**Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2019/2020**

**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:** | **5.0** |
| **Chief Officer** | **ACC Andy Prophet** |
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| **Author on behalf of Chief Officer:** | **Supt Cat Barrie** |
| **Date of Approval:** | **5th December 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 1st December 2019 Essex Police Special Constabulary has a headcount of 516 officers. National Workforce Statistics, published in July 19, show that Essex Police is still the second largest Special Constabulary in England and Wales after the Metropolitan Police Service.

The gender breakdown for Specials is 165 females (32%) and 351 males (68%) which indicates that our female ratio is improving due to targeted media campaigns to highlight role models and specialist opportunities.

Over the period 1st September 2019 to 30th November 2019 Specials have contributed a total of 48,659 hours, a 9% increase on the same period in 2018/19. The last 3 months has seen an increase of 6% in operational hours worked (33,537 operational hours) and an increase of 2% in high visibility hours compared to the same period last year (18,404 hours). The hours worked by the Special Constabulary across this period is equivalent to having an additional 109 full time officers, who would attract an annual salary cost of £5.6m.

Essex Police received 229 new applications between 1st September and 30th November 2019. This is an increase on the previous quarter by 12.6% when 200 applications were received and is a decrease from 275 applications (17%) on the same period last year.

The threat to the Specials continued growth remains the regular recruitment programme and there are now significant warning signs to indicate that the 600 headcount ambition will not be achieved by March 2020 based on the leaver data provided at section 9.1. Over the last 2 years, an average of 3 Specials resigned to become a regular each month. In the last 6 months, this has increased to 9.1 Specials each month and is likely to rise further. In 17/18, 180 new officers were recruited and in 18/19 this increased to 215 new officers. Since 01 April 19 to 30 November 2019, we have recruited 127 new officers with plans to recruit a further 84 officers. During the same period, 123 officers have resigned, with 67 officers becoming regular officers (59 – Essex, 8, MPS) which is 51%.

The number of applications are lower than last year and this may be attributed to recruitment saturation with 44 forces now actively recruiting officers directly or via a specials pathway. The mitigating action in place is to maximise our media campaigns and good news stories and continue to develop the employee advocacy strand. It has also been noted that there has been an increase in candidates requiring additional specialist medical reviews which has impacted on the time within the pipeline process. The mitigating action in place is a new FAQ sheet on the website to signpost awareness at the earliest opportunity. In order to recruit 156 Specials by March 2020, which would allow for a leaver rate of 72, 735 applications would be required. There are adequate resources in place to process these applications. Due to the Christmas and New Year holidays, the medical provider is closed from 21-29 December and plans are in place to have maximum appointments available from 30 December onwards.

Internal insight has been conducted through an anonymous survey and the results indicates that circa 111 Specials (55%) are interested in becoming a regular within the next 6-12 months. This evidence has been taken into account in future recruitment and training schedule plans.

The success of the regular recruitment campaign is clearly reflected in the projected joiners/leavers table at section 9.1 and taking into account that there are 2 more regular courses commencing in February and March, it is anticipated that the headcount ambition will remain relatively static over the next 4 months.

The impact of regular recruitment on the growth of the Special Constabulary is being mitigated through the following areas:

* Bi-weekly strategic meetings between Head of Media, Head of Specials, Head of Recruitment & Head of HR set against a terms of reference and current recruitment data.
* A weekly meeting is chaired by the Head of Specials with appropriate stakeholders to ensure that the recruitment pipeline is on target to achieve the maximum number of candidates for each intake. This is supported by the Recruitment oversight meeting that is chaired by the Head of Business Services and the Head of Resourcing. This meeting ensures oversight of key recruitment pipelines to ensure they are progressing in an efficient fashion and any blockers to progressing or hiring successful candidates are mitigated at a senior level.
* An extensive and creative media campaign to ensure we attract sufficient applications which 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, with a focus of BAME and female applicants.
* Data has shown that more people apply to be a special as a result of a referral from an existing Essex Police employee than any other forum or platform. This is called ‘Employee Advocacy’ and plans are underway to maximise this in 2020.
* Effective management of the ‘expressions of interest’ link on the Specials/regular online recruitment pages where 65 queries have been successfully dealt with.
* Filming Attestation Ceremonies with focus on bespoke interviews from females, transferees, BAME, ESP & CSC Specials to aid recruitment tactics via social media.
* A review of the medical and vetting process has been conducted which has resulted in FAQ help sheets being placed on the external website to inform and aid candidates.
* Maintaining focus on improving the volunteer experience and retention of those that do not intend to join the regulars via signposting available opportunities, leadership development, developing or valuing people framework and training.
* A change in the recording and management of requests to resign forms to ensure that reasonable adjustments and support is in place at the earliest opportunity which will now include oversight from the S/Superintendent before being accepted.

