LOUGHTON: Woman made false sexual assault claim

James Colasanti

THOUSANDS of pounds have been wasted on a full-scale police investigation into a woman's false allegations of sexual assault.

Shock waves reverberated through Loughton over the Bank Holiday weekend after police officers made house-to-house calls as part of enquiries into an alleged attack in broad daylight on Borders Lane last Thursday afternoon.

It has since been revealed that the same 41-year-old woman made another false allegation of sexual assault in nearby Willingale Road two days earlier.

Despite an angry backlash from the community, a police spokesman said no further action will be taken against the woman.

"This decision is based on her background and personal issues - each case is judged on its individual merits," he said.

Her claims prompted a media appeal for information, and caused deep concern and speculation among crowds gathered at the annual Debden Day on Saturday.

BNP councillor Rod Law, who represents the area, worked closely with the police to encourage local residents to help with the investigation.

He said: "This sort of thing can really damage the confidence within a community, and it really had people worried here."
"Rightly or wrongly, I know many residents were avoiding the area near the college where this was supposed to have happened - that is how scared people were.

"Obviously I don't know exactly what this woman's personal issues are, but this was a very irresponsible thing to do."

A police spokesman said: "As with all allegations of this nature, the woman - who appeared to be distressed by the alleged assault - was treated sensitively, and detectives spoke to many people in the local community to gather information.

"Following interviews with the victim, and further enquiries, it has become clear that no offence had taken place."

He added: "While it is difficult to quantify exactly how many officers and resources were used, it is safe to say this investigation will have cost thousands of pounds.

"It will have also meant that officers were redirected away from other incidents.

"I think this highlights how damaging false allegations can be in wasting police resources and raising the fear of crime. I hope it helps to prevents similar incidents of false allegations in the future."

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