

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

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

2.0 Recommendations

For the Board to note the content.

3.0 Executive Summary

The paper provides an overview of each department within the Operational Policing Command and its contribution towards the Force Plan and Police and Crime Plan. The Operational Policing Command provides a wide range of policing capabilities to the Force in support of local and Force wide objectives. This paper includes key performance headlines, future issues, risks and areas of development for the department.

4.0 Introduction/Background

Each year OPC present a report to the Police Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) at the Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee outlining its contribution to the Force Plan and Police and Crime Plan. The Command covers a wide range of operational policing areas, providing a significant degree of flexibility and pro-activity in support of the wider Force in delivering against the operational policing requirement.

Over the course of the last 12 months the Command has been instrumental in rising to the challenge of policing Covid-19 and the policing major events such as the recent G8 Summit and the European football championships.

Currently priority operational deployments include supporting the summer policing plan (Operation Sunshade), supporting the Southend policing plan (Operation Union) and planning the Essex support to the COP26 climate conference in the autumn, which is likely to require an additional 240 officers from Essex supporting the policing effort in Scotland every day for three weeks between the end of October and the middle of November.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

5.1 Dog Section – The team provides 24/7 support to front line policing, targeting of active and organised criminals together with providing specialist search dog support to the wider force and region. The section attends LPA team briefings to maintain strong relationships with LPAs and supports planned operations. Within the Dog Section there are both ‘Operational’ and ‘Training’ departments.

The operational side consists of 22 operational handlers and 5 special constables, who have attended 7807 incidents over the review period which is slightly down on the 7908 from last year, this is believed to be due to the reduction in the calls for service during the national lockdowns. The team have arrested 179 individuals but continue to support LPAs in locating and detaining subjects, they remain proactive in relation to stop searches (308) and intelligence submissions.

The training section comprises of a Sergeant and 3 NPCC approved trainers (PCs), responsible for all training, the 3-kennel staff, and the management of dangerous dogs. There are 2 full time staff and one part time who provide kennel care to police dogs when housed.

The team have now recruited a ‘Dangerous Dogs Manager’ to support the increasing risk and demand in this important area of work. Between July 2019 to June 2020 there were 770 dog incidents and 115 dogs were seized compared to July 2020 to June 2021 where there were 1151 dangerous dog incidents and 143 dogs seized. An additional 381 incidents and 28 dogs seized in last reporting period on previous year.

5.2 Operations Centre - The team are responsible for planning all large operations, sporting events, and large music events that require either Public Order or some form of specialist support. They attend Safety Advisory Groups (SAG) and debrief large scale incidents which enables the Force to ‘learn the lessons’ and provide logistical support for major incidents. Currently the team consists of 1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant and 11 Constables including Dedicated Football Officers and a member of police staff. Within the team there are two Eastern Regional Coordination Centre officers who are responsible for Force, Regional and National mobilisation.

These officers are part funded by the region and coordinate all level of mobilisation and are a key link to the National Police Coordination Centre.

5.3 Public Order Training - The team are responsible for the training and continued accreditation of our Public Order assets, to meet the regional and national Strategic Risk Assessments. The Public Order Training Team consists of 1 Inspector (Ops Planning Inspector), 1 Sergeant and 2 full time Constables. Additionally, there are also a contingency of 5 part time Public Order trainers.

The team are now able to deliver additional training programmes, such as Specialist Method of Entry (SMOE), Level Three Public Order training and AEP (Baton) Public Order. The Covid pandemic saw a halt to Public Order training during 2020, however since the reinstatement of training the team have successfully reaccredited all officers and are now in a comfortable position to train additional role profiles such as Forward Intelligence Teams and Protest Removal Teams on water.

5.4 Resilience Department – The team has responsibility to discharge the statutory obligations placed on Essex Police by The Civil Contingency Act 2004 in terms of emergency and business continuity plans. They are also the operational representative for Essex Police in The Essex Resilience Forum working with partners to produce multi-agency plans for key sites. There are currently 114 emergency plans and 91 business continuity plans which are accessible to all staff via the intranet. The team provide support across Essex Police in ensuring plans are owned locally, tested and in a standard format for compliance with the ISO standard for business continuity.

An interim review of the response to Covid-19 in terms of the business continuity response resulted in a refresh of the plans particularly focusing on the risk of staff absence. Those plans now reflect a scaled loss of staff section that allows plan owners greater flexibility and adjustment in their functions depending on the loss of staff numbers. Towards the end of 2020 the team also oversaw a Force-wide Athena exercise (originally cancelled at the outbreak of Covid-19) and in 2021 Force-wide cyber-attack exercise. Both have resulted in internal plan validation and amended plans based on the learning.

