

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2020

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

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OPC Briefing Paper

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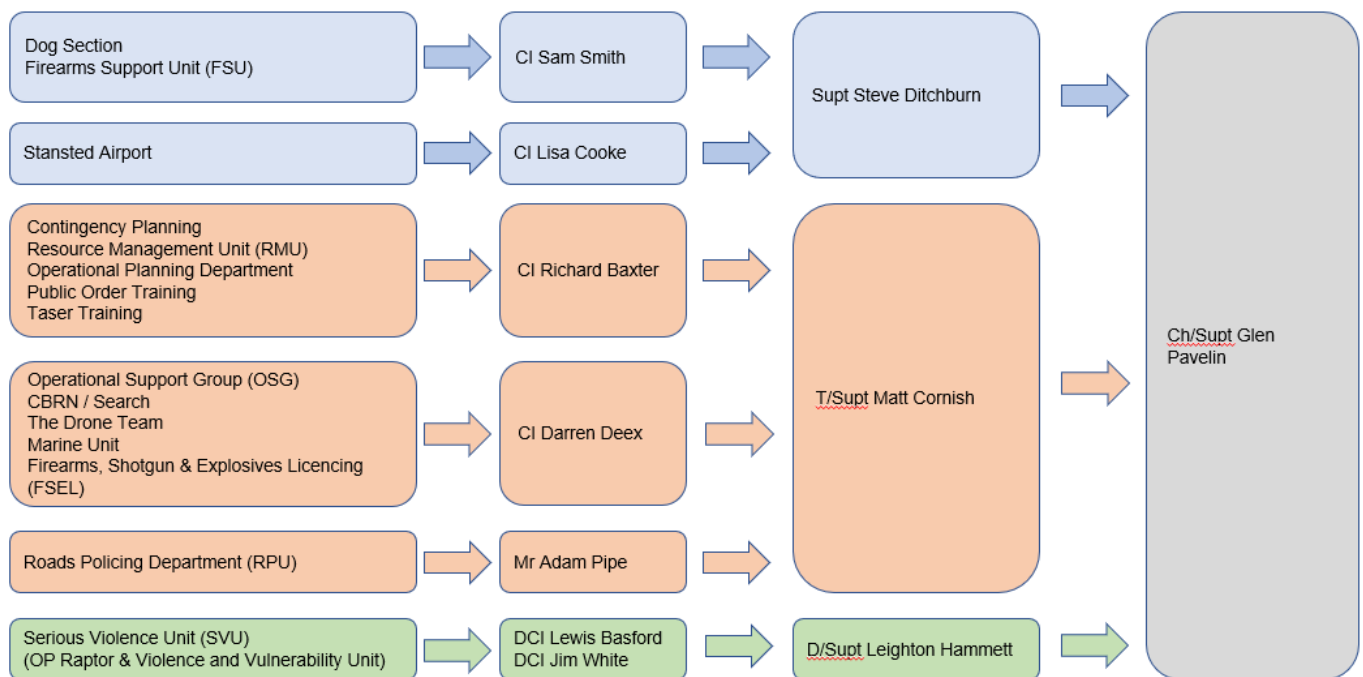
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Introduction

This report is designed to provide a brief overview around Operational Policing Command (OPC); including how it delivers against the Police and Crime Plan, current resourcing, finance, areas of responsibilities, performance and future plans.

It should be noted that OPC also oversee the Firearms, Shotgun & Explosive Licensing Teams (FSEL) who are subject of another scrutiny report, and therefore not included in this.

Overview of Operational Policing Command



1 Dog Section

Overview

The Dog Section continues to provide 24/7 support across Essex, supporting front line policing, targeting of active and organised criminals together with providing specialist dog search support to the wider investigative departments. The section regularly attends LPA team briefings to maintain strong relationships with LPAs.

Within the Dog Section there are both 'Operational' and 'Training' departments.

The operational side consists of 21 operational handlers and 4 special constables, who have attended 7980 incidents over the review period, assisting with the arrest of 912 Individuals.

The training section comprises of a sergeant and 3 NPCC approved trainers (PCs), responsible for all training, the kennel staff and the management of dangerous dogs.

The team are currently recruiting a 'Dangerous Dogs Manager' to support the increasing risk and demand in this important area of work. In the year 2019/20 125 dogs have been seized, with 'dangerous dogs offences' increasing year on year. In the first quarter of this reporting period we recorded 174 dangerous dog incidents, compared with 110 for the whole of 2019.

Specialist Dogs

- Digital Detection

Having recently introduced the capability to Essex the section has supported SCD with the execution of 19 warrants, recovering key evidence including micro-sim cards and other concealed materials.

- Forensic Recovery Dogs

The section deploys 3 FRD dogs trained to detect bodily fluids and cadavers. The team have assisted investigatory departments in conducting 22 searches, recovering significant finds not visible to the human eye that have directly assisted criminal investigations including rape scene investigations.

- Drugs Dogs

The section deploys 7 drug trained handlers deploying in a proactive capacity to pre-planned warrants supporting Raptor teams and community policing to target OCGs throughout the county. The team has assisted with the execution of 114 warrants, recovering large sums of cash, weapons and drugs. Additional funding is currently being sought (through Op Sceptre) to extend the capability by 3 additional dogs.

- Explosives Dogs

The section has 4 Explosive trained dogs embedded on the training team, servicing both pre-planned and spontaneous deployments for suspicious packages and venue searches. The team have performed 16 searches over the counting period.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

The lockdown had minimal effect on the teams' operational capability. The period saw a vastly reduced reactive volume of general police incidents for the teams allowing them to become even more proactive, working alongside other OPC assets to police the road network and react to intelligence.

