

## 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 a narrative to accompany the HR strategic dashboard which relates to the force's attendance, establishment, strength full time equivalent (fte), turnover and diversity profiles.

This report will also provide a summary of overtime and vacancies. Note, this analysis can be found under section 5 Current Work Performance, sub section 1. Establishment v Strength as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

#### 2.0 **Recommendations**

Not applicable

#### 3.0 **Executive Summary**

Each section contained within the HR strategic dashboard is summarised under section 5.0 below.

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

This commentary report provides context for the information contained within the HR strategic dashboard sheet and summarises the key highlights from each section. The data has been taken from the force HR system (SAP) as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, except where alternative data is displayed for trend analysis.

High level comparisons relating to recruitment, turnover, absence and force level strength fte figures have been provided against the last HR data pack as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

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

Please note the following section numbers detailed in the below subheadings relate to the corresponding reference on the HR strategic dashboard.

##### **1. Establishment v Strength as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

###### Officer

The officer strength fte, as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 was 3315.55 fte, which is 53.45 fte under the establishment of 3369.00 and is a net increase of 9.47 fte since the last HR report as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

When compared to the previous HR data, as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there have been positive reductions in the vacancy proportions for some of the larger Commands. For example, Local Policing Area (LPA) West were the only one of the LPAs under establishment (-1.56%) but they are now +1.89%. Note, all three LPAs are currently over establishment, due to the number of probationers. Similarly, Crime & Public Protection Command have reduced from a vacancy rate of -12.52% to -9.92%.

There have been several variations in the smaller Commands, when measured as a vacancy percentage, however from a strength fte perspective the position has remained static. (Note, vacancy percentages vary greater in the smaller Commands due to the low level of establishment).

Of the larger Commands, the only exception to report is an increase in the vacancy level of the Serious Crime Directorate which has increased from 10.83% to 11.86%. This increase is due to 5.00 fte leavers over this period as well as officers who have recently been promoted out of the Command. It should be noted however that several vacancies have been selected for (12.00) with officers awaiting release to the Command.

###### Police Staff

The police staff strength as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 was 2066.41 fte, which is 221.93 fte under the establishment of 2288.35. Whilst the strength fte has increased marginally, by 5.33 fte compared to the last HR data pack as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, the vacancy percentage has increased from 7.94% to 9.70%. This is mainly due to an

increase in the establishment (49.98 fte), as a result of force growth posts being added to SAP.

As a result of the growth posts being added to SAP, this has resulted in several vacancy percentages of some Commands increasing. However, when reviewing actual strength fte, of the 15 Commands listed on the 'Est v Str' tab of the HR Dashboard, 11 have either remained static or increased. The only significant reduction / exception is within the Criminal Justice Command where the strength fte has reduced by 10.32 fte from 237.54 to 227.22 fte.

As a result, the Criminal Justice Command currently have 36.78 fte vacancies. Of these vacancies, 5.00 posts are due to be delimited at the end of the financial year and a further 4.00 posts are being transferred to Contact Management which will result in the establishment reducing by 9.00 fte. The remaining vacancies are predominately in the roles of Criminal Justice Administrator and Witness Care all which are actively being recruited to (note 7 individuals are currently in pre-employment checks). There are also Detention Officer vacancies, which are currently not being recruited to at this stage as a result of the Chelmsford Custody closure. The next scheduled intake is March 2021, however the exact numbers for this course will be determined towards the end of the 2020.

These resourcing of growth posts is monitored by the Force Growth Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

### PCSOs

The PCSO strength as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 was 104.45 fte, which is 4.17 fte under the establishment of 107.00. Whilst under establishment it should be noted that the PCSO establishment is due to reduce to 103.00 with effect from January 2021. This is due to the withdrawal of external funding and therefore, currently no PCSO intakes are planned for the remainder of 2020/21. However, this position is under continuous monthly review and, if required, the force has the capacity to commence a PCSO course towards the latter part of 2020/21.

### Specials

As at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, there were 524 specials in post on SAP, however there are a further 23 leavers due to imminently be processed, which will result in this figure reducing to 501. Therefore, this represents a reduction of 15 when compared to the last HR data pack as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (516).

### Specials Duty Hours

The total duty hours worked for the period April to September 20 increased to 107,665 compared to 100,611 for the same period last year, with the average hours worked per person also increasing from 32.63 to 35.35.

The total duty hours worked of 107,665 is an average of 17,944 a month. This is the equivalent of, on average, 1122 specials working 16 hours a month (an increase when compared to the same period last year where this figure stood at 1048).

