

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2021

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

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1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the PFCC Performance & Scrutiny meeting with a deep dive assessment on Homicide Prevention, and an update on activity since the Policing Minister visit in November 2020.

2.0 Recommendations

The Board to note the report and the current position.

3.0 Executive Summary

The Policing Minister visited Essex in November 2020 as part of a series of visits to forces who had high rates of homicide. In advance of this visit a Homicide Prevention Profile was produced in October 2020. This was a significant piece of analytical work which reviewed both Homicide and 'near miss' offences, with over 3000 offences analysed in total. Our analysis identified that the Homicide rate in Essex was in line with the size of the

population, and when compared nationally in this way, Essex appeared to be on the trend line. Overall, our Homicide rate remains stable.

Our analysis also took a deep dive look into 3 ½ years of actual homicides to apply professional judgement around the drivers for homicide. This identified Gangs & County Lines, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, Night Time Economy and OCGs as the key drivers.

Recently updated analysis of near miss offences identified a fall in GBH offences, but an increase in GBH offences linked to Domestic Abuse. There is also evidence of a decline in both community violence and knife enabled crime.

Ongoing preventative work is captured in all key driver areas, noting the Public Health approach around Gangs & County Lines, with a focus on effective scoring of harm and modelling of intervention work, as well as training with partners to identify young people at risk of exploitation from gangs.

DA still has a high level of scrutiny and oversight, however the new DA problem solving teams are a significant asset in targeting high risk DA perpetrators with the aim of providing effective interventions around serious violence and homicide prevention. DVPNs continue to be an effective tool in Essex.

Mental health remains a challenge, with limited influence of police on wider partnership leads, but progress has been made with several partnership events and internal reviews of process, providing areas for improvement.

OCG risk management continues through local SOC boards and the re-launched Strategic SOC board with partners. The introduction of SOC system tasking and MoRILE scoring improves the overall oversight of risk.

Night Time Economy harm has been most affected by COVID lockdown, but data continues to show the most likely correlation between serious violence and populated areas with NTE locations.

The Governance and oversight of Homicide Prevention has increased through an ACC chaired board and regular reporting to COG, as well as through the Force tasking process.

A number of predictive tools are currently used within Essex to identify those most at risk of causing serious violence, including Gangs & County Lines scoring, DA perpetrators and knife crime.

Following the initial Policing Minister visit, a Homicide Summit was held with six forces in March 2021, focusing on Data, People and Places. A number of key issues and common themes were identified, which the Chief Constable intends to bring to a dedicated Essex Homicide Summit in May 2021.

Future work will ensure our homicide data can be easily compared to the Home Office data set and a pathfinder piece of analysis is underway picking up the key theme of young people and drugs.

Additional work around development of the SVU prevention team, a Mental Health case study review, and plans around lockdown easing, are further evidence of the commitment to reduce serious violence and prevent future homicides.

4.0 Introduction/Background

In November 2020 the Policing Minister visited Essex as part of a series of visits to forces that were perceived to have proportionately high homicide rates.

A detailed Homicide Prevention Profile was produced in October 2020 which provided an analytical assessment of both homicide and 'near miss' events (Near Miss events including: Attempted Murder, Cause/allow death or serious physical harm to child or vulnerable person, Conspiracy to Murder, Wounding with Intent to do GBH, Malicious Wounding: wounding or inflicting GBH, Arson endangering life, Endangering Life, Robbery Business where a weapon was used, Robbery Personal where a weapon was used).

This was a significant piece of analysis that involved over 3000 offences being reviewed, particularly looking to identify the drivers behind homicides and identify any trends that could assist with prevention. The outcome of the analysis was presented to the Policing Minister in November 2020 as part his visit to Essex Police and received positive feedback.

