**Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2018/2019**

**Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex**

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| --- | --- |
| **Title of Report:** | **Specials Recruitment – Quarterly Report** |
| **Agenda Number:** | **4.0** |
| **Chief Officer** | **ACC Andy Prophet** |
| **Date Paper was Written** | **11th March 2019** |
| **Version Number** | **2** |
| **Report from:** | **Essex Police** |
| **Date of Meeting:** | **3rd January 2019** |
| **Author on behalf of Chief Officer:** | **Supt Simon Anslow** |
| **Date of Approval:** | **15th March 2019** |

1. **Purpose of Report**

Quarterly update on recruitment under the Special Constabulary Development Programme.

1. **Recommendations**

No specific recommendations arising

1. **Executive Summary**

As of 11th March 2019 Essex Police Special Constabulary has a headcount of 502 officers. National Workforce Statistics, published in January 2019, show that Essex Police is now the second largest Special Constabulary in England and Wales. The statistics show that whilst there was a national reduction in headcount of 12.3% in the previous year, Essex Police had achieved growth of 22.1% and had the largest increase in numbers of any force in the country.

Over the period 1st December 2018 to 28th February 2019 Specials have contributed a total of 43,730 hours, a 39% increase on the same period in 2017/18. The last 3 months have seen a 53% increase in operational hours compared with the same period a year ago (33,198 operational hours). The hours worked by the Special Constabulary across this period was equivalent to having an additional 98 full time officers, who would attract an annual salary cost of £5.1m.

Essex Police received 300 new applications between 1st December 2018 and 28th February 2019. This is a slight increase on the previous quarter (+12.4%). Recruitment of new Specials in the last 3 months has matched the forecasts given in the previous quarterly report.

The greatest threats to continued growth remain regular recruitment and any diminishing impact of our recruitment campaign. In the last 12 months we have recruited 207 new officers. Our surveying suggests that circa 80% of those new starters intend to join the regulars. This suggests that there is a cohort of approximately 165 officers who have joined in the last year and are likely have both an intention to join the regulars and the opportunity to do so, given the ambition of the force to grow by an additional 215 regular officers over the next 12 months.

The impact of regular recruitment on continued growth of the Special Constabulary will be mitigated through:

* Extensive media campaign over the next financial year to ensure we attract sufficient applications to overcome any additional losses to the regulars.
* A media campaign that will specifically include those less likely to join as regulars e.g. those in their 30s and 40s who are earning in excess of £35k per annum.
* Maintaining focus on improving the volunteer experience and retention of those that do not intend to join the regulars

We are considering a proposal from Havas People to deliver our recruitment campaign for 2019/20. Their campaign would primarily focus on targeted social media advertising across Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, using a new creative concept and moving away from #MyOtherLife. The proposal is currently under review, set against the capacity and capability of our internal campaigns team to continue to drive recruitment through the third year.

Looking beyond March 2020, sustaining a headcount of 600 or more Special Constables beyond 2020 is likely to require recruitment of 180 new Special Constables per year (achieved through 800 applications per year). The Specials Development Programme is resourced to deliver headcount growth, so savings will be available in relation to recruitment and training posts once we reach a ‘headcount maintenance’ position (albeit some savings will be delayed as the training legacy of new starters will run into 2020/21).

The table below provides indicative costings for maintaining a headcount of 600 officers and an estimate of the return on that investment (measured in terms of equivalent regular salary). This is explored in more detail in section 9.0.2.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020** | **2021+** |
| Special Constabulary Costs[[1]](#footnote-1) | £1,772,000 | £1,620,000 | £1,527,000 |
| Special Constabulary Value Added[[2]](#footnote-2) | £5,870,000 | £6,340,000 | £6,340,000 |

The ability of the force to maintain a headcount of 600 will be predicated on the following:

* The regular recruitment strategy – the presumption is that where regular recruitment stops or slows, Specials recruitment will increase, and vice-versa.
* Investment in retention – where other forces have seen a period of substantial growth it has been followed by a period of reduction as they have also removed investment in retention (achieved through paid staff to support the Specials and through commitment to training and integration)
* The volunteer recruitment environment - our recruitment campaign will have been running since May 2017, but will still need to attract 800 new applications every year. This is a substantial requirement and there is a risk of reducing return on investment as the campaign continues.

Changes to any of the above will have a significant impact on headcount maintenance, however, the return on investment in terms of salary equivalent suggests that continued investment in the Special Constabulary is worthwhile and achieves value for money.

