

MINUTES

OFFICE OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

ESSEX POLICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES BOARD

25 June 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
DCC Pippa Mills (PM)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Dr Vicki Harrington (VH)	Director of Strategic Change and Performance, Essex Police
ACC Rachel Nolan (RN)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Dawn Walters (DW)	Corporate Finance, Essex Police
Kirsty Smith (KS)	Commissioning Officer, PFCC's office
Anna Hook (AH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny, PFCC's office
Claire Putnam (CP)	Minutes, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive, PFCC's Office
Liz Helm (LH)	PFCC Interim Head of Finance

1 Introduction and welcome

RH welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were received from PBI and LH.

RH wanted it noted for the minutes his thanks to ACC Paul Wells for all his hard work and he will be missed.

2.i Minutes of last meeting

Meeting: 21 May 2020

Point 4.8 VH requested the wording to change to Actual solved rate has increased from 5.3% to 5.9% for child abuse.

Point 5.9 VH requested the wording to change to VH stated that SMSR produce the levels and PAU's factor analysis identified the key factors that will impact confidence levels.

Point 7.23 PM stated it's the Sergeants Exam, not the Sergeants Board.

Subject to the amendments above, the minutes of the last meeting held on the 21 May 2020 were approved.

Meeting: 5 June 2020

The minutes of the Extraordinary Board Meeting held on the 5 June 2020 were approved.

There were no matters arising

2ii Action Log

07/20 Collaboration – RH will follow up RAG rating through the 7Forces Collaboration Oversight Meeting and Tim Passmore. Update 25 June 2020: RH stated that the 7 Forces look at ratings from their perspective to ensure they're on track however is it delivering for Essex Police and PFCC and how can it be challenged further. PM confirmed that she has the opportunity to challenge through the 7 Forces Deputies Meeting and the Chief Constable has the opportunity to challenge through the 7 Forces Chief's meeting and the PFCC has the opportunity to challenge through the Oversight Scrutiny process which PBI attends. AH stated that she'd received feedback from PBI that the RAG status hasn't been presented at the 7 Forces Oversight meeting that she and JG attend for the last couple of meetings. PM confirmed that it is represented monthly at the 7 Forces Deputies Meeting and also stated that they do email out in advance of the meeting to see if there are any agenda items that need to be included so there is an opportunity to ask for it to be included in the Oversight group. RH asked PM if she is content that it is where it should be and PM confirmed that she's confident that the 7 Forces RAG Ratings are where they need to be from a Force perspective. RH agreed Action can now close.

11/20 Monthly Performance Report - VH will look into the Violence Without Injury data to see if there's a reason for the deteriorating trend. Update 25 June 2020: Summary now received so Action can close and AH will continue to monitor.

15/20 Monthly Performance Report – PM to share Stranger 1 and 2 rape rolling data with RH. Update 25 June 2020: Paper was sent to RH on 22 May so Action can close.

16/20 Firearms Licensing Update - AP to liaise with AH in regard to bringing a detailed report on Firearms Licensing Automation to a future P&R meeting and ensuring it's on the Forward Plan. Update 25 June 2020: Dan Scales and AH have spoken and the Firearms Licensing paper update is on the P&R forward plan for September so Action can close.

17/20 Use of Stop and Search - AP to include an in-depth racial disproportionality in the next report so Action can close.

2.iii Forward Plan

- 2.iii.1 AH stated the 2019/20 Force Growth Plan has been added to this agenda.
- 2.iii.2 AH also confirmed that some of the 6 monthly updates and quarterly updates have slipped so Hate Crimes has been added, the OPC update has been added for September as has the Firearms Licensing Update and the Covid-19 Fixed Penalty analysis has been added as requested by the Chief Constable.
- 2.iii.3 PM stated that in regard to July's meeting there is the Public Perception Quarter 4 results and the Covid-19 confidence levels will be included either in that report or as a separate report. RH asked for the Covid-19 results to be a sub item. VH gave a quick update and stated that the Force has received a representative sample of data now and overall confidence is at around the 75% mark which shows that the public seem very supportive of the approach Essex Police are taking.