The analysis also showed a strong correlation between population size and homicide rates. It also identified five key primary drivers for homicide offences:

- Domestic Abuse
- Gangs & County Lines
- Organised Crime Groups
- Mental Health
- Night Time Economy

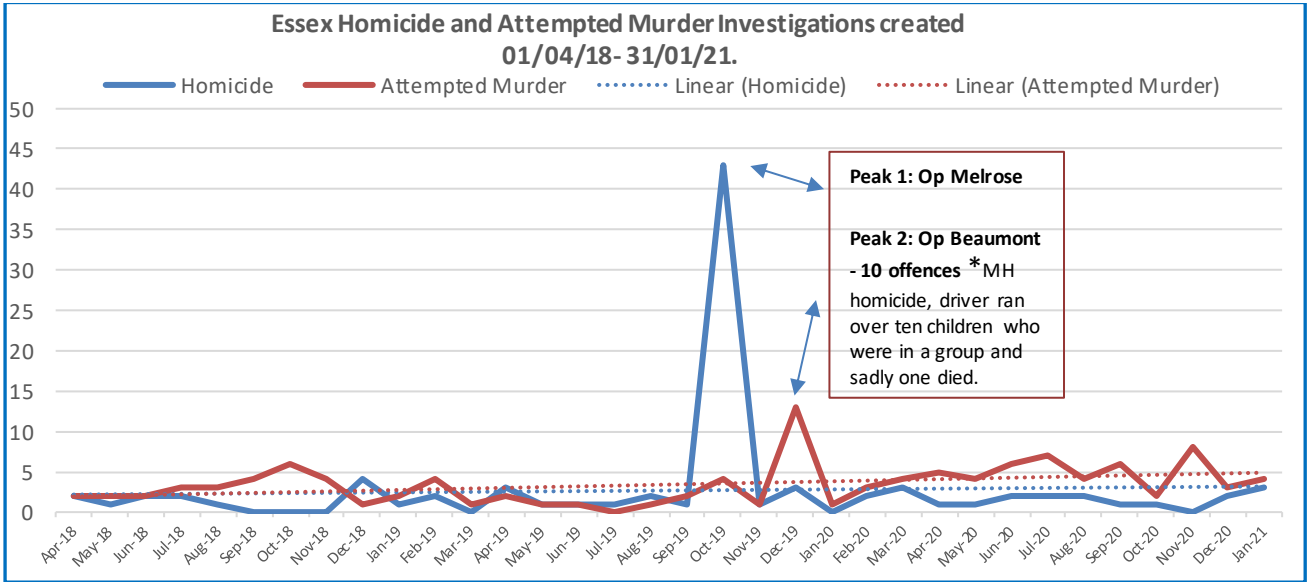
The Homicide Prevention Profile identified 61 recommendations across a range of different areas including intelligence, analysis, each of the five key driver areas and Major Crime. As a result of this analysis and closer scrutiny, Homicide is now included in the Essex Police control strategy, resulting in a Homicide 4P plan and new Governance structure, which seeks to identify and coordinate 4P activity across all the driver areas.

This paper will provide a summary of the initial analysis, as well as a more recent updated picture on near miss offences. It will then provide updates on preventative activity in all the key driver areas. More recently, the Policing Minister has held a Homicide Summit with six Chief Constables, including Essex. The paper will give an overview of the matters discussed and the next steps resulting from this and other preventative work.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

