



PFCC
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

Annual Report **2020-2021**

Contents

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

The purpose of the Narrative Report is to provide information on the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Force, its main objectives and strategies and the principal risks it faces.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Report

Foreword from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

The last year has been a difficult and challenging time but it has also shown the strength of policing in Essex and how our longer-term strategy of growth, investment and partnership has started to get crime down and is delivering real results for residents.

By the end of March 2021, we had recruited over 500 extra officers over the previous three years and have secured the financial commitment to recruit a further 218 in 2021-2022. This extra capacity across the force has had a significant positive impact, as has closer collaboration with partners and a stronger focus on prevention.

These extra officers combined with targeted investment in prevention and partnership activity has helped us to get crime down, tackle drug driven violence and ensure that Domestic Abuse hasn't spiked as it has in certain areas of the country during the pandemic.

Through the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership we have supported young people to stay in school and avoid being drawn into gangs. The targeted hot spot enforcement activity delivered by Essex Police has also delivered and we have started to see a levelling off of drug driven violence in the county, with positive signs that this will start to fall in the coming months.

Anti-social behaviour, burglary and theft have been falling for several years and the trend of reducing levels of crime has continued throughout the pandemic.

While much of the country has seen a spike in domestic abuse, in Essex, by investing in programmes to target and change offender behaviour, support victims and the

introduction of Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams, we have kept Domestic Abuse in check. Our ambition is to invest further in these areas to start getting domestic abuse down and reducing the harm it causes to so many in our communities.

Our investments in technology have helped our officers be more efficient and be able to spend more time in their communities and less behind desks. Our work within Community Safety Partnerships has given local people a real voice in resolving the issues that are important to them and our ability to work together with partners mean more issues are being resolved earlier and better outcomes are being achieved across the county.

COVID-19 has changed the level of reporting with reductions in crime nationally and we will have to wait until there is sufficient data to fully understand the longer term impact of the pandemic on crime levels, but in Essex the foundation of this reduction in crime was already in place and we have taken every opportunity presented by the changes in crime over the last year to hit criminals hard, support victims and put in place longer term improvements to help benefit our county now and in the future.

We are incredibly fortunate in our country to have a police force that works with the community they serve, are recruited from that same community and as a result have strong community support. Creating an environment where everybody can thrive is something that we all contribute towards whether we are officers, volunteers, members of community groups or by being part of a community that doesn't tolerate crime, that reports it, provides intelligence and is willing to give evidence where necessary.

The relationship between the police and the public has never been more important than it has over the last year. For all our safety, police across the country have been asked to



enforce regulations that were unthinkable just a few years ago. As individuals we have had to learn how to act to keep ourselves, our loved ones and our wider community safe. At the same time, we have seen our most vulnerable people placed at increased risk, our children out of school and the value of self-isolating, all of which has required us to put extra support in place.

Given these challenges it is very positive to see what we have achieved as a community, as a county and as a country. Over the last year Essex Police has worked as a central partner within the Essex Resilience Forum which has led the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Essex. The Chief Constable, along with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, has chaired the Strategic Coordination Group pulling together the countywide response with senior officers involved at all levels within the coordinated response to the pandemic.

As a service Essex Police had also had to tread a very careful line enforcing regulations appropriately while also maintaining the confidence and support of the wider community. Their approach has proven successful as blatant

breaches have been robustly tackled and high levels of public confidence have been maintained. In fact, public confidence in Essex Police has reached extremely high levels during the year with periods where over 80% of people have said they were confident or very confident in them.

This positive response to the pandemic and the longer-term trends in reported crime show our plan is working what has been even more pleasing is the clear support the public has for our police force. It is this relationship and our ability to work together that will enable us to push out crime, reduce offending and make Essex safer.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chief Constable, his senior team and all the officers and staff who have done such a good job over the last year. It is at these most difficult times that you see the true strength and commitment of the people within the service.



Roger Hirst

PFCC
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

Chief Constable's Report

Essex Police continues to grow and to put the new and existing resources at its disposal to best use to protect and serve the County. This report relates to the second full Financial Year since the introduction of the current Essex Police Force Plan, which is focused on Victims, Vulnerability, Violence and Visibility.

The number of Officers, Volunteers (including Special Constables) and Police Staff is increasing, funded by both central Government and the local precept.

To ensure that these men and women are appropriately skilled, equipped and enabled the force continues to re-invest savings achieved through its extensive modernisation programme to offer an improved service to the public and to businesses. This ranges from the force's capability to respond to the most serious crimes requiring extensive long-term investigations to the reassurance afforded to local communities through an increased visible presence in communities and crime prevention.

This report is a demonstration of the commitment of the Chief Constable and of all those at Essex Police to deliver justice to every victim of crime.

During the year, seven men were sentenced to a total of 92 years and 10 months imprisonment for one of the most appalling crimes committed in the 180 year history of the force. Following the discovery of the bodies of 39 men, women and children in a lorry trailer in October 2019, the force made public commitment to bring those responsible to justice wherever they might be within the UK or overseas. Delivering on that promise would not have been possible

without the sustained long-term investment the force is making in training and developing its officers and staff and its equipment and facilities. Equally, this outcome would not have been possible if the force had not invested significant time in securing the trust and confidence of the people of Essex and further afield.

The force has and will police with the consent of all communities and make full use of all available resources to be a diverse and inclusive organisation.



In 2020/21 the force grew to 3,369 officers (Full Time Equivalent) and it will grow further in the coming year and will continue to encourage an increasing proportion of candidates from diverse backgrounds. Our colleagues are not only growing in number, they are growing in capability. While continuing to deliver the Force Plan to catch criminals, protect people and keep people safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, the force has taken the opportunity to accelerate the introduction of enabling technology which means that our people are better connected than ever before and more able to share information. Agile working capabilities will mean that officers and staff can spend even more time with the people who need our help and less time travelling to

and from police buildings. This has already assisted the force in the development of an environmental strategy in order that we can protect our rural and urban areas as well as the people within them.

The force is proud to report one of the lowest rates of sickness of any UK police force during the year. However, a number of officers, staff and volunteers have, like so many, experienced bereavement and our thoughts remain with the family and friends of all those whose lives and livelihoods have been lost.

Our work to unite our County against criminals and to deliver the Force Plan in 2021/22 is already underway. Through dedication and hard work we are having a positive



impact on serious and organised crime groups and have achieved some of the largest seizures of drugs and cash in the history of the force, preventing drugs from getting into our communities and dismantling the gangs that deal in them. One such operation saw more than £21m worth of Class A drugs and £1.85m of cash being seized in Essex by our Serious Crime Directorate as part of an international operation, led in the UK by the National Crime Agency.