**4.0 Introduction/Background**

In September 2016 the headcount of the Special Constabulary was 350 officers. The intention of the Special Constabulary Development Programme has been to double that headcount to 700 officers by March 2019. This was an ambitious target and the change to the recruitment landscape in relation to opportunities to join the regular constabulary has limited our growth. In September 2018 the Performance & Resources Scrutiny Programme accepted a recommendation that the PFCC and Essex Police adjust the ambition to a target of 600 active specials by March 2020 with a stretch target of 700.

National Workforce Statistics, published in January 2019, show that Essex Police is now the second largest Special Constabulary in England and Wales, behind only the Metropolitan Police and 56 officers larger than the next biggest force (TVP). The statistics show that whilst there was a national reduction in headcount of 12.3% between October 2017 and September 2018, Essex Police had achieved growth of 22.1% and had the largest increase in numbers of any force in the country. Essex Police was one of only 10 forces nationally to achieve any growth and our increase in numbers was double that of the next closest force. We have more Specials in Essex than they have in the whole of Wales and in the whole North East region

This report will focus on current recruitment activity and plans over the next period and address the action arising from the last board: “start modelling for diminishing returns and what should be the input in order to achieve a certain level of sustainability”.

**5.0 Current Work and Performance**

**5.1 Recruitment**

Essex Police received 300 completed applications between 1st December 2018 and 28th February 2019. This is a 12.4% increase from 267 applications in the previous quarter (In 2017 we operated a very different application process so comparable data is not available). The last report to the P&RS set out the recruitment timetable for the remainder of the 2018/19 financial year:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **No.** | **In** | **Out** |
|  | Dec-18 | 474 | 12 | 8 |
|  | Jan-19 | 478 | 15 | 9 |
|  | Feb-19 | 484 | 24 | 8 |
|  | Mar-19 | 500 | 24 | 8 |
|  | Apr-19 | 516 |  |  |
|  | **Totals** |  | **75** | **33** |

(No. shows predicted headcount at the start of each month)

The current headcount of 502 shows that we remain on target to deliver a headcount of 516 officers by the end of March 2019.

In the last 3 months we have continued the marketing and outreach work from the previous quarter:

**Media Attraction**

* We have introduced an approach linking our recruitment adverts to seasonal or national events. This has seen us put together social media posts around Christmas, New Year’s resolutions, Valentine’s Day and linking to the Six Nations rugby tournament. We continue to support these adverts with additional boosting to target communities.
* We have launched new opportunities for Specials to join SCD directly following attestation. They undertake the same initial training as all other Specials and will qualify for independent patrol on the same operational criteria, but they are able to support SCD far earlier than normal. This attracted quite a lot of negative press, featuring on the website versions of the Mail, Mirror and Express. Despite this we attracted a lot of interest and have received 61 applications for the 5 roles available. We are creating opportunities in CID and PPU to ensure we take advantage of the interest of those who are not successful in joining SCD.
* We have made use of Facebook “instant experience” adverts, a full page advert on that platform to better capture the attention of users.
* We continue to promote good news stories involving Specials and to promote the specific roles and activities of different Specials
* Through February and March we have commissioned a series of newspaper advertisements and linked online adverts through Essex Gazette and Essex Live. We have a further 6 adverts to run.

**Recruitment Outreach**

* The majority of physical outreach activity has been linked to schools, colleges and other career-based events. The recruitment team have attended such events in Epping, Harlow, Colchester, Thurrock, Tendring and Chelmsford. Experience over the last two years show that these types of event are the most beneficial in attracting applications.
* The team run regular Recruitment Information Events, with two in the last quarter attracting over 100 interested members of public.
* The team have also supported recruitment events linked to the launch of Employer Supported Policing, most recently in London at the headquarters of EE.

**Employer Supported Policing**

* 19 companies are now committed to providing their staff with paid time off to volunteer as Specials in Essex (17 more than 12 months ago). This has realised a total of 324 hours from employees of external companies over the last 3 months. Late November and December saw a significant drop in the amount of ESP leave volunteered, this appears to be linked with the seasonal demand in retail and the amount of existing holiday available in December, which reduced the need for ESP for many people. January 2019 saw the numbers return to September and October levels.
* Recently signed-up employers include Ringway Jacobs, Hand to Mouth Ltd (formally Eat Natural) and Anglian Water.
* Our EE recruitment event took place on 23rd January in City of London. We were fantastically supported by senior management at the event and have commitments that we will be positively introduced to companies in their supply chain.
* We continue to work well with Essex Chambers of Commerce and receive interest from employers following the 3 events attended in the last quarter.
* Negotiations are ongoing with a further 36 companies who are interested in the scheme, either through Chambers of Commerce events or as a result of having Specials already employed with them. The latter has proven to be by far the most productive way forward as we find it harder to engage senior management teams where they do not have SCs on staff.

