

Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020

Quarterly Update

Quarter 3 – 2020/21

Data to December 2020



Version 1.3
Produced January 2021
Performance Analysis Unit, Essex Police

Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020 – Quarterly Update 2020/21 Q3

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Priority 1 - More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing

We will:

Boost community volunteering, encourage the Active Citizen Programme and grow the police family – doubling the Special Constabulary, with a Special Constable in every community.

- The Special Constabulary headcount stood at 509 at the end of December, compared with 519 at the same time last year. In the last quarter, three courses have commenced, and one intake commenced on 19 December. Course intake sizes have been increased from 10 to 20 for the last 2 intakes of the quarter.
- In the last quarter, Special Constables have recorded 50,313 total hours with 17,489 hours of high visibility policing. The hours worked are equivalent to having an additional 109 full time officers, who would attract an annual salary cost of £5.7m.
- Essex Police currently retains 197 Active Citizens/Police Support Volunteers with 11 applications waiting to be processed, and continues to work with all Community Volunteer Services (CVS) and Local Authorities on recruitment campaigns to boost existing volunteer numbers. A recovery plan is in progress to slowly return volunteers back into the workplace over the coming months and Active Citizens will continue to support local Community Policing Teams with Coffee with Cops and Crime Prevention Campaigns, which includes Operation Meteor (burglary prevention), once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.
- Essex Police currently retains 410 Volunteer Police Cadets across the 13 cadet units. Due to COVID-19, Units are currently closed but Cadets remain in contact with their Leaders through social media and they have taken part in the Retired Police Dog Baloo campaign. A recovery plan is being developed to return Cadets to their Cadet Units, working in partnership with the local schools and community centres to allow the use of their facilities for any meetings over the coming months.
- The National Volunteer Day was promoted on 4th December. Essex Police showcased some of the Police Support Volunteers and Active Citizens personal journeys with Essex Police on the internal and external website.
- The Employer Supported Policing (ESP) scheme (whereby staff are given paid time off to volunteer as a Special Constable) currently has 32 companies registered. 79 Special Constables contributed 916 hours over this quarter, a decrease of 18% from 1,137 hours in the same period last year. This may be related to the impact of COVID-19.

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Priority 1 - More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing

We will:

Support increased participation in Community Safety by supporting schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch, Street Pastors, Community Speed Watch, Volunteer Police Cadets and others.

- Membership of Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) currently has approximately 105,000 registered members and over 3,000 NHW Coordinators. NHW works closely with the four Essex Watch Liaison Officers promoting NHW and the various Watch Schemes including Business Watch, Farm Watch, Caravan Watch and Dog Watch. They also work in partnership with the Citizens in Policing Team with respect to Crime Prevention and Fraud and Scams.
- The Essex Watch Liaison continue to work with the Business Crime Team and have re-launched the information application form which works in conjunction with the Business Crime Team Newsletter. Local businesses have found this really useful.
- Volunteer Police Cadet Scheme are working in collaboration with Essex County Fire Cadets which will include Fire Safety Training for our Police Cadets and Crime Prevention Training for our Fire Cadets. This is planned to commence early 2021.
- Street Pastors continue to work closely with all Local Policing Teams across the districts offering support particularly around Night Time Economy.
- North LPA: A “Tri Service” officer has been appointed for Maldon and the Dengie to be a visible presence for the Fire, Police and Ambulance services delivering crime prevention advice.

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Priority 1 - More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing

We will:

Make it easier to contact the police. Improve the 101-response time, encourage online reporting and realise the benefits of the national Single Online Home solution.

