

MINUTES – Part A

OFFICE OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

ESSEX POLICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES BOARD

23 April 2020, 10.00am to 1.00pm, Video Conference & Telephone Conference

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Anna Hook (AH)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Policing & Crime), PFCC's office
DCC Pippa Mills (PM)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
ACC Andy Prophet (AP)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Dr Vicki Harrington (VH)	Director of Strategic Change & Performance, Essex Police
D/Supt Rob Kirby	Head of PSD, Essex Police
Richard Leicester (RL)	Director of HR, Essex Police and Kent Police
Claire Putnam	Minutes, PFCC's Office

Apologies:

Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive PFCC
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Richard Jones (RJ)	Finance, Essex Police
Annette Chan (AC)	Finance, Essex Police
Mark Gilmartin (MG)	Director Of Support Services, Essex Police

1 Introduction and welcome

RH welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were received from PBI, DM, RJ, AC and MG

2.i Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 26 March 2020 were approved.

There were no matters arising and subject to the amendments above, the minutes of the last meeting held on the 26 March 2020 were approved

2ii Action Log

06/20 Monthly Performance Report – TS to check the severity score in regard to Homicide on the Crime Tree Data. Update: 23 April VH confirmed the numbers didn't include Op Melrose and that the figures are only calculated once a year. So the figures have been run again which incorporates the 39 unfortunate deaths in Grays and it's coming out as the 11th highest CSS, it was 17th in 2018/19 in terms of the Crime Severity Score (CSS). RH stated with that number of homicides he expected homicide to be higher on the CSS. VH confirmed the reason it's not higher as the volume comparatively, when you look at Violence with Injury for example, is much lower. RH asked if the calculation score should be done more frequently. VH confirmed that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) complete this on an annual basis and there will be obvious fluctuation throughout the year. When there is a significant event like the unfortunate incident of the 39 deaths in Grays, that will prompt the Force to re-run the figures which can be done internally. RH stated in regard to comparable reporting, it would be helpful to include on the report, the trend,

the movement and the development of homicide without the 39, to understand the levels normally. VH confirmed that those figures can be tracked separately. PM stated that the Force needs to ethically show figures and can't discount that single incident, which RH agreed with. PM stated that maybe a standalone document could come to the Performance and Resources Board for scrutiny, as PM wouldn't want it in the normal reporting data as unfortunately it is a core part of the performance figures. The Force understands the impact it's had but it needs to be reported and there is a note at the bottom of each report about the unfortunate incident. PM also stated that she's confident that the Force understands the underlying trends internally due to the crime analysis and homicide data that sits outside that. RH stated that it's important to have transparency with the public. PM stated that there's a reference to it and it is split out in terms of any reference on any data reporting to that one incident. PM also stated that if RH thinks that there needs to be a distinct piece of work to explain the deployment of resources etc then the team will look into it.

07/20 Collaboration – RH will follow up RAG rating through the 7Forces Collaboration Oversight Meeting and Tim Passmore. Update: 23 April PBI will be following up with the 7Forces Oversight Board to understand the RAG Rating Reporting which will allow the PFCC to align it with the papers received at the P&R Board Meeting in a more constructive way.

08/20 Rape Prevention Strategy – RN to update RH after her meeting with DCS Baldwin on how reporting of performance in regard to the Rape Prevention Strategy Action Plan including the core elements and milestones are going to be presented – noted that it's likely to be a dashboard approach given Covid-19 pressures. Update: 23 April Action will remain open as this will be included in the next scheduled paper to P&RS

2.iii Forward Plan

2.iii.1 AH confirmed that the Public Perception Survey Q3 results has been moved from April to May but this has had an impact on moving the Victim Commissioning Programme to June to allow room on the agenda however AH stated that the reports for the VCoP are coming largely from the PFCC's office and it's been agreed with Greg Myddelton and Kirsty Smith to move this item to May.