5.5 Resource Management Unit - Significant recent work includes arrangement of mutual aid for Op Trelawny, the G7 meeting in Cornwall, and COP26, the Climate conference in Glasgow. In addition, the department has continued to resource significant local operations such as the force response for the Euros football within Essex. The RMU continue to gatekeep resources for Essex successfully, whilst making provision for mandatory and non-mandatory training. Over 90% of training course spaces were filled. A large amount of additional resources was added to FCR staffing levels to cope with additional summer demand. The Dept is on course to process over 600,000 SAP transactions per year and deals with around circa 13,500 emails per month.

5.6 Force Support Unit & Firearms Training - The current Force Support Unit (FSU) establishment is 2 Inspectors, 11 Sergeants and 87 PC's, this is an increase of 5 posts following the PFCC growth last year.

The team are all trained to Armed Response Vehicle Officer (ARVO) level and provide the armed response across Essex for spontaneous and planned deployments. Within the team there are also several specialisms, such as Tactical Rifle Officer, MAST and Close Protection.

All training matters are overseen by the 7-Force Collaboration, with local primacy over operational delivery managed by a Chief Inspector responsible for armed policing.

The Firearms Training Team have an establishment strength of 2 Sgts, 19 PC Instructors, 1 PSE Instructor, 1 Armourer and 1 PSE Chronicle Administrator following a successful PFCC growth bid last year. The team are currently 3 instructors under establishment.

5.7 Taser Governance - At the beginning of 2021 the 'Taser' portfolio was split, with Taser Training becoming the responsibility of L & D, and the governance aspects remaining with OPC. The 7 Force Chief Firearms Instructor retains oversight of Taser training, and as well as supporting completion and review of the STRA, has recently produced a Standard Operating Procedure in consultation with forces.

There are monthly Taser Governance meetings between OPC and L&D, whereby STO numbers and the spread of Taser Devices is discussed. The last meeting highlighted there are now 636 Specialist Taser Officers (STO's) from a target of 737; with the completion date on track for December 21. Additionally, there is now a clear governance process in place following all uses of Taser (red-dot or 'firing'), whereby the Taser Training Team conduct a review of the deployment using the Body Worn Video and officers' statement. In the event issues are identified there is a conversation between PSD and the training team to consider the next steps, such as further training or potentially removal of the STO status. This is then fed through the Tactical 'Use of Force' meeting into the Force Board for Chief Officer oversight.

5.8 Stansted Airport - On 1st August 2021, a new operational policing model commenced at Stansted. The overall budget for 2021/22 is set at £5,509,605 funded via the airport operator, Manchester Airport Group. The operational policing plan is led by a Chief Inspector with two Inspectors overseeing the armed assets – 5 PS and 45 PC's and the tactical and intelligence teams along with police staff support - 2 PS, 10 PC's, FIO, intelligence support officer, admin support and a supervisor with 10 PSE operating the standalone communications room.

In the past 12 months, passenger numbers have significantly decreased, at the lowest numbers, less than 1000 passengers per day. Since the introduction of travel restrictions and the traffic light system, recent figures are approximately 15,000 per day. Deportation flights have increased and there are additional responsibilities in relation to VVIP movements.

Stansted is the national lead in planning and response to drone incursions and recently took part in an exercise to test the operational and emergency planning. Op Pegasus, the operational name for any drone incident has been developed at Stansted and there are approximately three deployments every week.

Op Aidant is conducted to identify those who may be victims of modern slavery and human trafficking, in recent months, although passenger numbers have been vastly reduced, these deployments have continued.

5.9 Operational Support Group - The OSG establishment is two inspectors, nine sergeants and 63 constables. Between July 2020 and June 2021, the OSG have made a total over 1855 arrests, with 754 relating to Operation Sceptre (knife and violent crime) deployments and 265 arrests relating to drink or drug driving offences. This compares to 1720 arrests in the same period the previous year.

The OSG have assisted the Mental Health Teams across Essex with over 200 Section 135 Mental Health Act warrants, which supports the LPA's, the health trusts and most importantly the vulnerable individuals who needs support at their time of crisis. The team have carried out 1,858 Stop and Searches, 666 of which had positive outcomes.

The OSG have provided the main Public Order response to many Unlicensed Music Events (UME) throughout the COVID pandemic and have been instrumental in continuing to deliver a highly visible policing presence in support of the LPAs.

The Operational Support Group are currently focussing their activity on the following work streams:

- Operation UNION – supporting the South LPA in tackling serious violence across the Southend and Leigh-on-Sea areas. The OSG will be committed to this area from 26th July till 5th September 2021.
- Operation GRIP – supporting those areas of our county that are suffering most chronically with violent crime. In these areas we see high levels of repeat violence offences over a sustained period and Op Grip works by using the data that shows us when and where these crimes are happening and then patrolling those hotspot areas at key times of the night and day so that by our presence we make violent crime absent. The OSG will continue to provide the main thrust of support for this operation over the next 12 months.