**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 the ambition and the change to the recruitment landscape 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 desire to stretch to 700 where viable.

National Workforce Statistics, published in July 2019, show that Essex Police is still the second largest Special Constabulary in England and Wales, behind only the Metropolitan Police with a headcount of 1860 officers and 103 officers larger than the next biggest force (West Yorkshire). The statistics show that whilst there was a national reduction in headcount of 9% from the previous year, Essex Police had achieved growth of 21.1% and had the largest increase in headcount of any force in the country. Essex Police was one of 14 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 in the whole of Wales and in the whole of the North East region.

**5.0 Current Work and Performance**

**5.1 Recruitment**

Essex Police received 229 completed applications between 1st September 2019 and 30th November 2019. This is a 12.6 % increase from 200 applications in the previous quarter and is a decrease of 17% on the same period last year when the media campaign #Myotherlife campaign was at its peak. 26 applicants were from a BAME background (11%) compared to 33 applications from the same period last year (12%). 68 applicants identify as female (29.6%) compared to 51 applicants from last year (19%). We are addressing recruitment for females through the following positive action:-

* maximising the social media good news stories for females
* enhancing existing twitter profiles for our female Specials
* capturing unique female journeys in the video films
* including female good news stories in #Myotherlife Specials magazine
* ensuring that female Specials are at recruitment/outreach events
* signposting the opportunities and support available for females i.e. staff networks/WLDF, confidence workshops, coaching/mentoring, leadership training, health & wellbeing and menopause support

The current headcount of 516 shows that we are behind the previous projected timetable to deliver a headcount of 554 officers by 30 November 2019, however plans are in place to respond to this as outlined in section 3 and 5. The final ambition is dependent on the number of Specials who join as a regular by March 20.

In the last 3 months we have continued the marketing and outreach work as detailed at section 5.3.

**5.2 Media Attraction**

* In this quarter we have celebrated social media posts around a number of events and can evidence where it has positively impacted on recruitment figures directly.
* Specials attended the Basildon Pride event in September which generated positive engagement.
* 30 staff which included 23 Specials completed the 3 peaks challenge in 30 hours and raised £17,500.00 during this time. Live time tweets and photos mapped our journey through Scotland, England and Wales and directly generated 6 applications. During this time, we met with the Fort William Specials Team and celebrated with an exchange of Essex Police memorabilia and a group photo.
* 2 new CSCs entered their foundation training phase and the Councillors were present at the Attestation Ceremony. The bespoke video footage generated interest from BBC who are planning to patrol with Graeme and Elizabeth in the near future.
* Specials volunteered over 1700 hours during Halloween and Bonfire night events which was shared online.
* On 5th October, the Specials and WLDF hosted Volunteer Fitness Festival to thank all volunteers for their hard work and support and to provide practical tips to aid mental and physical wellbeing with additional workshops. Over 200 people attended this event at the Pavilion and DCC Pippa Mills ran a popular event on ‘Time Management’.
* On the 10th October, the Specials celebrated Mental Health Day with a media campaign by providing evidence to support that volunteering as a Specials can be a de-stressor as well as existing provisions already in place.
* On the 15th October, SC Del Garroway from OSG, OPC returned from London after spending a week supporting the public order teams during Extinction Rebellion protests.
* On 22nd October, a Recruitment Information Evening was held for the public and this generated attendance from 80 people. 15 Specials then shared their journey which covered all aspects from completing the application form, interviews and the training programme to life as a front line or specialist officer. This was captured online and it generated 6 applications within 48 hours. A further event is now planned for 4th December.
* Media coverage was circulated relating to the Force and BAWP Awards where Specials and Specials Command Team were nominated as finalists and winners to showcase the calibre of our staff.
* On the 19th November, we celebrated International Men’s Day by launching a media campaign which consisted of 5 case studies of male Specials throughout the day and we also donated £1000 to the local men’s health charity ‘Baggy Trousers’. This activity generated 8 applications that week from men and 13 in total.
* On 21st November, the Force recognised the Long Service and Good Conduct Awards at Hylands Park and we were delighted to see Deputy Chief Officer Derek Hopkins receive his 39th year bar as recognition of outstanding commitment to the public along with 2 other Specials, who received their 9 year bars.
* Essex Police has featured on 3 occasions in the November Special Impact Magazine which is circulated nationally.
* Ongoing good news and public thank you stories are shared via our social media platforms but an exceptional case of great customer service from S/PS Andrew Morgan resulted in him receiving a thank you letter from a family in Japan. Whilst visiting Colchester, they had got lost and were worried and unsure of their surroundings at night. Andy identified himself and offered them a lift home and made sure that they were safely in their accommodation before leaving which generated positive feedback on twitter.
* In the next reporting period, the media team will be circulating the last Havas image via social media platforms and launching our Specials Advent Christmas Calendar in December. This will be followed by short and dynamic animation video clips to attract a more digitally aware audience followed by plans to maximise the employee advocacy evidence.