3 Finance

3.i Efficiency & Investments Plan (Transformation Savings)

- 3.i.1 VH took the Board through the report and confirmed that the £8.1million savings hasn't changed however there is a difference in June's forecast vs May's and this is because the Force has shown the £97,000 non-cashable savings shortfall from 2019/20 separately in this monitoring report and isn't being included within the main savings total. In addition, there were two paused business cases, so the in-year reduced savings have been calculated which totals £62,000, showing a reduction of £159,000 in cashable savings for June's forecast.
- 3.i.2 Cashable savings plan forecast for May was £5.908million, forecast for June is £5.749million which is showing the £159,000 reduction. No change in the non-cashable savings plan this had increased previously due to the Telematics figure. Custody review will be moving from amber to green, Criminal Justice Command PNC Bureau was one of the paused business cases and at the recent SSCB meeting it was agreed to continue with project and the £24,000 reduction in-year effect has been reflected, OPC RMU will be moving from amber to green, LPA LPSU Strategic Centre and Specials was another of the paused business cases and at the recent SSCB meeting it was agreed to recommence and the consultation is being in early July and the reduction due to the pause is reflected in the figures. The two paused business cases give the £62,000 reduction and the £97,000 non-cashable shortfall give the total reduction of £159,000 which reduces the forecast for June down to £5.749million savings overall.
- 3.i.2 VH stated that in regard to 2021/22 the Force are developing initial plans and ideas after the Efficiency and Savings Board meeting held in May. July's P&R Board will see a high level view of the savings and efficiencies proposed.
- 3.i.3 RH stated that it's a clear report and also good to hear that the paused business cases are now re-starting.
- 3.i.4 PM stated in regard to the recent Efficiency and Savings Board there had been 97 suggestions for savings opportunities for 2021/22 which was encouraging and DM's team are working through the detail and looking at how they could potentially be achieved.

3.ii Finance Report (Pay Only)

- 3.ii.1 DM explained it was the month 2 report and that pay only was being reported on and DW had joined the meeting as she's responsible for the forecast.
- 3.ii.2 The Force are forecasting an overspend on Police Officers of £1.13million and an underspend on Police Staff of £1.254million. DM noted that the opening position for the Force was 24.5 officers higher than at budget setting and will have an impact on the rest of the year. Ambition is still for 3369 Officers by 31 March 2021.
- 3.ii.3 DM explained that the impact of having 24.5 more officers at the beginning of the year is £1.295million, however the change in joiner recruitment profile has made a difference of £809,000. Impact of 18 Officers returning to Force from externally funded posts is £976,000. Impact of Stansted Airport Officers returning to Force in Q1 in relation to Op Talla £209,000. Realignment of externally funded and ERSOU budgets £109,000.

- 3.ii.4 DM explained that in regard to the Police Staff, it comes down to the vacancy factor and the number of leavers the Force has had in the month which is an impact of £1.245million on general reserves.
- 3.ii.5 DM confirmed that at budget setting Police Officer strength was at 3269 but it's actually 3293 and original forecast was 3246 and ended up with 3279. DM noted that the actuals are for April as always a month behind in data.
- 3.ii.6 RH asked for clarity around Police staff and the difference between the £1.7million and the £1.2million which DM confirmed that the difference of the 500,000 is 456,000 that is relating to ERSOU which is a budget adjustment in terms of the Officers and income for the Officers that has no impact on the bottom line. DM also confirmed that the income is from other Forces. RH stated the figure here is different to the figure at the recent ERSOU meeting. DW explained that these are forecasted figures and that the Force has reduced the forecast costs on staff and also the forecast budget for staff. Also realigned the latter end of last year how ERSOU is reported in the financial statements for 2021. DM confirmed that is why it doesn't match up as this is Essex Police's adjustment.
- 3.ii.7 RH asked for clarity in regard to the 18 Officers that are coming back to the Force. PM confirmed that it's the net position of 30 Officers returning to the Force, and 10 Officers moving to externally funded and the adjustment of 2 relates to Op Sceptre and the differences are around the movement when budgets were set and the position as at the 1 April 2020. PM is satisfied that this is an accurate reflection.
- 3.ii.8 RH updated on the bi-weekly meeting with the APCC and the discussions around finance and the concerns around council tax returns which won't affect this year however if there are lower collections it will impact on next year which DM agreed with. RH asked DM and LH to look at it from an Essex point of view and he will speak to Suzanna Hancock and Ian Thompson to do some work around the national picture as to what the overall exposure to non-collection of council tax is as this figure hasn't yet fed into the government's thinking for 2021 submission to the treasury. Council leaders have detailed a £3.2 billion shortfall for local authorities for increased expenditure and council tax non-payments. RH asked if that can be passed onto us and if so, what will the size of it be? DM stated as the Force get a proportion of the collection from surplus it will be the same principle, so the Force will get the same deficit proportions within the country. DM stated that the Force will need to keep an eye on the impact to Essex Councils. RH stated that there's a difference between non-payment and the Council deciding to waive the council tax charge and if they make the decision to waive they can't pass that onto the Force which DM agreed is correct for this financial year.

