

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2020/21

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

Title of Report:	Specials Recruitment – Quarterly Report
Agenda Number:	5.0
Classification	Official
Chief Officer	ACC Rachel Nolan
Date Paper was Written	27th July 2021
Version Number	1
Report from:	Essex Police
Date of Meeting:	30th September 2021
Author on behalf of Chief Officer:	Jenny Brouard Citizens in Policing Commander
Date of Approval:	8th September 2021

1.0 **Purpose of Report**

Quarterly update on recruitment under the Special Constabulary Development Programme.

2.0 **Recommendations**

No recommendations.

3.0 **Executive Summary**

The previous paper dated 23rd April 2021 provided a narrative on the following areas:

- Recruitment
- Media opportunities
- Employer Supported Policing
- Community Special Constables
- Performance
- Covid 19 response

This paper reports key deliveries against the above from 1st May 2021 to 31st July 2021 and future areas of focus. Highlights include:

Reward & Recognition:

- The Special Constabulary were successful winners of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS) and will be attending a function on the 24th September 2021 at Chelmsford Cathedral to celebrate and meet the other winners;
- The Lord Lieutenant Essex will be visiting Essex Police 4th November 2021 to present the Special Constabulary with their QAVS Award in front of members of the Special Constabulary, Chief Officers and the PFCC. Invitations are currently being organised and will be sent out soon..

Establishment, engagement & duties (as of 31/07/21):

- 532 officers;
- 45 BAME officers (8.3% of the establishment);
- Delivered 49,471 hours of which 37,337 were operational hours. This is equivalent to the working time provided by 117 full time officers at a cost of £1.5m during this quarter (approximately £6.1m/year);
- 13 Community Special Constables covering 8 parishes with a further 22 CSC's in the pipeline and 10 currently attending Foundation Training;
- 39 businesses (including Essex Police) and 93 Officers who now benefit from the ESP scheme. This is an increase of 7 Officers from the previous quarter.

Recruitment, training & retention:

- Essex Police continue to adopt the SC to PC pilot being led by College of Policing. The College of Policing has confirmed that Essex Police has successfully met the National Minimum Requirements and our submission has been handed to the panel members. This is still scheduled to go-live summer 2021;
- On the 23rd June we held our very first Keeping Warm Event which was held virtually in which 15 candidates waiting to join our courses was held. This event is to support those candidates that are waiting for their vetting and medical checks to be finalised and to ensure they receive continued support whilst on their Special Constabulary journey they are kept updated with Special Constabulary plans and activities. The feedback for this event was extremely positive and so we are planning to hold future events over the coming months;
- 149 applications completed this last quarter which represents a decrease from the previous quarter of 29 applications (19.5%);
- 26 applications were from BAME applicants;
- Five intakes in the last quarter started with 32 new officers.
- Scheduled for five more Intakes by 31 October 2021, with a potential for 59 more officers to start;
- Covid-secure attestation ceremonies continue with 29 Specials Constables attested during this quarter.

Non-operational & service exit:

- 31 leavers represent an increase of 15 (93.7%) from the previous quarter; 5 for Essex Regs, 3 for other Force Regs, 6 during training, 1 terminated at end of training, 1 terminated for misconduct and 15 others a mixture of personal reasons;
- 74 officers (14%) are non-operational, leave of absence or suspended.

4.0 Introduction

Essex Police remains the second largest Special Constabulary in England and Wales, behind only the Metropolitan Police.

Appendix A shows National Growth of all Forces which shows Essex Police is one of nine forces recording a growth in recruitment.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

5.1 Recruitment

Essex Police continue to be the only force in the country that have signed to become an early adopter of the SC to PC pilot being led by College of Policing. The pilot is a formal process to enable Special Constables (SC) who have demonstrated competence in role at Independent Patrol Status (or equivalent) to transition more easily into Police Constable (PC) roles.

The process intends to enhance the current recruitment of candidates who are experienced SCs to the regular PC role to join as new recruits under the IPLDP (and forthcoming PEQF) programmes. Adopting this national programme will build on the current internal training and evidence collation of SC competency. The intended benefit will be a streamlined recruitment process allowing SC candidates with suitable evidence of competency to bypass the national selection process. They will however be required to complete the remaining aspects of the recruitment process to ensure suitability to the role of PC.

Essex Police received 149 completed applications between 1st May 2021 and 31st July 2021. This is a decrease from the previous quarter of 29 applications (19.5%).

26 applications were from a BAME background (17.45%), compared to 28 applications from the same period the previous year (10.64%), the number is lower but the percentage from a BAME background increased. 42 applicants identified as female (28.19%) compared to 94 from the same period last year (35.74%); this a decrease in the number and percentage.