What has it done to deliver against the Police & Crime Plan?

More Local, visible and accessible policing – The Dog Section continues to have a high impact around local visible and accessible policing. In the first quarter of 2020 the section changed from personal Twitter accounts to a Dog Section account. It has 6395 followers and continues to attract good public interest. There have been regular online events, linking to live activity that has provided good feedback.

Tackling gangs and serious violence – The Dog Section are deployed in support of Operation Sceptre on a daily basis, working with OSG to tackle knife enabled crime and violence.

Disrupting and preventing organised crime – The specialist dog provision (drugs, digital, forensic) are frequently deployed by SIOs by; supporting investigations that target and dismantling OCGs, management of sex offenders (such as searches for memory cards), and other operational deployments with well evidenced success.

Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm – The Dog Section are frequently used in support of open area searches for High Risk missing persons (vulnerable).

What is new / next?

The team are looking to increase their coverage by increasing the dual handling capability, and bids have been submitted through different funding streams to purchase an additional four specialist dogs in support of this venture.

The unit are also seeking funding from the POCA fund to secure the purchase of a dog camera for use in high threat deployments such as firearms, supporting officers in the search phase of properties or open country.

2 Firearms Support Unit

Overview

April 2020 to June of 2020 saw a notable increase in the number of firearms deployments, there were 116 spontaneous and 65 planned deployments. This is despite Covid and lockdown restrictions.

April 2019 to March 2020 saw a total of 535 deployments (394 spontaneous and 141 planned), this is an increase of 55 since 2018. Spontaneous deployments remained steady between 2018 and 2019 and the increase was in planned deployments involving close protection of protected MP's or members of the Royal family who have visited or reside in Essex.

The current FSU establishment is 2 inspectors (increased from 1 last month), 11 sergeants and 82 PCs.

The recruitment and retention of firearms officers remains a challenge, with regular loss of trained officers transferring to City of London or Metropolitan Police.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

The lockdown had minimal effect on the FSU operational capability. The period saw a vastly reduced reactive volume of general police incidents for the teams allowing them to become even more proactive, working alongside other OPC assets to police the road network and react to intelligence. This supported the significant increase seen in drink/drugs driving prosecutions and the volume of arrests and POCA seizures across OPC in general.

The suspension of firearms training impacted the ability of the team to balance operational resilience whilst ensuring all College of Policing mandated training is completed by March 2021.

LPA support

As well as responding to firearms deployments the FSU supported LPAs by attending 7980 incidents in 2019/2020. They carried out 242 Stop and Search interactions within the same year and 736 intelligence reports were submitted.

In the first quarter of 2020, 204 Intelligence reports have been submitted, 63 Stop and Search interactions and 2491 incidents have been attended. An increase in overall productivity.

What has it done to deliver against the Police & Crime Plan?

More Local, visible and accessible policing - FSU officers have a patrol strategy when not deployed to provide maximum coverage across the Force. This strategy includes the use of analytics and evidenced based policing to inform it.

Tackling gangs and serious violence - Tackling gangs and serious violence, bringing offenders to justice through targeted police enforcement is heavily supported by armed officers through deployments in both covert and overt activity. County lines and exploitation in Essex and across borders is a large focus of the work carried out by firearms officers

Disrupting and preventing organised crime - Supporting NCA, ERSOU and SCD targeting offenders and vehicles involved with serious and organised crime is another area of police work linked FSU are heavily involved in.

There is also a national policing requirement, specifically the national threat around Marauding Terrorist Attacks (MTAs) and Op Plato, both of which are managed by FSU in the first instance.

What is new / next?

2020/21 FSU will grow in strength by an additional five PCs.

In order recruit and train firearms officers, three initial courses will be run. The number of firearms deployments continues to increase. The team aim to introduce new practices to take positive action around inclusivity in firearms and increase the diversity of the team.

3 Stansted Airport

Overview

London Stansted Airport carries up to 100,000 passengers per day at peak times and the core policing business is counter terrorism, aviation security and preparedness to deal with major incidents that require specialist policing skills.

The team provided an armed and unarmed policing response, supporting several local and national operations, for example;

- Project Servator - This operation uses officers trained in 'deceptive behaviours' to identify persons acting suspiciously and conduct targeted stops. Of note, positive outcomes following 'Stop Searches' under this operation are 74%, compared to the national Stop Search average of around 25%.

- Operation Othello is a multiagency operation designed to increase identification of victims of modern slavery & human trafficking being brought through the airport. Over a 3-day period in July 1720 passengers were monitored, with a number of intelligence reports being submitted and one referral to the National Slavery teams. Good use of social media raised awareness of this issue with 38,618 people reached via Facebook.
- Op Pegasus - This relates to incursions of the flight restriction zone by drones. Using some counter drone technology, the drone and pilots can often be located quickly, preventing large scale disruption.

The resources at Stansted are 1 superintendent, 1 chief inspector and;

- 1 inspector, 10 sergeants and 66 constables (armed).
- 1 inspector, 4 sergeants, 25 constables and 18 police staff (unarmed)

The forecast costs for 2020/21 were £7,583,655 (£7,353,643 with 6% vacancy) with Manchester Air Group (MAG) covering these costs. Covid has affected these figures significantly, with MAG forecast to spend £5,594,758 and the remainder needing to be absorbed by Essex Police as a result of Op Talla (Covid response).