**5.3 Recruitment Outreach**

* We have attended 37 Outreach Events in this period which included schools & colleges. Experience over the last two years show that these types of event are the most beneficial in attracting applications.
* We attended Basildon Pride to recruit from the LGBT community.
* We attended Women’s Health in Harlow to recruit females.
* We attended the Rice & Spice events to recruit from the BAME community.
* We attended events during Black History Month to recruit from the BAME community.
* We attended events during the Interfaith Week to recruit from the BAME community.
* We hosted an Essex Police Careers Evening at HQ to showcase our staff and to answer any questions/dispel myths.
* We hosted a Volunteers Workshop for students at Anglian Ruskin University

Traditionally, recruitment numbers increase during this period which is reflected in our extensive outreach activity over the last three months and in 2020.

**5.4 Recruitment data from 01 Apr 16 to current date**

This table reflects the recruitment position over the last 3 years balanced against the number of leavers and the percentage who become a regular. The number of Specials who are resigning to become a regular has increased from a position of 26.6% in March 2017 to 51.2% by 30 November 2019.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PERIOD** | **JOINERS** | **LEAVERS** | **(no. of leavers who have joined regulars)** | **% of leavers who have become a regular** |
| 01/04/2016-31/03/2017 | 87 | 105 | 28 | (26.6%) |
| 01/04/2017-31/03/2018 | 180 | 116 | 38 | (32.7%) |
| 01/04/2018-31/03/2019 | 215 | 127 | 49 | (38.5%) |
| 01/04/2019-30/11/2019 | 127 | 123 | 63 | (51.2%) |
| **Grand Total** | **609** | **471** | **178** | **(37.7%)** |

**Employer Supported Policing (ESP)**

* Nationally, there are 1057 Specials who are supported as part of the ESP scheme which includes 174 businesses.
* Of the 174 businesses, 39 are police forces supporting a total of 687 members of police staff. Removing the police forces from the equation results in 135 businesses supporting 370 officers. ESP coordinator Les Hawkins has negotiated and registered 20 of these businesses (14.8%) on behalf of Essex Police benefitting 32 officers (4.7%)
* 25 businesses (14.4% nationally which includes Essex Police) are now committed to providing their staff with paid time off to volunteer as Specials in Essex (17 more than 12 months ago and 1 more since the last reporting period).
* 75 officers (7.1% nationally) now benefit from Employer Supported Policing scheme of which 37 are from Essex Police (22 more than 12 months ago and 2 less since the last reporting period due to 2 joining the regulars). 126 ESP duties have been completed within this period (43 Essex Police, 83 external business) culminating in a total of 1097 hours (378 Essex Police and 719 external business). This has decreased by 60 duties/38% and 513 hours/40% since the last period. This reduction is due to the significant number of hours worked for President Trump’s visit in June. Aside from this anomaly, ESP engagement continues to show a steady increase.
* BT/EE will be hosting a recruiting event with Essex Police at their London HQ in January/February 20 with the other businesses continually circulating recruiting material and promoting Specials internally.
* Whilst there have been no new companies signing up for ESP during this period there is significant work ongoing. Negotiations are at various stages with 30 businesses which include advanced negotiations with TFL, Rothschild and Essex & Suffolk Water and early stage negotiations with the Sainsbury Group (Grocery Stores, Bank, Argos and Habitat).
* Les Hawkins has recently attended the first relaunched national working group as the Eastern Region representative. It is apparent that many other forces are still keen to replicate the success of Essex Police in this area.