Plans are in place for 4th August 2021 to run a virtual Recruitment Life as a Special Event using Microsoft Teams where members of the public can log on and engage with the Specials Recruitment Team and Citizens in Policing Team to understand the vast roles and opportunities that they can achieve as a Special Constable or within the Citizens in Policing team. Further events will be planned for the coming months.

5.2 Media Attraction

In this quarter we continue to maximise social media coverage around several events and can evidence where it has positively impacted on recruitment figures directly as highlighted below:

- The Media Team continue to promote good news stories via the “We Value Difference” campaign;
- Facebook and Twitter continue to be the highest media source for Special applications;
- A campaign around ESP continues to be promoted with a soon to be produced promotion film introduced by ACC Rachel Nolan. The Business Chamber of Commerce continue to promote and support our scheme;
- Essex Police are featured in page 3 within the national Special Impact magazine, which is shared online, see Appendix C.

5.3 Recruitment Data – 1st Apr 2016 to present

The table below compares the recruitment and exits of the current year with the previous three years. The number of Specials who resign to become a regular officer has increased from a position of 26.6% in March 2017 to 29.2% during 2020/21 which is a success as part of the officer uplift programme.

Year	Joiner	Exits	(No. of leavers who have joined regulars)	% of leavers who have become a regular
2016/17	87	105	28	(26.6%)
2017/18	180	116	38	(32.7%)
2018/19	215	127	49	(38.5%)
2019/20	163	163	77	(47.2%)
2020/21	167	137	40	(29.2%)
2021/22	46	43	13	(30.2%)
Grand Total	868	691	245	(34.3%)

The above table identifies the SC Command as a significant pipeline to the recruitment of PCs with 245 recruits having started their policing journey as a Special.

5.4 Employer Supported Policing & Community Special Constables

Employer Supported Policing (ESP):

- 39 businesses (including Essex Police), in the last quarter, support 93 officers in the ESP scheme which is an increase of 7 officers from the last quarter. Of these 93 Officers, 45 officers are employed by Essex Police in other roles;
- 150 ESP duties have resulted in 1263 hours of policing in this period which is an increase of 16% for duties and 20% for hours worked on the previous quarter. This suggests the dip last quarter was as expected, a combination of the seasonal dip combined with the uncertainty of the additional COVID restrictions imposed in October 2020;

- 13 businesses, who are not registered with ESP, have provided staff a total of 192 hours over 25 duties for policing duties during this quarter to support Op Talla;
- Advanced negotiations are underway with the following businesses: Chelmsford City Council, Southend Borough Council, Tendring District Council, Harlow District Council, Morrisons, Asda, South Essex Homes, Marks and Spencer, McDonalds, Stockvale Group, Gepp Solicitors, East of England Ambulance Service and National Crime Agency;
- Essex Chamber of Commerce continue to plan for future ESP virtual events following on from the previous event in January;
- The Metropolitan Police ESP Co-ordinator is planning to visit Essex Police in September 2021 to look at our best practices and share ideas.

Community Special Constables (CSC):

- 13 active CSC officers covering 8 councils. This is 1 less officer from the last quarter as they have joined the regulars;
- CSC Specials have worked 78 duties resulting in 569 hours;
- There are currently still 22 officers in various stages of the pipeline including 10 in post foundation stage. It is anticipated that 2 of these officers will take up post during the next quarter which will bring an additional 2 councils on board.

5.5 Cyber Specials Cyber Volunteers (CSCV)

The CSCV initiative continues to progress in line with the last quarter report. We are now looking at planning the next steps as we come out of lockdown. There was a meeting with the Head of Digital Forensics on 7th May 2021 where plans were discussed and put in place. There continues to be regular video calls to support the volunteers. Currently the volunteers can be summarised as:

- 6 HQ based digital forensics volunteers have not been active due to the pandemic, but as restrictions lift plans are in place to support them slowly returning;
- 3 cyber volunteers report to Jenny Housego's teams and are working at a high level around cyber incidents. 2 more cyber volunteers are vetted and awaiting placement;
- 9 volunteers who are part of the Ethics committee continue to have zoom meetings with Jenny Housego;
- 2 volunteers have now been placed in the Counter Corruption Unit which is a brand-new volunteer role;

5.6 Performance

- 532 officers;
- 45 BAME officers (8.3% of the establishment).
- Delivered 49,471 hours of which 37,337 were operational hours. This is equivalent to the working time provided by 117 full time officers at a cost of £1.5m during this quarter (approximately £6.1m/year);

- 13 Community Special Constables covering 8 parishes with a further 22 CSC's in the pipeline;
- 39 businesses (including Essex Police) and 93 officers who now benefit from the ESP scheme.