The Force Control Room (FCR):

- Call-handling demand was low during this quarter with 73,887 emergency calls (999) received, (803 a day). This represents a 19.2% decrease on last quarter (17,538 less calls). By comparison, 90,503 calls were received during the same quarter last year (16,616 less calls). October was the busiest month with approximately 5,000 more emergency calls than either November or December.
- 70,753 non-emergency calls (101) were taken compared to 78,753 the previous quarter, a decrease of 8,000 (10.2%). This was higher than the same quarter last year when 68,218 non-emergency calls (101) were received. October recorded the highest number of calls (28,503).
- Live Chat has seen 3,535 interactions this quarter, a decrease of 1,464 on the previous quarter, this may be the result of an increase in COVID-19 breaches being reported via 101 instead.
- The online reporting facility for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), which launched on 24th May, provides an alternative to calling 101 to report various categories of ASB. It has been live for seven months and this quarter there were 733 reports generated, a decrease of 177 on the previous quarter. This decrease may be due to an increase in e-mail reports of COVID-19 breaches being dealt with by the Quality of Service Team.

The Resolution Centre (RC):

- The Resolution Centre (Case Investigations) continues to embed as a county-wide resource, managing investigations into crimes reported by the public that would previously have been dealt with by front-line officers. 2,921 investigations were received in this quarter, a decrease of 547 from last quarter of which 60.5% (1,768) are currently retained by the RC.
- 36,865 crime investigations have been processed by the Demand element of the RC (previously known as the Crime Bureau).
- During the quarter 20,019 public calls were processed by the RC, a decrease of 3,537 from the previous quarter.

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Priority 2 – Crack Down on Anti-social Behaviour

Working with partners we will:

Target repeat and high harm anti-social behaviour through the continued development of Community safety Hubs to include police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Community Safety Officers, licensing, housing and environmental health in every police district.

- North LPA:
 - Chelmsford and Maldon: Ongoing work with the Council, Licencing and Environmental Agency around licencing issues involving ASB has resulted in a premises having their licence revoked, they have ceased to open since.
 - Chelmsford and Maldon: Three closure orders have been completed in the Chelmsford district on properties that were causing disruption within communities.
 - Colchester: Joint Partnership working with Colchester Borough Council Licensing Team to engage with Licensees and enforce COVID regulations which links into Night Time Economy Policing – ASB in Castle Ward, Colchester.
 - Colchester: Worked with Parish Council at West Bergholt to resolve ASB relating to nuisance vehicles.
 - Uttlesford: Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) agreed by the Uttlesford District Council will be launched as COVID restrictions and Council guidelines allow.
 - Tendring: The newly appointed Youth Officers have received bespoke training and can now work flexibly in any location allowing increased communication and cooperation. One such relationship is with Manningtree High School, where a Children and Young People (CYP) Officer holds a drop in session one afternoon per month. This increased accessibility/visibility will allow better community and safety links and aid with perception of the Police.

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- South LPA:
 - Basildon: Operation OXYGEN, which focuses on park related anti social behaviour (ASB) and in particular the issues and dangers associated with Nitrous Oxide cannisters, continued over the last quarter. Joint patrols were undertaken with the county's Youth Service in Wickford parks. alongside strong media messaging to educate youths and attempt to curb problematic use of nitrous oxide.
 - Basildon: Joint initiative with roads policing teams to deal with ASB on Cranes Farm Road. Teams deployed to deter and disrupt road racing activity.
 - Southend: High profile ASB within the Old Leigh area, linked to licensed premises prior to the second lockdown period. The Community Policing Team (CPT) worked with the Community Safety Unit, Regulatory Services and the local licensees to apply dispersal orders where necessary, to achieve better regulation of sales and provide additional visible deterrence. This joint approach resolved the issues.
 - Southend: In response to problematic ASB at a privately owned residence, the CPT worked with the Community Safety Unit to make best use of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) and Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) to address the offending behaviour. The partnership were able to gather evidence of breaches of notices and obtained a civil injunction which has curtailed the ASB.
 - Rochford: The Community Safety Engagement Officer identified growing community concerns about a regular camp fire and nuisance activity at Clements Halls Leisure Centre. Working with local Councillors a series of partnership patrols were conducted to tackle the nuisance and remove rubbish.
- West LPA
 - Unlicensed Music Events have been prevalent in the West LPA and there has been a joint response with partners to tackle them before they take place. Operation RECTIFY saw a multi agency proactive response to a major event which allowed police to utilise preventative powers to curtail the event. Five arrests were made and equipment seized.
 - Thurrock: Officers continue to work with ECFRS for the joint safety assessment of the Buckles Lane travellers site, a large unlawful site on the outskirts of the town. Given there are both fire and ASB risks at the site, both service regular attend the site. A longer term ASB response is in place with ECFRS partners.