5.10 Drone Team - The team establishment consists of two constables and one Specialist Operations Co-ordinator member of staff at 1 x FTE. The primary function of the team is to support LPAs and other departments in operational delivery. This is through conducting thermal imagery flights to identify cannabis factories, to use in Public Order and firearms deployments to support command functions.

Following a successful financial bid, the Drone Team have recently obtained funding of £83.5k over the next three years and revenue costs of £19.5k over the same period to ensure the existing aging equipment is replaced and updated. Between July 2020 and June 2021, the Drone Team have deployed 683 times, which is a significant increase from the same period the year before (473).

The Drone Team are currently focussing their activity on the following work streams:

- Providing all planned flights to support intelligence development and firearms/public order deployments.
- Where practicable supporting requests for spontaneous deployment of drones to support operational policing thus reducing the use of NPAS.

5.11 Marine Unit - The team is at full establishment of one sergeant and five constables and provide seven days a week patrol coverage thanks to the additional support of 14 dedicated Marine Reservists, with an annual budget of £15,000 for equipment The team are also supported by two Special Constables.

Essex Police have recently entered into partnership with Maldon District Council who have gifted the team a Personal Water Carrier (PWC – jet ski) for use in tackling ASB around the coast and inlet water areas, which have previously been inaccessible to the team.

The Marine Unit are supporting efforts by the NPCC to improve marine policing nationally and are the national lead around the Safe Use of the Water which is one of the five strands of the National Policing Maritime Strategy.

The Marine Unit have fully embedded the community policing ethos, including a marine newsletter which is circulated across the marine community and a well-supported Twitter feed. The team are being encouraged to take a problem-solving oriented approach to their activity and work is currently underway in areas such as Colchester, Maldon and Southend around exploring opportunities for Public Spaces Protection Orders on the water and Essex are leading the way nationally around these conversations/tactics.

5.12 Specialist Operations - OPC coordinate the Chemical, Biological, Radiation 7 Nuclear (CBRN) and Search (POLSA) response for Essex Police. There are two establishment police constable posts who provide co-ordinator responsibility for training, CPD and equipment.

Essex have 11 Police Search Advisors (POLSA) and 123 Licenced Search Officers (LSO) against a STRA of 14 and 130. A training course has been planned to generate the necessary uplift. There have been 864 requests for advice or deployment between July 2020 and June 2021, in comparison to 715 requests for the same period the year before.

With regards to CBRN, Essex currently has 7 tactical Advisors and 100 'CBRN responders', with training courses in place to increase this number to 125 by November 2021. The CBRN team have deployed or provided advice at a total of 117 incidents between July 2020 and June 2021.

5.13 Roads Policing – Provides a reactive investigative response and proactive contribution to improving the safety of all road users, alongside a focus upon disrupting and detecting criminality. This is provided across the two Roads Policing Operational bases alongside specialist teams covering Commercial Vehicles and Road Crime.

These teams are further supported by back office Police staff who perform investigative and processing roles in support of processing minor traffic offence process, Extra Eyes, Vehicle recovery and collision recording. Most of these staff are funded through the activity of The Safer Essex Roads Partnership. Roads Policing also now includes specialist officer(s) who look to disrupt and dismantle organised vehicle crime groups within Essex and across the Eastern Region.

During 2021, 313 people have received serious injuries following a road traffic collision and 13 people have received fatal injuries. This compares to 295 serious injuries and 22 fatal injuries during 2020. During the first 5 months of 2021 the team have made 670 arrests (706, same period 2020), 779 intelligence submissions (667 same period 2020) and 15,785 incidents (compared to 11,415 same period 2020).

5.14 Serious Violence Unit (SVU) - Provides a Force-wide response in preventing, dismantling, and disrupting violent street gangs who cause harm to communities, in line with the Force Control Strategy. The SVU seeks to identify those who present the most harm and undertake enforcement activity to disrupt and deter. This activity is completed by the Op Raptor Teams who work throughout the county. The second strand is the multi-agency 'Violence and Vulnerability Unit', working with partners in a 'public health approach' to try and prevent violence and young people from joining or being affiliated to gangs through active community engagement and partnership working.

Pursue: The enforcement structure is designed to target the 'middle' and 'upper market' within gangs and County Lines, using a model known as the 'Orochi Model'. This approach has proven successful in other forces and works by looking to dismantle entire criminal enterprises by several methods, thus tackling the violence and exploration their existence causes. In quarter one for 2021/22 the teams achieved the following: 47 Warrants executed, 130 arrests, 79 suspects remanded and £183,000 seized.

More suspects are remanded upon arrest than ever before (rather than bailed or released under investigation), latest figures show 89% are remanded compared to 21% in the last three years. Sentencing for suspects is up from an average of 16.5 months to 4.9 years. The team continues to make use of gang injunctions, obtaining fifteen with eleven pending. It continues to make use of the Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Orders Regulations for shutting down mobile numbers associated with drug dealing – obtaining 15 orders to date.