2.iii.2 *Dealt with under Part B*

3 Finance

3.i Efficiency & Investments Plan (Transformation Savings)

3.i.1 VH confirmed the 2019/20 Savings Plan is delivered. The 2019/20 budget set out an efficiency and savings requirement of £6.413M. The Budget set out cashable savings of £4.753m with a further £3.609m non-cashable efficiencies identified which in total exceeds the overall Savings and Efficiency target by £1.949m. There are cashable savings of £4.667m with a further £4.649m non-cashable efficiencies now forecast which in total exceeds the overall Savings and Efficiency target by £2.903m.

3.i.2 VH confirmed the identified savings and efficiencies for the force set out in the Budget for 2020/21 total £5.833m cashable (£4.832m recurring), and £2.220m non-cashable savings. The target set for the force is 2.25% of the MTFs which is £6.775m; this has been exceeded by £1.278m, with a combined cashable and non-cashable savings total of £8.053m.

3.i.3 Variations to the cashable savings forecast in two areas have been confirmed following the development and agreement of the 2020/21 Savings & Efficiency Plan

as part of the budget process. The updated forecasts indicate an adverse variation of £0.022m in-year effect and £0.040m full-year against the agreed 2020/21 Efficiency and Savings Plan.

- 3.i.4 The implementation of two agreed 2020/21 savings business cases, where implementation required staff consultation (the LPSU and the CJPNC), have been paused due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. The pause and in-year savings forecast for these business cases will be reviewed by the SCCB at its next meeting on the 13th May 2020.. RH stated the Chief had spoken to him about the LPSU case but what are the reasons for the CJPNC. PM confirmed that launching the consultancy process with people potentially losing jobs wasn't the right thing to be progressing at this point and stated it was around sensitivities around the situation and putting people into a period of uncertainty during this current Pandemic situation. PM confirmed that the decision will be reviewed every 6 weeks at the SCCB.
- 3.i.5 Work is now focusing on developing the savings and efficiency plans for 2021/22 and future years, primarily through the Force Efficiency and Savings Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. The Chief Finance Officer will provide an overview of the Efficiency & Savings Challenge for 2021/22 and 2022/23 at the 17th April 2020 Force Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Commands will then be required to consider and propose efficiency & savings ideas for both 2021/22 and 2022/23. RH asked if the timeframes were still realistic. VH confirmed that proposals will be presented at the next SLT meeting at the end of May ahead of the next Efficiency and Savings Board meeting and confirmed that plans are currently on track.
- 3.i.6 RH stated that in regard to Firearm Licensing the anticipated software still isn't in place in Kent Police, and also brought to DCC Mills' attention that local MP's have been written to by the British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC) saying the Force are behaving (in relation to medical certification of firearms license holders and applicants) in a way that's not been agreed. RH believes there's been a miscommunication and has a conference call with the Chief Executive of the BASC to get clarity on their viewpoint. PM confirmed she hadn't received any communication as yet, however it's a national NPCC position in terms of the medical certification requirement but will look into further. RH will send all details over to PM.

Action: 09/20

RH to send over details of the British Association of Shooting and Conversation letter and concerns over to PM to look into further.

PM also confirmed in regard to the software, this relates to Kent Police software and Kent coming in on the same software that Essex Police use which is where the additional savings would be made, and this IT is in the 20/21 Programme of Work for Kent Police. RH asked, as there's a surge in license renewal, does a discussion need to happen with Kent Police about accelerating the software implementation. PM confirmed that it's all on track and that it's aligned and converged in advance of the technology going live which will be Q3. PM confirmed there's a Firearms Licensing update on 21st May and will update at the next P&R meeting.

Action: 10/20

PM to include this update in the Firearms paper coming to the May P&RS meeting.

4.i Monthly Performance Report

- 4.i.1 Three of the seven PFCC Priorities for Essex Police have been given a recommended grade of 'Good'. Recommended grades have been determined with

reference to comparisons with Essex Police's Most Similar Group (MSG) of forces, internal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and professional judgement.