**Community Special Constables**

* We now have 34 Parish or Town Councils signed up to Community Special Constables (CSCs) from across the county.
* A further 5 councils are seriously engaged but have not yet signed up
* Over the last 3 months we have received 17 applications for CSC roles. We currently have 3 candidates in shortlisting, 5 awaiting their assessment centre and 6 candidates who have passed their assessment centre and are booked on foundation courses. These 6 will provide CSCs for Leigh-on-Sea, Great Burstead, West Mersea, Halstead, West Bergholt and Springfield.
* In the last 3 months two new CSCs have attested, for West Mersea and West Bergholt. They are now working with Local Policing Teams to complete their portfolios prior to achieving Independent Patrol status, before taking up their position in their parishes. Our Buckhurst Hill CSC is progressing well with his evidence portfolio and should achieve independent patrol status in the next couple of months.
* We now have a CSC for Halstead – SC Michael Mihalyfi has asked to take up this position after he attained independent patrol status. Two other officers have asked to join him at Halstead when they are certified as independent. We also have interest from current Specials in being CSCs in Canvey and Hullbridge.
* Witham remains the flagship council area for CSC with 3 independent officers deployed. Over the last 3 months they have contributed a total of 226hrs to local, visible and accessible policing in that area. In recognition of their hard work they have recently received the Inspirational Role Model award at the annual Witham Chambers of Commerce Community Awards ceremony.

**5.2 Performance**

Over the last 3 months (1st December 2018 to 28th February 2019) Specials have contributed a total of 43,730 hours, a 39% increase on the same period in 2017/18. The operational contribution over the last 3 months has amounted to 33,198 hours (a 53% increase). The Specials have recorded 17,494 hours of high visibility policing over this time, a 56% increase over the same period last year.

The hours worked by the Special Constabulary across this 3 month period is equivalent to having an additional 98 full time officers, who would attract an annual salary cost of £5.1m.

Over the last 3 months, 75% of Special Constables have volunteered at least 16hrs a month. This compares favourably with a national engagement rate of 50%. Specials are asked to work at least 16hrs per month, however, in the last 3 months Essex Specials have volunteered an average of 31hrs per month each, up from 27hrs per month in the equivalent period in 2017/18.

Between 1st December 2018 and 28th February 2019, 34 Specials have left the Special Constabulary. 12 of these did so to join the regulars; 15 left for personal reasons (ranging from medical reasons, to changes in personal circumstances and changes in work-life balance); 3 failed in initial training and 4 were hired, but failed to attend initial training. Our annual turnover rate is currently 27.2%, a slight increase on our performance over the last 12 months. We have reviewed each case in-depth to determine whether there is anything systemic that we can influence to improve retention. Of the 34 leavers only one left for something that may have been resolvable (dissatisfaction with his supervisor) if we had known before resignation. In the case of all other leavers all the appropriate efforts and interventions had been made to try and retain the officers.

**6.0 Implications (Issues)**

The greatest risk to the continued growth of the Special Constabulary remains the recruitment of regular officers.

The last 12 months has seen a steady growth, moving from a headcount of 416 in Feb 2018 to 499 at the end of Feb 2019, despite 124 leavers. We have recruited 207 new officers[[3]](#footnote-3) in the last 12 months and both our surveying and anecdotal evidence suggests that circa 80% of those new starters intend to join the regulars. This suggests that there is a cohort of approximately 165 officers who have joined in the last year who have an intention to join the regulars. With the ambition of the force to grow by an additional 215 regular officers over the next 12 months there is a significant risk that we will see increased attrition from existing Specials achieving independent patrol status and applying for the regular force. Independent Patrol Status (IPS) is a landmark for potential applicants, both as a qualifying criteria for those who do not have the necessary academic qualifications and in allowing new starters to start their regular service at a higher pay point. IPS is normally achieved after 12-18 months of service.

The threat this poses to continued growth of the Special Constabulary will be mitigated through:

* Extensive media campaign over the next financial year to ensure we attract sufficient applications to overcome any additional losses to the regulars.
* A media campaign that will specifically target those less likely to join as regulars e.g. those in their 30s and 40s who are earning in excess of £35k per annum.
* Maintaining focus on improving the volunteer experience and retention of those that do not intend to join the regulars

Specials joining the regulars is not necessarily a negative for Essex Police – it is a legitimate route into the force and allows Essex Police to recruit officers that are already vetted, have proven capability in the role and who know they want to remain in the organisation - however, it is likely to continue to adversely impact on the specific ambitions for the Special Constabulary.