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Priority 3 – Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse (DA)

Working with and through the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board to deliver an ambitious programme of transformation we will:

Support victims and their families affected by domestic abuse to feel safe, cope and recover through targeted help and jointly commissioned services.

- Funding has been secured from the PFCC to support a pilot of Project Papillion, which will investigate using Conditional Cautions for perpetrators in specific Domestic Abuse cases. Post approval and funding, this will be launched across Essex.
- A review of the use of Stalking Protection Orders has taken place post their launch in January 2020. A refresh in November 2020 provided further clarity following feedback from officers and staff involved in the process.
- Post Operation CONSIDER, an operation to maximise opportunities to secure a Domestic Violence Protection Notice / Order (DVPN/O) when responding to any DA incident, Local Policing Teams have been trained in using DVPNs in order to provide additional safeguarding to victims.
- Work has continued with Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) and other agencies in order to deliver Domestic Abuse awareness training. Essex Police are key members of the SETDAB and fully involved with all activity.
- A Victims Independent Advisory Group (IAG), which includes a Victims Feedback Panel, has been created with appropriate partners and will run quarterly. IAG Victims will include Domestic Abuse Victims who will sit on the panel in an advisory capacity.
- The Local Policing Support Unit are utilising the National Rural Crime Network report “Captive and Controlled” which provides a better understanding of life in rural areas and finds new ways to keep rural communities safer.
- The Operation ENCOMPASS pilot, in which schools are made aware if children have been present at a DA incident that the police have attended, was launched on the 2nd January 2020 in Thurrock. This has provided significant learning for Essex Police in developing the plan for wider roll-out. It was launched in Southend in December. The initiative is designed to understand the impact domestic abuse can have on children with a view to preventing them from growing up to become perpetrators in the future. It shares information with schools so that they can understand the impact in an educational setting, better understanding behaviours and providing pastoral care.

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Priority 4 – Reverse the Trend in Serious Violence

Working with partners we will:

Bring violent offenders to justice through targeted police enforcement, working closely with neighbouring forces such as the Metropolitan Police (MPS).

- North LPA
 - Colchester: Partnership Nights of Action: Policing the Night Time Economy to reduce violent offences associated with licensed premises in conjunction with the Royal Military Police.
 - Colchester: Joint Policing operations with British Transport Police at the Railway Stations for Operation SCEPTRE, an operation focusing on knife crime and violent crime.
 - Tendring: Working in conjunction with local partner agencies, arrests have been actioned of several particularly violent, high risk domestic abuse perpetrators. As a result, long-suffering victims have been suitably safeguarded, preventing further offending by the suspects.
- South LPA
 - Southend: Operation ARK saw officers from Operational Policing Command (OPC) deployed in violent crime hotspots. The operation resulted in significant reductions in harm and frequency of community violence.
 - Southend: The district has become the 4th area in Essex to be accredited for Project Servator deployments, with 10 authorised locations identified for future deployments. The Project Servator approach will assist in identifying potentially harmful offenders, such as those carrying weapons, and will allow interventions prior to any serious offences being committed.
- West LPA
 - A cross border meeting at command level has taken place with MPS equivalents to ensure intelligence is shared in the most efficient way. MPS colleagues can join local tasking meetings enabling joint focus on those that are causing most harm in the community.
 - Operation WILDCAT (part of Operation SCEPTRE) and Operation GAMBLER (a cross border operation with MPS tackling violent crime and vehicle crime) takes place regularly focussing on the borders with MPS targeting prolific offenders. To date, over 200 offenders have been arrested across 19 operations.

