

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2020

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

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### 1.0 Purpose of Report

This report provides an update, as requested by the Board at their 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 meeting, on the Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) and the position regarding funding received by Essex and, where known, the impact of this funding.

No decisions are required by the PFCC.

### 2.0 Recommendations

The report is for the Board to note.

### 3.0 Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit, in the context of the Violence and Vulnerability partnership.

The report outlines the progress made on establishing the partnership and governance arrangements for the Violence and Vulnerability partnership and management of funds; the approach adopted by the partnership; the establishment of the VVU; the funds received by Essex; areas of work being delivered; and how the work is being monitored and the measurements of impact.

#### 4.0 **Introduction/Background**

This report provides an update on the work of the Essex Violence and Vulnerability (V&V) partnership and Unit. The aim of the partnership, and the unit, is to reduce serious violence and safeguard those being exploited and at risk of exploitation through gangs and 'county lines'.

Following the development in 2018 of the Essex Violence and Vulnerability (V&V) Framework ([here](#)), work continues to develop the approach to violence and vulnerability across the county. This includes the development of:

- Partnership boards (V&V Round Table and V&V Strategic Executive Group) to provide leadership and strategic direction
- A multiagency operations group (V&V Operations Board) to join up and drive partnership activity across the county
- A Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) to co-ordinate activity; support the partnership boards; co-ordinate delivery of the Essex V&V work programme; and deliver against the priorities set out in the V&V Framework.

Work includes activities to address 'county lines'; gang related crime including serious youth crime and drug related crime; child criminal exploitation through gangs; child sexual exploitation through gangs; the cuckooing of vulnerable adults; and the extent of school exclusions and their link to violence and vulnerability.

#### 5.0 **Current Work and Performance**

Working closely with strategic partners, £3.584m Home Office funding has been brought into Essex, in 2018-19 and 2019-20. This includes funds to support the establishment and development of Essex Violence & Vulnerability Unit (VVU), and 'surge funds' to support additional police activity, along with putting interventions in place to reduce violence and vulnerability.

Local governance arrangements have been in put place to support the collective commitment to reduce the harm associated with serious youth violence. A V&V Round Table, chaired by the PFCC, and including elected member representation from Southend, Essex and Thurrock Councils, met for the first time in May 2019. From this a V&V Strategic Executive Group was established. The Round Table and Strategic Executive Group set the strategic direction and oversee the work of a V&V Operations Board. The Operations Board drives progress on the delivery of a V&V work programme and reports to the two leadership boards. These three boards have input and active involvement from a range of partner organisations.

The V&V leadership boards have agreed key principles to underpin the approach to activities in Essex. These are;

- A long term, system wide approach to the problem of rising violence and vulnerability should be adopted (a public health approach).
- Activity is data driven, informed by best practice and supported by good quality analysis.
- Activity is sustainable in terms of resource and funding.

- Cross cutting activity considers the entire county (Greater Essex) but it must be recognised that activity focussed on defined localities with the clearest needs will be essential.

The VVU's main focus in 2019/20 is to support the boards in the delivery of the V&V work programme and deliver against the objectives in the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Framework;

- improve visibility and awareness of partnership activity
- identify opportunities to add value to existing and planned activities
- identify gaps in current and planned activities
- increase the occurrence and effectiveness of prevention and intervention activities
- highlight areas where cross-border and partnership working would be beneficial

The VVU includes a programme manager, Essex Police Inspector, a manager from Essex Youth Offending Service, a part-time representative from the Essex Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), and a senior analyst from Essex County Council. The first three members of the team were in place from late April 2019, joined by an analyst at the end of July and a CRC manager in September 2019. From October 2019, a YOS gang worker (funded via a Ministry of Justice pathfinder project regarding county lines in the east of England) has been also been aligned to the VVU.

The VVU has worked across the partnership to develop the programme of work and ensure that the latest funding from the Home Office (Violence Reduction Unit Grant Fund of £1.1m, received in September 2019) complements and further develops the approach to violence and vulnerability in Essex.

The funds which support the delivery of the V&V work programme for 2019/20, are made up of the amounts below, and total £2.24m;

- Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund (EIYF) £350,000 (& £30,000 carried forward from 2018/19)
- OPFCC contribution £200,000
- Essex County Council contribution £500,000
- Home Office Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) fund £1,160,000 (notified of in September 2019)

This funding has been allocated to a number of work-streams within the V&V work programme. These include;

- Direct delivery to communities and individuals £1,578,100
- Training to staff £341,200

In 2019-20 the VVU is supporting the V&V partnership in delivering against a number of objectives identified in the V&V work programme, including;

- Expanding existing interventions to support vulnerable young people
- The Basildon A&E youth work pilot has engaged over 100 young people since summer 2019
- The Observers Project in Colchester and Spot the Signs in Braintree have delivered training to hundreds of staff members from both statutory agencies and

others who come into contact with the public such as taxi drivers, social landlords and hoteliers to enable them to 'spot the signs' of vulnerability. This is currently being developed into an Essex wide project by the VVU

- Understanding gaps in our knowledge, and using evaluation and analytics to improve our ability to target initiatives in the most effective way
- Improving our response to safeguarding, including supporting Essex police Op Raptor teams with the development of dedicated safeguarding officers
- Working closely with our neighbouring authorities to improve our response to those moving in and out of Essex

Underpinning all of this is a commitment to learn from the approaches being adopted within Essex and elsewhere, and share this learning and incorporate into our practice during the year, and into a work programme for 2020/21.