## Overtime Spend v Vacancies

The following section provides a review of overtime payments in respect of whether there is any correlation between vacancy levels and overtime spend. For officers, the below table provides an outline of the top 5 Commands with regards to forecasted overtime overspend and above the agreed budget. It also outlines how that Command is ranked with regards to their level of vacancies.

Note, the finance data provided below corresponds with the data produced by Corporate Finance for the Performance & Resource Scrutiny Board.

### Officers

Command	Original Budget	Current Year Virements	Current Budget	Actuals to Date	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Overtime Var (+)	Cmd Av. H'Count	Vacancy Ranking (out of 13)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		
Criminal Justice Command	53	0	53	132	287	234	78	13
Operational Policing Command	343	196	539	298	739	200	447	6
Contact Management	110	0	110	77	200	90	133	12
Local Policing Area North	361	20	381	207	448	67	794	11
Local Policing Area West	243	8	251	159	283	32	512	9

For information the fields are defined as:

**Forecast Overtime Variance:** this has been provided by corporate finance based on quarter 2 overtime summaries and identifies the forecasted overtime variance against their allocated budget.

**Command Average Headcount:** this is the Commands average headcount for the period April to September 2020. This has been provided for context.

**Vacancy Ranking (out of 13):** this is based on the percentage of vacancies each Command has. Note, this won't include Commands with a headcount of less than 10. 1 = highest level of vacancies, 13 = lowest level of vacancies.

The Criminal Justice Command is a relatively small team of officers and has a forecasted outturn of £287,000 against a budget of £53,000, which represents a variance of £234,000. However, as a Command they are currently over established for officers meaning they currently have the lowest level (13<sup>th</sup>) of vacancies of the Commands. As such for this specific case there is no direct correlation between overtime spend and levels of vacancies.

Similarly, Contact Management have a forecast overtime variance of £90,000 and, like Criminal Justice are currently over established and have the second lowest (12<sup>th</sup>) of vacancies.

Local Policing Area West and North, which are larger teams both appear in the top 5 areas of overtime overspend, however they both have low levels of vacancies.

With regards to Operational Policing Command, they have a forecast overtime variance of £200,000 and a vacancy rate of 8.77% which is the 6<sup>th</sup> highest in force.

Police Staff

Command	Original Budget	Current Year Virements	Current Budget	Actuals to Date	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Overtime Var (+)	Cmd Av. H'Count	Vacancy Ranking (out of 13)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		
Criminal Justice Command	41	0	41	67	163	122	258	5

For police staff, from an overtime perspective, the only area of concern is Criminal Justice who have a forecast overtime variance of £122,000. From a vacancy perspective they have the 5<sup>th</sup> highest level of the Commands with 13.93%.

**3. Recruitment 2020/21****Officers**

This financial year to date, a total of 120 officers have joined the force, of which 106 joined through the standard police constable entry route, 4 re-joined and 10 transferred in from other forces. It should be noted that whilst the 2 intakes this financial year to date have been lower than originally anticipated, due to the impact of COVID, the force is line with where it originally projected to be and in line with its uplift requirements.

There are 3 further recruitment intakes scheduled for the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year (November 20, January 21 and March 21). Note, following a reduction in turnover and to ensure budgetary requirements are met the recruitment plan has been reduced to a total of 158 (November = 60, January = 40, March = 58). This will still result in the national uplift requirement being achieved and the force ending with a strength fte that is aligned to the establishment.

In relation to standard entry applications, the average weekly applications for April to June 2020 was 76 a week, which is an increase when compared to the previous quarter (58) and an increase when compared to the same period in 2018 (30) and 2019 (43). There were 812 applications for the period July to September 2020, which is higher than the same period last year (638). The 'We Value Difference' Campaign was launched in mid-September 2020.

In relation to the remaining intakes, a further College of Policing on-line assessment process commenced in September 2020, where 356 candidates have been invited to complete this online process. The results are due back to force mid October 2020. The current number in clearances should achieve the November intake requirements and the September online assessment will improve the pipeline for the January 2020 recruitment intake and beyond.

**Specials**

During this financial year to date (April to September 2020), 67 specials have joined.

As previously reported, application numbers increased to an average of 21 per week for the period January 2020 to March 2020 and remained at that level throughout

quarter 1 of 2020/21. The average number of applications reduced to 17 a week from week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020, for the week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 there were 24 applications, followed by 28 for the following week. The 28 applications for week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020 is the highest weekly number since the end of April 2020.