- 4.i.2 Four of the seven PFCC priorities – 1 (More local, visible and accessible policing), 3 (Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse), 4 (Reverse the trend in serious violence) and 6 (Protecting children & vulnerable people) – have been given a recommended grade of 'Requires Improvement'. None of these recommended grades have changed since the July 2019 report.
- 4.i.3 All Crime has risen by 5.4% for the 12 months to March 2020 compared to the 12 months to March 2019. This equates to 8,577 additional offences.
- 4.i.4 However, the number of crimes recorded by Essex Police reduced by around 24.5% since the Government's social restrictions on gathering and movement in relation to Covid-19 were introduced. This equates to around 113 fewer crimes being recorded each day. From 24 March to 31 March 2020, Essex Police recorded an average of 348 crimes per day; for the period 1 April 2019 to 23 March 2020, Essex Police recorded an average of 461 crimes per day.
- 4.i.5 Essex Police solved 682 fewer crimes in the 12 months to March 2020 compared to the 12 months to March 2019; this equates to a 2.9% decrease. The All Crime solved rate also continues to decline due to the increase in the number of crimes reported. The solved rate is currently 13.5%. RH stated that the volume of solved crime is a concern and need to ensure more perpetrators are taken through the process. PM confirmed that at the recent Synergy Performance Meeting the focus was on high harm solve rate as one of the key performance indicators and a lot of work is happening around the Investigations Standards Board which is looking for improvements. LPA's have done a lot of work in understanding what the blockers are, custody being one and PM is confident that the Force will continue to see an improving picture on year on year performance. The cases that the Resolution Centre take on and then pass onto the LPA's once preparation work has been completed, their solved rate is higher than that Force average solved rate. So, there are areas to focus on.
- 4.i.6 Confidence (Essex Police internal survey) is at 65.2% (results to the 12 months to September 2019). Compared to year ending September 2018, confidence in the local police significantly decreased (deterioration of 2.8% points). Confidence in the local police from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) places Essex eighth in its MSG, and 10.7% points below the MSG average.
- 4.i.7 VH stated that shoplifting experienced a statistically significant decrease for the month of March 2020. This offence type also experienced a 4.6% decrease (504 fewer offences) for the 12 months to March 2020 compared to the 12 months to March 2019. Other Theft experienced a statistically significant decrease for the month of March 2020. This offence type also experienced a 10.4% decrease (1,435 fewer offences) for the 12 months to March 2020 compared to the 12 months to March 2019.
- 4.i.8 VH stated that there has been an improvement in the direction of travel in the survey results in regard to the Forces response to ASB is now showing as stable and the Child Abuse solved rate has increased slightly to 5.5%.
- 4.i.9 VH stated that the Crime Tree table is much more positive particularly for year on year 3 and 1 month percentage differences. RH stated that it's discouraging to see Violence without Injury has continued to increase and is still rising. PM commented that it could be down to CDA and NCRS change with Violence Without Injury so VH will look into what the reporting is saying

Action: 11/20

VH will look into the Violence Without Injury data to see if there's a reason for the deteriorating trend.

RH stated that Hate Crime also looks like it's rising and is aware that DCC is monitoring due to the current climate. PM confirmed that the EU Exit period saw an increase in Hate Crime and trends are being monitored closely as the National Crime Agency has looked at other countries where Hate Crime has increased during Covid-19 but Essex Police haven't experienced that as yet. However, there has been an increase in reporting Anti-Social Behaviour against some faith groups.