Prevent, Prepare, Protect: Operation Grip is the forces 'place' strategy to reduce community violence. It involves weekly analytical work to identify the locations where the most harm is caused and policing those locations in a variety of ways. It is incorporated into the VVU to ensure multi-agency engagement and activity in the harm spots. This approach has Home Office approval backed with academic support (Cambridge) for measuring effectiveness. This operation went live on 28th June 2021 and identified 67 harm spots in the seven major towns across all LPA's. There were 968 interactions in those harm spots in week one.

The Violence, Vulnerability Unit (VVU) continues to have a dedicated Det Insp, overseen by a DCI to assist in driving the work. The multi-agency approach assists in delivering significant amounts of work overseen by the PFCC.

Officer Growth from 2021/22 has enabled the development of a Prevent, Prepare, Protect team PPP team, with multi-agency working who's aim is reduce exploitation, harm and violence emanating from Gangs and County Lines. This team is being formed over the Summer of 2021. They will work with the Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) and other key partners to give a professional and consistent safeguarding approach to children and vulnerable adults exploited by Gangs and County Lines in Essex. The team will work with the Raptor teams to mitigate the effects of proactive policing and enforcement, where power vacuums can result, planning for the safe return to normality, looking to suppress any consequential violence and harm.

6.0 Implications (Issues) by exception

6.1 Dog Section - An area of concern is the rising kennel costs for seized dogs, these are dogs that are seized by officers following reports of dangerous dog incidents. The resulting costs of housing dogs whilst the investigation continues are increasing with demand and fall to the Dog Section. Often these dogs have significant welfare needs.

2020/21 budget was £191,500 with a total spend of £222,160 and having retained the same budget for 21/22 the current spend is £22,293 with a projected end of year forecast of £235,800.

The options being considered to reduce these costs include:

- Enhanced governance processes to include OPC Finance Partner, Dangerous Dog Manager and Unit Inspector to ensure close monitoring of spend monthly.
- Education campaigns to raise awareness in owners of general dog “good practice” and management to reduce incidents reported.
- Reviewing the circumstances in which we hold onto dogs and how we manage the risks in returning them pending completion of investigations.
- The Command are exploring opportunities to recharge owners for kennelling costs.

6.2 Force Support Unit & Firearms Training - The primary concern currently is the number of AFO's and ARVO's, and the difficulty in running sufficient Initial Firearms Courses (IFC) to uplift the teams to the numbers required.

FSU are currently 15 ARVO's under strength, meaning to meet the STRA requirement and deploy 6 ARV's to cover the county, the team are having to cancel officer rest days and use overtime. To try and reduce this gap the team are working with HR, Vetting and Media to recruit Authorised Firearms Officers (AFO's) and ARVO's and try and reduce recruitment and vetting timescales.

With the support of the 7 Force Chief Firearms Instructor, the Firearms Training Team are exploring the creation of a modular approach for the IFC course, rather than the current 14 weeks. As well as the potential Diversity & Inclusion benefits, this will also give the team the ability to run more 'Search' modules, which is where the highest rate of student failure is. This would mean rather than completing a full 14-week recourse for a student that failed this aspect, they would simply complete this part of the module again.

Whilst a modular approach would be slower to realise benefits in the short term, it is felt there would be significant benefits to this approach in the medium to long term.

6.3 Marine Unit - The ALERT IV launch is due for a refurbishment later this year and a full assessment will take place in August 2021. This is likely to be at considerable cost however OPC will work closely with Transport Services, Procurement and Finance to obtain best value.

6.4 Specialist Operations - Following a review into the CBRN budget a shortfall has been identified and OPC are currently working with Finance to submit a proposal for an increased budget for 2022-23. This proposal will request an increase in the CBRN equipment budget to ensure that all existing equipment can be serviced and maintained, that sufficient PPE can be purchased when replacements are required and the replacement of Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) equipment.

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

Through growth, and by October 2021, an additional 1 Police Sergeant and 6 Police Constables will enhance the Road Crime Team based at South Woodham Ferrers, providing resilience to high end harm offences on the road, organised vehicle crime and other forms of criminality.

7.0 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

More Local, visible, and accessible policing

Dog Section - The Dog Section continues to have a high impact around local visible and accessible policing. Engagement through the Dog Section Twitter account has grown to 7419 followers and continues to attract good public interest with positive interactions. There have been regular online events, linking to live activity that has provided good feedback. The section take part in engagement events and offer displays, demonstrating the capability of the team that attracts positive feedback. The section also supports numerous force operations with proactive visibility/reassurance deployments.

Operations Centre - Key Force operations including Operation Sceptre (knife crime), Op Union (Southend) and Op Silver Dawn (UME) are planned, managed, and debriefed by the team. These operations have a significant impact on all the priorities, and the recycling of learning assists greatly with managing future events.

Force Support Unit and Firearms Training- FSU officers have a patrol strategy when not deployed to provide maximum coverage across the Force. This strategy includes the use of analytics and evidenced based policing to inform it.