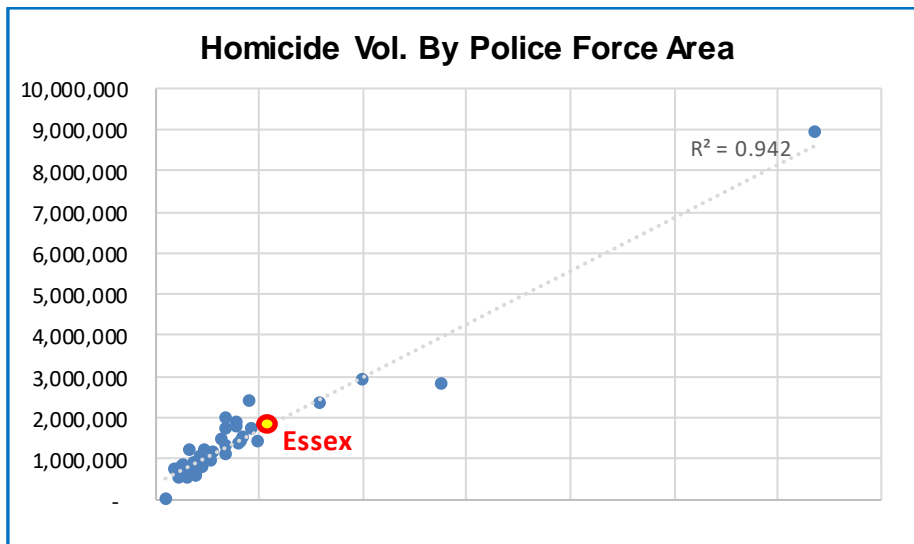
5.1 Overview of Performance

A review of the homicide and attempted murder rates in Essex (when Op Melrose is removed), over the past three years shows a stable rate.



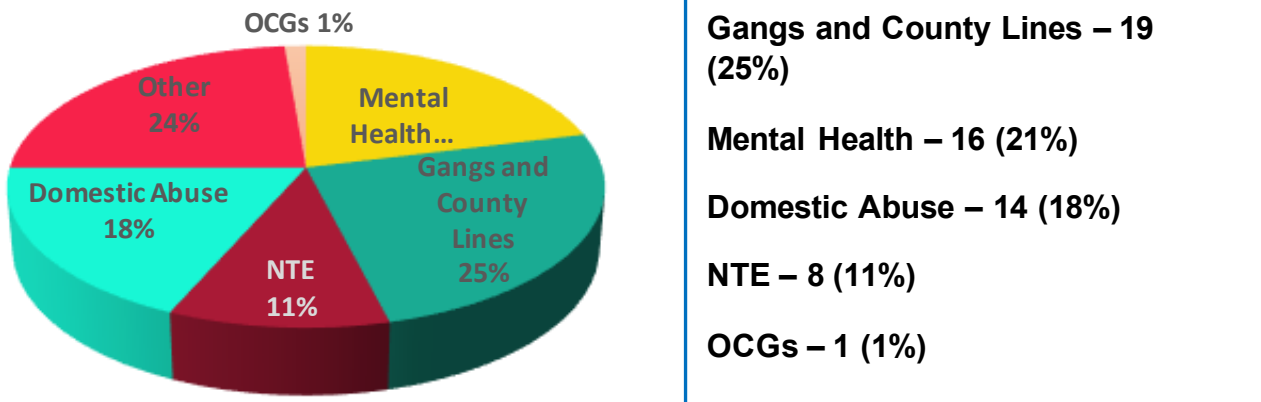
Our analysis has shown that homicide rates nationally directly correlate with the size of population. (There is a high correlation (97%) between population size and homicide).

Essex has the 8th highest resident population in the UK. Essex districts with the highest populations, experienced the highest volumes of homicide. With this analysis, Essex is shown as on the national trend line.



5.2 Key drivers of Homicide (2017 – 2020)

Alongside the detailed analysis of over 3000 homicide and near miss offences, a more detailed review was carried out of actual homicide offences between February 2017 and August 2020, where detailed and accurate records could be reviewed. This review of 76 offences in total, allowed an assessment to be made of the key drivers behind each homicide using case information and the professional judgment of Major Crime professionals.



The complexity of homicide offences means that there will be instances when a number of different drivers may contribute to the outcome, including additional factors such as alcohol and drugs. The offences classified as Mental Health were where it appeared to be the main contributing factor, although it is worth noting that Mental Health often appears as a secondary driver, particularly in Domestic Abuse homicides.