4.ii Quarterly Performance Report

- 4.ii.1 VH took the Board through the report and highlighted the work around the following: Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse and Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults, but as a whole there's a lot of proactive work happening.
- 4.ii.2 RH confirmed it's a good report and wanted to know in regard to the Special Constabulary and the progress with Parish Councils, has there been any changes amid the current crisis. PM stated that the Special Constabulary continues to make a significant contribution inline with the Forces response to Operation Talla and applications are still being received to become a Special.
- 4.ii.3 RH asked in regard to emergency response calls, there's been an improvement in 101 but are the Force seeing an increase in emergency calls. PM confirmed that 999 calls have dropped off during Covid-19 and 101 calls are maintaining previous levels. PM also stated that an Online Chat facility is currently being tested and will be launched soon which will help with 101.
- 4.ii.4 JG stated that the report is hugely helpful and that Essex Police are making great strides in Domestic Abuse, working closely with partners in anticipating a spike during Covid-19. PM stated that she'd spoken to Rachel Nolan after the SETDAB meeting in regard to the value of partnership data and overlaying that with Police data which will be of benefit going forward. JG stated that all of the good work from partners and the Force is being collated and will be used as the foundation to build on.
- 4.ii.5 RH asked about how the new Stalking Prevention Orders are working. PM stated that an update with the legal team had confirmed that a third Order had been successfully secured. As it's new legislation the Force are testing the way with the CPS but it's positive so far and not all Forces have secured any as yet and Essex Police has 3.

4.iii MSG Aspirations

- 4.iii.1 VH confirmed that there's been positive movement and the Force are meeting their aspirations in 3 out of the 10 areas: Violence with Injury – offences, Trafficking of drugs – solved rate and Percentage sick – officers (latest available data March 2019), which is an improvement on the last quarter where the Force only met 2 out of the 10 areas.
- 4.iii.2 Since the last quarterly update, Essex's MSG position has improved in three areas: All crime – solved rate, Trafficking of drugs – solved rate, Homicide – solved rate and Since the last quarterly update, Essex's MSG position has deteriorated in one area: Trafficking of Drugs – offences. So overall a positive picture.

5 CDA Report (quarterly)

- 5.1 VH highlighted that compliance rates remain high which is positive especially after an inspection where other Forces have seen rates drop and the prediction is above an outstanding level.
- 5.2 The Force continues to benefit from the support provided by the NCRS Support and Review Team (NSRT). Their experience and ability to effectively and quickly quality assure crime recording decisions remains essential in ensuring the standard of crime recording is maintained at the highest level. Significantly, their tenure has recently been approved until the 31st March 2021.
- 5.3 The force currently conducts a number of their own internal audits, these are conducted by the CDA Audit Team, which is led by one of the two Deputy Force Crime Registrars. The audits are agreed at the CDA Board and overseen by DCC Mills. The audits take account of where the greatest risk for the force may sit. The results allow the force to direct its focus and resources in the most efficient and effective manner.
- 5.4 VH highlighted that the key message is ensuring that victims are given the service and response that they need.
- 5.5 VH confirmed that the Force are now voluntarily adopting Outcome 22 which is used as an option to finalise certain investigations. Essex Police have been using this since April 2019 ahead of it being formally mandated and the CDA team have been monitoring it which puts EP in a good position. Overall it's a positive report. RH is interested in understanding Outcome 22 better, so PM will send relevant information and guidance over and will also ask Ron Scott to provide a briefing. PM also wanted to re-iterate that the CDA team are focusing not only on compliance at the front end but are also focusing on the outcomes.

Action: 12/20

PM to send RH information and guidance on Outcome 22 and will ask Ron Scott to provide a briefing.

RH asked how the Force wants to report on this going forward, PM confirmed that every 6 months would be sufficient.

Action: 13/20

AH will amend the Forward Plan to show CDA reports every 6 months (October and April).

6 Operational Transformation Reserve Monitoring

- 6.1 VH explained that this report is around the OTR bids and the summary around the finances is as follows; Currently £2million of the £2.7million is projected to be spent by the end of 2019/20, forecast spend for 2020/21 is £127,000 and if the proposed changes are accepted that would leave an estimated balance of £33,000 in the OTR. The proposed changes are as follows;
- 6.2 Predicting Domestic Abuse - £81,300. This OTR bid was to allow Essex Police to pilot a DA predictive model developed by Kent Police. However, since the bid was approved, the Kent project has been subject to considerable delay and has now been replaced by a new proposal which is significantly different. The Force have decided to wait until Kent has piloted this new DA project and then review its suitability for use in Essex. Following consideration by COG on 20th March 2020 the Force are therefore proposing to cancel this OTR bid so that the funds can be released

potentially for another project. RH asked if there was any operational impact in not continuing and PM confirmed that it removes the opportunity in the short term, however, to invest in something that Kent Police have changed their approach in, doesn't seem the right thing to invest in. So, a delay in benefit would be the only impact. VH also confirmed that the Force are actively looking into other projects around DA and will be keeping options and avenues open. JG is encouraged by the Force pursuing other options. RH accepted the recommendation.