To support the learning of the activities within the V&V work programme, there are five key elements:

- i. Reviewing project documentation (including ensuring the project is delivered in line with what was planned at the outset).
- ii. Reviewing projects' monitoring information (including data as appropriate)
- iii. Selected visits to projects, conversations ('interviews') with delivery partners
- iv. Interviews and surveys with participants (by the delivery partner).
- v. Case studies developed to support our learning.

There are also three key areas of measurement, to support the overall learning from the programme and provide an assessment of the impact:

- i. Track the levels of serious violence, using the Home Office measure of knife enabled crime.  
For the period June to September 2019 (compared to June to September 2018) knife-enabled crime increased from 231 to 238, seven more offences, a 3% increase. This increase is not statistically significant. There was a marginal reduction recorded where the victim was under 25 (5 fewer, 175 down from 180, 2.8% less).
- ii. Track two intermediate outcomes associated with serious violence (to positively impact on these). These are school exclusions and missing episodes. These are being collated for the activities being delivered as part of the V&V Work Programme. The data for this will be available by the end of January 2020.
- iii. Consider whether the V&V Work Programme activity has resulted in improvements in co-ordination and alignment of the range of provision being delivered in this area. For this to use the findings from the Home Office funded 'VRU process evaluation' which started during December 2019, and will report later in 2020/21.

## **6.0 Implications (Issues)**

As discussed from the outset as part of the conversations across the V&V partnership, this area of work requires a long term approach, with significant impacts unlikely to be felt within 2019/20. There are many excellent areas of work, which the VVU and Operations Board is developing and the leadership boards are supporting.

The challenge is sustaining, developing this activity further and measurement of the impact over the longer term.

Work is underway to develop the evidence base and build a longer term strategy for the V&V partnership. The work undertaken to date provides excellent learning from which to develop the approach for the county. This includes working closely with the Home Office and contributing to the evaluation being undertaken of the 18 Violence Reduction Units to build the evidence base nationally.

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

The work of the V&V partnership and through the funding in the V&V work programme enables Essex Police and partner organisations to support the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan, including protecting children and vulnerable people from harm; tackling gangs and organised crime; and reversing the trend in serious violence.

#### **6.2 Demand**

Non applicable

#### **6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

Non applicable

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

It is recognised that some individuals may be more likely to be victim to the criminal exploitation associated with the violence and vulnerability agenda, and therefore be more in need of support. Interventions and activities within the V&V work programme have been developed to identify and target resources at those most likely to be impacted (or those that work with that cohort), for instance we know from research and local experience that those that are not in full time education, are at greater risk. Delivery partners are expected to be mindful of these vulnerabilities and to take reasonable and appropriate steps to engage this cohort as well as using monitoring information to measure and report on the impact the interventions have on different client groups.

#### **6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

Not applicable

#### **7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

In terms of the contents of this report, the work of the V&V partnership and VVU, it is the subject of consultation and collaborative working, with a range of partner organisations and through various multi-agency arrangements. This includes close collaboration with the following partnerships:

- Safer Essex
- Essex Partnership Board
- Essex Leaders and Chief Executive Group
- Children's Safeguarding Boards
- Adults Safeguarding Boards
- Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Criminal Justice Board
- Reducing Reoffending Board

## **8.0 Actions for Improvement**

Non applicable

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

The V&V partnership is planning for 2020-21, and the approach the group would like to see is more people impacted through the funded activities, aimed at those identified as at risk and known to be at risk of exploitation or harm. Initial indications for a work programme for 2020-21, which reflects our current learning about what works from this year, and complementing work by statutory partnerships, are:

- A key focus on a multi-agency programme of work with targeted groups post custody with a focus on safeguarding and reducing offences related to serious violence.
- Seeking to better understand (through ongoing and improved data analysis) the effectiveness of services in Essex in responding to violence and vulnerability.
- Further building capacity within the Essex workforce to respond to the needs of young and vulnerable groups.
- Matching children, young people and adults, identified to be at risk, to existing provision more effectively.
- To increase the volume and frequency of communication highlighting issues, activity and outcomes.