These redeployments have understandably reduced performance since March, with the teams averaging attendance at 500 incidents per month, making 8 arrests, 110 intelligence reports, 2 cash seizures and 15 Stop Searches. As passenger numbers increase these performance figures will also increase.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

Covid-19 has (and continues to have) a significant effect on the airport, with passenger numbers drastically reduced, and MAG needing to make a large proportion of their 12,000 staff furloughed, and now redundant.

A number of the officers and staff were redeployed from the airport under Op Talla, which will affect the costs being passed to MAG.

Passenger numbers are increasing, with August seeing around 20,000 passengers a day, and the policing 'footprint' has increased as a result. However, the travel industry continues to be unstable due to Covid-19, which is likely to have a knock-on effect to the policing of the airport.

What now / next

The effect of Covid-19 to the travel industry continues to be a significant factor in 'what happens next'. EasyJet have recently 'pulled out' of Stansted, Ryanair have reduced flights by 30% and Emirates are reviewing their position. This is likely to have an impact on passenger numbers, and therefore the policing requirement going forward.

Negotiations are ongoing for 'Quarter 3' costs under the 'Police Service Agreement', with the Airport Commander taking the view it is unlikely we will return to normality until 'Quarter 4' at the earliest.

4 Contingency Planning

Overview

The Contingency Planning and Business Continuity team are responsible for planning (jointly with partners) the emergency response plans for key sites across Essex, and then (using suitably trained staff and commanders) testing these plans, as per government guidelines.

There are currently 122 emergency plans, which are accessible to all staff via the intranet.

The team also support all Essex Police in preparing the 60 (current) Business Continuity plans, at both a 'district' and 'Force' level, to cover a range of different options in the event of disruption to the Force's ability to function.

The team have a supervisor and 3 staff.

Performance this year (to date)

The team also support Essex Police in preparing the 60 (current) Business Continuity plans, at both a 'district' and 'force' level, to cover a range of different options in the event of disruption to our ability to function. These were recently tested during Covid-19.

Work continues on managing the backlog of emergency plan work as highlighted in the recent Civil Contingencies STRA (CC STRA).

Despite the challenged posed by Covid-19, the year began with 62% of plans in date, rising to a peak of 72% in date at the start of July, dropping to 66% this month. With legislation still requiring testing and exercising of certain plans, three of these have been carried out virtually, developing learning on each successive exercise.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

In the first two months there was a significant draw on the business continuity area of the department, this impacted on some emergency planning having to be postponed supporting internal and external (Essex resilience Forum amongst others) Responses to Covid.

A member of staff was seconded to the Strategic Awareness Cell (SAC), and a number of testing and training sessions were cancelled, including an Athena and Custody exercise.

The support to Essex Resilience Forum work has also created additional demand that removes staff from their core function, as discussed on the STRA.

Details of support from OPC provided to LPAs

The support has focused on continuing to provide tactical and operational commanders the opportunity to take part in multi-agency major incident exercises for the CPD. The department has continued to work with the LPAs in learning from the initial Covid response to refine and develop the BC plans for the LPAs, with the South LPA agreeing to test the new plans.

What has it done to deliver against the Police & Crime Plan?

This work delivers a statutory requirement placed upon Essex Police by the Civil Contingencies Act, as such it delivers against the areas of the Police and Crime plan that mention [support of the national Policing Requirements](#), and against the areas of [collaboration and partnerships](#).

What is new / next?

The team have reviewed the roles and are looking to create a combined role (BC and CP) to improve efficiencies.

Reviewing the BC mapping across Essex Police to improve quality and coverage.

Creating a CPD for operational and tactical commanders, to support their learning and development when dealing with multi-agency major incident command.

5 Resource Management Unit

Overview

The Resource Management Unit (RMU) are a central 'hub' responsible for managing the duties, specialist rotas, allocation of training, and other staffing issues across Essex.

The team consists of an RMU manager, 5 managers and 29 administrative staff.

Together they deal with;

- 660,000+ SAP updates per year
- Receive and process over 13,000 emails **per month**
- Assign over 16,000 spaces on training courses
- And have resources 25 large scale operations (so far) this year.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

The team has to set up the SAP processes and manage the staffing impact of the staff and officers across Essex that were isolating, shielding or working from home. Throughout this, the office has retained a 'core' number of staff to deal with anything urgent requiring attention, with the remainder of the team working from home.

Details of support from OPC provided to LPAs

- Regular reporting of staffing levels, alerts when below minimum levels.
- Arrangement of support calls i.e. constants, within LPA and cross county
- No cost & low-cost approach to requirements where possible.
- Arrangement of training
- Management of absences and attendances
- Develop you days to foster relationships

What has it done to deliver against the Police and Crime Plan Metrics?

RMU are the team that manage the resourcing and training requirements across Essex. It could be argued they cover all strands of the policing plan; due to the support their function provides every team, enabling them to perform their core roles with appropriate training and staffing levels.

What is new / next?

A review will be conducted of admirative functions and roles, with a view to finding further process efficiencies.

Work will be completed with the Force Control Room (FCR) to review overtime processes, seeking efficiencies.

6 Operational Planning

Overview

The team are responsible for planning all large operations, sporting events, and large music events in Essex that require either Public Order or some form of specialist support. In addition, they attend Safety Advisory Groups (SAG) prior to these events, debrief large scale incidents which enables the Force to 'learn the lessons', and provide logistical support for major incidents such as Op Melrose.

Currently the team consists of 1 inspector, 1 sergeant and 11 PCs including Dedicated Football Officers and member of police staff.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

The impact of Covid-19 was significant for this team, given the cancellation of 103 sporting fixtures and large events (festivals and concerts) that would have affected Essex.