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Priority 4 – Reverse the Trend in Serious Violence

Working with partners we will:

Ensure victims of rape and sexual violence receive the help and support they need, and work with criminal justice partners to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

- Operation YEOVIL relates to two linked offences in November 2020 whereby a male attempted to grab two separate females in parks in Basildon. Extensive enquiries in the local area were made including house to house, CCTV, forensics and the circulation in the media of an edited image which led to a number of positive calls. The victims continue to be supported by specialist officers and a substantial local engagement plan developed to provide public reassurance. Following Police activity, no further linked offences have been identified at this time.
- Operation SULPHUR relates to the attempted rape of two females in Great Dunmow within a 24 hour period. These offences were linked, due to a number of similarities, and the offender was arrested and charged with two assault offences with a trial scheduled for January 2021.
- Development plans are underway for a Criminal Justice Portal to improve victims and witnesses understanding and confidence of the criminal justice and court process. A working group with partners has been established. It supports the feedback received from victims of Rape feeling overwhelmed by the Criminal Justice system. It will include 3D imagery of a court room, links to legal and support services, entitlements under the Victims Code and explain special measures, along with how to access compensation and ancillary orders available.
- Crime and Public Protection continue to identify options to deliver sustainable improvements to the quality of Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interviews to improve outcomes for victims. Training to be delivered to all officers. As part of this, Essex Police have implemented Section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (YJCEA) from August. This allows vulnerable and intimidated witnesses, who have given their evidence by ABE interview, to video record their cross-examination before trial.

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Priority 5 – Tackle Gangs and Organised Crime

Working with partners we will:

Support victims of human trafficking and modern slavery, including sexual exploitation, working closely with UK Border Agency (UKBA), National Crime Agency (NCA) and national and regional partners to bring perpetrators to justice.

- The Modern Slavery Human Trafficking (MSHT) team work closely with the NCA through Operation AIDANT. To date it has focused on labour exploitation and raising awareness of COVID-19 throughout the agricultural sector; raising awareness of child sexual exploitation throughout the hospitality industry and raising awareness of adult sexual exploitation through targeting high risk premises suspected of being involved in prostitution and trafficking.
- The MSHT team also continue to liaise with the NCA to effectively share intelligence. Such intelligence, gained and shared through the investigation of Operation HOSTEL (sexual exploitation), led to the apprehension and successful conviction of a male for over twenty offences linked to Modern Day Slavery (MDS). Operational learning was provided to the Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit in order to support national best practice.
- The MSHT team also work closely with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) which includes intelligence sharing and investigation support with “safe and well” visits to identify potential victims. They have collaborated on Operation SCARLET, an operation to engage with a Romanian family with 12 potential victims listed as workers in the agricultural sector, and Operation DOORSTEP, an operation involving joint agency visits to potential exploitation sites.
- The MSHT team provide training both internally to Essex Police officers and also to partners such a Local Authorities, Charitable organisations and those within the criminal justice system. The aim is to enhance understanding, improve the level of service they provide to victims and to support bringing offenders to justice.

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Priority 5 – Tackle Gangs and Organised Crime

Working with partners we will:

Disrupt and prevent organised drug distribution through improved intelligence shared between police partners and local communities to limit the harm drugs cause.

- Since 1st October 2020, Essex Police Serious Organised Crime unit have completed significant activity in tackling the importation and supply of Class A and B Drugs (currently working on 26 Organised Crime Group (OCG) operations). A total of 31 people have been arrested with 17 charged and awaiting court dates and two sentenced to two years in prison. As a result, at least six kilograms of cocaine and £126,000 cash were seized. A significant number of these results have come from Intelligence gained through working with the National Crime Agency (NCA) under Operation VENETIC.
- Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) have been working alongside National Crime Agency's (NCA) Specialist Operations Centre (SOC), Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU), Local Policing Area teams (LPAs) and policing teams from other parts of the country to apprehend suspects committing crimes in Cheshire and Devon, whilst awaiting court for crimes committed in Essex.
- SCD Intelligence Bureau (IB) work closely with partners such as Crimestoppers and local authorities with particular regard to County Lines and Organised drug supply. Of the 17,303 total intelligence reports submitted in Essex over the last quarter, 1,701 were from Crimestoppers of which 946 related to Drugs and County Lines.