This is only possible with sustained investment and the support of the people of Essex. During 2020, independent surveys of the public showed that confidence has reached record levels since the introduction of the survey in 2017. This is encouraging. However, everyone at Essex Police is aware that trust must not only be earned but also maintained and never taken for granted.

I have a vision of a united Essex in which we celebrate our diversity and where we value each other's differences. The recovery which is now underway following the global Covid-19 pandemic will bring new businesses and new communities to our County and to neighbouring areas and we will use all our resources to make sure that Essex is a safe and prosperous place to live and work.



Ben-Julian Harrington
Chief Constable





LOCAL, VISIBLE
AND ACCESSIBLE
POLICING

Local, visible and accessible policing is essential to deliver a policing service that is properly connected to the community, where the public work with the police to squeeze out crime and wherever possible crime is prevented from happening.

Since 2018 we have grown the force by over 500 officers, taking the total number of officers to 3,369. In 2020-21 there has been an increase of 151 officers and 60.8 staff. This growth will continue over the next year with a commitment to recruit a further 218 officers in 2021-2022.



As the multi-year growth programme has been delivered, we have seen significant improvement both in public confidence and in the underlying levels of crime. The number of crimes recorded in Essex fell by 11.4% in the twelve months to March 2021 compared to the same period a year earlier. This is a significant drop and while much of the reduction can be attributed to the national lockdowns it also reflects, in part, a pattern we were starting to see prior to the pandemic, where the growth in crime was slowing and starting to decline.

The public's confidence that Essex Police do a good or very good job follows a similar pattern, with steady, consistent increases throughout 2019-2020 and then significant jumps in 2020-2021. Overall, in 2020-2021 76% of the public felt

Essex Police was doing a good or very good job compared to 65% in 2019-2020.

This positive trend is also reflected when we ask the public whether the police understand their community's issues, with 71% of people agreeing or strongly agreeing in 2020-2021 compared to 60% in 2019-2020.

This increased confidence and reduction in overall crime has developed as we have continued to grow the force. The introduction of Town Centre Teams comprising 58 officers and ten sergeants in 2019, had an immediate impact and has continued to drive down business crime and anti-social behaviour, while coinciding with a significant increase in the public's confidence in policing.

Similar growth across community policing, local policing and some of our specialist teams has gained traction through the last year. The introduction of Community Safety Engagement Officers based in Community Safety Hubs has increased capacity in terms of local engagement and continues our investment in local Community

Safety Partnerships as an important way of giving local communities influence over resolving local issues. Together these extra resources and continued investment have led to an increase in public satisfaction with the level of local policing from 64% for the 12 months to December 2019 to 75% by the end of December 2021.

Overall confidence in Essex Police continues to show a strong year on year improvement. In Q1 2020-21 81% of respondents thought that Essex Police did a good or excellent job in their local area, which represents a significant increase compared with Q1 2019-20 at 65% and Q1 2018-19 at 69%.

We have continued our investment in tackling rural crime with the growth of the specialist Rural Engagement Team, representing a dedicated investment of £623k. The team have made a significant difference in rural communities and focus on unauthorised encampments, hare coursing and rural theft. The work of this dedicated team has seen a reduction in the number of unauthorised encampments from 229 in 2018 to 182 for the 12 months to March 2021.





The Business Crime Team was established in February 2020 and works closely with business networks such as the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and business groups across the county to prevent business crime and provide specialist advice to local community policing teams.

In early 2020 we increased the number of Children and Young People officers (CYP) from 13 to 33 as a result of increased funding from the policing precept. These officers work to identify children and young people who are most at risk of becoming repeat offenders or at serious risk of harm/vulnerability. They engage with young people in senior schools to support a partnership approach in keeping young people safe and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. The work being completed by the CYP officers is providing increased accessibility and visibility with school staff and children and young people and has received positive feedback.

At the same time, our shared School Liaison Team with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has continued to reach out to schools providing a broader range of community safety advice to all school children across Essex. Following the pandemic this team developed a range of videos, teaching plans and supporting material to help teachers, children and parents engage their children while teaching from home.

Alongside this growth in officers, we have also continued to develop and improve the technology, helping them to work more efficiently. The mobile first programme has continued to save officers time with 50% of all daily recorded crime now completed via smartphones without the need to return to a station. This success has led to the deployment of extra applications at officers' request, including What3words, an interpreting service, bike register and in September 2020 a stop and search module which was supported by a mobile fingerprint scanner. This has resulted in more successful arrests.

Our Special Constabulary has also continued to deliver a strong service for the public with 521 officers by the end of 2020/21, maintaining Essex Police's position as the second largest Special Constabulary in the country. This year we have also continued to see a significant increase in the number of hours delivered by the Special Constabulary with a 11.45% increase over the year to 214,503 hours, the equivalent to 122 full time officers.

This strong volunteering base is also reflected in the strength of our Police Cadet Programme which has maintained its position as the largest in the Eastern Region with 410 Cadets and 80 Leaders. We also continue to benefit from a large Active Citizen Programme consisting of 69 Active Citizens and 110 Police Support Officers and significant participation in over 15 Watch schemes from Neighbourhood Watch, to Farm Watch. Together these groups reach over 215,000 people across Essex and provide vital crime prevention advice and act as an extremely useful conduit to the public.

At the same time our Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) programme is the largest in the country, with 460 accredited people from 44 organisations working together with police across the county in a range of roles and with a wide range of powers given to them by the Chief Constable.

During the year we have also seen a significant improvement in accessibility with investments in an online Live Chat function on the Essex Police website, which went live in April 2020 and the launch of a Single Online Home. The Live Chat function is available seven days a week and received over 10,000 conversations in the first six months. Following the

successful launch of the Single Online Home website, police were also able to significantly improve online reporting systems, including a dedicated way to report anti-social behaviour. Providing a timely and effective Emergency (999) and non-emergency (101) public call system remains a priority. Over 2020-21, largely down to the impact of the pandemic, we have seen a significant reduction in 999 calls with 306,439 calls compared to 353,743 the year before, a 13.4% reduction. Over this period the average time for a call to be answered came down from 9 sec to 7 and the abandon rate fell from 1.8% to 1.5%.



We did not see the same reduction in 101 call volumes with overall numbers increasing from 292,472 to 295,105, a 0.9% increase. However, over the period the force did continue to improve call handling times getting the average down from 3 min 50 sec to 2 min 36 seconds. They also reduced the abandoned rates from 22.7% to 19.2%.