5.3 Recent Analysis of ‘Near Miss’ Data (01/11/2020 – 31/01/2021)

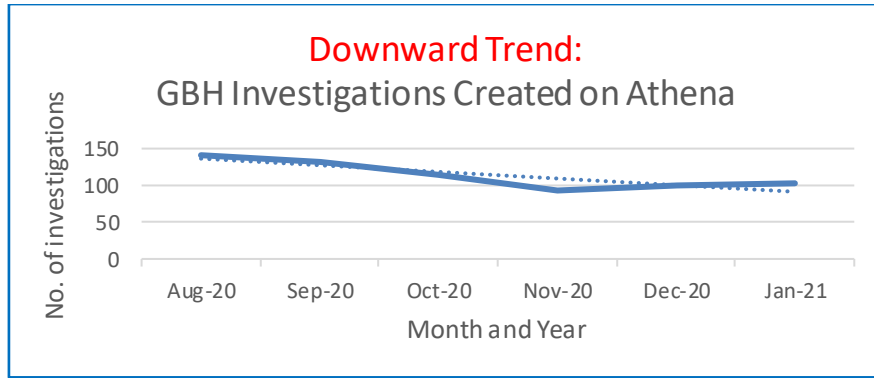
5.3.1 Analysis of Homicide/Attempt Murder

A more recent review of ‘near miss’ data has been reviewed and submitted to the Chief Officer Group. This focused on the period of 1st November 2020 to 31st January 2021.

There were 20 Offences recorded in the 3 month reporting period (5 Murders and 15 Attempt Murders), the majority of which were domestic abuse investigations (13 out of 20). Suffocation/asphyxiation was a factor in 9 of the 13 recorded DA attempted murders.

5.3.2 Analysis of GBH Offences

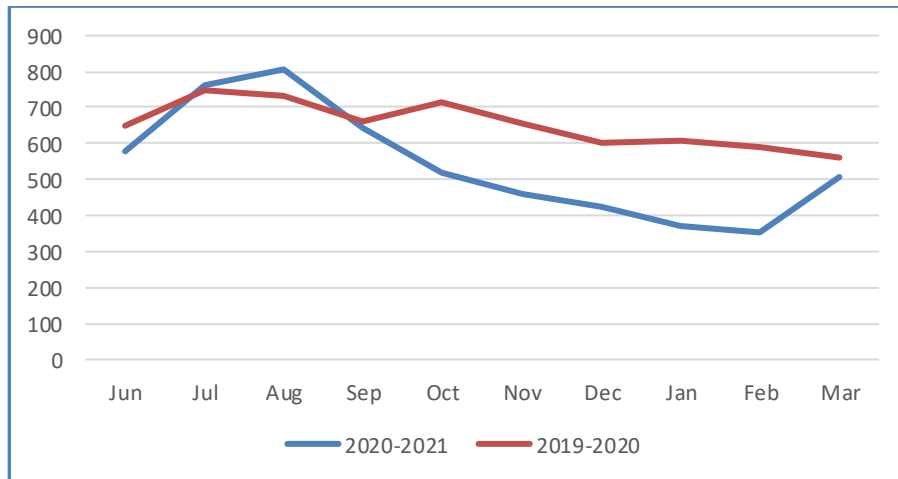
There is a downward trend in near miss serious assaults (Grievous Bodily Harm offences) since August 2020. We continue to maintain analytical focus through Force and Local Tasking, with biweekly refreshed hotspot data, to flag any increases and best direct resource to areas of high violence saturation.



Whilst the overall trend has been downward, there has been an increase in Domestic Abuse GBH offences with 99 offences in total in this period (noting the potential impact of the Christmas period: Nov-24, Dec-34, Jan-41). This will be subject to monitoring going forward.