Action: 18/20

DM and LH to discuss the council tax non-payment implications from an Essex point of view and provide updates to the Commissioner

- 3.ii.9 RH stated on a positive note that the government are still committed to supporting Policing and wants the Force to keep recruiting. It's encouraging that the public are keen to support their communities so need to keep the momentum going with recruitment. PM stated that there will be a refreshed recruitment campaign going to the next COG meeting which looks engaging and shows clear commitment from the Force to focus, refresh and keep the offering clear to people who want to join Essex Police.
- 3.ii.10 RH stated it was his understanding that there will potential be a workshop in July around the Medium Term outlook which will help to work through assumptions in more depth.

3.iii Verbal Closure Update

3.iii.1 Auditors have started but making slow progress due to other audits not connected to the Force, however it is on schedule.

3.iii.2 Receiving weekly debriefs and no issues to report.

4. Monthly Performance Report (May)

4.1 VH stated that this is the first report with the new priority indicators included. There's been no change around the 4 priorities that are graded as good and the 3 priorities that require improvement. Worth noting that priority 6 was upgraded to good last month and all of the indicators are continuing to improve.

4.2 All Crime fell by 0.6% for the 12 months to May 2020 compared to the 12 months to May 2019. This equates to 983 fewer offences. Essex Police recorded 2,377 fewer offences in the month of May 2020 compared to May 2019; this equates to a 16.3% reduction

4.3 The number of crimes recorded by Essex Police has reduced since the introduction of the Government's restrictions on gathering and movement in relation to Covid-19 were introduced compared to the period of no intervention. 24.7% fewer offences were recorded when the full restrictions were in place (23 March 2020 to 10 May compared to the same period in 2019); this equates to around 116 fewer offences per day. By contrast, 14.9% fewer offences have been recorded since the restrictions have been eased (11 May 2020 to 31 May 2020 inclusive compared to the same period in 2019); this equates to around 72 fewer offences per day. Each change in the rules relating to social distancing has affected the number of All Crime offences reported to Essex Police.

4.4 The number of anti-social behaviour incidents increased by 47.8% in May 2020 compared to May 2019 (1,829 more incidents). This is due to the Government's social distancing restrictions that were implemented on 23 March 2020; many reports relate to activities that were previously not considered to be anti-social behaviour, for example social gatherings, as well as shops and businesses continuing to trade. RH stated that on a weekly basis that's falling back and ordinary crime is picking up which VH agreed, it's monitored on a weekly basis and Covid-19 breaches are reducing as it's becoming more difficult to report a breach with restrictions easing.

4.5 Confidence (Essex Police internal survey) is at 64.7% (results to the 12 months to December 2019). Compared to year ending December 2018, confidence in the local police significantly decreased (deterioration of 3.0% points). Confidence in the local police from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) places Essex eighth in its MSG, and 8.7% points below the MSG average.

4.6 Trafficking and possession of drugs have increased with consistently higher levels than prior to lockdown. These are the only crime types that are currently and consistently at higher levels compared to pre lockdown.

4.7 VH explained that the MSG comparison data is up until end of March 2020, so the full impact of Covid-19 hasn't been realised as yet in the full MSG comparative measures.

4.8 Hate Crime Severity Score is 13.9% making the Force currently 8th in the MSG as the average is 12%, this is to do with volume of crime. ASB has no additional measures.

Domestic Abuse arrest rates have increased. Reversing the trend in Serious Violence has no new measures and the Board knows that Violence with Injury is an upward trend but for the first time there's a 2% decrease and the Force is slightly better than the MSG average. RH stated that there was a peak in October and then before Covid-19 it was reducing which is starting to look like a trend which VH agreed and will be monitored. The combined harm (Crime Severity) score (8.2) for Violence with Injury, Rape, Other Sexual Offences and Robbery of Personal Property places Essex eighth in its Most Similar Group of Forces (MSG). However, there has been a decrease in the number of solved for these crime types and what's driving this is the decrease in numbers of Violence with Injury investigations that are solved, a reduction of nearly 500.