- 6.3 Funding for the Digital Hub is until August 2020 and if the Force want to continue to fund this until 2021 it will be at a cost of £175,000. The benefits of the digital hub are provision of fast time information to FCR staff, predominately around, OSCAR 1 & 2's decision making, Gold / Silver seeing first hand images from the scene, Resolution Centre – Case Investigators having access to advice and guidance, Support to Operational Support Unit (OSG) and Force Support Unit (FSU) operations, Support to LPA resource in initial investigation stages - LPT and CID. VH explained the proposal is to use some of the OTR monies that are now left over to fund the Digital Hub to 2021 with the understanding that there will need to be a Business Case to recommend a variety of options for 2021/22. PM also stated that the FCR Digital Hub came in separately to the wider Contact Management Programme piece of work and from the funding being approved for the Digital Hub to the Contact Management Programme continuing to roll out and the full go live of the Resolution Centre these two are converging but will take more time. So, the benefit of the Digital Hub and what's being learnt about the performance of the Resolution Centre and additional improvements is why the Force wants to continue the funding and will enable a sound Business Case to be put together to establish the Digital Hub going forward. RH stated that as this is a disposal of a reserve, does there now need to be a decision sheet? AH confirmed that decisions are made at the Strategic Board so a decision sheet will need to be put forward in regard to the allocation of funding and the next Strategic Board Meeting is in June.

Action: 14/20

VH to put together a Decision Sheet in regard to funding requirements from the OTR in readiness for the Strategic Board Meeting in June.

VH stated that if the £175,000 funding for the Digital Hub is agreed that will leave £33,000 remaining.

- 6.4 RH stated that it was good to see traction with a lot of the projects and asked PM if there were any projects that stood out as more successful. PM confirmed the Contact Management Programme investment was very helpful to enable innovative change and the growth in financial investigators to support the POCA Strategy was beneficial. RH stated the only project still in question was the Body Worn Video and PM confirmed it was the Data Storage element of BWV and that the Force has built the learning from the data requirement from BWV into ensuring there is sufficient data storage capacity around the interviewing solution. RH asked with £33,000 remaining in OTR should the fund be kept open and PM stated if it causes no issues to keep it open then yes keep it open.

7 Changes to Complaints Management

- 7.1 PM explained that this has been a longstanding piece of work and the legislation was enacted on the 1st February 2020 which despite all the planning was still short notice. Significant efforts were made from the Professional Standards Department under Dean Chappell's leadership in the first instance and is now under now Rob Kirby's leadership.