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Priority 5 – Tackle Gangs and Organised Crime

Working with partners we will:

Disrupt and prevent organised drug distribution through improved intelligence shared between police partners and local communities to limit the harm drugs cause.

- North LPA
 - Chelmsford and Maldon: The Community Policing Team (CPT) have completed two large drugs warrants in Maldon which led to around £50,000 worth of drugs being seized. The offenders who are from an Organised Criminal Gang (OCG) are now under investigation.
 - Colchester: Multi-Agency Crime Prevention meeting conducted with internal and external partners to focus on joint problem solving of individuals causing harm to the community including gangs and county lines.
 - Tendring: Three warrants issued in the lead up to Christmas on premises which contained considerable cannabis grows within them. A street value of £4million of cannabis was seized. Offenders were arrested and will be placed into the criminal justice system.
 - Harwich: Work continues to tackle OCGs. Multiple warrants issued in 2020 which resulted in firearms and cars being used to transport drugs seized. This response has seen levels of violence drop and a reduction in the use of vulnerable individuals including children. One notable warrant was the discovery of a cannabis grow in a disused factory that saw the seizure and removal of a £1million worth of cannabis and the arrest of multiple individuals.
- West LPA
 - Operation BLUEBIRD (previously known as the 'Ports as a Community' project) looks to increase intelligence sharing between law enforcement agencies to strengthen borders and support victims of organised immigration crime. This growing intelligence picture will lead to better sharing/joint operations between port enforcement partners. The project has significantly increased visibility of policing across international ports, increasing interactions with port communities, the local community and key border partners. It also provides accessible policing for victims of human trafficking and aims to create richer intelligence for the targeting of organised immigration criminals across county borders. All partner agencies are now fully engaged with the initiative and a number of joint immigration operations have been conducted.
 - Epping: Operation TOMBSTONE is an operation focused on tackling the recent spike in the theft of catalytic converters in Epping/Loughton. Officers target organised vehicle crime and provide a consistent approach to vehicle crime investigation.
 - Harlow: Disruptive activity against organised crime groups continues which involves collaboration across both the local and county council. A number of convictions for acquisitive crime have been made.

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Priority 6 – Protecting Children and Vulnerable People

Working with safeguarding partners and the Southend, Thurrock and Essex Safeguarding Boards we will:

Bring more perpetrators of rape and sexual abuse to justice.

- Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT) are organising training for Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) and other Public Protection staff to become Nationally Accredited to grade indecent images of children. This will ensure consistency and provide inexperienced staff with the confidence to undertake this difficult area of work.
- The introduction of a Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Disruption Letter sent by the CSE Proactive Investigation team, aims to dissuade identified predators and protect children from further potential abuse. The CSE team will be working with local authorities, in particular the Hidden Harm teams, to implement trigger plans and CSE warning markers for victims and perpetrators.
- A Victim's Feedback Panel has now been established with the first panel sitting in February 2021. This will provide feedback to frontline teams by utilising rape crisis and Domestic Abuse victim commissioned services to help identify recurring themes to shape future services.
- The SHIFT project in the Southend Community Safety Hub is a collaboration between Essex Police, NHS and Mental Health Professionals to help those at risk of sexual exploitation develop resilience and coping mechanisms. This was expanded to cover Castlepoint and Rochford districts with a view to a countywide expansion in the future.
- POLIT and MOSOVO use of polygraph examinations are now back to pre-COVID-19 levels with the aid of appropriate social distancing measures. The use of polygraph testing continues to be a useful tool to aid the risk assessment process and has resulted in a number of disclosures being obtained ranging from undisclosed child contact to sharing of indecent images of children.
- MOSOVO were successful in securing Home Office funding for a number of technological solutions and training to improve the knowledge of staff and assist with conducting registered sex offender (RSO) visits.