Stansted Airport - the patrol strategy of both armed and unarmed assets provides a visible policing presence across the airport.

Operational Support Group - the OSG have provided HVP patrols in areas identified as hot spots for violent crime, providing support to the LPAs in terms of their visible policing profile.

Marine Unit - The Marine Unit have become a CPT, serving the marine communities, providing a more visible and accessible policing provision within the marine community.

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

Roads Policing - Operation CALYPSO, Operation NASH provide visible Policing activity directed towards traffic offences that contribute to the highest level of risk to public safety. Officer uplifts have enabled increased levels of visibility on the strategic, rural, and urban road network.

Serious Violence Unit - by engaging with sections of community who would not normally have access to policing services.

Crack down on anti-social behaviour

Stansted Airport - SPOC is in place to deal specifically with licensed premises, regular meetings with risk assessment group. Liaison with North LPA and local CSP

Operational Support Group - the OSG deploy every weekend for Operation SILVER DAWN to tackle UMEs and smaller gatherings where ASB is being caused.

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

Marine Unit - The Marine Unit are tackling ASB on the coastline and in-land waterways, mainly through Op WAVEBREAKER which is cracking down on the anti-social use of PWCs.

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

Roads Policing - Operation CALLA supports local Policing areas with additional resilience and tactical options linked to Car Cruise events, and in particular those individuals who use the road network in a dangerous or anti-social manner. The Extra Eyes Road Safety project continues to take positive action by means of prosecution or educational course offer on over 50% of incidents received online.

Serious Violence Unit - by reducing the ASB associated with community class A drug use.

Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse

Stansted Airport - ensuring response to any DA related incident within the SVA or which may have taken place whilst airborne

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

Marine Unit - Due to increasing their presence within the marine community the Marine Unit are also able to engage with the community on other topics, such as domestic abuse, providing advice to victims and feeding information back into investigative/intelligence functions where appropriate.

Reverse the trend in serious violence

Stansted Airport - ensuring high visibility of policing within the SVA, dealing with weapons possession effectively, ensuring response to all NTBC alerts to keep the public safe and reduce threat/harm and risk

Tackling gangs and serious violence

Dog Section - The Dog Section are deployed in support of Operation Sceptre daily, working with OSG to tackle knife enabled crime and violence. The section focuses patrols on areas that have seen incidents of violence and this further supports the various operations in place, with several notable successes.

Public Order Training - By providing officers with the relevant training, skills, and equipment for Public order the team continue to deliver towards the Force Plan by preventing and tackling many of the Force priorities which include violence in all forms and protecting vulnerable people.

They continue to adapt training needs to new style of tactics seen within our communities and maintain a strong visible presence at events and protests where disorder can occur.

Force Support Unit and Firearms Training- bringing offenders to justice through targeted police enforcement is heavily supported by armed officers through deployments in both covert and overt activity. County lines and exploitation in Essex and across borders is a large focus of the work carried out by firearms officers.

Stansted Airport - collaborative work with North disruptor teams, Border Force and reacting to ANPR activations

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

Drone Team - Drones continue to be used for planned firearms deployments instead of NPAS. This reduces the cost to Essex Police from NPAS and the drones have significant benefits, especially in relation to the community impact and the liaison with the officers on the ground.

Marine Unit - The team are working closely with the LPAs to develop intelligence and support proactive operations around the importation of Class A drugs via small ports/coastline areas.

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

Roads Policing - Operation GAMBLER provides a cross border intelligence led Policing operation focusing upon criminal use of the road network and those linked to violence and other high harm offences. The focus upon drug driving continues to link between drug drive arrests and violence.

Serious Violence Unit - The model of dismantling rather than disruption seeks to have longer term effects on serious violence across Essex. The enforcement aspect is the role of the Raptor Teams.

Disrupting and preventing organised crime

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

Force Support Unit and Firearms Training - Supporting NCA, ERSOU and SCD targeting offenders and vehicles involved with serious and organised crime is another area of police work linked FSU are heavily involved in.

Operational Support Group - the OSG have worked closely with SCD and the FSU on several significant operations targeting OCGs in the past 12 months and this work stream is expected to increase as positive working relationships between the departments grow.

Drone Team - The Drone Team continue to support SCD in live covert operations.

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

Specialist Operations - CBRN attendance is required at cannabis factories and illicit labs. This provides LPAs and investigation teams with support and advice to disrupt OCGs.

Roads Policing - plays a critical role in disrupting Organised Crime through operations such as Operation BLUEBIRD and Operation BUFFALO which focus upon a reactive and pro-active response to organised immigration crime. More recently, Roads Policing now leads on Organised Vehicle Crime for the force. Under Operation VENICE, significant efforts continue around the dismantling of Organised crime groups linked to vehicle crime across Essex and the region.

Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm

Dog Section - The Dog Section are frequently used in support of open area searches for High Risk missing persons (vulnerable).