The biggest improvement in call handling over the year was in relation to public calls which experienced a reduction in the volume of calls from 107,925 to 79,762, a 26% reduction. Over this period the average wait time reduced from 13 min 48 sec to 3 min 2 sec and the abandon rate from 21.8% to 5.8% a significant improvement.

A person wearing a dark hoodie is shown from the side, holding a smartphone in their right hand. They are standing in front of a brick wall. The entire image is overlaid with a dark teal color. The text 'CRACKING DOWN ON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR' is written in white, bold, uppercase letters on the left side of the image.

CRACKING DOWN ON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Since 2016 there has been a significant year-on-year reduction in anti-social behaviour. With a 21% reduction between 2017-and 2019-20. While this underlying trend is well established, over the last year, since breaches of COVID regulations have been classified as ASB, we have seen a 34.4% increase in reported anti-social behaviour. However, once the COVID-19 related incidents have been removed and we consider the impact of this change in how we record the data we can expect to see a continued long-term reduction in the number of ASB incidents. In the two weeks prior to Christmas, Essex Police recorded the lowest two-week period for non-Covid related ASB in the last ten years.

In the two weeks prior to Christmas, **Essex Police recorded the lowest two-week period for non-Covid related ASB in the last ten years**



HMICFRS assessed Essex Police as Good at dealing with ASB in 2016, 2017 and 2019, and while there has been no separate inspection since 2019 the progress shown in these inspections has continued. The force wide growth programme, for example, has continued to increase the resources and investment in local policing, including the introduction of Town Centre Teams in 2019. This has increased the amount of resources each year that are focused on local, preventative policing.

Anti-social behaviour is defined as “any behaviour where the victim is suffering harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance”. The responsibility for tackling it is shared between local councils and Essex Police. As such a lot of the activity is delivered through local Community Safety Partnerships that Community Policing Teams are represented on. In rural communities this support is also supplemented by the Rural Engagement Team who work closely with local police to offer specialist advice and guidance on tackling rural crime such as Hare Coursing, Unauthorised Encampments and the theft of rural machinery.

Expert advice is also provided to Community Policing Teams by specialist ASB Officers who advise on proactive tactics and guidance, as well as training and briefings on changes to legislation and assisting with Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) and ASB Injunctions.



As discussed in other sections of this report the introduction of Community Safety Engagement Officers during the year has had a big impact on the engagement at a local level. This has been further bolstered by the introduction of a stronger analytic capability which has allowed local policing teams working with Community Safety Partnerships to have a much stronger intelligence focus. This ensures resources are allocated efficiently and the biggest impact is made with the resources we have.

As well as strengthening the size and strength of the force through the Commissioner's office we also provide direct funding to the Community Safety Partnerships. In 2020-21 this amounted to £272,558. Working directly with the Commissioner's office each Community Safety Partnership commits to a local informed annual plan with clear local priorities and objectives. This structure is designed to ensure collaboration and partnership is at the heart of how these teams operate, and that local people get the opportunity to have their say in the priorities for their area. This local variation can be seen in the priorities for the different partnerships with rural crime being a priority in Maldon, while gangs and street drinking appear more frequently in urban areas.

Successfully preventing anti-social behaviour is often about proactive problem solving. Identifying why an issue is happening and then working within the community or with individuals to resolve those underlying issues. Restorative and Mediation practices, which are delivered directly out of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's office, are an effective approach to tackling these issues and are becoming increasingly popular as the impact of the approach is understood.

Restorative Justice is a voluntary process which facilitates communication between somebody who has been harmed and the person who has caused that harm. It has been proven to result in a reduction in reoffending, high participant satisfaction and an improvement in victim recovery.

Our Essex Restorative Justice and Mediation Service accepts referrals ranging from community issues and anti-social behaviour to the most serious offences. The team has grown

from 2 members of staff when the service launched in 2015, to 4 in 2020, managing a team of 40 trained volunteers. Traditionally carried out face-to-face, the team had to adapt to changing circumstances caused by the pandemic this year. Even given this challenge the team processed 297 referrals and 55 cases were carried out using socially distanced meetings or virtual discussions leading to 156 participants being engaged in the restorative process.