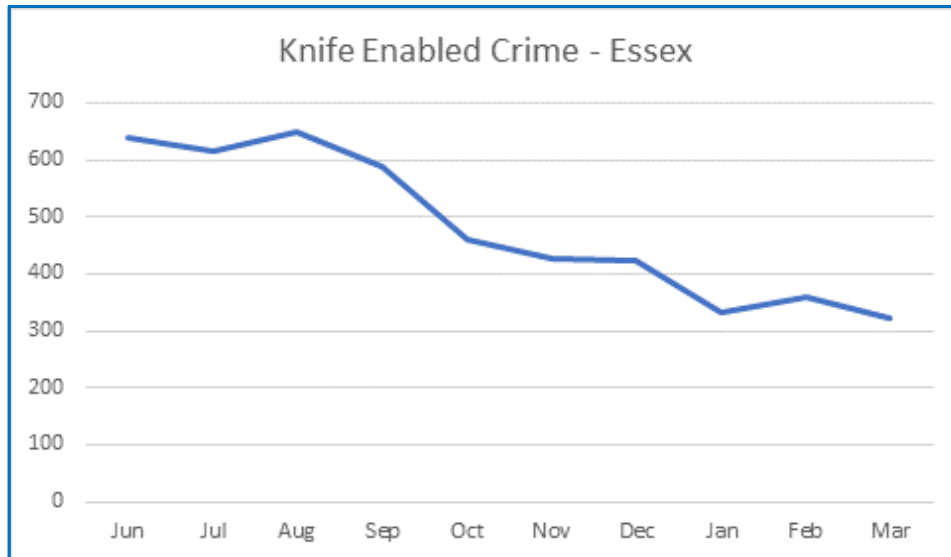
5.3.2 Analysis of Community Violence and Knife Enabled Crime

Community Violence



Analysis of Community Violence data (defined as Homicide, attempt murder, assault with injury & serious injury, personal robbery and excluding Domestic Abuse, family relationships, victims under 15 and over 64) has shown positive reductions in 2020/21 compared with 2019/2020. Whilst some of this may be as a result of COVID lockdowns, there has been a slight increase since February 2021 so will require careful monitoring in the coming period.

Knife Enabled Crime



There is a similarly positive picture around knife enabled crime in Essex, with levels reducing since June 2020. Unlike Community Violence this is continuing to decrease into March 2021. Of note, in June 2020 the Performance Analysis Unit improved knife crime flagging, providing increased assurance around data accuracy in this area.

5.4 Key Preventative activity around homicide drivers

5.4.1 Gangs and County Lines

The Serious Violence Unit continue to lead and innovate around their approach to Gangs and County Lines. Focusing on a Public Health approach, working in partnership with drug addiction charities, the SVU now send bulk text messages to drug users signposting them to support networks. Users are targeted upon seizing of County Line phones, looking to work with Substance Misuse Groups to divert controlled drug dependant users onto alternative prescriptions and rehabilitation programmes. This is the first such initiative nationally, with the aim of reducing the drug market in Essex and removing the demand for county line drug dealing.

The SVU continue to utilise the Hampshire matrix to identify those most at risk of harm from gangs and county lines. With support from intelligence analysts, it uses 42 different fields of data to identify possible exploitation through analysis and tasking processes, which identifies persons most at risk of harm. This then drives operational priorities and tasking of assets to reduce the threat, harm and risk caused by Gangs and County Lines.

The Risk Terrain Modelling (RTM) trial remains ongoing in Basildon, with the launch of a second Hotspot operation in Chelmsford, following the near miss analysis identifying Chelmsford as an outlier around serious violence.

Op Trespass, led by DCI Jim White, is delivering safeguarding training to Police and partner agencies including local authorities, education and health. During March 2021 approximately 450 Police Staff and partners across Southend, Essex and Thurrock were involved in training inputs around gangs and exploitation. This included how to spot the signs of exploitation and further raise awareness.

A continued focus on enforcement and dismantling County Lines has led to strong Q3 results for SVU:

Warrants executed	49
Arrests	69
Remands in custody	45
Lines dismantled	14
People safeguarded	28
Cash seized	£59 000
Drugs seized	£96 000

5.4.2 Mental Health

There continues to be multi-agency engagement and attendance at dedicated Mental Health partnership meetings which includes agreement for cross partnership data sharing, although more engagement would be welcomed from partners in Children's Mental Health services.