Over the period of 1st May 2021 to 31st July 2021, Specials have contributed a total of 49,471 hours compared to 56,361 hours in the previous quarter. This is a 15% decrease on the same period in 2020, where 58,481 hours were contributed – this was during lockdown when many officers were furloughed and had more time to volunteer. The last 3 months have seen 37,337 operational hours - a decrease of 9.2% in operational hours worked the previous quarter (41,097 operational hours last quarter and 45,991 worked the same period in 2020). The hours worked by the Special Constabulary across this 3 month period is equivalent to having an additional 117 full time officers, who would attract an annual salary cost of £1.5m during this quarter (approximately £6.1m/year);

During this period (1st May to 31st July 2021), we had an average of 509 officers. These officers contributed 49,471 hours of which 37,337 were operational. They had contributed 50,939 hours (39,569 operational hours) the previous quarter. During this quarter in 2019 Specials had averaged 33.3 hours each month.

Over the last 3 months, 67.6% of Special Constables volunteered at least 16hrs each month (as required). However, Specials have averaged 31.2 hours each per month compared to 35.5 hours per month last quarter. This is a decrease of 18.5% on the equivalent period in 2020 where Specials gave 38.3 hours per officer with many furloughed during lockdown and able to provide more volunteering hours.

31 Specials have left the Special Constabulary which is an increase of 15 (93.7%) from the previous quarter and a decrease of 3 (9.7%) from the same period last year. 8 of these did so to join the Regulars (5 for Essex), 6 during training, 1 terminated at end of training, 1 terminated for Misconduct and 15 others a mixture of personal reasons;

Officers continue to focus on supporting the front-line response for Covid under the banner of Op Talla which has consisted of community engagement, licensing checks, adherence to legislation whilst utilising the 4E model (engage, explain, encourage, enforce) and updated methods.

The team continue to support proactive policing for knife crime, gangs and violence under Op Sceptre with operations in each district and with BTP. This approach was successful in the monthly OPC led Op Gambler operations which focuses on travelling criminality at the Essex/London border in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Service and surrounding Forces. During the summer months the Specials will be supporting the regulars with Op Union which is tackling anti-social behaviour.

5.7 Covid Response (Op Talla)

The Special Constabulary have made progress in the following areas:

- All online training continues to be provided via Microsoft Teams;
- There has been a slight decrease in officers who are non-operational due to self-isolating and/or social distancing from 5 officers (0.9%) in April 2021 to 4 officers (0.8%) in July 2021 – all are self-isolating and zero officers are social distancing currently;
- Leadership and Command Team meetings continue to take place via Teams and/or Covid-secure face-to-face meetings;
- Recruitment events continue to place via Microsoft Teams;
- The online written test for candidates via Teams will be adopted permanently;
- The promotion board process was adapted to ensure it was Covid-secure and this will be adopted permanently as best practice;
- We currently have 16 intakes in place for 2021/2022 to accommodate 226 new applicants;
- Covid-secure training reviews continue to be monitored as lockdown restrictions start to ease. We continue to facilitate class sizes for foundation training which has increased from 10 officers to 20 for weekend courses and 10 officers to 16 for intensive intakes;

5.8 Operational Deliverables

- Special Takeover Days – continue to support our Regular colleagues to focus on case progression, victim contacts, online training and ANPR duties. This has proved to be most successful and well received by Regular Command Teams;
- Operation Sunshade, supporting the Force as we come out of lockdown, and Operation Union during the Summer months supporting the Regulars tackling anti-social behaviour;
- Following on from the successful Rural Engagement Team recruitment campaign that took place on 24th January 2021, 2 officers started on 1st June 2021 with great success and have made a positive impact on the team. 2 more officers will be joining the team in Autumn 2021.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

The greatest risk to the continued growth of the Special Constabulary remains the recruitment of Regular officers and the impact of reduced class intakes to implement safe social distancing during Covid 19.

The aspiration to achieve 600 Specials by March 2022 will be challenging due to three additional factors in addition to the regular turnover:

- Exit of Specials who joined during Covid 'lockdown' such as university students and those furloughed;
- Reduced training capacity to ensure Covid-secure classes;
- Increased conversion rate of Specials to Regulars which is assisting in the officer uplift priority.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

The Police and Crime Plan 2016-20 states that the PFCC 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 has grown by 172 Officers (33%) since September 2016. Highlighting the context of a significant reduction in numbers of Specials nationally and our active recruitment of Regular officers, this stands as a considerable achievement. A number of Special Constables are aligned to each of the Community Policing Teams. The Community Special Constables scheme continues to progress steadily in application numbers and in Specials who are in post.