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Priority 6 – Protecting Children and Vulnerable People

Working with safeguarding partners and the Southend, Thurrock and Essex Safeguarding Boards we will:

Improve reporting of hate incidents through improved community engagement, improved reporting through Victim Support and greater use of Hate Crime Reporting Centres.

- Community Policing Teams investigate a large proportion of all hate crime and hate incidents, recognising the impact hate crime can have, not only on victims, but their families and sometimes entire communities. Work is ongoing to increase the number of referrals to Victim Support. There are dedicated Hate Crime Officers who engage with communities and hard to reach groups. Part of their role is to recruit Hate Crime Ambassadors, of which there are now nearly 1,000 in Essex and to increase the number of Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRCs), of which there are 60 enabling the increased reporting of Hate Crime across Essex.
- The new 2021 Hate Crime Prevention Strategy supports the Police and Crime Plan with specific focus on improving reporting and community engagement.
- The Law Commissions Hate Crime Consultation is underway proposing changes to both current hate crime legislation and on-line communication legislation.

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Priority 6 – Protecting Children and Vulnerable People

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Improve reporting of hate incidents through improved community engagement, improved reporting through Victim Support and greater use of Hate Crime Reporting Centres.

- North LPA
 - Chelmsford and Maldon: New Independent Advisory Group (IAG) being set up at Maldon.
 - Colchester: Regular engagement through the IAG to review hate crime levels across the district and provide updates regarding methods of reporting hate crimes.
 - Braintree and Uttlesford: Implementation of Youth Hate Crime Ambassadors in Secondary Schools. Selected pupils at County High School in Saffron Walden have received training from the North Hate Crime Officer. Training will also be given to the Police Cadet Units who will become ambassadors within their respective secondary schools.
 - Tendring: The Community Police Team and the newly formed Jaywick Neighbourhood Watch (JNW) carried out joint community drop ins to discuss local matters pertinent to the community.
- South LPA
 - Southend: Given many of the Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRCs) are closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, the IAG have provided support by maintaining key community contacts and local schemes to ensure communities can continue to report any incidents.
- West LPA
 - Hate crime officers continue to be an integral part of all IAG's, reporting, monitoring and driving use of HIRCs. Thurrock, Harlow and Epping/Brentwood IAG's seeking new methods of attracting IAG members that have not historically been supportive of police activity (critical friends).
 - Thurrock: The first 'Challenge Panel' was held in December with BAME leaders/community members to launch the new Essex Police Diversity strategy. The panel is independently chaired and discussed Hate Crime monitoring/reporting and crime issues faced by the BAME community.

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Priority 7 – Improve Safety on our Roads

Working with Safer Essex Roads Partnership we will:

Build of the success of reducing those killed or seriously injured on our roads by working with our partners on the Safer Essex Road Partnership to set an ambitious long-term target for significant further reductions.

- There were 167 Killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties in the last quarter, down from 215 KSI casualties in the same period in 2019/20. 11 of these were fatalities, down from 12 in the same period in 2019/20. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, traffic volumes and opportunities for behaviours such as drink driving have reduced. This reduction has counteracted by higher vehicle speeds enabled by reductions in congestion.
- A further eight new Roads Policing Officers have successfully completed the second Roads Policing Skills Course. This course provides new officers to Roads Policing Command with the skills and knowledge to perform this specialist role and in particular skills and legislation set around enforcing road traffic offences known as the Fatal 4 (speed, mobile phone, seat belt, drink / drug drive).
- Roads Policing Unit (RPU) Local Intelligence Officer (LIO) training course was delivered to both Kent and Essex officers. This ensures we provide a professional response to the scene of a serious/fatal collision and also provides the framework for the investigation into these offences. This maximises our opportunities to bring offenders to justice and also provide support to the casualties and their families.
- During Q3, two separate people were killed in a road traffic collision involving stolen cars. As a result, the Road Crime Team (RCT) now proactively gathers and develops intelligence in order to target stolen vehicles being used for criminal activities in Essex.