- 4.9 VH confirmed that the Force has invested a lot in improving data quality, and the recent Datactics pilot has given a standalone data set and the Home Office plan is for this pilot to be rolled out nationally.
- 4.10 VH stated there had been a substantial increase in Stop and Search for weapons (156%) which is around 2000 more in the 12 months to May 2020 which shows the proactive approach the Force is taking. RH asked in regard to the 100% increase in detecting drug offences, does Stop and Search link directly to this or is Stop and Search predominantly only for weapons. VH confirmed that this increase is solely for weapons however PM stated that 80% of Stop and Search is primarily for drugs and then the Officers will potentially find weapons.
- 4.11 55 Organised Crime Group (OCG) disruptions were conducted in Essex in January to May 2020 inclusive compared with 26 in the same months in 2019 (29 more). In January 2019 there was a change in the way in which the number of OCG disruptions were counted; this follows National Crime Agency ERSOU guidance to ensure that all forces record disruptions in the same way. Year-on-year comparisons can only therefore be made from January 2020.
- 4.12 RH stated that the recent ERSOU review saw Essex at the bottom of nearly every category and asked if PM and the Chief Officers had any concerns around this. PM confirmed that Essex only procure some of ERSOU's services because of the SCD arrangement with Kent but will look into this further. AH confirmed that she is working with Lisa Cooke from the Chief Constables Office to look at this in more detail so no action required for PM.

RN joined the meeting at 11.11am

- 4.13 In regard to drink driving and drug driving, RH requested a split in recording this data.

Action: 19/20

VH will split the drink driving and drug driving out for the next report.

- 4.14 VH stated that the overall picture shows that 13 measures are improving and 9 measures are deteriorating. RH is encouraged that there are more improving statistics and thanked VH for a very informative report. PM stated that the improvements are clear from 2017 however wanted to note that the number of driving under the influence of drink and drugs shown on Essex roads as deteriorating can get better measures as it's a reflection of Police proactivity and focus in this area and the prevention around this measure lies with partners in SERP and isn't solely a Police performance measure.

DW left the meeting at 11.15am

5 Recruitment of Specials (quarterly)

- 5.1 RN took the Board through the report and confirmed that it was relatively a good news story even though the Force as yet hasn't reached their recruitment target.
- 5.2 At the end of May 2020 there was a headcount of 512 and has slightly increased through June. Focus is around Diversity and the Force's response to the current pandemic and there is mitigation in place for the ongoing recruitment of Specials.
- 5.3 The national uplift of 20,000 Regular Officers has impacted the Special Constabulary and in particular Essex and the retention of Specials.
- 5.4 National Workforce Statistics, published in January 2020, show that Essex Police is still the second largest Special Constabulary in England and Wales for the 12 months up to September 2019, behind only the Metropolitan Police with a headcount of 1838 officers and 142 officers larger than the next biggest force (West Yorkshire).
- 5.5 Essex Police received 317 completed applications between 1st March 2020 and 31st May 2020. This is an increase of 83 applications (35%) from 246 in the previous quarter and is an increase of 29% on the same period last year. 38 applicants were from a BAME background (12%) compared to 22 applications from the same period last year (9.4%). 94 applicants identify as female (29.6%) compared to 95 applicants from last year (40%). This was due to the Detective recruitment programme last spring which attracted a high number of female applicants.
- 5.6 The recent National Volunteers Week proved successful and the Force received an influx of enquiries about joining the Specials.
- 5.7 As a result of the pandemic, most outreach events have been cancelled and will be rescheduled when it is safe to do so. The Recruitment team are exploring ways to create an online programme to showcase a 'Recruitment Information Evening' which will allow candidates to have access to a range of information on social media platforms during this period.
- 5.8 In regard to Employer Supported Policing, Essex Police are fully immersed and are one of the national leaders having registered 20 of the 160 businesses that are involved. The Force currently have 8% of ESP Officers. RH mentioned that McColl's Retail is interested in ESP which RN confirmed and stated they are working through the business model with them.
- 5.9 Community Special Constables continues to be challenging possibly around expectations from some councils. The scheme was stalled to look at potential adjustments and RN feels the Force is nearly at the point to reinstate. Earls Colne have recently come forward with a potential candidate in mind so they were able to do the recruitment themselves, it's the advertising and keeping potential candidates engaged that's the part that takes time and you find you lose some of the candidates along the way. If councils come forward with a particular individual in mind then the scheme is opened on a bespoke basis. There are 10 CSC's in post foundation training and are awaiting independent patrols. Currently 44 councils have signed up and there are 11 CSC's in post, 10 awaiting independent patrol, 3 in foundation training, 7 awaiting training start dates and 9 awaiting assessment centre dates.
- 5.10 RN confirmed that the Special's hours are bigger than previous years and an additional 135 full time Officers at an annual salary cost of £7million. RH asked if the Federation are concerned around the £7million perceived saving in cost through Specials and RN confirmed that the majority of work is traditional Policing but it's the

areas where the Force would struggle to fill with Regular Officers that the Federation is very supportive of.