The numbers of operations managed by the team have significantly reduced as a result;

- 30 x C145's (large events requiring a Public Order Command Structure)
- 164 x C146's (OPC providing specialist support to LPA operations, warrant execution etc)

As a result of Covid-19 the Operational Planning team were seconded to other departments leaving just one sergeant and the ERICC officers to manage the department.

Staff were seconded and remain in the Multi Agency Information Cell (MAIC) with one having recently returned to the team. The inspector and 4 constables were seconded to the Situational Awareness Cell (SAC), all have returned apart from one constable who is expected to return in September.

What have your departments done to deliver against the Police and Crime Plan Metrics

In a similar vein to RMU, Operational Planning manage the specialist resourcing and operations across the Force, in particular Operation Sceptre (knife crime) and Op Silver Dawn. Through this, and the specialist support provided to SCD and LPAs, the team support the majority of strands, on the basis of the help they provide the teams designed to operate in those key areas.

What next?

Having reviewed the internal briefing process, the team are now looking to make improvements force wide, to maximise the flow of learning across the Force.

7 Public Order Training

Overview

This team are responsible for the training and continued accreditation of our Public Order assets, to meet the regional STRAs. In addition;

- PO trainers debrief officer assault cases to try and extract the learning
- Fulfil the Tactical Advisory (TA) role within the Public Order Command.

The Public Order Training Team consists of 1 inspector (Ops Planning Inspector), 1 sergeant and 2 full time constables. Additionally, there are also a contingency of 5 part time constable Public Order trainers, who work within other departments but can be called upon to support training when required.

Following the growth in the team of a sergeant last year, the team are now able to deliver additional training programmes, such as Specialist Method of Entry (SMOE), Level Three Public Order training and AEP (Baton) Public Order officers.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Due to Covid-19 all Public Order training was suspended and the College of Policing extended accreditations. As a result, the Public Order Training Team moved to support the Taser Training Team who continued training throughout this period, with 'Covid safe' methods.

Under the PFCC priorities the team continue to provide accessible policing by keeping specialist officers trained in profiles such as Public Order, PRT, PLT who can all provide support and engagement with protests such as BLM or football matches. The team deliver training for MOE ensuring that warrants which are executed for tackling gangs and organised crime are executed successfully to ensure that we preserve and secure evidence and quickly apprehend offenders.

What next?

The future of Public Order training is set to be a busy year with the reinstatement of the training in September, and a requirement to uplift the numbers of both Level 2 and Level 3 Public Order officers to meet the STRA requirements.

8 Taser Training

The dedicated Taser Training Team was created in September 2019, by seconding officers from across OPC that had the prerequisite skills and upskilling them to instruct the Taser course.

So far to date the team have successfully trained 257 new Specialist Taser Officers (STOs), completed 154 conversion courses (from the 'old' Taser to the 'new' one) and delivered 17 refresher courses.

The team will be adopted by Learning & Development (L&D) Command by January 2021, and staff are being recruited to the team on permanent basis to assist with this transition. L&D are in the process of submitting a further COG paper looking to confirm the finals numbers (and type) of posts they require for the team moving forward.

Currently the team consists of 1 inspector, 1 sergeant and 3 dedicated PCs, plus the team have the support of 3 x Public Order trainers. Many of these officers are seconded from other roles, as such not all costs are attributed to the Taser Team at this time. It is expected that following the transition to L&D in the new year, the posts will be made established and costed.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

As a result of Covid-19 the numbers of each training course have been halved to six students to allow for social distancing this has slowed the rate of the uplift down however has not prevented the training from being delivered.

What next?

- Transition of the Training Team to L&D, with OPC maintaining strategic 'ownership' of Taser.
- Roll out of Chronicle, a system designed to manage and audit the use of Taser across the Force.

9 Operational Support Group (OSG)

Overview

The OSG establishment is two inspectors, nine sergeants and 63 constables, costing £4,432,064 per year.

During this reporting period OSG have made a total of 1,720 arrests; 928 of these arrests relate to Operation Sceptre (knife and violent crime) deployment and 86 relate to other tasking deployments (for example - High Risk Domestic Abuse suspects or other LPA priority offenders).

The team have continued to develop intelligence to support operational decision making through the submission of 2,774 Police Intelligence Reports and carried out 2,452 Stop and Searches, 773 of which were positive (31.5%).

The OSG have also seen an increase in public order deployments in the previous 12 months, including Mutual Aid deployments to London for Extinction Rebellion protests, BLM demonstrations and are now providing the Public Order response to the large number of Unlicensed Music Events (UME) seen over recent weeks.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

The OSG have deployed throughout Op TALLA to support the LPAs and there have been two very distinct phases throughout the pandemic.

Phase 1: Demand across the county reduced significantly as Essex entered lockdown enabling the team to be more proactive, significantly increasing activity around stop searches and high visibility engagement activity.

Phase 2: There has been a significant increase in the number of Unlicensed Music Events (UMEs) across Essex which is consistent with the national picture. The OSGs role has therefore shifted to provide a tactical response to UMEs under Operational SILVER DAWN.

Details of the support provided to the LPAs by the team;

The OSG have maintained their service levels to the LPA over the past 12 months. The team have deployed on Operation Sceptre throughout the week, and continue to support the LPAs with key taskings, such as locating and arresting priority offenders, execution of drugs warrants and being the SPOC for the NHS around S135 warrants.

