viewed as a positive. To date 46 (69.7%) of the 66 possession of class A drug offences have been detected.

## Violence against the Person

East Herts witnessed a 30% increase in violence against the person during 2016 (1870 offences) compared to 1439 offences the previous year (2015).

East Herts currently sits 3/10 within county for the rate of offences recorded per 1000 population. iQuanta data reflects East Herts as 8/15 in its MSG during the most recent 12 month period, with the CSP reporting 12.76 crimes per 1000 residents, which is lower than the MSG average of 13.66.

Hertford Castle reported the highest number of offences in the CSP during 2016 (246 offences), which accounted for 13.2% of the overall total and was up 33 offences on the previous year. Bishop's Stortford Central was second highest beat with 10.7% of the overall total (200 offences) and was up 21 offences on the previous year (2015).

The top streets for offences of violence against the person were Fore Street in Hertford (46 offences) and Parliament Square in Hertford (35 offences).

The most prevalent crime types were assault – occasioning ABH with 696 offences, followed by assault common without injury with 624 offences. To date 371 (19.8%) of the 1870 violence against the person offences have been detected.

April recorded the lowest number of offences during 2016 with 126 offences, while July recorded the highest number of offences with 192.

## Robbery

East Herts witnessed an increase of +85.2% in reports of robbery compared to the previous year (2015). Of the 50 offences in 2016, 2 were business robberies and 48 were personal robberies.

East Herts currently sits 4/10 within county for the rate of offences recorded per 1000 population. iQuanta data reflects East Herts as 13/15 in its MSG during the most recent 12 month period, with the CSP reporting 0.332 crimes per 1000 residents, which is higher than the MSG average of 0.233.

Hertford Castle reported the highest number of offences in the CSP with 15 offences, all of which were personal robberies and 2 of which were attempts. These 15 offences accounted for 30% of the overall total. Ware Christchurch was second highest with 16% of the overall total (8 offences).

The top streets for offences were North Road in Hertford Castle with 4 offences, 3 of which were personal and 1 attempt. All 4 offences occurred between 21:00 and 00:32 hrs. The second highest street for offences was the High Street in Ware with 3 offences, of which 2 were personal robberies and 1 was a business robbery.

To date 5 (10%) of the 50 Robbery offences during 2016 have been detected.

## Deliberate Fires

The county total of recorded deliberate fire incidents has increased from January 2016 to December 2016 and January 2015 to December 2015 by 113, from 1098 to 1211. East Herts saw an increase in deliberate fires from 0.7 per 1000 of the population to 0.8 per 1000 of the population.

Over 60% of deliberate fire incidents countywide occurred in outdoor locations including tree, scrub, meadow, crop, woodland, hedgerow, bins, tips and 'other outdoor locations'. The largest specific category was 'Refuse Bin / Rubbish Tip Wheelie Bin / Skip'.

### Partnership information

During this strategic period East Herts Fire and Rescue Service have contributed towards, Safer Streets, Op Stomp (vulnerable people), Op Panther (ASB), Op Agrarian (vehicle checks), Bike Safe and Learn to live. HFRS have also continued to support partners in seeking referrals of suitable candidates for inclusion in LiFE courses in East Herts. The Fire and Rescue Service have also undertaken business safe visits, school safe visits and arson patrols to identify deliberate fire risks and to provide appropriate advice.

## Rural Crime

There is no national recognised definition of rural crime. Across the country police forces and Community Safety Partnerships have adopted their own definition of rural crime. In Hertfordshire a definition of rural crime is yet to be identified.

As there is no formal definition of rural crime, evaluation of crime trends is commonly done through what is readily available such as; burglaries, criminal damage, anti-social behaviour, drug offences, theft of and from motor vehicles, assault and shoplifting. As a result rural crime levels are lower than urban areas due to the nature of what and how crimes are recorded against vastly different population levels. However, that does not mean crime is not an issue to rural areas, and in contrast the CSP often sees rural crime as a priority.

East Herts population is considered 30% rural where 43,421 people live in rural areas compared to a total of 99,600 living in the five main towns. It is worth noting that Buntingford is often considered rural.