- 5.11 RN confirmed that the main issue remains the loss of Specials to Regular Policing and a recent bespoke survey showed 50% of the current Specials establishment would consider being a Regular, these results are enabling the team to focus on this area. However, RN feels the Force is in a strong position post Covid-19.
- 5.12 PM reiterated that the Force have gained an understanding from the survey results in regard to the group who haven't wanted to join the Regulars, and have stressed that there is investments in Specials, whether it's driving courses, whether once they've achieved their independent patrol status there are opportunities to work in specialists units (road policing, OPC, dog welfare etc) there are significant scope for Essex Specials that aren't replicated in other Forces.
- 5.13 RH stated that the impact of Specials in the communities is apparent and gets public support for Policing in a different way and also having parish councils wanting to be involved and businesses wanting to support shows good engagement and mutual partnership working. RH asked how do we thank our Specials for giving over 20,000 hours of their time and show them that we care? PM confirmed that she has taken over as Gold Command for Op Talla and Reward and Recognition for the whole response is a separate strand and the Specials will be included in this strand of work.
- 5.14 JG congratulated RN on a really good paper with good news stories and her leadership in this area alongside DCC PM. JG has spoken with Specials and they really feel that sense of family within Essex Police which culturally makes a difference.

There was a slight re-ordering of the agenda to allow ACC Nolan to present her next item as she needed to attend another meeting

6 Crime Prevention Strategy

- 6.1 RN took the Board through the report and explained it was a slightly different update due to the pandemic and Black Lives Matter. RN also highlighted that the Forces use of DVPN's was picked up during a Domestic Abuse Bill reading in Parliament thanks to Jess Philips MP and EP will also be receiving national recognition of good practice in a paper being prepared by the NPCC DA lead Louisa Robb.
- 6.2 There has been a significant increase in Anti-Social Behaviour reports predominantly related to breaches of Covid-19 restrictions.
- 6.3 The Force is fully engaged in the Covid-19 Recovery Plan and all stages of the restrictions being lifted.
- 6.4 RN stated that all protests around Black Lives Matter have been peaceful with a positive response.
- 6.5 RN confirmed that the Crime Prevention Strategy will need to be renewed next year so the Force have negotiated for an interim Superintendent to look at the strategic side and Michelle Davis will be looking at refreshing the strategy and consulting with all necessary partners. Draft strategy will go to Safer Essex in September and will be launched in January 2021.
- 6.6 the RN stated that ECC will be jointly leading on the SETDAB Strategy Outcome 4 which is perpetrators, and Ben Hughes from Health will be joining with the Force to look at a preventative approach.

- 6.7 Knife crime offenses have increased but the Serious Violence Command under ACC Andy Prophet will be focusing on this area. Night-time economy is going from strength to strength and Superintendent John Hallworth has set up a Crime Reduction Group who are specifically looking at Prevent, Repair, Text and Pursue and it's getting very positive feedback, just need to get more partners on board for the prevention side.
- 6.8 There was a thematic inspection from HMICFRS on Prevent which highlighted some national recommendations and the Forces new Strategic Prevent Lead has picked these up.
- 6.9 The local picture reflects the national picture with no significant rise in hate crime due to COVID19. Chief Inspector Balding has taken ownership of COVID19 related hate crime and implemented weekly hate crime virtual meets with Hate Crime Officers, weekly Strategic Independent Advisory Group meetings and daily reporting on hate crime in order to identify patterns and trends.
- 6.10 Fraud Co-ordinators were successfully recruited in October 2019 and are now firmly embedded within Local Policing Support Unit.
- 6.11 House burglary has been significantly impacted by the Coronavirus crisis, with less opportunity to commit offences because potential victims and witnesses are at home and increased risk of detection during travel to or from offending.
- 6.12 RH thanked RN for a very comprehensive report and stated that he would like the BAME data on Stop and Search/Use of Force to remain in the report going forward. RH also stated that the National Policing Board is about to release the policing outcomes it wants to see and the one not currently in the report is Homicide, so this will need to be considered when the Force are looking at the Programme going forward. Also need to consider speaking to the National Crime Prevention Unit in South Yorkshire.

