

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2020

Report to: The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

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1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the 2020/21 Force Growth Programme in line with the agreed investment.

2.0 Recommendations

That the progress is noted by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC).

3.0 Executive Summary

The 2020/21 Force Growth Programme is co-ordinating the additional investment by recruiting 151 more frontline officers, and 60.8 additional staff (16 operational police staff and 44.8 support staff roles). These officer and staff posts are being invested in line with the investment plans outlined to the PFCC.

The most significant areas of investment to be realised during the 2020/21 programme will be the increase in High Harm and Investigations with an increase of 54.5 officer posts, Learning and Development with an increase of 15.5 posts, Custody with an increase in 12 posts and Crime and Public Protection with an increase of 11 posts. The investment in these areas recognises the need to balance the previous investment in frontline uniformed staff, with investigative and specialist resources and sufficient training and support staff to deliver the overall growth programme for the Force.

The Programme continues engagement and consultation with Commands to ensure the allocated growth meets the demands previously identified and to clarify recruitment priorities and processes needed for delivery in a consistent manner through Corporate Recruitment. Recruitment processes continue across all remaining areas in order to meet the agreed growth plan.

Due to the development of the Coronavirus Pandemic, a decision was taken at the Force Growth Board on 30 March 2020 to review the previously agreed implementation plan for the 2020/21 growth, with consideration given to any requirement to reprioritise or defer the identified implementation dates for each area. As the organisation continues to manage the impact of the pandemic, this continues to be overseen and managed through the Force Growth Board and will be kept under monthly review.

4.0 Introduction/Background

The 2020/21 investment recommendations put forward by Essex Police were carefully calculated to ensure that the Force remains local, visible and accessible to communities, responding to the growth in high harm and emerging crimes as well as investing in long term infrastructure, technology and skills. **Figure 1** below shows the planned investment.

Figure 1: 2020/21 uplift: Agreed allocation of new posts**Table C**

| Investment in additional Police Officers and Staff | Officers | Staff |
|---|-----------------|--------------|
| | FTE | FTE |
| High Harm & Investigations | 54.5 | |
| Custody Command | 12.0 | |
| Specialist Policing - Traffic Collision Investigation | 3.0 | 2.0 |
| Specialist Policing - Firearms | 9.0 | 1.0 |
| Managing Sexual, Violent Offenders and on-line investigations | 11.0 | |
| Serious Crime - Major Crime Team | 7.0 | |
| Local Policing Areas - Briefing & Tasking | 6.0 | |
| Learning and Development - recruitment & training | 15.5 | |
| Financial Investigations and Cyber - Detective Inspector | 1.0 | |
| Serious Crime - Dedicated Source Unit - Inspector | 1.0 | |
| Dedicated Taser Training Team | 6.0 | |
| Data Quality Improvement | 2.0 | |
| Professional Standards - Police Integrity Reforms | 4.0 | 5.0 |
| Serious Crime - Intelligence Support | 3.0 | |
| Resource Management Unit (RMU) | | 5.0 |
| Dangerous Dogs Manager | | 1.0 |
| Gang & County Line Capabilities | | 2.0 |
| Total - Operational Policing | 135.0 | 16.0 |
| Total - Infrastructure Support | 11.0 | 44.8 |
| Total - Reinvestment from shift pattern change | 5.0 | - |
| Total | 151.0 | 60.8 |

The Strategic Change project team continues to co-ordinate individual plans for the deployment of these additional officers and staff against the timeline set by Chief Officers. The recruitment is being sequenced to ensure the effect of new officer recruitment is realised within Local Policing Teams before experienced officers are released to other specialist roles. Adjustments to the timeline are agreed through the Force Growth Board.

The current implementation timeline for officers and staff is shown at **Appendix A**.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

The Force Growth Programme continues to carefully track each officer and staff post against the implementation timeline. The Resource Deployment Meeting seeks to balance business as usual resourcing priorities against those of the Force Growth Programme; all of which are scrutinised through the Force Growth Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. Strategic Change continues to work with Estates to ensure the additional officers and staff can be accommodated.

The Strategic Change project team continues to co-ordinate the recruitment and implementation of 'Support Function' growth; the implementation of which is a key enabler to the overall programme.

The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted on 2020/21 Force Growth, initially with the student officer intakes being diverted to support core functions in the Force Control Room and Custody Command. These released to their LPA postings in September, effecting a return to business as usual in terms of recruitment as far as possible. Whilst the implementation of innovative ways of working, with regard to remote interviewing as part of recruitment has been embraced by the organisation, this has occasionally slowed the progression and completion of processes. Additionally, these changes have had little effect on the demands experienced in completing associated recruitment checks and vetting clearance, where relevant.

This has led to the timeline being amended to consider the priority of posts to be implemented due to the completion of required checks or the release to operational roles. Due to the need to manage the logistical move of multiple officers across Commands and identified interdependencies of moves, some posting to growth areas have also had to be deferred to maintain operational effectiveness across business areas. These amendments will be kept under review through the monthly Force Growth Board.