What has it done to deliver against the Police & Crime Plan?

More Local, visible and accessible policing – the OSG have provided HVP patrols in areas identified as hot spots for violent crime, providing support to the LPAs in terms of their visible policing profile.

Cracking down on anti-social behaviour – the OSG deploy every weekend for Operation SILVER DAWN to tackle UMEs and smaller gatherings where ASB is being caused.

Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse – the OSG have positively contributed to breaking the cycle of domestic abuse by target hardening on DA suspects highlighted by the LPAs as those at highest risk of causing harm, including actioning outstanding arrests on high risk DA perpetrators.

Tackling gangs and serious violence – the daily focus of the OSG is on Operation Sceptre, targeting hot spot areas identified by analysts and individuals identified through intelligence. We work closely with the LPAs, Op Raptor teams and SCD which has led to an abundance of arrests and disruption in relation to county lines.

Disrupting and preventing organised crime – the OSG have worked closely with SCD and the FSU on a number of significant operations targeting OCGs in the past 12 months and this work stream is expected to increase as positive working relationships between the departments grow.

Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm – the OSG have executed 186 Section 135 warrants since July 2019, supporting adult social care and mental health teams in Essex to supporting and protecting vulnerable people. The OSG have also deployed at a significant number of high-risk missing person incidents, utilising the drones on occasion to assist with searching.

Improving safety on our roads – the OSG have seized 522 vehicles off the road for no insurance since July 2019 and made 491 arrests for drink/drug drive.

What is new / next?

The OSG are in the process of trialling 'Airbox', an 'app' which serves as a briefing, and tracking tool to support deployments and public order. It is hoped this the technology provided in this app will make the deployments more effective going forward.

10 Specialist Operations (CBRN & Search)

Overview

OPC coordinate the Chemical, Biological, Radiation 7 Nuclear (CBRN) and Search (POLSA) response for Essex Police. There are two police constables in a coordinator function, that are responsible for ensuring key staff across the force are trained and accredited according to College of Policing (CoP) standards and have continued professional development.

The specialist staff are deployed in roles across the force, with additional training that can be utilised when required. Essex have 12 Police Search Advisors (POLSA) and 108 Licenced Search Officer (LSO) against a STRA of 14 and 120. A training course has been planned to generate the necessary uplift.

With regards to CBRN, Essex has 12 tactical Advisors and 99 'CBRN responders'. There isn't currently a STRA for CBRN, however, Essex Police have commissioned a piece of work to review demand versus capacity across the region.

As well as providing support to the specialist trained staff across the Force, the coordinators are also responsible for providing expert advice in planning and coordinating responses to large incidents, and the storage and maintenance of all specialist equipment.

There has been an increase in the demand this year. There have been 538 requests for advice or deployment. This is compared to 402 for the same period last year. An increase of 33.8%.

Specific highlight report on draw on the team as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic;

CBRN: The team conducted over 150 respirator 'face fit' tests for OSG, Airport ARV's and dog handlers so they could wear FFP3 respirators during Operation TALLA if required, a higher level of protection than standard surgical masks. This gave the force more resilience to deal with more demanding Covid-19 related incidents and situations.

Due to their knowledge in this area, the CBRN team also assisted Operation Talla Command with the coordination and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) PE across the 7 forces.

POLSA: The initial period of 'lockdown' did see a reduction in calls to the PolSA. However, it is evident that since the easing of restrictions demand has increased. Essex Police were one of the only forces in the country to continue with the annual search re-licensing course, with strict Covid-19 compliance processes in place. The course was conducted outdoors and involved physical search scenarios.

What has it done to deliver against the Police & Crime Plan metrics?

More local, visible and accessible policing – A marked CBRN van is used to attend CBRN incidents such as cannabis factories, chemical suicides, white powder incidents and illicit laboratories. POLSAs are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and search teams are deployed to incidents when required, providing a visible presence at that deployment, particularly in the search for high risk missing people.

Cracking down on anti-social behaviour – Illicit labs and cannabis factories both require CBRN attendance. This acts as a supporting role to LPAs and investigation teams in dealing with these anti-social incidents.

Tackling gangs and serious violence – CBRN attendance is required at cannabis factories and illicit drug labs helping LPAs tackle gangs. CBRN will also offer support and assistance during and after a corrosive substance attack. CBRN will attend and deal with the most serious CBRN incidents involving incidents where chemical warfare agents have been used or released.

Several searches have taken place in 2020 relating to gangs and incidents of serious violence. At least two searches this year have resulted in the finding of viable firearms.

Disrupting and preventing organised crime – As above, CBRN attendance is required at cannabis factories and illicit labs. This provides LPAs and investigation teams with support and advice to disrupt OCGs. 115 deployments so far this year many of which are as a result of crime resulting in some significant finds for the investigation teams to assist with securing convictions.

Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm - The On call POLSA function is to set the search strategy for high risk missing persons, many of whom are vulnerable children. Additionally, LSOs are often used to support the Public Protection Command in searches, where children have been the victim of significant abuse.

Improving safety on our roads – CBRN has just started a piece of work with the Roads Policing Unit (RPU) and the Road Crime Team to deal with radiation transportation on the UK's road network.

What is new / next?

Essex are leading on a regional scoping exercise for CBRN. The concept is to understand the capacity and demand within each force and see if better collaboration can improve efficiencies without affecting the forces capacity to respond to incident.

11 Drone Team

Overview

Drones have been used operationally within Essex Police since 2016 with the 'Drone Training Team' being established in 2018. The operational use has increased year on year, as demonstrated in the below table. This is in keeping with drone use nationally, which is increasing as drones become 'more mainstream'.