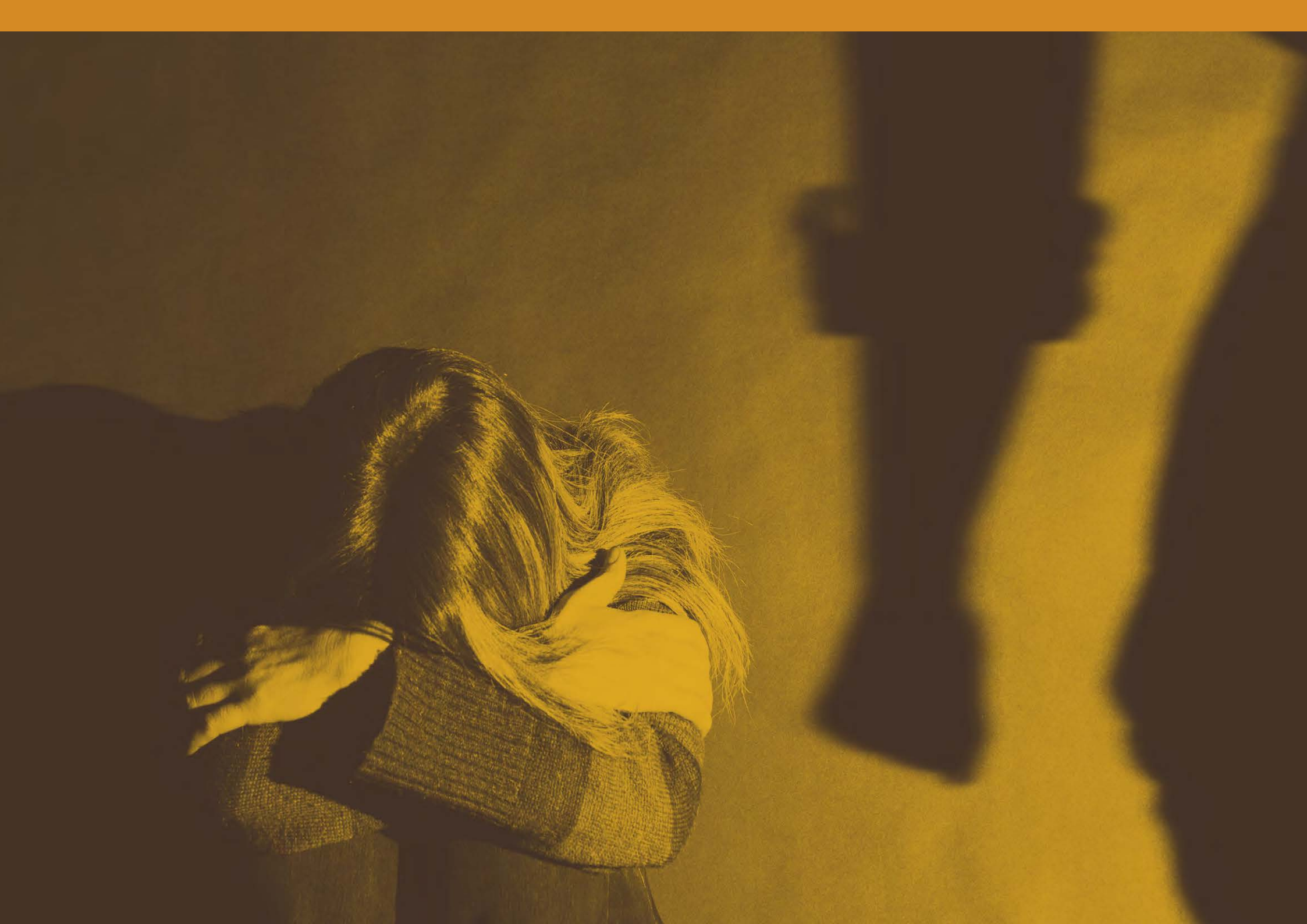


Feedback from victims has been very positive with the service being rated 4.5 / 5. Two thirds of those asked reported that the process had a positive impact on their situation and 80% said they felt better after speaking with facilitators. 80% of victims would recommend the service to others. General feedback was equally as positive and as an example one victim said "I think your understanding and sensitivity in these issues is faultless".

Satisfaction rates for those responsible for the harm was even higher with the service being rated at 4.9 out of 5. All of those who responded felt the process had had a positive impact on them and agreed that they had a better understanding of "How your actions affect others as a result of this process" and "Do you think that you will behave differently in future as a result of the RJ process". 100% of referrers said they would use the service again and rated it an average of 4.8 out of 5.

Over the last year the service has focused on improving restorative justice access for victims of domestic abuse, which led to an increase in referrals in domestic abuse cases of 57% on the year before. Lots of discussions have been had with relevant services, and during International Restorative Justice week the service hosted a webinar around the use of RJ in domestic abuse cases which was attended by over 160 people.





Domestic abuse accounts for 35.6% of all violent crime in Essex. In 2020-2021 there were 28,952 cases recorded. Reported incidents have grown significantly over the last ten years as we have worked hard to encourage victims and survivors to come forward to report crimes. Changes in law in relation to controlling and coercive behaviour and stalking, have also resulted in new offences and legislation leading to more criminal incidents being recorded. Over the last year, as well as building our support for victims, we have increased our focus on changing the behaviour of perpetrators to break the cycle of domestic abuse and prevent it from happening in the first place.



Jane Gardner, the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, chairs the countywide Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB). This is made up of partners from across Essex with a focus on working together to support victims and reduce offending.

In May 2020, SETDAB launched a new, ambitious five-year strategy which focuses on the delivering five key outcomes:

Outcome

1 Children and young people can recognise and form healthy relationships.

Outcome

2 People experiencing and at risk of experiencing domestic abuse are supported to be and feel safe.

Outcome

3 Everyone can rebuild their lives and live free from domestic abuse.

Outcome

4 Supporting and disrupting perpetrators to change their behaviour and break the cycle of domestic abuse.

Outcome

5 Communities, professionals and employers are able to recognise domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity and have the confidence to take action.

On behalf of the Board, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex and Essex Police take the lead on outcome 2 and outcome 3.

To support people experiencing and at risk of experiencing domestic abuse, a wide range of specialist services are commissioned by the Commissioner which provide specialist, tailored support when and where it is most effective.

Victim Support is the first level of support provided and offers a wide range of general support for all victims of crime. This high-volume service received £1,650,000 over the last three years to provide this important function.

Specialist domestic abuse organisations such as Next Chapter, Safe Steps and Changing Pathways are provided with £2.465 million as part of a jointly commissioned contract with Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council worth over £14.875 Million over five years. This funding delivers an integrated domestic abuse support service including refuges, Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors and community-based support. This funding includes the delivery of a 7-day a week, single point of access; the Compass helpline, which delivers advice and support for victims and professionals.

Specialist support services are also commissioned for the victims of rape and sexual abuse, including historic child sexual abuse. Over three years, the Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership received £5.281 million to deliver specialist support across the county including therapeutic support, advocacy, counselling and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs). Synergy also offers a single point of contact for victims of abuse to engage through, ensuring help and advice can be found in a consistent and accessible way.

This year a new two-year funding arrangement was put in place for an additional six Independent Sexual Violence Advisors as part of a broader initiative to provide more support earlier in the process. This is to help victims and improve the number of cases that make it through to the courts. Between October and December 2020, the number of victims referred to ISVA increased by 84 per cent compared to the same period a year earlier, an increase from 159 to 289.



IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP AND AFRAID TO CALL 999 IN CASE YOU'RE OVERHEARD?

When you call 999, an operator will ask which emergency service you need. If you can't talk, the call is forwarded to a system whereif you press 5 5 you will be transferred to the police as an emergency.

STAY SAFE AT HOME
#ProtectingandServingEssex

The national lockdown presented new challenges around domestic abuse and heightened concern for victims. To manage this potential risk a wide range of activity was developed to reach out to potential victims and perpetrators to reduce the risk of incidents occurring and ensure that victims could access support.

The Commissioner secured £605,967 of extra funding for local domestic abuse charities to increase the capacity of local services. The funding also helped to make venues and services COVID-secure, so they could continue to provide vital support to victims. Sexual violence organisations were also provided with £415,000 to support their work during COVID-19 including the provision of extra counselling.

As well as supporting victims a significant focus continues to be on challenging perpetrators and getting them to change their behaviours. Dealing with domestic abuse incidents can be complex. Where it is appropriate Essex Police officers will pursue a prosecution through the criminal justice system, however, this is not always possible. In these situations, the force has increasingly focussed on alternative ways to safeguard victims using Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders (DVPNs and DVPOs) and the application of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) otherwise known as "Clare's Law".