- 7.2 RK confirmed that Essex Police was in a good position to react to this short notice introduction having spent months of planning and preparation in order to be ready. Successful growth bids within the PSD are currently being recruited against, training has been rolled out across the organisation (although currently suspended due to COVID-19) and significant guidance is now available on the PSD Portal as well as bespoke guidance as new cases are recorded under the new legislation.
- 7.3 Essex Police continues to attend the regional and national working groups including the 'Reflective Practice National Working Group' (run by College of Policing) and the 'Complaints Practitioners Working Group' (run by Home Office) and has in place internally the Police Reforms working group where reviews of current practice can take place.
- 7.4 RK confirmed that initial indications have shown that it's working well and the recording of complaints is consistent whereby other Forces have reported some increases in complaint recording which could be to do with their previous method of recording dissatisfaction and Essex Police already had a method in place.
- 7.5 Longer term there will be a need to adapt to the cultural change required to embrace the principles of reflective practice and will require a bit of work. There have also been some IT issues with Centurion needing an update but managed to go live on the 2 April which was inline with what the IOPC wanted in regard to recording.
- 7.6. RB confirmed that it appears to be a more proportionate system which allows for the learning and there's an emphasis on more proportionate and reasonable investigations. This means the PSD will be able to take on more investigations and gives consistency across the Force and the independence of the PFCC's office for handling the reviews is a good thing for public confidence and is working well. Just need to get the balance right in regard to what the PFCC's expectation is and what PSD delivers.
- 7.7 Data comparisons over the next 12 months will be challenging as the team adjusts from the different ways of recording and Q4 will have old and new data.
- 7.8 RK stated that the biggest change that will help with public confidence is around the increase in the amount of categories that can be recorded, for example there used to be 2 categories called Failure in Duty and Incivility which has now been split into 5 categories and Discriminatory Behaviour used to be 1 category which has now been divided into different groups. So, this will enable PSD to dig down into complaints from the public.
- 7.9 RH stated that training and cultural change goes hand in hand, you can't achieve one without the other and training is currently on hold due to Covid-19. RK stated that the initial training was more about the actual changes in legislation and procedure and within that is the ethos change and this will build up over time when it's evident how local area policing are referring things into PSD and getting the balance right in regard to what needs to be referred and what can be dealt with locally. PM stated that Dean Chappell has drawn up a scheme of delegation, so each LPA for example will have a Superintendent level local delegating authority who will be making the decisions. There will also be benchmarking across the Force to ensure there's consistent application of the guidance and understanding what is deemed as performance or conduct. JG congratulated the PSD team and the work that's happening with the PFCC's office it shows good collaboration to get complaints where it should be.
- 7.10 RH stated it's important to retain as much comparability around historic trends as PSD possibly can and RK confirmed he's met with Darren Horsman and now that

PSD are using the new recording strands this will happen going forward however Q4 will be challenging as there will be 1 month of old data and 2 months of new data.

- 7.11 RH asked that as this is about improving perception and Police legitimacy, have there been any Comms circulated about the changes and when should we let the public know the Force is doing something better? RK stated when the bedding in period has occurred and the Force know what the changes look like will be good however, the big win with the public will be around the transparency with the PFCC's office and that the Review Process will be done outside of the Force, so maybe a joint Comms message should be shared. RH agreed.
- 7.12 AH stated that she will be picking up the appeals work and there have been issues regarding access to Centurian in order to access the required case files. RK confirmed he'll speak with AH offline to work through the issues.

RK left the meeting at 11.44am

8 HR & Sickness Attendance Management Staff Performance Reports (Quarterly)

- 8.1 The officer strength, as at 31st March 2020 was 3293.35 fte, which is 75.35 fte over the establishment of 3218.00. This is a net increase of 96.41 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019 and a net increase of 229.41 fte when compared to the same period last year (3063.94 fte as at 31st March 2019).
- 8.2 The police staff strength as at 31st March 2020 was 2060.68 fte, which is 170.72 fte under the establishment of 2231.39. This is a net increase of 35.94 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019 meaning the force vacancy rate has reduced from 9.16% to 7.65%. When compared to the same period last year the strength has increased by 56.52 fte.
- 8.3 The PCSO strength as at 31st March 2020 was 111.88 fte, which is 2.88 fte over the establishment of 109.00. This is a net increase of 3.80 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019.
- 8.4 The areas with the most vacancies are Crime and Public Protection, SCD and OPC and the Force has a robust resourcing process that looks at the vacancies and will move Officers where able, based on priorities and taking into account those on training.
- 8.5 The total number of vacancies of 170.71 fte, when measured as strength fte against establishment, means the force currently has a vacancy rate of 7.65%, which is a reduction compared to the last HR report (9.16%). However, it should be noted that this is higher than the force wider average vacancy factor requirement of 5.50%. Note, this accounts for staff in posts that are not permanently on the establishment (non-established posts).
- 8.6 As at 31st March 2020, there were 521 Specials in post, which is a marginal reduction of 1 when compared to the last HR data as at 31st December 2019 and a marginal increase of 4 when compared to the same position last year. National figures show that Essex still have the second largest Special Constabulary in England and Wales and are the joint fastest growing (alongside the West Midlands), based on January 2020 data. Continuing to see the challenge in Specials transferring into Regulars however the Force are seeing a large increase in the hours worked, total hours were 171,725 and now up to 196,000 average hours which equates to 1,021 Specials working 16 hours per week.