In the last report to this board we reported on concerns of a steady decline in the conversion rate from “apply now” clicks to actual completed applications (SF:App Ratio). This had reduced to 15% in the previous quarter. In response we made some amendments to the Success Factors landing page to give some clearer information and encourage application. In the last 3 months we have seen an improvement where 22% of people clicking “apply now” on our website go on to complete an application. Further work will be done to improve this through our marketing provider over the next financial year.

**6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

The Police and Crime Plan 2016-20 states that the PFCC will: “boost community volunteering, encourage the Active Citizen Programme and grow the police family – doubling the Special Constabulary, with a Special Constable in every community”

The Special Constabulary has grown by 43% since September 2016. Whilst this is not as significant as intended at the outset of the programme, set within the context of a significant reduction in numbers of Specials nationally and our active recruitment of regular officers, this stands as a considerable achievement.

We already have Special Constables aligned to all our DPA Community Policing Teams. The Community Special Constables initiative is starting to gain traction as more applications are received and officers who applied for that scheme attest. Our Community Special Constables initiative is now seeing officers recruited to work on an even more localised area in Witham, Halstead, Buckhurst Hill, West Bergholt and West Mersea, with more to come.

**6.2 Demand**

The impact on demand is best measured through contribution of operational hours. The improvements in operational performance were described in section 5.2.

**6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

The following red risks are identified on the force risk register:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| URN | Score | Risk | Rationale |
| 1196 | 40 - Red | Unable to meet the Special Constabulary establishment target due to Force recruitment. | Surveying continues to show that the majority of Specials are joining with a future intention to join the regulars - 80% of new starters tells us they intend to join up. In the last 12 months we have seen 37 officers leave to join the regulars, this is equivalent to 18% of new starters over the same time period. As officers who have been recruited under the current campaign reach independent patrol status we anticipate seeing an increase number of applications. Anecdotally the recruitment team state that they is an increase in the number of Specials applying for the regulars. |
| 1659 | 40 - Red | Regular recruitment compromising Specials recruitment | Subject to local and national funding decisions, Essex Police hopes to increase establishment beyond 3,000 officers in the next 12 months. This means that the current regular recruitment campaign will continue. The launch of the #FitTheBill campaign saw a marked reduction in applications to the Specials and reduced the capacity for Specials recruitment messages on our social media platforms. Where forces have previously succeeded in doubling the size of the Special Constabulary (Northants, West Yorks) this was done in an environment where the forces were not also recruiting regulars. |

**6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications**

There are no specific equality or human rights implications in this paper.

**6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

There are no specific health and safety implications in this paper.

**7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

* Becky Humphreys & Allison Bentley – Corporate HR
* Pru Witherspoon – Media
* Jason Poole – Learning & Development
* Les Hawkins – Supported Policing Champion
* David Stovell – Corporate Finance

**8.0 Actions for Improvement**

The action taken to sustain recruitment over the last quarter has been summarised in section 5.1 above.

**9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome**

**9.0.1 Recruitment 2019/20**

The 2019/20 Recruitment Timetable is set out as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **No.** | **In** | **Out** |
|  | Apr-19 | 516 | 16 | 11 |
|  | May-19 | 521 | 16 | 11 |
|  | Jun-19 | 526 | 16 | 11 |
|  | Jul-19 | 531 | 30 | 11 |
|  | Aug-19 | 550 | 16 | 11 |
|  | Sep-19 | 555 | 25 | 12 |
|  | Oct-19 | 568 | 16 | 12 |
|  | Nov-19 | 572 | 16 | 12 |
|  | Dec-19 | 577 | 16 | 12 |
|  | Jan-20 | 581 | 25 | 12 |
|  | Feb-20 | 593 | 16 | 12 |
|  | Mar-20 | 597 | 16 | 12 |
|  | Apr-20 | 601 |  |  |
|  | **Totals** |  | **224** | **139** |

(No. shows predicted headcount at the start of each month)

As agreed by the P&RS board in September 2018, we are exploring options for an external marketing company to deliver the campaign over the next financial year. **Havas People** are our current procured service provider, they have set out a proposal to meet the recruitment objectives for 2019/20 that would move away from the successful #MyOtherLife brand. The Havas campaign would primarily focus on targeted social media advertising across Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, however, Essex Police would still have the demand of creating those posts from the creative material send from Havas. In addition Havas’ proposal would make use of sponsored keywords and advertisement on search engines and advertising on job boards such as jobsinessex.com and totaljobs.com.