Stansted Airport - maintain Op Aidant deployments along with Op Servator.

Operational Support Group - the OSG have executed 200 Section 135 Mental Health Act warrants since May 2020, supporting adult social care and mental health teams in Essex to supporting and protecting vulnerable people. The OSG have also deployed at a significant number of high-risk missing person incidents, utilising the drones on occasion to assist with searching.

Drone Team - The team have improved their spontaneous response enabling them to support searches for vulnerable missing persons.

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

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

Serious Violence Unit - The Human Trafficking (Child Protection) Bill 2019-21 puts far more onus on multi agency working to target and eradicate child trafficking in gangs and county lines. The triple P team focuses on trafficked children and adults exploited by county lines

Improve safety on our roads

Stansted Airport - Op Parkin/ Op Dunker – vehicle check points daily to identify offences. HVP on surrounding road networks

Operational Support Group - the OSG have seized over 600 vehicles off the road for no insurance since June 2020 and made nearly 500 arrests for drink/drug drive.

Drone Team - the team are being used to assist in photographing and mapping the scenes of road deaths to assist the court with understanding the scene.

Specialist Operations - CBRN are continuing to develop work with the Roads Policing Unit (RPU) and the Road Crime Team to deal with radiation transportation on the UK's road network. **Roads Policing** - In Partnership with The Safer Essex Roads Partnership, Essex Police supports the annual Road Safety Delivery Plan focusing upon education, engagement, and enforcement across a range of road users and those identified as being most vulnerable.

8.0 Demand

8.1 Dog Section

The specialist search capability has been increased by 3 handlers, having absorbed 3 dogs and the handlers previously based at Stansted Airport, creating a specialist search team.

Having recently introduced the Digital Detection capability to Essex the section has supported 27 planned operations, recovering key evidence including micro-sim cards and other concealed materials. This capability is to increase from 2 to 4 dogs this year considering increasing demand.

The section deploys 4 Forensic Recovery Dogs trained to detect bodily fluids and body recovery. The team have assisted investigatory departments in conducting 74 searches, which is a three-fold uplift on the 22 conducted last year. Efforts continue to improve the section's capabilities in this area with opportunities for improved training being considered.

The section deploys 9 drug trained handlers deploying in a proactive capacity to planned warrants supporting Raptor teams and community policing to target OCGs throughout the county. The team has assisted with 321, up from 114 in the last period, recovering large sums of cash, weapons, and drugs.

The section has 5 Explosive trained dogs embedded on the training team, servicing both planned and spontaneous deployments for suspicious packages and venue searches. The team have performed 37 searches over the counting period, up from 16 in the last period.

8.2 Operations Centre

Currently, demand within the operational planning department has seen a noticeable increase in events/operations. COP26 resourcing request is significant, and the team are identifying specialist assets required whilst ensuring Essex can still maintain our force requirement to mobilise our Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) of one PSU within the hour.

8.3 Public Order Training

Demand for public order training is likely to increase with several new groups forming nationally and several new national issues including the increase in Black Lives Matter protests. Extinction Rebellion continue to grow in numbers and their tactics continue to change meaning the demand of our public order officers will also change.

8.4 Resilience Department

The team are progressing several plans and work with several internal and external partners to assist with our preparedness for significant events.

8.5 Resource Management Unit

This has been a challenging year for the RMU, every event which required planning impacts on RMU. This will continue with COP26, Commonwealth Games and the DEI training inputs.

8.6 Force Support Unit and Firearms Training

Two Initial Firearms Courses (IFC) were planned in the 21/22 training calendar. The first has just completed with 7 of 12 students being successful. The team couldn't run a third over the summer due to the AFO Taser conversion program, so the next is being scoped for October 2021.

8.7 Serious Violence Unit

The continued proliferation of county lines means the challenge of tackling these and the associated crime continues to be an issue. The 2021/22 growth in Raptor teams has ensured the ability for Essex Police to address these issues by having continued capacity to be proactive rather than reactive. By nature of the role, the proactivity produces its own demand, but this assists with the primary aim of reduction.

9.0 Risks/Mitigation

Public Order Training

PO SRA contains one identified red risk:

Command Resilience - EP currently have seven accredited PO Silver Commanders against the required number of twelve, and nine PO Bronze Commanders against the required number of twelve. To mitigate this, three officers have recently successfully completed their PO Silver course and are now working towards their accreditation. Also, officers are attending PO Silver courses late 2021 early 2022. In addition to the nine accredited PO Bronzes in Essex there are three officers who have had their PO Bronze courses and are working towards their accreditation.

Resilience Department

The Civil Contingencies Strategic Threat & Risk Assessment contains two identified red risks:

Testing of Emergency Plans – Growth bid submitted for 22/23 for a Testing and Exercise Officer and the team exercise as many plans as practicable each year.