Prior to the current situation regarding COVID-19, there were a total of 16 courses scheduled to run in 2020/21, which would attract, at full capacity, a total of 226 specials.

There are currently 6 more courses scheduled between October 2020 and March 2021 (with an option of including a further 2 in March 2021, if required). Currently, due to social distancing measures, the maximum capacity per course is 10 candidates which, if filled, would result in a further 60 specials joining in the remainder of this financial year.

Foundation training and Special training remains a priority for Essex Police College and in order to increase capacity in both areas a proposal is currently being considered which outlines plans to adopt a 1M+ approach to training to maximise use of the estate and available resources. If social distancing measures were reduced to a 1 metre requirement (instead of 2), this could result in the capacity increase to up to 15/16 per course.

#### **4. Turnover**

There has been a reduction in turnover measured both as headcount and as a proportion of total leavers for officers, staff and specials for the period April to September 2020 when compared to the same period in 2019/20.

- Officers have reduced from 4.08% (131) to 102 (3.01%)
- Staff have reduced from 4.58% (101) to 4.09% (93)
- Specials have reduced from 16.59% (86) to 9.38% (49).

PCSO turnover has increased from 3.38% to 4.29% but on a headcount basis this is only an increase of 1 (from 4 to 5).

#### **5. Gender & BAME Representation as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

##### **BAME**

As stated previously, 106 new recruits have joined during the current financial year, of which 10 were BAME (9.43%). Of the other 14 that either re-joined or transferred in 2 were BAME (14.29%). Therefore, a total of 120 officers have joined the force of which 10.00% (12) were BAME.

As a result of this recruitment, the representation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) officers has increased to a headcount of 116 (3.42%) as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 from 109 / 3.22% as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. This demonstrates the highest

proportion of BAME officers in the force over the last 6 years and is now only 3.14 percentage points under the economically active population of Essex (6.56%<sup>1</sup>).

With regards to applications, as at 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020, there were 100 BAME candidates in process, which represented 9.10% of the 1098 total candidates in process.

For staff, the BAME headcount has increased from 88 as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (3.88%) to 93 (4.09%) and specials have increased marginally from 35 (6.78%) to 36 (6.87%). The proportion of BAME PCSOs has reduced from 2.59% to 1.77% but this is only a headcount reduction of 1 (from 3 to 2).

### Gender

Of the 106 new recruits that have joined 27 were female (25.47%) and of the 14 that re-joined and transferred in from another force 5 were female (35.71%). Therefore, in total, of the 120 joiners a total of 32 were female (26.67%).

As a result of this relatively low proportion of female joiners, the headcount of female officers has only marginally increased from 1150 as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to 1153 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, which has resulted in the overall female officer proportion has reducing marginally (33.97% to 33.96%).

With regards to current applications however, there are currently 387 female candidates in progress which equates to 37.07% of all applications.

For staff, the proportion of females has increased marginally from 64.85% (1472) to 64.98% (1477). Female PCSO headcount has remained static at 64 but due to a lower overall PCSO headcount the proportion has increased from 55.17% to 56.64%. With regards to specials, the headcount has reduced from 172 (33.33%) to 166 (31.68%).

As detailed above, the force launched the 'We Value Difference' marketing campaign in September 2020, which includes testimonials and bespoke marketing aimed to attract a wide range of protected characteristics that include BAME and females.

This campaign and associated Positive Action initiatives are co-ordinated through the Positive Action Chief Inspector who commenced in post at the end of July 2020. This includes positive action support for female recruits in process. An example of other early initiatives includes the use of internal and external networks (such as the Women's Leadership Development Forum and the British Association for Women in Policing) to encourage transfers into force at all levels.

### **6. Absence and Adjusted / Recuperative**

There has been a reduction in the average days lost per person for officers and staff for the period April to September 2020 when compared to April to September 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> 2011 National Census Data

Officers has reduced from 4.29 to 3.14 (a reduction of 1.15 average days) and staff has reduced from 4.74 to 3.29 (a reduction of 1.45 average days).

The average days lost of 3.14 and 3.29 for officers and staff respectively for the period April to September 2020 is the lowest level of absence for this period over the last 6 years.

For both officers and staff, there has been a reduction in each month of the current financial year to date when compared to the same months last year.

For PCSOs the average days lost per person is 5.72, however this is only marginally higher (0.12) than the same period in 2019/20 (5.60) and is significantly lower than both the same periods in 2018/19 (6.98) and 2017/18 (6.71).