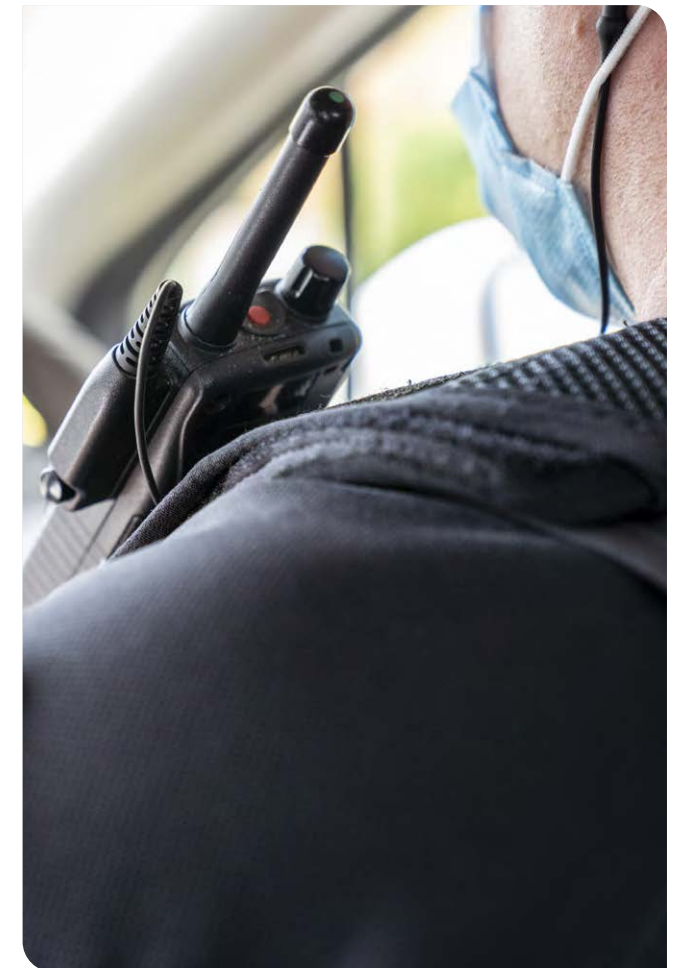
Since March 2020, the number of DVPNs has tripled monthly, as officers, legal advisors and partners have received training

on how to apply for them and use them successfully. This has resulted in a hugely positive response from victims and stakeholders who have seen Essex as leading the way. Importantly, better internal resourcing has also led to much more effective monitoring and as a result we have seen a significant increase in prison sentences for breaches of the orders

The Commissioner has also invested heavily in perpetrator behaviour change programmes to confront and change dangerous behaviour before it can cause more harm. In Essex, this work is delivered by The Change Project. The Commissioner has provided £170,000 to deliver the programme which has had over 280 referrals in the last year and has been able to deliver a 95 per cent reduction in physical violence. This is important work and vital to driving down the number of people affected by domestic abuse in our county.

The success of this project led to a further investment of £219,000 by the Commissioner to provide additional capacity to deliver domestic abuse perpetrator change programmes to targeted communities including BAME, LGBTQ+ and rural communities in Essex. There are areas where research indicates that domestic abuse is underreported. The funding was also used to deliver training to front line professionals in order to prevent adolescent to parent violence.

Working through SETDAB we also developed and delivered a virtual awareness week to support the national "16 days of action against domestic abuse" campaign in November 2020. This included five daily webinars for partners, leafleting in local supermarkets and a media campaign. It resulted in more than 8,000 engagements on social media and activity across the week drove views on the partnership website up over 300 per cent. Our specialist domestic abuse service providers reported an increased volume of contacts during the period, demonstrating that the action was successful in encouraging more people to seek support.



The image shows a group of approximately seven people standing in a doorway, their forms rendered as dark silhouettes against a bright, teal-tinted background. The scene is viewed from inside a dark space, looking out through the opening. The background shows a building with a chimney and some foliage. The overall mood is somber and serious.

TACKLING GANGS AND SERIOUS VIOLENCE

Violence in our communities affects us all; the vulnerable who are groomed into a life of crime, the families living without a loved one, the victims of drug driven crime and all of us in wider society who want to live free from the fear of violence.

Reducing violence in our communities and the impact of gangs and drug driven violence is important for all of us. In Essex we were one of the first counties to develop a Violence Reduction Unit or, as we have called it in Essex, our Violence and Vulnerability Partnership. The Partnership, which is chaired by the Commissioner, has tested and trialled a range of interventions in recent years and through careful evaluation has developed a strategic approach that is delivering significant results in the fight against violent crime.

Working together, the Partnership closely aligns activity to prevent violence and protect the vulnerable with strong, robust enforcement activity.

Across Essex the wider strategic approach includes:



Identifying and tackling organised crime gangs, county lines and drug supply.

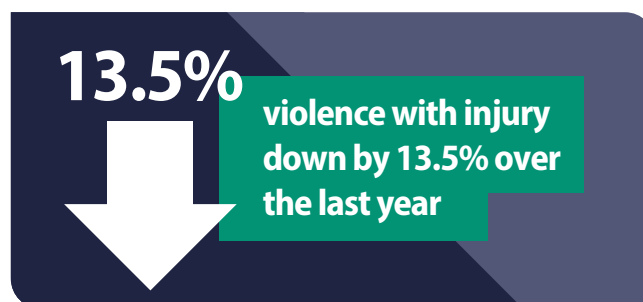


Delivering a proactive, robust local enforcement programme in partnership with communities.



Reducing the risk of young or vulnerable people being exploited by gangs and help those involved in gangs to break away.

This approach has started to turn the tide of violent crime in Essex with violence with injury down by 13.5% over the last year. This is a very positive result and while partly driven by the COVID-19 restrictions, which have been in place over the last year, it also reflects the trend we had started to see prior to COVID-19 of a gradual reduction in the growth of violent crime leading to an overall reduction.



As the Partnership has continued to develop, so has our understanding of the specific nature of the problem we collectively face and importantly how we can intervene to reduce the risk to young people by breaking the business models used by county line gangs, which has such a devastating impact in our county.

We now know the profile of those in Essex who use drugs and whose activity fuels the violence that goes hand in hand

with drugs. This has allowed us to develop interventions to focus on users, reinforcing to them the real cost and impact of their activity to society.

Through the development of a serious problem profile we now have a much better understanding of the small number of individuals who cause disproportionate levels of harm in our communities. How they act and importantly how we can identify them early and tackle the behaviour, is key in preventing them from affecting our communities. Our work in Accident and Emergency Departments is just one example of where this level of insight has led us to develop an early intervention by trained youth workers. This has proven to be very successful with most young people engaged continuing with ongoing support. The ability to target the right people, in the right way and at the right time is enabling us to change the course of these young people's lives and prevent future violence happening.

This targeted approach has also been successfully used through the integration of safeguarding officers within Essex Police's specialist gang enforcement teams. These safeguarding officers work with partners to support young or vulnerable people who are swept up in enforcement activity against higher up county line gang members. This approach provides the opportunity, where appropriate, to reach out and stop a young or vulnerable person falling further into a life of crime.