Command Training – Introduction of a module on the FDO course has been successful but this is at the tactical level and the OPC Command are looking at the wider issue with L & D.

Resource Management Unit

There is one red risk on the Force Risk Register:

Departmental staffing levels - prioritised recruitment has helped to mitigate the risk.

Force Support Unit and Firearms Training

The AP STRA contains two identified red risks:

Armed Policing resilience and maintenance of operational capability – Mitigation recorded within Demand section at 6.6

Review of National Firearms Instructor Numbers to meet demand - (The level of training required has significantly increased yet NFI numbers remained stable. Following a growth bid 3 further NFI's have been recruited and are currently on the trainer's course and 2 others external candidates are being recruited)

Stansted Airport

The Stansted STRA contains three red risks:

Shortage of Operational Firearms Commanders at Stansted – two further courses are booked in this year which will result in all Sergeants being trained as OFC'S and an additional five courses requested, one for each shift to offer resilience.

Lack of advanced drivers which can reduce response times – 5 officers currently on their advanced course and two are on the career pathway to FSU.

AFO/ARVO numbers currently below required establishment – AFO/ARVO numbers will remain below the operational policing plan level however ARVO upskill course commences in August which will see an increase in skill level. Unfortunately, due to permit loss, retirements etc, there is little opportunity to increase to establishment prior to the conclusion of the October IFC.

Marine Unit

The RHIB was previously identified as a Force Risk (Risk Register reference 1799) and has now recently returned to operational use following an extensive period of refurbishment.

The ALERT IV Launch vessel has several issues affecting its performance and will be assessed for required work in August 2021. This is likely to require extensive refurbishment work and has been raised on the Force Risk Register under reference 2570.

Roads Policing

Force Risk Register – *Provision of Dash Cams into Operational Police vehicles.*

A business case has been approved in principal to equip 80 Operational Policing Command vehicles within car video (dash cams). This will align Essex Police with the College of Policing APP (Pursuits), which requires all police vehicles that engage within a tactical phase of a pursuit to be equipped with video and telematics.

10.0 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

Force Support Unit and Firearms Training - Currently the team are working through the OPC D&I board and national working groups to improve the level of under representation within armed policing, with a particular emphasis on recruitment of female AFO's. Currently 3.5% of FSU and 14.5% of staff are female. A 'Buddy scheme' pairing potential students with experienced AFO's is gaining momentum, alongside open days to 'myth-bust' and the creation of a blog from 2 recent female students who were on the Initial Firearms Course.

11.0 Health and Safety Implications

Public Order Training - There is an investigation ongoing into an incident at Lydd in which several officers had their coveralls burnt with 3 officers receiving minor burns. This has been referred to the H & S Executive and subject to a Gold Group.

12.0 Consultation/Engagement

The OPC Command Team along with subject matter experts have been consulted in the production of this paper.

13.0 Actions for Improvement

Public Order Training – Forces were given four AFIs from the recent HMICFRS review in December 2020:

Forces to improve quality of protest related intelligence provided to NPCC and ensure the collection process is fit for purpose - there is a robust procedure in place now which is linked in with the intelligence department who submit a weekend return which is then captured in a weekly circulation under op Inlet. Every protest that takes place in force now has a submission sent through to NPoCC SIB and any that are identified in their planning stage are also notified through to NPOCC SIB.

Police should develop rationale for determining the number of commanders, specialist officers and staff needed to police protests – Essex have a healthy number of commanders in place now from Gold, Silver and Bronze. The STRA is regularly reviewed every six weeks with an update on numbers of commanders trained. There are no anticipated issues for lack of commanders, and there are several commanders awaiting courses on a succession pathway.

Police protest-related community impact assessments are an area for improvement, particularly those that need to be completed after the event – CIA templates have now been sent out from LPSU, training is also being considered for District Commanders and Inspectors once the forms are published to ensure they have consistency in their completion before, during and post event.

Chief Constables should ensure that their forces have sufficiently robust governance arrangements in place to secure consistent, effective debrief processes for protest policing – The hot debrief trial has concluded and survey results have been fed back to Ch. Insp Baxter for review – the structured debrief process is now underway and identifying a number of opportunities to learn from incidents and share good practice. For every protest identified a debrief form is now submitted through to NPoCC SIB via the intelligence department to capture any post learning from protests.

14.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

14.1 Dog Section - The training team is seeking to grow in terms of capability and reputation to establish itself as a nationally recognised school of excellence. Opportunities are being developed to offer external training courses to other forces and the private sector, there is an ambition that the training department could become self-sustaining, achieving a “Zero budget” status.

The department is moving to become paperless, having a positive effect on the forces environmental impact and documentation is in the process of being digitalised.

Due to the demand for Digital Search Dogs, there is to be an increase from 2 to 4 dogs with courses running later in 2021. There is a piece of work currently been undertaken to understand the requirements, and benefits of developing a dog breeding programme to minimise the cost to the force in buying dogs and generate income through the sale of dogs.

