



Message from Essex Police Wednesday November 11th, 2009.

Essex launches first Rural Policing Conference

By Morwenna Holland



Essex Police is taking steps to be more effective in rural areas by launching the first Rural Patrol Companion for police officers and police community support officers.

Launched by Deputy Chief Constable Andy Bliss at the county's first Rural Policing Conference, the unique handbook provides specific guidelines and contacts for policing rural areas.

Building on valuable relationships between the police and local communities, dedicated neighbourhood support officers continue to carry out intelligence-led, targeted patrols on foot, bike and horseback. The conference gave officers and partner agencies the opportunity to further discuss and find solutions to the issues rural communities face, ranging from vandalism to terrorism.

Mr Bliss said: "Nearly two-thirds of our neighbourhoods are rural communities. Many of the people living in these areas can feel isolated or vulnerable and it is vital that we act positively, providing equally effective policing in urban and rural areas.

"There are 103 neighbourhood support officers covering 85 rural neighbourhoods and we have a number of schemes in place specifically for rural life, such as Farm Watch and Horse Watch, as well as Community Speed Watch in which more than 50 neighbourhoods already participate.

"Investing in such schemes gives local people the opportunity to voice their own concerns and get involved in helping to make their neighbourhood safer. It also allows the police to listen to the wants and needs of rural communities.

"In the past few months, police officers and PCSOs have travelled 31,000 miles on bicycles, in many cases reaching rural areas that other vehicles simply can't. This increased police presence has already had extremely positive feedback and we will continue to work with other key agencies to make rural areas safe places in which to live, work and visit."

The rural policing conference, which took place Thursday, November 26, coincides with the release of the Essex Rural Commission's report which made 60 recommendations to secure the future of rural Essex. This includes a focus on crime prevention, making Essex Police one of the key agencies involved.