In addition Havas have made recommendations on how to improve our Specials website to make the most of traffic driven to the site by the campaign. We will be working with our media department to introduce those changes that are compatible with the Single Online Home.

At the time of writing the Havas proposal is being considered against the capacity and capability of our in-house campaigns team to deliver through a third year.

**9.0.2 Beyond 2020**

Based on current turnover, maintaining a headcount of 600 or more Special Constables beyond 2020 is likely to require recruitment of **180 new Special Constables per year**.

Based on current recruitment attrition, **800 applications a year** would be required to achieve these 180 new starters. This is equivalent to the number of applications received in 10 months between April 2018 and January 2019.

Maintaining a 600 headcount would be achieved through the following timetable:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **No.** | **In** | **Out** |
|  | 28% |
|  | Apr-20 | 600 | 16 | 14 |
|  | May-20 | 602 | 16 | 14 |
|  | Jun-20 | 604 | 16 | 14 |
|  | Jul-20 | 606 | 0 | 14 |
|  | Aug-20 | 592 | 28 | 14 |
|  | Sep-20 | 606 | 16 | 14 |
|  | Oct-20 | 608 | 16 | 14 |
|  | Nov-20 | 610 | 16 | 14 |
|  | Dec-20 | 611 | 0 | 14 |
|  | Jan-21 | 597 | 16 | 14 |
|  | Feb-21 | 599 | 16 | 14 |
|  | Mar-21 | 601 | 26 | 14 |
|  | **20-21 Totals:** |  | **182** | **169** |

The Specials Development Programme is currently resourced to deliver headcount growth, so it is likely that some savings can be made in relation to recruitment and training posts once we reach a ‘headcount maintenance’ position. In relation to training, any reduction in capacity will be delayed as the impact of 2019/20 growth will have a significant training legacy into 2020/21 (new starters in February and March 2020 will require foundation training and patrol assessment into the next financial year).

The below tables show indicative of costs associated with maintaining a headcount of 600 Specials and a simple calculation of the return on investment we can expect:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cost Area** | **2019/20 Cost[[4]](#footnote-4)** | **2020 Cost** | **2021+ Cost** |
| Pay  Recruitment, Vetting, Training, Retention | £889,000 | £765,000 | £672,000 |
| Non-pay  Allowances, Mileage, Uniform, Medicals etc | £798,000 | £815,000 | £815,000 |
| Marketing  Creative, Social Media, Print Media, Events | £85,000 | £40,000[[5]](#footnote-5) | £40,000 |
| **Totals** | **£1,772,000** | **£1,620,000** | **£1,527,000** |

N.B. Costs are based on today’s amounts and do not take account of inflation or wage increases

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Value Added** | **2019/20** | **2020** | **2021+** |
| Productive Hours Volunteered[[6]](#footnote-6) | 169,000 | 182,000 | 182,000 |
| Equivalency in Regular FTE[[7]](#footnote-7) | 112 | 121 | 121 |
| **Equivalent in Regular Salary[[8]](#footnote-8)** | **£5,870,000** | **£6,340,000** | **£6,340,000** |

The ability of the force to maintain a headcount of 600 will be predicated on the following:

* The regular recruitment strategy – the presumption is that where regular recruitment stops or slows, Specials recruitment will increase, and vice-versa.
* Our investment in retention – where other forces have seen a period of substantial growth it has been followed by a period of reduction as they have also removed investment in retention (achieved through paid staff to support the Specials and through commitment to training and integration)
* The volunteer recruitment environment - our recruitment campaign will have been running since May 2017, but will still need to attract 800 new applications every year. There is a risk of reducing return on investment as the campaign continues.

Changes to any of the above will have a significant impact on headcount maintenance, however, the return on investment in terms of salary equivalent suggests that investment in the Special Constabulary is worthwhile and achieves value for money.

1. Calculated based on all identifiable and attributable costs of the Special Constabulary [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Based on salary costs of FTE regular officers working an equivalent number of productive hours as Specials [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Data obtained from Duty Sheet [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Agreed budget for 2019/20 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Likely budget required to attract 800 applications based on 2018/19 cost per application (£45) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Total hours, less training (Total hours estimated based on 30hrs/mth/officer; training estimated based on 16% total hours) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Productive hours divided by equivalent productive hours of a regular officer per year (1508hrs/yr as per NPCC) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Equivalent regular salary based on FTE multiplied by ready reckoner salary (£52,434 for a Police Constable) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)