6.2 Demand

The impact on demand is best measured through the contribution of performance and operational hours. The improvements in operational performance are described in section 5.6.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

The following red risks are identified on the Force Risk Register, and the action being taken to mitigate these risks is detailed in Section 5.0 above:

URN	Score	Risk	Rationale
1196	40 - Red	Unable to meet the Special Constabulary establishment target due to Force recruitment.	There continues to be a successful pathway for SCs to become a PC and this is expected to continue in 20/21 and beyond. Reduced intake numbers to adhere to Covid social distancing are impacting on the recruitment plan.
1659	40 - Red	Regular recruitment compromising Specials recruitment	As a result of local and national funding decisions, Essex Police plans to increase the establishment to 3,369 by March 2021. This means that the current regular recruitment campaign will continue.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

There are no specific equality or human rights implications in this paper.

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

There are no specific health and safety implications in this paper.

7.0 **Consultation/Engagement**

- Pru Kingham – Media
- Jason Poole – Learning & Development
- Hannah Scally – Specials Recruitment Delivery Manager
- Les Hawkins – Supported Policing Champion

8.0 **Actions for Improvement**

The action taken to sustain recruitment over the last quarter has been summarised in Section 5.0 above.

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

Awards & recognition:

- **Promotion Boards** took place in July 2021 where 6 Special Constables achieved promotion to the rank of Special Sergeant and will be posted shortly;
- **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service** is to be held on 24th September 2021 at Chelmsford Cathedral to celebrate all winners and the 4th November 2021 the Lord Lieutenant will be presenting the award at Essex Police HQ.
- **British Awards for Women in Policing** – two Specials were nominated in 2021;
- **Force Awards** nominations closed on 9th May 2021 with ceremony for winners planned for November 2021

Communication:

- Strategic review of Essex Specials Twitter account usage – looking to create more original and regular content;
- “We Value Difference” campaign in which promotion and recruitment of Special Constables will have a bespoke feature within the campaign;
- National Volunteer Week (1st-7th June 2021) was a fantastic success and the Specials were highlighted across Facebook, Twitter and the Essex Police Website showcasing the great work they achieve.

Recruitment training & retention:

- Continue weekly ‘pipeline’ meeting of Specials Development Team, HR, Business Support, Vetting, L&D. ToR is to review numbers at each stage against target, process & attrition from application to attestation and to identify any blockers or risks and take action to mitigate;
- Future virtual recruitment events scheduled for summer 2021 and will showcase the Special Constabulary and Citizens in Policing as part of the Essex Police recruitment campaign;
- Specials Training Team (L&D) response to Covid-secure training has enabled increased class sizes. Intensive intake SA started on 15th May 2021 with 7 students. In June 2021, S3 and SB started with 10 students on each course.

Weekend classes have been increased from a maximum of 10 officers to 20 and our intensive courses have been increased from 10 officers to 16;

- Additional intakes have been added to the training calendar which includes a tutor training course and leadership course;
- Increased our maximum numbers of students for 2021/2022 from 164 to 226;
- Specials Training Team are focusing on supporting the investigative specials through their post foundation training so that we are in a position in 2021 to start the next step of their detective pathway. Two PIP1 courses were run during March 2021 which has resulted in 13 officers in the investigations programme with 8 Special Constables now independent;
- The Cyber Special/Cyber Volunteer programme continues to make progress;
- RET continue to support our recruitment campaign to increase our Rural Special Constable figures to 10 Specials, 1 per district. We currently have 2 in post and 2 more officers to start in Autumn 2021.

Reporting & governance:

- Development of 4-year delivery plan – Essex Police Specials 2025;
- Review of current reporting format;
- Review of assets and business case to support upscaling of BWV, laptops and mobile devices. A second paper is currently in process to progress to the Chief Officer Board with the ambition to be at the September 2021 board.




9.1 National Overview

In line with the Special Constabulary Strategy 2019-2023, the College of Policing have devised and developed a new Special Constabulary Learning Programme, detailed at Appendix B. This programme aligns with the PEQF and provides a clear pathway from SC to PC for Forces who wish to adopt this. Essex Police Learning & Development Team are reviewing this programme to establish the best option under the direction of ACC Nolan at the Special Constabulary Review Programme.

10.0 Decisions Required by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

Not required.

11.0 Appendices

Appendix A	Appendix B	Appendix C
 Police Workforce Statistics - March 20	 SC Force detailed comms.docx	 Special Impact - Issue 42 - Spring 2021.pdf