- 8.7 In terms of position of overall recruitment for the past year, 463 Officers were recruited last year and at the end of the financial year the Force were 5 over where they'd hoped to be. The recruitment plan for this financial year is to recruit 352 Officers and have built in additional capacity for up to 410 Officers.
- 8.8 RL confirmed that there are some challenges with Covid-19 restrictions as the Force can't hold any national assessment centres until a virtual assessment option is available, so effectively the Force are still accepting applications and progressing those who have passed the national assessment they are in a holding position. RL stated that he is the national lead on the NPCC recruitment work stream and they are working towards getting a virtual assessment centre up and running and in pilot week soon but the reality is that won't hit Forces for some months yet. So, the Essex and Kent approach is to front load all of the recruitment activity so everything is done that can be done ahead of the national assessment centre. This means the Force may see some impact on the intakes going forward for Officers but then will catch up when it's possible with the virtual assessment centre once live. However, the Force is receiving more applications and that is continuing to increase.
- 8.9 RL stated that there were 170 Specials who joined the Force in the last financial year which was less than the previous year, but in total over the last 3 years the Force has recruited 565 Specials. The challenge remains retention and there is work in progress around this. RL noted for reassurance that the Specials training is back up and running but offering smaller courses with 10 attendees per course and will ensure social distancing measures are in place.
- 8.10 RL stated that it's good news in regard to representation especially recruits from BAME which at 9% is the highest in the last 9 financial years and the Force managed to recruit a number of BAME Officers which is reflective if not a little higher than the economic population. As part of the growth ambition a dedicated positive action group has been put in place which will start once the Covi-19 situation has reduced and will focus on engagement, support, development and positive action.
- 8.11 RH asked in regard to training capacity, how big is the issue. RL confirmed that a number of decisions have been taken around what the Force will and won't train, critical areas of training have been identified and they will continue. Probationary training is continuing whereby classes are split into multiple rooms and some trainees are dialling in virtually. If students are isolating or unwell and haven't been able to come into the workplace virtual learning is taking place so no training has been missed. Driver training is being worked on as a priority and risk assessments are being worked through. Other training will start to resume with appropriate safety measures in due course. The Force are aiming to maintain business as usual but doing it in a different way through digital capabilities.
- 8.12 RL stated there's been a continual reduction in the level of absence for Officers which is an improvement on the same period for last year and the best in the last 5 years. However, there has been an increase in Police Staff absence with the key reasons being psychological and muscular skeletal. The Performance Improvement Team (PIU) has been used to assess each level and area of business affected to try and understand better and to look at ways of improvement. RH commented that PIU have looked at North LPA in two areas. RL confirmed that North LPA is around the Officer absence which has had challenges so PIU have reviewed. So, the Force are now looking at the opportunities to either support the Managers in managing that absence down and taking my robust management action or equally what additional support needs to be provided. So now working closely with LPA Commanders and ACC Rachel Nolan has been briefed on key areas and this is being discussed on a monthly basis at COG.

- 8.13 RL updated on Feel Well Live Well which is around psychological wellbeing and it's being used as a proactive intervention to try and encourage individuals to seek help before psychological ill health makes them unwell. Traditionally it's been delivered as group exercise work however it's now being delivered virtually. It's been targeted in 2 key ways, one being around psychological wellbeing and one around muscular skeletal. In addition, the Employee Assistance Programme has been launched and is designed to give counselling and support 24 hours a day 7 days a weeks 365 days a year via the phone and the programme is also available to family members free of charge.
- 8.14 AH asked where the Force is carrying large vacancies is there increased impact due to the current pandemic. RL confirmed that this data goes back to 31 March 2020 and the Force have seen a positive position around attendance since the pandemic. The current vacancies are being managed in an appropriate way due to priority. The ACC's are looking at their individual plans to get them back to where they need to be and where there is long term absence performance in those departments with those individuals will be monitored.
- 8.15 PM noted that in regard to the adjustments RL's team made in regard to the continued training at the college, huge efforts across the organisation ensured a quick turnaround which meant that training was only interrupted briefly.