East Herts Council and its partners work closely with communities and individuals living in rural areas to respond and where possible prevent rural crime. East Herts CSP therefore focuses resources and activity on prevention and engagement within rural communities and individuals considered at risk.

### **Partnership consultation**

Community Safety Partners are in continual engagement with the rural community. Every year CSP partners arrange a structured engagement meeting with rural landowners to share ideas, to raise awareness of emerging issues, and for the rural community to express their concerns. The outcomes of the 2016 barn meet suggested criminal damage as a result of poaching, deer strikes on main roads, road safety and speeding, fly tipping, and dog's intimidating livestock were high to medium concerns for the rural community.

## **Reassurance**

### **Feel safe, stay safe in East Herts**

Responses to community safety issues and prevention measures to addresses risk continues throughout the district with key partners.

There has been an increase in Neighbourhood Watch Membership with 19% of the district signed up. OWL membership has also increased by 2,500 members.

Pub Watch continues to cover Hertford, Bishop's Stortford, Ware and Sawbridgeworth where those involved in the scheme meet monthly with Herts Police and the East Herts Council to share intelligence with the aim to reduce crime related to the night time economy.

Herts Police have carried out many operations to address dwelling burglaries, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour.

## **Community safety outcomes 2016-17**

East Herts CSP is an established partnership as evidenced through joint initiatives and regular meetings focusing on prioritising actions, distributing grant funding, implementing projects and ensuring the needs of individuals are addressed. CSP partners continue to embrace new legislation and respond to emerging issues and crime trends.

The priority for the previous strategic assessment period (2016-17) was:

**Keep crime levels low and maintain public confidence through partnership working and responding to emerging community safety issues.**

Partners achieved the above through completing the actions detailed on the 12 month action plan (2016-17) and by responding to emerging trends.

## Knowledge gaps and emerging issues

The strategic assessment process creates a picture of community safety related issues over a 12 month period. However, crime and community safety trends can spike, issues emerge either predicted or unexpected and the partnership responds to these accordingly. It is these trends which cannot be reflected in this assessment process. In addition to the risks highlighted within the assessment, the crimes classed as low risk have not been analysed in this document.

In addition to the risks highlighted within the assessment, the partnership predicts the following topics as areas likely to influence 2017-18 activity:

- Continuing to ensure issues relating to Prevent (through the Security Act 2015) are incorporated into the daily work of CSP partners
- Working with Hertfordshire County Council, and responding to the recommendations laid out in the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy (2016-2019) and the Hertfordshire Hate Crime Strategy (2017-2020).
- Engage with key businesses and individuals to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation.

The following are often highlighted in partnership conversations. However, partners have limited access to data and the scale of the following concerns:

- Fraud – in all its forms from telephone, postal and online
- The uncertainties around new psychoactive substances
- Alcohol abuse in young people
- Cyber crime

The above list will be considered at strategic partnership meetings and consideration paid to obtaining data for the next strategic assessment.



# Conclusion

Crime and disorder levels across East Herts remain relatively low and overall, the district compares favourably within the county and with other CSPs.

The crimes considered high risk are those which have increased from the previous year, are higher than other areas across the county, affect the majority of people, are severe or violent, and are a threat to life, or property. The CSP cannot compare one crime with another as they affect people in different ways, scales and severity.

This assessment has determined two community safety priorities for 2017-18:

- 1. Protecting vulnerable people**
- 2. Keeping crime low**

A summary of the key action plan objectives for 2017-18 are described below.

| <b>Priority</b>                     | <b>Key actions</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Protecting vulnerable people</b> | <p>To safeguard people, property and individuals considered vulnerable through initiative known as Op Stomp.</p> <p>To harness rural business motivation and intelligence to make rural East Herts safe through the Rural Watch scheme.</p> <p>To safeguard individuals at risk, to raise awareness of Prevent and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).</p>                                |
| <b>Keeping crime low</b>            | <p>To ensure key businesses are connected via radio through the Business Watch initiative.</p> <p>Carry out a full review of public CCTV across the district to ensure coverage justified at hotspot locations and known crime areas</p> <p>Night time economy enhanced, businesses are using resources to help respond to negative associations with night time economy activity.</p> |