**Community Special Constables (CSC)**

* We now have 44 Parish or Town Councils signed up to Community Special Constables (CSCs) from across the county (an increase of 3 in the last reporting period). A further 3 councils have expressed an interest and are in the process of submitting their recruiting material.
* In the last 3 months we have received 17 applications for CSC roles directly through a Parish Council or Essex Police website (an increase of 1 from the last period). Of these 17, 5 have passed the assessment centre and have dates to commence foundation training, 5 have, or are awaiting dates to attend the assessment centre and the remainder have either failed a part of the process or have withdrawn.
* We currently have 6 officers in post foundation training with a view to starting with Halstead, Kelvedon, Newport, Springfield, West Bergholt and West Mersea Parish/Town Councils in the near future which is 1 more since the last reporting period.
* On 30th November 2019, there were 10 active CSC officers (an increase of 2 from the last period) covering 7 councils (an increase of 1 from the last period). 1 CSC Officer has withdrawn due to promotion and relocation to another District. Currently, an independent officer is working towards starting as the Birchanger Parish Council CSC in December.
* In summary there are 38 candidates active or being progressed through the various stages of recruitment/training as a CSC (an increase of 6 from the last period) and it is anticipated that there will be 15 CSCs in post by the end of March 2020 which is in keeping with this long term aspiration.
* The CSC action plan has made strong progress in all areas and 2 recruitment masterclasses were held on 5th September and 17th October and attended by 23 Parish/Town Councils to assist with engagement and recruitment tactics. A further event is being planned in January for the remaining councils.
* 3 Parish Councils attended the recruitment information evening in October and 1 other Parish Council has pledged to attend the December event.

The CSC action plan is monitored weekly by the Head of Specials via the delivery group and has made good progress with all actions marked as ongoing or complete and is attached as Appendix A under section 11.

**5.5 Performance**

Over the last 3 months (1st September – 30th November 2019) Specials have contributed a total of 48,659 hours, a 9% increase on the same period in 2018/2019. The operational contribution over the last 3 months has amounted to 33,537 hours (a 6% increase). The Specials have recorded 18,404 hours of high visibility policing over this time, a 2% 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 109 full time officers, who would attract an annual salary cost of £5.6m.

Over the last 3 months, 74.39% of Special Constables have volunteered at least 16hrs a month compared to 75.35% over the same period last year. The slight reduction in due to the number of staff in training and the high number of leavers to join the regulars. This still 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 32.2 hrs per month each, up from 31.4 hrs per month in the equivalent period in 2018/19.

Between 1st September 2019 and 30th November 2019, 53 Specials have left the Special Constabulary which is an decrease of 1 (1.8%) from the previous quarter and an increase of 25 (52%) from the same period last year. 37 of these did so to join the regulars; 34 for Essex and 3 for other forces and 16 left for personal reasons (ranging from medical reasons, moving away, to changes in personal circumstances and changes in work-life balance). Our annual turnover rate is currently 41.62% (those that leave to become a regular and for personal reasons) and the adjusted turnover rate is 11.56% (those that leave for personal reasons only), which has increased by 19.17% and decreased by 8.4% from the same period last year which indicates the increased number of specials leaving to become a regular.

In the last 3 months, the Specials have conducted 5 ‘Takeover’ shifts where they will police a response shift in its full entirety which allows LPT and CPT staff to conduct proactive enquiries or do other work. This has been highly successful in Chelmsford, Braintree & Uttlesford, Colchester, Rayleigh and Basildon. The West LPA Specials are finishing servator training in early December and will then be in a position to take over patrols at Lakeside during the Christmas period and thereafter.

The Specials continue to support Op Sceptre in proactive operations throughout the county and are heavily involved in supporting Op Director for the NATO summit.