AP joined the meeting at 12.11pm

9 Operational Support Group – Have Benefits from Investments been realised (Action 71/18)

- 9.1 AP explained that this is the report covering the performance uplift from the Operational Support Group (OSG) as a result of the expansion from the 2018/19 precept increase which saw an Inspector, 3 Sergeants and 21 additional Police Officers onto the team. A post implementation review has taken place in which 10 recommendations were put forward and all of those recommendations have been implemented.
- 9.2 Performance headlines show an overall increase in the number of arrests the team has made. It also shows the material increase in individual Officer activity and serious violence arrests and knife crime arrests have seen an increase.
- 9.3 A key focus of OSG is supporting LPA's in the targeting of Organised Crime Gang members with Operations Sceptre, Zeal and more recently Produce. The aforementioned increase in warrants is also a strong indicator that the OSG are contributing to this area.
- 9.4 OSG are responsible for all section 135 mental health warrants. This requires liaison with the mental health services and ensuring the welfare of the individual involved. The Force have increased the capacity to conduct such warrants, meaning safeguarding even more vulnerable adults this year.
- 9.5 RH stated that there's been an upturn not only in activity but also in individual Police Officer's activity which is great but asked if the Force know why Officer productivity increased? AP stated that the Force have invested heavily in the quality of supervisions and the direction of tasking given to the team and have ensured that the OSG are tied into local and Force tasking so that the team completely understand the threat, harm and risk picture that they're seeking to address.
- 9.6 RH asked if that is a one-off step change or has it stabilised and also once the lockdown starts to lift there's a material risk of increased Public Order Offences and

this will be a distraction from clear strategy, clear understanding of the task in hand and the sense of purpose. Will OSG go from pro-active to re-active? PM confirmed that through monitoring during the Op Talla period the Force are understanding where the hotspots are and proactive work to understand where those hotspots might be will continue. AP also confirmed that he expects the team to continue to deliver against the core priorities and not lose focus. In regard to expectations on the same increase level year on year, AP is doubtful that the Force will see another 65% increase in arrests without an increase in resourcing however as a minimum he would not expect to see degradation and hopefully things will continue to move forward. Furthermore, AP confirmed that in relation to evidence in the quality of Stop and Search, data was the Force looked at the percentages of Stop and Search that had a positive result demonstrated how the team are getting better in targeting them to prevent crime.

- 9.7 RH stated that the Force are making projections around Op Talla and how it's expected to impact, is there a forum in which the Force can make the scenarios transparent to the PFCC. PM confirmed that the Chief Constable will pick with up with RH in their monthly meetings in terms of what the approach is and it is a developing piece of work under Detective Chief Inspector Paul Wells and supported by the Performance Analysis Unit to ensure there's an evidential basis to it as well as the operational experience where the Force sees hotspots in regard to New Years Eve and days of celebration for example. RH stated that there is an upcoming national celebration with the VE Day Bank Holiday and PM confirmed that this has been discussed and work is underway to ensure appropriate policing response.
- 9.8 RH asked in regard to the success story of the OSG team how much impact can the team have in this level of output, productivity and improved outcomes on the impact in society. AP stated that the team as a proportion of the overall workforce is that it's not a small team as it's been increased by a third and how this connects to the Community Policing Teams, the Op Raptor teams and how it's all tied together is where the Force continues to show the benefits. PM stated that it's hard to quantify but if there's a request for mutual aid or skills requirement whether its regionally or nationally then this team is the first place you would go as they are equipped with the skills to deal with it which takes the strain away from Local Policing. For example for Extinction Rebellion it was this team who volunteered at short notice to assist the Met for a week.

10 AOB

- 10.1 None to report.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.27pm