RN left the meeting at 12.00pm

- 6.13 PM wanted to note that Michelle Davis has made a significant difference in the 3 months she's been in situ and looking at the Forces 3 year ambition around investment. Prevention is a key strand for this year and next year.

7 Collaboration (quarterly)

- 7.1 VH confirmed that there's an abundance of collaboration work ongoing at different levels and the Commissioner will be well sighted already on the 7Forces Programme and the Home Office National Technology Programmes.
- 7.2 Essex Police with the support of the national content team installed live chat facilities on its Single Online Home website during the Op Talla period for free (could be extended until September). Receiving 80-90 chats a day and the volume is increasing. RH stated he has received really good feedback from the public about this. ASB is also being reported through SOH and the public will continue to use this facility going forward. Essex Police will also potentially be the National Pilot for this in regard to inputting data onto Athena and PM stated that the Force had volunteered to stress an interest at this stage and will await further details in relation to what it entails
- 7.3 VH highlighted the work that's happening around Mental Health and unfortunately the partnership table-top event had to be postponed due to Covid-19 but will be re-scheduled when it's safe to do so. 5 scenarios have been developed by the relevant partners to look at how the Services can be improved. The Mental Health Force

SPOCs and Crime and Public Protection Strategic Centre subject matter expert meet regularly with the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) Local Security Management Specialist. In January 2020, attendees began utilising data to establish a multi-agency problem-solving approach. The Force have strong ongoing and oversight management processes in respect of the Mental Health Street Triage service. Essex Police were one of two forces working with the College of Policing and Nottingham University to devise a template for all Forces to self-evaluate their Street Triage function in order to assess effectiveness. An independent review by the College took place in October 2019 with feedback anticipated from the College of Policing post COVID-19.

- 7.4 In regard to Essex Centre for Data Analytics (ECDA) an amorphous (cloud based system) Amazon Web Services data solution has been procured jointly with funding from the PFCC's office and is shared with ECC and University of Essex. Partners are currently linking and testing this solution with go live planned for the end of July.
- 7.5 Progress is also being made around data ethics framework and advertising nationally and locally for a Data Ethics Committee and 9 individuals have been identified for this Board.
- 7.6 VH stated that focus has narrowed to several core projects and one developing project is a societal impact of Covid-19, the impact that the pandemic has had on demand and whether it's demand that hasn't appeared yet and what will the response need to be. Also how has vulnerability increased due to Covid-19. VH confirmed that the Force will be leading on this project. Hoping to have early findings by September especially around domestic abuse, child abuse, mental health etc. JG stated that this is a really important piece of work and the unintended consequences of Covid-19 aren't sometimes considered in regard to the impact on agencies. VH & JG will talk offline.

Action: 20/20

VH & JG to discuss the Societal Impact of Covid-19 Project

- 7.7 VH stated that the Board know about the success of BT Hothouse 1 and the Dot.com product which has now been extended and includes content around gangs and county lines. Also the Analytics for Everyone Project which was about putting data into the hands of Frontline Officers. VH confirmed that the contract has now been signed with KMPG working with Microsoft and implementation is going live on 6 July 2020.
- 7.8 Cyber Volunteer Dr Christian Kemp has been successful in obtaining a Home Office grant of approximately £100,000.00 to focus on a Cyber Protect Research project and the Force were only 1 of 2 to be selected for this grant. Dr Kemp will gather evidence from a variety of sources in order to create an evidence based tactics option menu.
- 7.9 RH agreed with VH that there's a lot of innovative, constructive and collaborative work going on which will help the Force deliver on community safety to the public and also deliver improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. RH asked in regard to Community Safety Hubs which are a very important building block in the current environment and given the importance of partnership working, and they will take everyone through the recovery phase, are the plans to strengthen the Hubs and to put more Officers into them on track? PM confirmed that in relation to the Community Safety Engagement Officers, the first 10 have been posted and they work alongside the Community Safety Partnerships and there are also the Children and Young People Officers who will also be working closely with the Partnerships, and the focus is to continue driving forward the Partnership working. PM also confirmed that Thurrock and Harlow continue to be the challenging areas.