### Absence Term

There has been a reduction in average days lost per person across all absence terms (short term, medium term and long term) for officers and PCSOs.

For officers the greatest reduction is in long term absence (reducing from 2.80 average days lost per person to 2.06). For staff, long term and short-term absence have both reduced by 0.62 average days lost per person. Long term reducing from 2.85 to 2.23 and short term reducing from 1.19 to 0.57.

For PCSOs, the average days lost per person to long term absence has increased from 3.46 average days lost per person to 4.20. Whilst this is an increase of 0.74, it only relates to a small number of long-term absences; the overall PCSO headcount is extremely low, therefore a small number of instances can result in greater fluctuations in the figures. It should be noted that whilst long term absence has increased both short term and medium-term absence has reduced.

### Absence Reasons

For officers, the sickness reason which accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost is psychological related (41.54%) followed by musculo/skeletal (17.28%). However, it should be noted that when analysing the average days lost per person both have reduced significantly; psychological reducing by 0.54 average days lost per person (from 1.84 to 1.31) and musculo/skeletal reducing by 0.39 (from 0.93 to 0.54).

Across the 12 general sickness reasons there has been a reduction in the average days lost per person for 9 of them, with the increases across the other 3 only being marginal.

For staff, the sickness reason which accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost is psychological related (40.59%) which has increased compared to the same period last year (36.07%) followed by miscellaneous (16.86%), which has also increased (36.07%). However, it should be noted that when analysing the average days lost per person, psychological absence has reduced significantly by 0.37 (from 1.71 to 1.34) with miscellaneous only increasing marginally (from 0.50 to 0.55).



As with officers, there has been a reduction in average days lost per person across 9 of the 12 absence reasons with 1 remaining static and 2 increasing.

For PCSOs, musculo/skeletal accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (28.09%) followed by psychological (25.00%). Whilst there has been a significant reduction in the average days lost per person to musculo/skeletal absence (from 2.07 to 1.61) psychological related absences have increased by 0.34 (from 1.09 to 1.43). Note, as stated previously, due to the low headcount there are greater fluctuations seen in the data.

#### Commands with highest absence (average days lost per person)

Please note the figures on the dashboard relate to average days lost per person and those listed in the top 3 are Commands with headcounts over 50.

#### Officers

Excluding 2 Commands that contain only one officer in each, there are 15 Commands in total. Of these 15, a total of 11 have a lower average day lost per person for the period April to September 2020 when compared to the same period last year and 1 has only marginally increased (by 0.02 average days lost per person). There only 3 Commands have shown an increase.

Of those 3, one is the Strategic Change & Performance Command (increasing from 3.42 to 9.78) however, the Command only have an average headcount of 12 for the period so this is a result of only one or two absences and thus not at this stage considered to be a cause for concern.

Of the other 2 Commands, Contact Management have increased by 1.37 average days lost per person from 10.04 to 11.41 and have the highest average days lost per person in force. Psychological related absences accounts for the highest proportion of absence in this Command (45.34%) followed by musculo/skeletal (24.78%). One of the causes of high absence in this Command relates to 9 individuals who had a period of long-term absence. Collectively this equates to a total of 1,115 calendar days off sick, however as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 only one of those individuals was still long term absent.

The other Command is Criminal Justice which has increased by 0.45 average days lost per person (from 6.82 to 7.82) and like Contact Management, the highest proportion of payroll hours lost is due to psychological related sickness (44.42%). The second highest proportion is Nervous System (23.06%). One of the main causes for the high level of absence is due to 2 long term absence cases (both of whom were still off on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020) which has had a big impact on the Commands overall absence position due to it being a relatively small Command (average headcount for the period of 78).

#### Staff

Of the 12 Commands that have a headcount of greater than 10, all but one has a lower average day lost per person for the period April to September 2020 when compared to the same period last year.

Criminal Justice Command are the only Command that have a higher average day lost per person for the period April to September 2020, when compared to the same period last year (from 4.54 to 5.15). As with officers psychological related absences accounts for the highest proportion of absence in Criminal Justice (53.17%) which has contributed towards a significant increase in long term absence (from 1.79 average days lost per person to 3.61). It should be noted however, that 5 individuals were off sick for a combined 640 calendar days for psychological relates reason are no longer absent from work.

It should also be noted that the long-term cases across all commands are peer reviewed by the Operational HR Team on a bi-monthly basis to identify any additional opportunities for support or appropriate action to identify potential return to work options; this appears to be having a positive impact.