Essex Police and partners are focusing work on high intensity service users, applying a public health approach, in order to reduce the demand. Access to s136 Mental Health beds remains a focus, albeit NHS winter pressure funding resulted in access to two additional s136 beds. Alternative places of safety are also being explored by partners to reduce pressure on s136 beds.

A 'Leaky Pipe' event was held in December 2020 to identify any opportunities for service improvement. This event was supported by data from the Performance Analysis Unit and the subsequent report once finalised will identify a number of areas where Essex Police can improve.

A further 24 hours snapshot of Mental Health demand was carried out in November 2020. This has provided opportunities to improve the number of incidents that are identified as mental health related, which will lead to more people being referred to the Street Triage Team. This issue is being addressed by D/Supt Elliott Judge (MH lead) and Supt Claire Talbot (Contact Management) with plans to change policy and procedure and bring the issue to the Mental Health board.

5.4.3 Domestic Abuse

There remains strong oversight of Domestic Abuse through a number of mechanisms. Internally the DA Governance Board is held once a month, chaired by the C/Supt Strategic lead. It incorporates heads of all investigative departments as well leads for Crime and Public Protection and the head of Domestic Abuse partnerships. Chief Officer scrutiny is in place in the form of a Domestic Abuse Oversight Board.

Regional meetings are now held with the DA leads of our neighbouring constabularies, sharing good practices within the Eastern Region. Fortnightly meetings are also held nationally, chaired by Angela Whittaker on behalf of Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolphe (national lead for DA).

The new Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams have now been implemented since 1st March 2021, representing a substantial officer uplift in this area. The Problem Solving teams will look to tackle recidivist DA offenders and offer an enhanced support network to high risk victims.

Essex Police have continued to make good progression on DVPN's and we are seeing in excess of a 90% conversion rate to DVPO's.

5.4.5 Organised Crime Groups

Only a limited number of OCGs are directly linked to violence but there is an acknowledgement that their broader criminal activity can result in serious violence being perpetrated at lower levels (such as Gangs and County Lines). The introduction of SOC system tasking and MoRILE scoring has resulted in the risk scoring of all OCGs and the organisational position of how well those OCGs are being managed. This allows an assessment of the level of engagement and allows for increased focus and prioritisation.

Information around OCGs is shared with LPAs through the local SOC boards. There is a dedicated Prevent & Protect officer in SCD around Organised Crime as part of the wider Prevent & Protect team, who works with partners to share information and help identify prevention opportunities.

The first of the new Strategic SOC partnership boards was held in Essex in March 2021, chaired by the SCD T/ACC Tom Richards. This board brings together partners from key agencies including Immigration Enforcement, and the Gang Masters & Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), to focus on where they can assist with OCGs. This may include where pursue activity has ceased or long term PREVENT activity is required.

Where OCGS are believed to be linked to County Lines, SCD Serious & Organised Crime continue to link in with the Serious Violence Unit, connecting through tasking processes.

5.4.6 NTE

Homicide incidents linked to the Night Time Economy tend to be spontaneous violent incidents, due to the large numbers of people in small spaces and the effect of alcohol.

Alcohol harm prevention, relies on an effective partnership licensing approach, including intelligence, test purchasing, licensing checks and reviews.

Analysis shows a downward trend of NTE homicide and near miss offences, which remains consistent even when 2020-21 lockdown data is removed. Offences times peak at the weekend and overnight as expected with limited repeat victimisation

COVID has had a significant impact on NTE as a driver of serious violence as the NTE effectively shut down, however hot spot data confirms that during the brief periods of lockdown easing, NTE harm focused predominately on areas of dense population and NTE activity, most notably Southend and Chelmsford.

5.5 Governance & Oversight




There is a dedicated Chief Officer lead for Homicide Prevention, ACC Andy Prophet, who chairs a bi-monthly meeting with the analytical team, Strategic Lead for Homicide (Head of Major Crime) and leads for each of the key driver areas. This meeting allows for progress against the 61 Homicide Prevention Profile recommendations to be assessed, and progress on preventative activity to be captured. This meeting also feeds quarterly updates to the Essex Chief Officer Group, providing updates to the Chief Officer team and giving reassurance of progress in this area.