8 2019/20 Force Growth Programme

- 8.1 PM stated that this is the 2019/20 Programme and had hoped that this would be a closing report however it has been impacted by Covid-19. The final phase of implementation for police officers was scheduled for the end of March, which would have seen the final 53 officers posted to growth roles. Due to the development of the Coronavirus pandemic, and the associated contingency planning by the Force, a decision was taken at the Force Growth Board on 30 March 2020 chaired by the DCC PM, to defer the posting of the identified officers to maximise frontline capability.
- 8.2 At the Force Growth Board on 1 May the decision was made to prioritise the completion of the Children and Young Person officer posts; at the Board on the 4 June, the implementation plan for the remaining posts was reviewed and agreed for completion. This will see all the remaining posts filled in a phased approach across June and July, with the final posts being completed in early August, bringing the 2019/20 growth programme to a close.
- 8.3 PM confirmed that out of the 31 operational posts, 9 remain outstanding but are nearing completion, 8 going through the vetting process and the Operational Lawyer posts was going to be replaced by use of an agency. Out of the 22 support posts only 1 remains to be completed with an imminent start date.
- 8.4 PM confirmed that the final completion report will be coming to the Board in August.
- 8.5 RH asked what the Officers were doing before they were deployed? PM stated that the issue was around O,P and Q intake who were put into Custody, Contact Management and Crime and Public Protection and putting those Officers into critical functions delayed the anticipated uplift on the Local Policing Teams and those Officers arriving on Local Policing Teams released the resource to move elsewhere into growth posts. This maintained the numbers of Local Policing during critical time.
- 8.6 RH thanked PM for all the work the Force is doing and JG is pleased that Children and Young People has been prioritised especially in the current climate. PM confirmed that engagement with schools and education partners is happening now.

9 PFCC Victim Commissioning Programme

- 9.1 KS introduced herself to Policing colleagues as the Commissioning Officer in the PFCC's office and explained that the PFCC has a responsibility to commission services that support victims to cope and recover from the impact of crime
- 9.2 The PFCC commissions 4 main contracted support services which are Synergy Essex Rape Crisis Partnership which is made up of 3 rape crisis centres in Essex, Sexual Abuse Referral Centres provided by Mountain Healthcare which is for forensic examinations of sexual abuse victims, Domestic Abuse Partnership which is made up of Safe Steps, Next Chapter and Changing Pathways dealing with high risk domestic abuse and medium risk and lastly the Victim Support Service which deal with referrals, assessments and support services.
- 9.3 KS confirmed that the report includes crimes reported versus the number of victims supported however this isn't a measurement as from a commissioning and victim's point of view a victim doesn't have to report the crime, so it's included as a comparison. Outcome data is also included in the report and across the 4 contracted services it shows they are performing well and in line with expected performance levels.

- 9.4 COVID-19 is expected to have an impact on support services and we are working with them in preparation for an increase in demand. Additional funding has been requested from Ministry of Justice Extraordinary COVID fund to support the anticipated demand.
- 9.5 KS confirmed that they have got approved funding from the Ministry of Justice for £717,000 to support the organisations in recovery and meet the expected demand.
- 9.6. Future work is now around recovery and ensuring continued partnership working. Support activity is being delivered in response to the Sexual Abuse Strategy and the Thurrock Sexual Abuse joint strategic needs assessment. The PFCC is awaiting a new revision of the Victims Code. We will respond to any amendments ensuring compliance through commissioned services and the Victim Witness Action Team (a subgroup of Essex Criminal Justice Board)
- 9.7 RH thanked KS for the report and the good news story that things are working and has asked that for the next update timelines are included, previous work and benchmarking data for comparison.
- 9.8 PM stated that the Force are sighted on the quarterly victim feedback from Rape Crisis and have acted on the negative perceptions for example the delays in referring victims to support agencies, victim contact etc and PM is happy to report that the Force has significantly increased referrals to Synergy Rape Crisis just over 1,500 in 2019/20 versus less than half of the in 2018/19 and also looked at the timeliness of referrals. In regard to victims feeling overwhelmed by the criminal justice process work has been undertaken around the criminal justice portal and demystifying the core process and KS is looking at the victim's gateway to see whether the work the Force is doing can be replicated. Independent victim panels are also being looked into alongside Synergy Rape Crisis who are keen to get the victims voice heard. PM also thanked KS for the support given to the Force's team in regard to this area.
- 9.9 VH found the report really interesting and stated it was good to see the metrics coming through but would like to know especially around Victim Support and the 6,000 people who have been supported, what the starting point was to understand the true picture the data is showing. Also is there a way VH can access the data provided to KS to understand better victims needs and where the Force can provide greater assistance, KS confirmed that performance data is received quarterly which highlights the top needs of the victims and what support is required and what support is given and that's shared with Clare Heath's team. Victim feedback whether it's positive or negative is also shared with Clare Heath's team. VH asked if the team can be more demanding in the request for data from Victim Support. KS and VH will discuss offline.