14.2 Force Support Unit & Firearms Training - The primary plans over the next 12 months will be to reduce the number of vacancies within Armed Policing, both FSU and NFI's. Ultimately this will be achieved by getting more students through the Initial Firearms Course and the ARVO upskill course. The challenges include:

- The number of IFC / ARVO courses that can be conducted (due to length of IFC / NFI availability / capacity due to other training demands)
- The potential for the National CBRN program to significantly impact the training delivery for 21/22.
- The STRA risks around lack of 'specialist capabilities' places further training demand

Joint planning meetings with the 7 Force team are underway to try and work this through. Success looks like; either a (successful) modular IFC/ARVO program is implemented or run three of the 'old' style IFC followed by similar numbers of ARVO courses over 2022.

14.3 Taser Governance - The focus is on the delivery of the 737 STO's required by the force, then designing processes to ensure re-accreditation and proper balance of STO's across the key areas as STO's change roles. Additionally, the governance aspects, including the implementation and use of Chronicle, remain to ensure appropriate oversight and review of deployments in line with wider force strategies and use of force.

14.4 Stansted Airport - Stansted Airport policing team will work with key partners and stakeholders to maintain the safety of the airport community, developing operations and engagement to reduce threat, harm, and risk to aviation security and to continue to provide counter terrorist activity:

- Create programme of school and youth club visits to provide educational input relating to drone use around the flight restriction zone (FRZ)
- Op Stardust – the only testing exercise to take place this year to test emergency plans in relation to a hijack event will take place at Stansted this Autumn
- Essex Police at Stansted are developing a tri-services exercise to deal with a CBRN incident
- Negotiations following close monitoring of travel patterns across the summer of 2021 to ensure plan going forward is developed and operationally sound
- Increased training in Servator - This project involves new tactics and cutting-edge training for police officers that will help deter those from carrying out hostile reconnaissance and help detect those with malicious intent. It also increases the opportunity for interaction between police officers and the public, provides further reassurance to the public and helps deter and detect other criminal perpetrators.

14.5 Operational Support Group - The Operational Support Group are currently focussed on tackling and preventing serious violence in the Southend district under the umbrella of Operation Union +. It is anticipated that this increased focus of activity in Southend will reduce the level of serious violence currently being experienced by the community and partners, working with community safety partners and other departments within Essex.

14.6 – Drone Team - The team are in the process of purchasing new drone equipment to replace ageing and obsolete equipment and this will future-proof the Drone Team capability for the next three years, providing Essex Police with an effective planned and spontaneous aerial capability.

14.7 Marine Unit - The focus of the Marine Unit over the next 12 months will be Operation WAVEBREAKER, an operation aimed at tackling ASB on the coastline and inlet water areas. Whilst an obvious objective of this operation is a reduction in ASB it should be borne in mind that monitoring ASB performance for water related incidents is challenging and this is something which the Unit are trying to develop.

The outcome of this operation will inform decisions about whether we seek to progress a Water Safety Scheme like that of the Driver Improvement Scheme. Similar to the Driver Improvement Scheme used to deal with motorists committing minor offences, the initiative would see users of vessels who are found to be committing ASB amounting to breaches of local bye-laws offered an alternative to prosecution by attending a Water Safety Scheme offered by the police. The user would pay a fee to attend the course which would be retained by Essex Police. If the pilot of the scheme is successful, then we will offer it as best practice to other forces as part of our responsibility as national lead for safe use of the water in England and Wales.

14.8 Roads Policing - Essex Police will be supporting The Safer Essex Roads Partnership and is delivering a new Road Safety initiative entitled “Vision Zero”. By 2040 the Partnership will work towards and aspirational target of zero road death and serious injury on the roads.

14.9 Serious Violence Unit

Operation Grip will continue to develop, and a greater emphasis will be placed on problem orientated policing and incorporating this model alongside Op Grip. This will ensure activity within the harm spot areas will be more diverse. The growth of Raptor teams will enable more proactive activity to take place over the coming year.

Essex Police continues to be at the forefront of innovative ways of tackling county lines and the harm they bring. The teams will make better use of technology including the hardware to quickly download phones and further software will allow teams to create instant analysis of available material enabling cases to be presented to the CPS more quickly and therefore improving the timeliness of investigations. A knife violence model has been developed in conjunction with the University of Essex where data is used to predict who is most likely to be involved in serious violence using a knife.

An initial trial starts in July 2021 in Chelmsford highlighting a cohort of 20 people. This is a multiagency approach where the ethos is to initiate contact with the people, identify their vulnerabilities and work to address this to divert from criminality. Finally, continued work in line with the national and force’s drug and alcohol strategy overlaps the preventative work being carried out in the SVU ensuring a public health approach to the problem. In the coming year, this will include the establishing of a drugs death panel, to ensure opportunities for improving services and enforcement opportunity.