Homicide was added to the Essex Police Control Strategy in November 2020 which was reviewed in February 2021 ensuring oversight through Force Tasking. In May 2021 the new EP control strategy will be ratified by DCC Mills. A 4P plan for Homicide captures the areas of activity against the driver areas.

6.0 Implications (Issues) – Policing Minister Homicide Summit

In March 2021, the Policing Minister met with the six Chief Constable’s of the forces identified as having high homicide rates (Metropolitan Police, GMP, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Merseyside, Essex).

Data, places and people were the key areas identified for discussion at the Summit:

	DATA	Improve the quality of Homicide Data
		This has already been addressed by improvements in data collection processes
	PLACES	Target the right Places
		There was a consensus on the value of effective hotspot policing and hotspot mapping in driving down serious violence and homicide. The Essex Case Study: Operation Ark was referred to during the Summit with Hotspot policing RCT in Southend between July and October 2020. Harm-weighted hotspots were created using public space and non-domestic violence with injury, robbery and drug trafficking offences, identifying small hotspots where harm was tightly coupled with place. Outcomes showed significant reductions in harm (-88.5%) and frequency of community violence (-73.5%).
	PEOPLE	Target the right People
		There were varied practices across forces in how individuals at high-risk of committing serious violence

		<p>were identified, including predictive analytics and effective interventions to deter future offending. The importance of continuing to target OCGs to drive down homicide was noted.</p>
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The meeting identified four key themes that were consistent across forces:

- 1) Young People and Drugs – Identifying those involved, investing in effective, professionalised intervention programmes, and tackling disorganised youth groupings.
- 2) Domestic Abuse – Acknowledging coercive control as a strong indicator of Homicide risk (Ref: College of Policing), the need to identify suitable interventions and focus on perpetrators, and the effective review of homicides and near misses.
- 3) OCGs/County Lines – The need to consider utilising the breadth of OCG tactics to tackle Gangs and County Lines.
- 4) Probation Supervision and IOM – The need to focus on effective supervision as a preventative measure, including those awaiting trial.

6.1 Essex Police Predictive Modelling Tools:
Identifying the right people to prevent serious violence / homicide

There was a strong emphasis in the recent Policing Minister Homicide Summit about the ability to identify those most at risk of committing serious violence and a discussion of the various modelling tools that are being used. Whilst it is impossible to predict all homicides, much work is already underway in Essex around predictive modelling to identify those most at risk of being involved in serious violence.

Strathclyde Model

The Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams use analysis from the Strathclyde Model, using recency, frequency and gravity to inform their victim and suspect cohorts, to then apply the appropriate focus to prevent further offending.

PAU Cohorts

Through performance analysis the PAU predict and generate cohorts of people at risk of serious harm. These adult cohorts are then jointly worked on with IOM and probation, with a diversion emphasis.

Hotspot Policing

Similarly, hotspot policing ensures officers are put in the right place at the right time to prevent and suppress violence. This coupled with Risk Terrain Modelling allows us to make environmental changes to locations to design out serious violence, working with partners.

Hampshire Matrix

The Criminal Gangs analysts use the Hampshire Matrix, to risk assess and score Gangs and County Lines. This system is used across the Eastern Region, allowing us to understand our regional footing in terms of Threat, Harm and Risk. It also identifies high risk Gang nominals and potential victims of exploitation, which are all flagged and then tasked through our Serious Violence Teams.

CSAS Analysis

The SVU Investigators now have access to CSAS analytical software which allows investigators to upload large volumes of digital data around a County Line. CSAS will assist in identifying the location of the phone, and common patterns around overnight locations, topping up or common travel, assisting in understanding the hierarchy of the County Line through the communication data.