Year	Number of flights
2016 -2017	15
2017 – 2018	108
2018 – 2019	250
2019 – 2020	420
2020 – 2021	546

Table 1 figures taken from the flight records recorded by the Drone Team.

When the Drone Training Team was officially established, the intention was for the team to operate under a cost neutral model, delivering external training for blue light responders. A year after implementation a Post Implementation Review (PIR) highlighted the team were not going to achieve the level of income generation predicted, for a variety of reasons.

As a result, a report was commissioned to consider the 'future use of drones within Essex Police', covering the following points;

- Provide an overview on Essex Police use of drones
- Suggest a change in focus from revenue generation to cost avoidance and operational effectiveness
- Provide options for future operational models

This paper was presented to chief officers in August 2020, with a general agreement to move towards operational delivery and cost avoidance.

The team has an establishment of four Full Time Equivalent (FTE) members of staff; 1 POS (Drone Manager), 1 SO1 (Administrative support) and 2 constables. A growth bid has been submitted to increase the size of the team, which will be considered towards the end of 2020.

At this time, the drone manager role is vacant, being filled by an inspector seconded from another department.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Covid-19 and the loss of the Drone Manager has meant the team have not been able to perform their key role generating income through external training. Finance are aware and this has been factored into the wider Force budgets.

This led to the move to operational delivery, and the opportunities now being seen through cost avoidance and reduction, particularly around the use of the National Police Air Service (NPAS). This is being explored and evidenced currently.

Details of the support provided to the LPAs by the team;

The primary function of the drone team is to support LPA and other departments in operational delivery. This is through conducting thermal imagery flights to identify cannabis factories, to use in Public Order and firearms deployments to support command functions.

What has it done to deliver against the Police & Crime Plan metrics (the 7 strands of the plan)?

Cracking down on anti-social behaviour – The drones have been supporting the LPAs with reducing antisocial behaviour. An example of this is the use of drones to fight antisocial jet ski use and antisocial motorcycle nuisance. The Drone Team also provide a defence against the antisocial use of drones at a local level and disruption at key iconic sites.

Tackling gangs and serious violence – Drones are now used for planned firearms deployments instead of NPAS. This reduces the cost to Essex Police from NPAS and the drones have significant benefits, especially in relation to the community impact and the liaison with the officers on the ground.

Disrupting and preventing organised crime – The drone team are now supporting SCD in live covert operations.

Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm – The Drone Team have improved their spontaneous response enabling them to support searches for vulnerable missing persons.

Improving safety on our roads – The Drone Team are being used to assist in photographing and mapping the scenes of road deaths to assist the court with understanding the scene.

What is new / next?

The Drone Team is being reviewed by chief officers and it is anticipated that it will grow and develop with the aim of ensuring significant cost avoidance by reducing the use of NPAS.

12 Marine Unit

Overview

A restructure during May 2020 returned the Marine Unit to their previous establishment of one sergeant and five constables, enabling them to provide seven days a week coverage as a result, significantly improving the visibility and patrol time of the team. There is an annual budget of £15,000 for equipment, of which approximately £6,500 is spent on mooring fees at Burnham Marina.

The team have now been transformed into a Community Policing Team, and with the support of the Community Engagement Teams have create a bespoke engagement plan, serving the marine communities.

They are in the process of launching this plan and building relationships with key partner agencies and community stakeholders. Although in its infancy, this new approach has already resulted in several instances of direct contact between the community and the unit, resulting in more effective responses to crime and anti-social behaviour and increased public confidence in policing.

Unfortunately, the Rib has taken longer than anticipated to refurbish which has left us with only one vessel, the ALERT IV during this busy period. The Rib is expected to be completed by late October/November 2020.

The unit have managed to extend their Marine policing powers by gaining Harbour Master status from Port of London Authority and we are hoping to extend this to other harbour authorities during the rest of 2020 and 2021.

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

The Summer period has seen a large increase in anti-social behaviour following the relaxation of lock-down rules and high demand on Marine Unit resources, particularly incidents involving Personal Water Carriers (jet-skis). Op BOW was implemented to tackle this; targeted patrols in hotspot areas and during high demand periods, predominantly at weekends and high tide times. From 15th May until 28th July Essex Police have received 68 reports of ASB, mainly direct from our marine community contacts.

Details of the support provided to the LPAs by the team;

The unit have provided specialist advice on marine crime and crime prevention to officers dealing with crime and the marine community in general and have assisted in recovering stolen items of marine equipment.

The team are currently working with the South LPA to target illegal shellfish picking on the coast, including working with local and national modern-day slavery and human trafficking specialist officers due to the link to OCGs. The team are also working with the North LPA, ERSOU and National Crime Agency (NCA) in relation to a number of operations involving the importation of Class A drugs and OCGs.

What has it done to deliver against the Police & Crime Plan?

More Local, visible and accessible policing – The Marine Unit have become a Community Policing Team, serving the marine communities of Essex, providing a more visible and accessible policing provision within the marine community.

Cracking down on anti-social behaviour – The Marine Unit are tackling ASB on the coastline and inland waterways, mainly through Op BOW which is cracking down on the anti-social use of PWCs.

Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse – Due to increasing their presence within the marine community the Marine Unit are also able to engage with the community on other topics, such as domestic abuse.

Tackling gangs and serious violence – The team are working closely with the LPAs to develop intelligence and support proactive operations around the importation of Class A drugs via small ports/coastline areas.