Amendments to the timeline agreed through the Force Growth Board include:

- Deferring implementation of some Custody Sergeant growth
- Deferring implementation of some Training and HR growth posts
- Deferring implementation of some Serious and Organised Crime growth posts
- Deferring implementation of some Business Services growth posts
- Deferring implementation of some Firearms Officer growth posts
- Deferring implementation of some Crime and Public Protection growth posts

Recruitment continues to be undertaken across all areas of business areas in receipt of growth in 2020/21. Recruitment has been successfully completed in the following areas:

- The remaining Community Safety and Engagement Officer growth
- Castlepoint and Rochford CID Team growth
- Professional Standards officer growth
- An element of Firearms Officers growth
- An element of Custody Sergeant growth
- Practice Nurse staff growth
- Crime Training DS, DC and DC Assessor officer growth
- Taser Training Team growth
- Resource Management Unit growth

6.0 Implications (Issues)

The Global crisis arising from the Coronavirus pandemic and the Essex policing response to it, has meant that a range of recruitment and posting processes have been affected during this period. Whilst in a Major Incident caused by the global pandemic, compliance with social distancing rules and regulations continues to have an impact in this area, however recruitment continues as the business adjusts and revised processes are embedded.

The postponement of the National Sergeants examination had an impact on the pool of potential qualified officers for promotion in the Q2 sergeant promotion process, meaning insufficient candidates were successful to fulfil all growth and existing vacancies. An additional process is being undertaken for those officers who are qualified and suitable to apply and will conclude in February 2021. As such, it is anticipated the Sergeants posts will be completed by the end of the financial year.

A priority will be growth for those posts allocated to Custody.

The impact of the Coronavirus and accompanying workplace safety regulations has also affected the ability to run the National Investigators Examination (NIE) and associated training courses for the Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme (ICIDP), the national detective training programme. This has impacted on the pool of candidates able to undertake the course, and the ability to run courses due to limited space and regulatory compliance. This has slowed the recruitment and progression of officers into the detective pathway, accreditation of individuals as detectives, and therefore the recruitment into identified detective posts; both business as usual as well as growth posts. This is against a national backdrop of challenges faced by Forces to recruit into detective arenas generally; this is expected to continue for some considerable time as Essex Police College manage the demand for all courses and training, and the prioritisation of these against overall recruit training.

This delay in progressing the accreditation of detectives, coupled with the substantial increase in detective posts arising from the growth programme, poses a challenge in the ability to fulfil all High Harm posts as identified above, within the current financial year. To mitigate this challenge, plans have been agreed to increase the number of cohorts for candidates to join Essex through the Investigate First programme during the next financial year.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

The deployment decisions directly support the Police and Crime Plan.

6.2 Demand

The Force Management Statement (FMS2020) details the PFCC's support to the Force by securing an increase in Council Tax Policing Precept for 2020/21 which has been utilised for the growth of officers and staff.

There is a high and increasing demand for police services due to both the volume of crime and incidents, and their severity. This trend, whilst slowing is continuing to increase over the next four years. In 2018/19 crime increased by 12.9 percent (compared to an average 7.2 percent increase nationally). This coupled with the changing crime mix, particularly the disproportionate increase in high harm and more complex crime types, increases the demand the Force faces, which volume alone masks.

The investment areas identified align to current analysis of demand both within frontline policing and specialist teams such as the Crime and Public Protection Teams.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

The capacity of the estate to accommodate all the planned growth has been identified as a challenge at the Force Growth Board. This risk will be mitigated through prioritisation of estate demand through the Estates Change Board and there will be further mitigation through the implementation of agile working. Specific risks around estates capacity will be raised through the Estates Change Board in the first instance.

The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the delivery of policing services, and business as usual continues as a potential risk, and a consideration as Governmental guidance and advice changes in light of the introduction of Tier 5 restrictions nationally. Having taken the decision to defer probationer deployments to support core functions and defer posting to growth posts to maximise the capacity of frontline core teams, the current circumstances place a pressure upon completing Force growth recruitment for 2020/21, due to the delays caused and these are likely to persist throughout the remainder of the financial year. This is being carefully managed by the Force Growth Board and is kept under constant review to ensure that when operationally appropriate and achievable without negatively impacting on frontline services to the public, these posts will be filled in a managed and phased approach.

Challenges still remain in recruiting to detective roles and certain complex/specialist posts, as is the challenge of bringing staff into the organisation according to recruitment timescales. These risks are mitigated by the implementation of new methods of working and conducting recruitment processes remotely and virtually, to ensure that where possible, usual business and recruitment can be continued as far as practicable.

Additionally, agreement has been obtained to increase the number of "Investigate First" cohorts to be implemented throughout 2021 and into 2022, which will run in parallel to the existing national ICIDP programme and intakes. This will strengthen the organisations ability to fulfil the Forces target for detective posts, including those created and completed as part of the growth programme in future years.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

Each strand of recruitment is co-ordinated and supported through HR to ensure fair and impartial selection processes are adopted.

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

There are no Health and Safety Implications.

7.0 Consultation/Engagement

Internal consultation with staff associations continues through JNCC, the Force Growth Board and regularly between the project team and each relevant body as appropriate.

8.0 Actions for Improvement

Through the 2019/20 Growth Programme, the volume of different posts to advertise and recruit to in the latter stages of the implementation was challenging. When considering the timing of implementing different phases for growth in 2020/21, the Force has ensured that the demands put on teams involved in recruiting, and the visibility of the different opportunities for officers and staff has been phased throughout the year. Corporate Recruitment are developing new streamlined processes to standardise the advertisement of roles as they are implemented to ensure a consistent and efficient approach is adopted, which will be taken forward into the 2021/22 Force Growth Programme

9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

The Programme Team continues working with all departments and Corporate HR to ensure the growth continues to be implemented, and especially as the impact of the pandemic develops and changes. Internal Communications are using various methods to reach as many individuals as possible, to ensure that all officers and staff are being made aware of the opportunities presented by the Force Growth Programme.

The Programme Team are supporting the continued development, confirmation and planning for proposed growth for the 2021/22 Force Growth Programme, in accordance with the current budget setting timetable.