**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 continued growth, moving from a headcount of 474 in November 2018 to 516 at the end of November 2019, despite 170 leavers. We have recruited 202 new officers[[1]](#footnote-1) in the last 12 months and both our surveying and anecdotal evidence suggests that circa 55% of those new starters intend to join the regulars. Specials can apply for the regulars once they have successfully completed 80% of their professional development portfolio (PDP) and achieved independent patrol status (IPS). This process takes between 12-18 months to achieve from date of joining, although can be completed sooner. This suggests that there is a cohort of approximately 111 officers who have joined in the last year who have an intention to join the regulars. With the ambition of potential future recruitment uplifts, we are likely to see increased attrition from existing Specials achieving independent patrol status and applying to be a regular.

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.

The threat this poses to the continued growth of the Special Constabulary will be mitigated through the actions highlighted in section 3 and 5.

Special Constables joining the regulars should be considered a success 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.

**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 50% since September 2016 and 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 gaining more 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, Hullbridge, Canvey Island, Billericay, Little Clacton and Rayleigh with more to follow in Birchanger, Buckhurst Hill, West Bergholt and West Mersea upon completion of training.

**6.2 Demand**

The impact on demand is best measured through contribution of operational hours. The improvements in operational performance are described in section 5.5.

**6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

The following red risks are identified on the force risk register and the action being taken to mitigate these risks is detailed in section 5.and 9.1:-

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 - 55% of new starters tells us they intend to join up. In the last 12 months we have seen 85 officers leave to join the regulars, this is equivalent to 37% 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 increased number of applications. Anecdotally the recruitment team state that there 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 plans to increase the establishment to 3,200 officers by March 2020 and beyond. This means that the current regular recruitment campaign will continue. The launch of the #FitTheBill campaign traditionally sees a marked reduction in applications to the Specials. |

**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 – Human Resources (HR Resourcing)
* 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 above.

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

**9.1 Recruitment 2019/20**

The 2019/20 Recruitment Timetable has been revised and is set out as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **No.** | **In** | **Out** | **(joined regulars)** |
| Apr-19 | 510 | 8 | 4 | 1 |
| May-19 | 514 | 8 | 12 | 11 |
| Jun-19 (a)  (b) | 510 | 6  8 | 12 | 2 |
| Jul-19 | 513 | 14 | 26 | 13 |
| Aug-19 | 501 | 22 | 16 | 3 |
| Sep-19 (a)  Sep 19 (b) | 508 | 15  11 | 22 | 15 |
| Sep 19 (b) |  | 11 |  |  |
| Oct-19 | 512 | 13 | 7 | 2 |
| Nov-19 (a)  (b) | 518 | 10  11 | 23 | 20 |
| Dec-19 | 516 | 16 | 12 |  |
| Jan-20 (a)  (b) | 520 | 10  16 | 20 |  |
| Feb-20 | 526 | 16 | 20 |  |
| Mar-20 (a)  TBC - (b) | 522 | 16  10 | 20 |  |
| 31 Mar 20 | 528 |  |  |  |
| **Total** | **528** | **221** | **194** | **67 – (59 Essex, 8 MPS)** |

*The figures highlighted in green are the actual numbers of Specials who have joined/left the organisation with an accurate headcount. The figures in grey are the projected numbers of Specials who will join/leave the organisation. Where there is (a) and (b) in each calendar month, it denotes that there are 2 intakes.*

**9.2 Financial Overview**

The below table shows the financial picture for the Specials Constabulary Business Case over the last 3 years and further details are attached under Appendix B.



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.

**9.3 National Overview**

Prior to the news of 20k uplift in frontline officers, the national picture consisted of 14 forces who were investing in growth and development for the Special Constabulary and other forces were considering closing down recruitment and focusing on the existing career specials. This position appears to be under review as other forces develop their recruitment strategy for the next 3 years to meet the 20k uplift in officers and this is at an early stage.

Hertfordshire Police recently visited Essex Police to review the recruitment and retention model and there has been 2 emails from other forces enquiring about the same thing.

**10.0 Decisions Required by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

No decision required.

The revised recruitment table relies heavily on the maximum number of candidates being booked for the remaining courses and is dependent on the projected number of Specials leaving to become a regular and/or for other reasons.

**11.1 Appendix A Appendix B**

 

1. Data obtained from Duty Sheet [↑](#footnote-ref-1)