Disrupting and preventing organised crime – The team are currently working with the South LPA to target illegal shellfish picking on the coast, including working with local and national modern-day slavery and human trafficking specialist officers due to the link to OCGs. The team are also working with the North LPA, ERSOU and NCA in relation to a number of operations involving the importation of Class A drugs and OCGs.

Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm – The Marine Unit have assisted in searches for missing persons and as part of their community engagement work will be seeking to develop key safety messages, especially around young people and being safe on the water.

What is new / next?

There is continuing joint work and training with the other Marine Units round the country and the NPCC lead for marine matters, ACC Jim Nye (Devon & Cornwall Police) to develop a response to ongoing migrant issues and the ability to deal with potential post EU-Exit issues in the marine community. This has led to four out of the five full-time officers now being trained to a national standard and able to deploy anywhere in the country to assist other marine units as required by the Home Office.

The Rib is being refurbished and once complete the Unit will have a longer-term fast response capability.

OPC have signed an MOU with UK Border Force which means the Marine Unit will be able to share assets, resulting in a huge improvement in efficiency on water patrols, particularly in the river Thames, reduced fuel costs, reduced time spent travelling to areas by water and therefore more time spent in areas Essex Police are targeting/patrolling. This will also mean partner assets are used more efficiently and result in more joint patrols between law enforcement bodies.

13 Roads Policing Unit

Overview

The Roads Policing team consists of operational and back-office functions, working in partnership with the Safer Essex Road Partnership who support the funding of some of the teams.

Over the first quarter of this year the team have made 580 arrests, submitted 502 pieces of intelligence, attended 7,089 incidents (including 46 Fatalities, and 859 serious injury Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)).

Following a PFCC uplift in 2019/20, RPU now consists of a Head of Roads Policing (police staff), 4 inspectors, 16 sergeants, 118 PCs and 88 members of police staff.

Due to the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) funding is shared; Essex Police pay for £4.8M for police officers and £631K for police staff. SERP pay for £975K police staff and £400K for operation Calypso (operation to reduce those killed or seriously injured in Essex).

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

The Covid-19 period witnessed a dramatic downturn with traffic volumes seeing the network return to early 1970 levels. These traffic volumes reflected a dramatic downturn in reported road traffic collisions. During April the Force recorded 27 KSI casualties compared to 62 in April 2019.

With less traffic, vehicle speeds increased, with Data showing an average increase in vehicle speeds by 15%.

The period allowed Roads Policing to provide a greater level of pro-active focus upon targeting road users who were linked to criminal activity and to target those road users who identified the highest level of risk when using the road. This resulted in a very high number of arrests, but across the Force extraordinary increases in arrests for Drug Driving, Section 5A Road Traffic Act 1988.

Details of the support provided to the LPAs by the team;

Reflecting Local Policing priorities and the Force Plan, Roads Policing continues to provide several pro-active operations to LPAs:

- **Operation CALLA** – Across all LPA Commands targeting car cruise events and Anti-social road user by young drivers.
- **Operation GAMBLER** – Cross border operation targeting criminality and high-end road traffic offences in partnership with LPA West and Metropolitan Police.
- **Operation BLUEBIRD** – Pro-active intelligence gathering and response to organised immigration crime supporting SCD
- **Operation CALYPSO** – Safer Essex Roads Partnership operation providing enhanced pro-active and visible policing capability into LPAs to address road safety and road crime issues.
- **Operation NASH** – Safer Essex Roads Partnership operation focused upon towns across Essex and within all LPAs. Multi-agency operation educating, enforcing and engaging with all road users and targeting criminality.

Roads Policing delivery against Police & Crime Plan 2020/21

The Operations set out above identify clear links to support the PFCC Police & Crime Plan across the following areas –

More local & visible Policing – Enhanced presence on strategic road, urban and rural road network within normal Road Policing deployments and through operations above.

Tackling Gangs & Serious Violence – Through Intelligence led and positive Road Policing interventions and linked to the continued analytical work studying drug drive arrests where there is a high link between drug drive arrests and violence.

Disrupt & Prevent Organised Crime – Roads Policing plays a critical role in disrupting Organised Crime through effective use of stop and search powers, specialist officers supporting efforts to disrupt Organised Immigration Crime, operations focused around vehicle crime and through back office investigations linked to traffic offences involving Organised Crime Group members.

Improving Safety on our Roads – In Partnership with The Safer Essex Roads Partnership, Essex Police supports the annual Road Safety Delivery Plan focusing upon education, engagement and enforcement across a range of road users and those identified as being most vulnerable.

Cracking down on anti - social behaviour – Operation CALLA focuses upon those individuals or groups who display behaviour that is identified as dangerous or anti - social use of the road network.

Protecting Children from harm – Through the activity of The Safer Essex Roads Partnership a range of educational activity is designed and delivered by partners to children and young people aged between 5 – 17.

What is new / next

An RPU STRA will be completed by the autumn, this is suggesting that based on analytics, there is a need for an increased RPU footprint within the South LPA. As a result, growth bids have been submitted to enhance the pro-active approach of the Road Crime Team alongside the potential of developing an additional Road Policing base within the South LPA.

In line with the Force Plan to have a skilled workforce equipped and enabled to use technology, Roads Policing is currently working with chief officers to develop options for both ANPR and video capability within several Roads Policing and wider fleet vehicles over the coming 12 months.

14 Serious Violence Unit

Overview

The Serious Violence Unit (SVU) provides a Force-wide response preventing, dismantling and disrupting violent street gangs who cause harm to communities, in line with the Force Control Strategy.