While these individual examples provide a flavour of the innovative and effective interventions currently underway, the real strength of the approach over the last few years has been the integrated and system wide strategy that this broader partnership has been able to deliver. By taking a holistic view of how we work together to support young and vulnerable people and reduce violence, we can spot opportunities to intervene early, to make a difference and stop people falling through the gaps. Just one example of this has been health workers who support young people leaving care. Through this work it has been identified that programmes to provide specialist input into health provision in schools, in particular to health nurses, would help identify early those at risk and empower these people to influence the at risk young people they come into contact with.

Since the start of our Partnership approach in 2017-18 we have embraced our collective responsibility to tackle violence in our communities, support those at risk of being exploited and create the communities we all want to live in. Having spotted this trend early, the Partnership has been well positioned to benefit from the government's increased funding and focus on this vital area. This has enabled us to learn, to innovate and most importantly to collaborate. As a result, we know what works in our communities, we know what we must do together and the effort that is required to see this through.

As a key member of the wider Partnership, Essex Police has played a central role in the development of this work. Over the last year they have also redeveloped and strengthened their own capacity to provide robust enforcement action against gangs and county lines.

A key development was the creation, in July 2020, of the Serious Violence Unit (SVU). The Unit uses an intelligence led approach to target gang leaders and County Lines. They have also boosted evidence gathering capacity which has resulted in an increase in convictions and sentences. The Unit takes a broad approach to tackling gangs and is supported by expert drug witnesses who can provide timely expert advice to support prosecutions and a dedicated legal resource to target gangs through civil injunctions.

Between the 1st April 2020 and the 25th March 2021 the work of the SVU has resulted in 288 arrests, 268 people have been charged so far, £300,082 of cash has been seized and £598,000 worth of drugs. The success of the unit has led to further investment and growth being planned for 2021-2022. This will be funded from increases in the local policing precept and central government funding.



Over the last two years the Partnership has also recognised the importance of building broad capacity within our communities, particularly within our voluntary and community sectors. Through targeted funding we have been able to foster a strong and robust network of organisations that provide a wide range of interventions in local communities across the county from youth clubs, boxing sessions, to after school sport activities for at risk children. These deliver an ongoing level of capacity that reduces the risk of young people falling into a life of crime.

One example of a group that has benefited from this support is Changing Lives which was set up in Harlow in 2018 to raise children's awareness about the dangers of gangs and gang activity. The group uses a mix of physical activities and wellbeing programmes to prevent young people from getting involved in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

The introduction of safeguarding officers in 2019 and 2020 provided a stronger focus on vulnerability, supporting those people who are being exploited and leading to several successful charges for Child Trafficking and Compulsory Labour of Adults. A child victim navigator also works within the team to provide specialist care and support to victims of trafficking and exploitation.

The safeguarding officers and the victim navigator role (designed to help victims understand the process and access relevant support) have helped Essex Police protect and safeguard victims of modern-day slavery and trafficking and helped build stronger prosecution cases. This has led to three separate charges, two for child trafficking and one for adult forced labour under the Modern-Day Slavery Act and demonstrates the impact of this new approach.

The extra investment has also helped improve the enforcement approach, with increased focus on identifying, targeting and prosecuting those gang leaders and County Lines. This new focus has led to more County Lines being dismantled and fewer restarting again after being targeted.

A key area going forward for the SVU is to work through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit to target and reduce the drug user market in Essex, thus reducing the scale and business model for gangs and county lines. Extra investment has also been agreed for 2021-2022 that will result in a further 30 officers joining the Unit. This will lead to a further increase in proactive operations against gang leaders, more offenders brought to justice and more assets seized.

Another area of significant focus within our fight against serious violence and gangs is the work we are doing to bring the perpetrators of rape and serious sexual assaults to justice, and ensure victims get the help and support they need. Over the last year we have seen a 9.6% reduction in the number of reported rapes. We have also seen a significant increase in the number of rapes within a domestic context with 43% of all reported rapes now domestic.

Over the year the force has continued to focus on engaging and supporting victims, building strong prosecution cases, ensuring evidence available digitally is used effectively and investing in more capacity and strong collaboration with partners such as the Crown Prosecution Service. As a result of this focus the number of cases solved has started to increase with 15% more cases solved. While this is still significantly lower than we would want it to be it is a clear sign that the strategy is starting to work.

Several significant initiatives have made a difference this year. The introduction of a victim feedback panel in partnership with our commissioned services, a victim closure document piloted in January that is completed at the end of a case, as well as a revision to the standard operating picture, have all come together to set a high standard and ensure teams involved in this important work are hearing and learning from the experience of victims.

Operational activity targeting high risk offenders has also been stepped up with regular enforcement activity helping to protect the most vulnerable and target the most harmful.

While this work shows that we are moving in the right direction the tragic death of Sarah Everard and the national outpouring of emotion that has happened since, has clearly show that there is much more we need to do in policing but also as a wider society to challenge and address male violence against women. No woman should feel unsafe in her own community, but the sad truth is that many do.

We need to create a society where women can live free from the fear of violence which has a real psychological and emotional impact and we have worked hard to encourage survivors of abuse and violence to come forward and when they have we have put in place specialist support services to help them cope and move on while at the same time robustly targeting offenders to break the cycle of violence against women.

Tackling male violence against women has been a key priority for the Commissioner and over recent years we have listened to the experience of victims and survivors and increased our funding for support services such

as counselling, advocacy, therapeutic support and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors. This advice and support from frontline services has been invaluable in helping to improve the services we offer and how we can prevent these crimes happening.

In the last year the Commissioner's team and Essex Police have worked with rape crisis centres, health and local authorities to develop Essex's first partnership sexual violence and abuse strategy which we outline in more detail under Protecting Children and Vulnerable People.

While progress is being made the number of rapes and sexual assaults that lead to a successful conviction are still woefully low. It is important that victims feel confident to report crime, that they are supported through the criminal justice system, that stronger investigations are undertaken, and we need more successful prosecutions. We must do better.

Domestic Violence Protection Orders are a valuable power to tackle offending early and in Essex we issue more of these than anywhere else in the country, but we should be doing more. Much more work is needed to protect them from harassment and abuse in public places and this will be a clear focus for us in coming years.





DISRUPTING AND PREVENTING ORGANISED CRIME

Working locally, regionally and nationally Essex Police take a hard line in pursuing organised crime groups, disrupting their activity, pursuing and prosecuting those involved and confiscating their assets.