7.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

7.1 Outcome of the Policing Minister Homicide Summit

Following the recent Policing Minister Homicide Summit, a number of areas of focus were identified. These areas were discussed as part of ACC Prophet's April Homicide Prevention board which resulted in the following work being commissioned:

Homicide Data

The Head of the Performance Analysis Unit, Mark Johnson has been tasked with providing a comparable homicide data set for Essex to be reviewed against the Home Office data utilised in the Home Office Homicide Summit. The intention is to develop a suitable single performance product that can feed a number of corporate boards.

Historically there have been gaps in the data provided to the Home Office through the method of manual reporting via Home Office CrimeSec 7 forms. Oversight of the process of Crimesec 7 forms has been tightened within Essex Police to ensure more timely submission of information and updates during the lifespan of an investigation. Further improvements are due in the coming months with the introduction of online submission through electronic Crimesec 7 forms.

Pathfinder Intelligence Analysis

ACC Prophet's Homicide Prevention board took the first key theme identified in the Policing Minister Summit (Young People and Drugs) and discussed the potential to develop some more detailed analysis to inform prevention work. There is a risk that has been identified by the NPCC drugs lead, that young males could be subject to a number of separate drugs

investigations by different teams and departments, in varying geographical locations, all being dealt with independently. This is particularly a risk in relation to County Lines where young males may be travelling into different areas of the county in order to sell drugs.

As a pilot project, the criminal analyst team will look at young males who have been 'Released Under Investigation' for drugs offences to identify any patterns of multiple investigations, or potential subjects at increased risk that could be targeted for future intervention programmes.

This work was commissioned at the April board and will report back to the subsequent meeting in June 2021.

If this pathfinder approach proves successful, then the next area to be considered may be a deeper dive around coercive control as a DA homicide risk factor.

Essex Homicide Summit

The Essex Chief Constable has an ambition to hold a local Essex Homicide Summit in line with the Home Office event. This event, to take place in May 2021, will consider the themes from the Policing Minister Summit and review progress in Essex. This will identify what further work needs to be done to ensure we are maximising the opportunities to intervene and prevent homicide wherever possible.

7.2 Additional Preventative Work

Gangs & County Lines

The Serious Violence Unit are developing a new Prevention Team with recruitment underway. The intention is to build a multi-agency prevention team to focus on the risk of exploitation of children. The team will include a charity based victim navigator position designated to supporting children and a gangs prevention officer who will aim to provide a problem solving approach around child exploitation and gangs.

The SVU are also engaging with British Transport Police who have had considerable success with securing child trafficking charges against gang members. The BTP enforcement team will be providing training to the Raptor teams, along with dedicated training to a CPS lawyer around the specifics of trafficking legislation.

Mental Health

The Strategic lead for Mental Health (D/Supt Elliott Judge) is looking to hold a partnership review of homicide case studies where mental health was the primary driver. The emphasis will be on shared learning and identifying whether there were any intervention opportunities, common themes or triggers that could be developed and applied as a preventative tool in future cases. The Mental Health lead is currently working with the Head of Major Crime to identify suitable case studies.

Preparation for Lockdown Easing

Lockdown easing is likely to have an impact on serious violence, particularly around the Night Time Economy. Essex Police is already planning for lockdown easing with a dedicated command structure and strategy in place, to ensure we meet our core functions whilst suppressing any potential rise in serious violence, taking on board learning and data from the first lockdown.

The plan has the following areas:

- Focus now on wanted violent offenders, looking to early arrest and prosecution.
- Focus on expediting bail and RUI cases for violent offenders to bring about charges.
- An operation to use the DDTRO (Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Orders) to switch off 20+ county lines.
- Investment from the VVU partnership to target vulnerability in the community, reducing likely victims.
- Interactive hotspot mapping with data uploaded for each key date in Lockdown easing, to allow for focussed patrolling aiming to suppress violence.

8.0 Risks/Mitigation

None identified

9.0 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

There are no identified impacts on equality, diversity or human rights.

10.0 Health and Safety Implications

None