The SVU will seek to identify those who present the most harm and undertake enforcement activity to disrupt and deter. They also aim to prevent young people from joining or being affiliated to gangs through active community engagement and partnership working.

The SVU team has recently joined OPC, bringing an investigative capability to the Command with a dedicated detective superintendent and two detective chief inspectors.

In total the team comprises of 1 detective superintendent, 2 detective chief inspectors (DCI), 4 detective inspectors (DI), 10 detective sergeants, 33 PC/DC, 3 police staff investigators and an analyst. The Supt, DCI and 1 inspector post are 'surge funded' and will feature as part of a growth bid for 2021/22 to formally establish them.

One DCI leads the pursue element against County Lines and gangs, owning the locally based 'Raptor' teams working out of each LPA. The second DCI is embedded within the multi-agency 'Violence and Vulnerability Unit', working with partners in a 'public health approach' to try and reduce and prevent violence.

Raptor

The new structure is designed to target the 'middle' and 'upper market' within gangs and County Lines, using a model known as the 'Orochi Model'. This approach has proven successful in the Metropolitan Police Service, Suffolk and Norfolk Police, and works by looking to dismantle entire criminal enterprises, thus tackling the violence and exploration their existence causes.

The Orochi Model focusses more on identifying the line holders through detailed analysis of passive data such as mobile phone records, ANPR and CCTV. This more refined detective led approach also leads to more opportunities to seize criminal assets under the Proceeds of Crime Act, thereby leading to greater (and sustained) public protection.

Under the new SVU growth, each Raptor team now has two dedicated safeguarding officers. These officers (six in total) have had specialist training to deal with children and adults who have been criminally exploited by gangs and County Lines. Benefits of this prevention approach are already being realised with Children being diverted from gangs, positive feedback has been received from partners such as local authorities.

In its first 8 weeks, the SVU have achieved the following:

- Made 74 arrests
- Executed 26 search warrants at addresses linked to County Lines and gangs
- Seized £43,500 of criminals' cash
- Seized over £40,000 of Class A Drugs

Specific draw on the team as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

The SVU launched during the Covid-19 pandemic, the front-line Raptor Teams have remained physically at work and have been out completing enforcement and disruption work against gangs and County Lines, as the above figures evidence.

Drug dealing has continued during the pandemic, the reported violence and exploitation did reduce during the lock down period, but as the Government eased its measures, quickly the violence came back as gangs and County Lines imposed themselves back on the streets.

Details of the support provided to the LPAs by the team;

The teams remain based in each LPA supporting the drive around Urban Street Gangs and County Lines. A change to the operating model now sees the team target the middle market to sustain longer term disruption and target those most influential within each gang and County Line, being the principle members. This change in direction for the team will look to deliver a more sustained suppression of serious violence with true dismantling of a county line. The SVU continues to support local tasking processes overseen by the DCI.

What has it done to deliver against the Police & Crime Plan?

Tackling gangs and serious violence and Disrupting and preventing organised crime.- The change to a model of dismantling rather than disruption will seek longer term effects on serious violence across the Essex. This will incorporate other tactics such as OP RADIO where covert tactics were deployed to bring about licensing changes within the night-time economy and drive violence down through a tighter grip.

The everyday use of analytical software is key to the sea change in Raptor deployments. The software is a key driver to understanding the complex nature of these gangs and how they are operating. The software seeks to identify overlay with communications data and ANPR. A move towards asset stripping and cash seizures will be an investigative objective of all deployments against County Lines.

What is new / next?

Op Orochi Team - By October 2020, Essex Police will have a dedicated Op Orochi team that will join forces with the Metropolitan Police Service in an operation targeting the controllers of county lines operating between London and Essex as well as lines that originate from Essex, shutting them down at their source.

This team will be headed up by a detective inspector, who will have working with them; an analyst, a detective constable and police staff investigators. The team will produce evidential packages that the Op Raptor Teams will then execute, targeting the principle members to dismantle their enterprise and seize criminal assets.

Operation Ark – This is a Hot Spots Randomised Control Trial – Southend is a statistical outlier for serious violence for Essex. A trail of a dedicated use of Hot Spots policing is being delivered with the assistance of Cambridge University. This will be a level 5 trial allowing for the highest level of statistical review. Police will deliver 30-minute patrols in 8 hotspots a day for 3 months. They will be randomly assigned each day to allow for an assessment of crime control and diffusion of benefits associated. The Home Office have taken keen interest in this based on possible future funding streams.

Op Gloss – This is a new initiative within the SVU launched on the 23rd July 2020, it is an evidence-based process, working closely with the UK Border Force who seize Prohibited Weapons and Drugs through the postal delivery service which are destined for recipients (importer) living in Essex. The Op Gloss team will review all the importations, produce evidential packages so the proportionate action can be taken. The objective is to reduce the impact of knife and drugs crime, keep the people of Essex safe from serious violence, utilising a more sophisticated method whilst preventing these items finding their way on to the streets of Essex. The impact on local officers is proactively removing these items and engaging with the offenders, so that traditional types of Policing, like stop and search, where normally these types of weapons are seized is reduced and limits their exposure to both the public and officers.

The data forecast projects that Essex Police will receive nearly 700 notifications in the next 12 months, this operation takes an innovative idea and uses this to protect the public by reducing the number of prohibited weapons and controlled drugs from reaching the streets of Essex. There have been early

successes, such as a recent operation in Harlow, where an imported lock knife seizure led to a warrant that recovered over 10 other prohibited weapons including two section 5 firearms.