Leading this fight are dedicated Serious Organised Crime units (SOC) based across the country and working with colleagues regionally and locally. These teams have recently grown due to the increased investment secured by the Commissioner through the local policing precept and national funding. They are also supported by a separate specialist money laundering team, a dedicated Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit and the Prevent and Protect Team who work with partners to reduce the risk of organised crime to the public.

While much of the work undertaken by these teams cannot be published, one outstanding success that has received publicity during the year is Operation Venetic. This was an international operation which resulted in the identification and disruption of several organised crime groups in the UK and in Essex. The dedicated specialist resources we have invested in Essex gave the force the capacity to respond proactively to the national intelligence secured under Operation Venetic and resulted in a significant number of arrests and seizures.

As well as this high profile work the force has successfully identified, targeted and closed down over 100 organised crime groups over the last two years, including the group responsible for the tragic death of 39 people found deceased in a lorry in Grays, on 23rd October 2019. After a successful international investigation by Essex Police the trial for these offences took place at the end of 2020/early 2021 and in January at the Old Bailey seven men were sentenced to over 92 years in total for their involvement.

While varying in size, complexity and operational sophistication an indication of the success of this work can be seen in the fact that since April 2020, the Serious


Organised Crime Unit have made 70 arrests, executing 56 warrants and charged 47 people. This has resulted in 183 KG of Class A drugs being seized, 40 KG Class B drugs, £2,693,500 in cash, 11 viable firearms recovered, 1161 un-harvested cannabis plants seized, and 29 people safeguarded.

Organised Crime Unit have made:

70 
arrests

183 KG 
Class A drugs seized

56
warrants

1161 
un-harvested
cannabis plants seized

47 
people charged

29 
people safeguarded

The launch of the Serious Violence Unit in June 2020, which is discussed in more depth in our section on tackling gangs, has also increased the identification of criminal exploitation of vulnerable victims by county lines and gangs, and this has led to improved identification of the organised crime gangs who are often the controlling influence behind the activity.

As well as strong, robust enforcement the Prevent & Protect Teams identify current and emerging issues relating to serious organised crime and proactively develop strategies to minimise their impact and tackle their criminal activity. This team focuses on cybercrime, fraud, modern day slavery and human trafficking, gangs and organised crime gangs. The team provide education and awareness to allow individuals and businesses to protect themselves from the

effects of serious organised crime as well as preventing people engaging in serious organised crime in the first place. Working with partners including Essex Chamber of Commerce, Barclays, Anglia Ruskin University and many more, the team deliver educational events to raise awareness of types of crimes that businesses and the public are susceptible to and how they can protect themselves from becoming a victim or a repeat victim of organised crime. Over the last year the team have undertaken over 194 individual engagements reaching over 800 people.

During the year the team have also developed the Essex Fraud Alert System (EFAS) which works with partners to utilise their own communication mechanisms to deliver advice and warnings about current scams and threats. This has been extended by providing monthly alerts to local magazines. Through these channels we estimate that Essex Police are able to reach over 370,000 residents with timely accurate fraud prevention advice. This proved to be very successful during the Covid pandemic where the force was able to react quickly to new and emerging scams.

The team have also developed work targeting romance fraud, supporting vulnerable fraud victims as well as working with key businesses to identify weaknesses in their processes and strengthen them against exploitation.





PROTECTING CHILDREN
AND VULNERABLE
PEOPLE FROM HARM

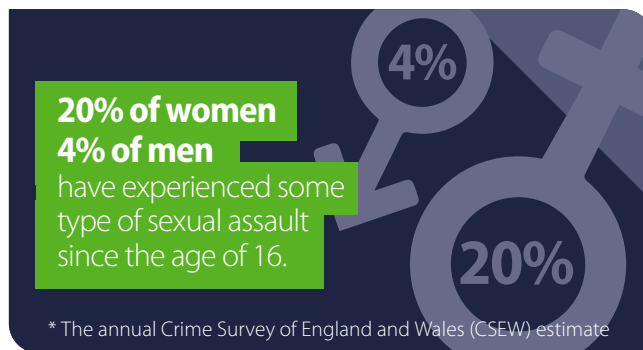
Protecting the most vulnerable in our society is a key responsibility for all of us and is rightly prioritised by the Commissioner and Essex Police. Work is undertaken with partners and across the force to ensure young and vulnerable people receive the support they need when they are the victim of crime, that perpetrators are identified, investigated and wherever possible prosecuted and, most importantly, that incidents are prevented from happening in the first place.

While young and vulnerable people can become the victim of any crime there are certain types of crime where they are particularly vulnerable. In the previous section on tackling gangs and serious violence, we highlighted a significant amount of work that is being undertaken to prevent the exploitation of young and vulnerable people by gangs.

Sexual violence and exploitation are also areas which can affect young and vulnerable people and as such, an area of focus for both the Commissioner and Essex Police. The annual Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) estimates that 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16. This suggests that 240,034 female and 48,007 men in Essex have experienced some type of sexual assault. The CSEW showed that around 83% of victims did not report their experiences to the police.

The CSEW indicates that the underlying volume of sexual abuse has not changed significantly since 2005. In Essex we have worked hard to increase the number of victims who are comfortable coming forward to report and to seek support.

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex has a responsibility to commission services to support victims of crime, which includes victims of sexual violence and abuse.



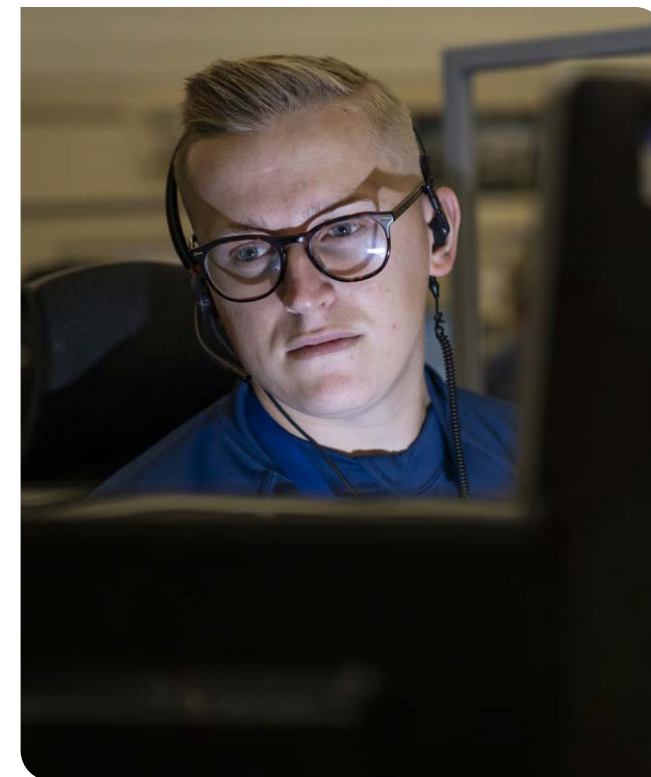
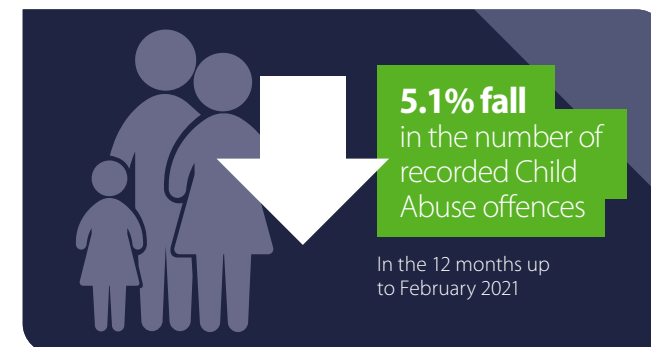
In Essex the demand has grown significantly in recent years and between 2018 and 2020 new referrals into support services increased by 29% (data provided by Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership).