**Action: 21/20
KS & VH to discuss Victim Support data trends**

10 VCoP Compliance

- 10.1 PFCCs assumed responsibility for the local monitoring of key entitlements under the Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP) from 2019/20. In order to monitor compliance, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) identified five key entitlements in which the responsible agencies should demonstrate their compliance and provide a 6-month and an end of year report back to MoJ
- 10.2 In Essex, task of monitoring VCoP compliance has been largely assumed by Essex Police as they have the ability to do so. Clare Heath's team has put an audit in place

whereby 30 cases per quarter are reviewed against the MoJ requirements as they want to see an end to end review of a victims journey.

- 10.3 KS highlighted the following; Low percentage in number of Victims receiving a written acknowledgement that a crime has been reported (30%, 33%, 35%). Using the MoJ requirements of an end to end journey there's a need to look at old cases as it's normally 18 months for the criminal justice process to complete. Because of this Essex Police also conduct additional compliance checking with more recent cases in order to ensure compliance is currently being managed. In the last quarter sample 103 cases of 118 received a written acknowledgement. This will continue to be monitored in VWAT.
- 10.4 KS highlighted the following; Decline in Victims receiving an update within 5 working days (88%, 69%, 55%) again it is believed the lower figures are due to the historic nature of the cases. Essex Police have done a lot of work improving victim contact and consistently monitor this through the Public Confidence and Victim Focus Board. In the latest report (April 2020) the overdue contacts were just 4%.
- 10.5 KS confirmed that there is a large disparity between what needs to be reported on and what is known is currently happening and the team have massively improved in that area.
- 10.6 KS highlighted the following; Lack of data for the use of Victims Personal Statement. The use of VPS is not readily recorded. Currently it is based on manual recordings on court record hearing sheets. There is not an easily identifiable way to monitor its usage. Locally we have identified this on the Victim Witness Action Team risk log and requested agencies to manually record. VWAT will monitor this through dip testing and will be included in future reports.
- 10.7 KS explained that this is the first year of compliance audit, prescribed from the MoJ. Whilst we understand that MoJ require a consistent method to collect data there are some concerns/issues that this method creates which other PCC's are also saying. The issues are it's a manual system which is taking up resource from a Policing perspective. MoJ is very prescriptive of what they require so need to discuss with them how this can be better reported on. There's also no benchmark of what good looks like. It's also not showing the current picture. KS confirmed that conversations are taking place through the APCC and Victims Portfolio Group with MoJ in regard to how this can be developed further but due to Covid-19 this hasn't happened as yet.
- 10.8 KS confirmed that VWAT are taking a more qualitative approach in dip testing more recent cases, having discussions around the findings and building confidence in the process.
- 10.9 RH confirmed that even with KS's caveats it is what he's hearing in that the victims often say they are not kept in touch. RH stated the he's doubtful the MoJ will want to vary their process so there's work to do to understand the relationship between the more up to date data and the more rigorous data.
- 10.10 PM stated that this is a small sample of 30 finalised magistrates and crown court cases and the Force then overlay with 30 finalised out of court cases that EP review however PM also has the results from a further 120 cases which shows the measures more in line with where the Force want them to be. 90% for written acknowledgment, referrals are 98% assessed and 28% referred as appropriate, victim updates are 75% and the team complete an independent assessment of the quality of that contact and that's 98%. PM want to give reassurance that the Force is working hard in this area and one of the challenges is manual and sporadic recording of VPS. EP's figures in terms of Criminal Justice don't correlate with the VPS offered/not offered/declined,

90% EP versus 50% Criminal Justice. VH confirmed that the MoJ template is restrictive and doesn't state anything meaningful, so understanding the Force's data and how it compares with the template is important.

10.11 KS confirmed that conversations will develop with the Victims Code being published and more focus in this area. RH stated that all input will help to improve it.

11. AOB

11.1 None to report.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1300pm