### PCSOs

The average days lost per person has increased in LPA North (from 5.21 to 5.87) and LPA West (5.33 to 7.22) with South the only one of the three with a lower level of absence (reducing from 6.52 to 3.83). It should be noted that this increase predominately relates to a small number of long-term absence cases.

### Adjusted / Recuperative

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties has increased from 366 as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to 386 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, h however this is lower than the same period last year where there were 407 officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties (as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019).

Similarly, staff has increased marginally from 73 to 81, however this is only marginally higher than the same period last year (78 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019). PCSOs have reduced from 7 to 4.

### Health and Wellbeing Services

The Interactive Wellbeing Sessions continue with a total of 72 sessions (average three per week) having now been delivered with 1649 (Essex and Kent) attendees across the total sessions. New sessions continue to be developed and added to the library of existing topics available.

World Mental Health Day (Saturday 10 October 20) is being supported by the delivery of two sessions on Friday 9 October. One of these sessions features an external speaker from Police Care UK detailing the support this charity can offer to both serving and veteran officers and staff, volunteers and their families.

The Wellbeing Steering Group (introduced as a response to the pandemic) now meets monthly and the frequency of these meetings can be flexed should the prevalence of the pandemic change and necessitate more regular meetings for this group.

The 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) continues to support officers, staff and members of the special Constabulary, alongside the internally delivered counselling provision ensuring timely access to this vital provision.

A flu vaccination programme is in the early stages of delivery with 2500 flu vaccines available within the force, with a priority grouping accessing the vaccinations initially in order to assist in reducing operational absences in this flu season and thereby promote good winter health.

## **6.0 Implications (Issues)**

Not applicable

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

Ensuring the force is sufficiently resourced is a specific ambition within the narrative of the Police and Crime Plan. The provision of a sufficient number of skilled, equipped and supported resources closely links to the delivery of all seven of the priorities. In addition to this, having a workforce that is representative of our communities will give the force a broader range of skills, knowledge and experience that can positively contribute towards the priorities.

Essex Police, despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, have been able to adapt their processes to ensure that recruitment has been able to continue at the start of the 2020/21 financial year. In addition, a higher number of officers have re-joined or transferred in from other forces this financial year to date when compared to the same period last year.

The representation of BAME officers continues to increase and the current proportion of 3.42% represents the highest proportion over the last 6 years.

Whilst the Special Constabulary headcount has reduced it is projected that the position should steadily increase throughout the financial year however this is subject to adopting a 1M+ approach to training. The total duty hours worked for the period April to September 20 increased to 107,665 compared to 100,611 for the same period last year, with the average hours worked per person also increasing from 32.63 to 35.35.

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The total duty hours worked of 107,665 is an average of 17,944 a month. This is the equivalent of, on average, 1122 specials working 16 hours a month (an increase when compared to the same period last year where this figure stood at 1048).

## **6.2 Demand**

An increase in overall resources has resulted in more hours available to deal with demand.

## **6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

The current situation regarding COVID-19 creates a significant risk for the recruitment of all roles, however intakes remain a focus to enable resources to joiner

as far as possible. The following outlines some of the steps that are being taken to mitigate this risk:

- The police constable recruitment process continues to be progressed during the COVID 19 situation.
- Clearances and selection processes are currently continuing to be progressed with virtual options, self-declarations or policy decisions in relation to risk assessing each element of the process. In the specific areas of medical, fitness, biometrics, CTC vetting and references, clear guidance and policy decisions have been provided to ensure consistency of practice and every effort is being made to obtain the necessary clearances prior to job offers being made.
- The slight reduction in female representation across the force is being managed through the 'We Value Difference' campaign and associated outreach.

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

Not applicable

**6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

Not applicable

**7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

Not applicable

**8.0 Actions for Improvement**

Not applicable

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

1. Continue to increase the number of specials throughout 2020/21 in line with the aspiration to achieve 600.

**Expected Outcome:** recruitment campaigns and increased intakes are scheduled throughout the year to increase current numbers. As reported to the Performance and Resources Board on 25th June it is expected, due to attrition and especially resignations to join as regular officers, that special constabulary growth will be challenging with a steady increase throughout 2020/21.

2. Continue to increase BAME officer representation throughout 2020/21.

**Expected Outcome:** recruitment campaigns and increased intakes are scheduled throughout the year to increase current numbers. As reported to the Performance and Resources Board on 24<sup>th</sup> September it is expected, due to class sizes, attrition and especially resignations to join as regular officers, that special constabulary growth will be challenging throughout 2020/21 but is still expected to increase.