NHS England and the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex jointly commission the Essex Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which is a safe place for victims of sexual assault to be examined, interviewed, and referred to further support services. They help victims understand their options and make an informed choice in deciding how they wish to proceed. SARC examinations have seen an increase in demand for their services by 16% between 2018 and 2020.

Essex is also one of only 5 local areas that successfully applied to receive devolved Rape Support Funding from the Ministry of Justice. This has brought commissioning services to a much more local level allowing the partnership, through the Commissioner, to tailor support to the needs of our communities.

Sexual violence happens both within coercive, intimate relationships and within wider family relationships. Data from Essex Rape Crisis Partnership shows that 23% of victims aged 16 and over had experienced sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner. An additional 33% of victims had experienced sexual violence and child sexual abuse within their family, perpetrated by a family member (predominantly father, stepfather, grandfather or brother).

In the 12 months up to February 2021 there was a 5.1% fall in the number of recorded Child Abuse offences (a reduction of 284) compared to the same period 12 months earlier. While this is a positive trend there is still much more that we can do to protect those affected by these crimes.



Our approach to tackling serious sexual violence is set out in the Essex Sexual Abuse Strategy. This was developed in 2020-2021 and brought together a range of stakeholders including councils, charities, support organisations, health partners and the emergency services. It aims to help organisations work together to prevent the volume and impact of sexual violence and abuse in Southend, Essex and Thurrock. It focuses on prevention, victim services, building awareness, partnership working across the criminal justice system as well as on perpetrators.

The ambition of the partnership is to ensure there is a clear understanding of consent amongst children and young people, that victims can access appropriate support, and the rate of sexual abuse charges and prosecutions increases as victims feel more confident in coming forwards.

There has already been some strong initiatives that have been developed through the Partnership including the First Responders project, which ensures victims of crime receive support within 24 hours from when they choose to report the crime and the Drink Aware initiative, which is a preventative programme safeguarding those who are most vulnerable during the night time economy, by working with local businesses, third sector agencies and Police.

While much more work is underway the development of the strategy marks an important step forward in providing a joined up and sustained approach to tackling sexual violence in our communities.

Another area of crime which can affect young and vulnerable groups in our society is Hate Crime. Essex Police and the Commissioner also work closely with partners to promote the reporting, prevention and prosecution of hate crime through the Hate Crime Partnership. Since 2018 the Partnership has been implementing the Hate Crime Prevention Strategy which aims to improve victim satisfaction with the response to hate crime across Essex by dismantling barriers to reporting hate crime, improving operational response to hate crime, and tackling hate crime by increasing public awareness and promoting positive values.



To achieve these objectives the Partnership focuses on; understanding and preventing hate crime, increasing reporting and support for victims and improving our shared operational response to hate crimes.

Together the partnership has worked hard over the year to increase the reporting of hate crime by building stronger relationships with communities, better collaboration with the Independent Advisory Groups and delivering more visible publicity, including a Crimestoppers' online hate crime campaign that reached over 1.2 million people and a multi lingual "Stop the Hate" leaflet.

Between January and December 2020 Essex Police received 3,600 reports of hate crime, a 14.4% increase on the same period the year before. Over the same period, victims support received nearly 1,000 referrals for victims affected by hate crime, including 90 children and young people.

These reports were supported by over 800 Hate Crime Ambassadors trained by Essex Police and 50 Hate Incident Reporting Centres spread across Essex. Awareness of Hate Crime in schools has also been a focus with programmes delivered to over 18,000 students since 2018.



**IMPROVE SAFETY
ON OUR ROADS**

More people are killed on our roads than from all other forms of crime put together. The four main driving offences – drug driving, drink driving, speeding and driving without a seatbelt - are without a doubt the biggest killers in our county.

As well as this direct impact, we know the road network is used by criminals and effective, robust policing of our roads can help to tackle other forms of crime such as organised crime groups, drugs and county lines, burglary and anti-social behaviour. During 2020, more than 150 people have been arrested by roads policing teams for a range of criminal offences including possession of weapons, burglary, violence, dangerous driving, possession with intent to supply class A drugs and high-end road traffic offences. This is an increase of over 30 arrests compared to the whole of 2019.

Working through the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, the Commissioner, Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service have continued to work hard to make our roads safer. Over the last ten years this has led to a significant fall in the number of people killed or seriously injured from 1,099 in 2010 to 641 for the 12 months to March 2021.

During the year the Partnership took the ambitious step to commit to its Vision Zero Strategy which builds on the success over the last ten years and aims to achieve zero people killed or serious injured on our roads by 2040. This will require a cultural change by communities, stakeholders and industry, acknowledging that everyone has a responsibility for safe use of the road network.

As in many areas of our lives, 2020 has presented unique challenges to policing on our roads. The first national lockdown drastically reduced traffic volumes and enabled the roads policing team to significantly increase proactive and preventative policing patrols. This increased proactive capacity helped tackle the high-end speeding offences which increased during this period while also improving the detection of drug driving offences.

Following the increase in the precept for 2020-2021 funding for an additional 24 officers was allocated to Essex Police. This growth provided further opportunities to increase the proactive focus on road safety and the disruption of those who use vehicles with criminal intent.



As part of the previous officer uplift programme in 2019 – 2020, an additional 17 Police Constables were posted to roads policing units. These officers have had a direct impact on the number of arrests, collision investigation, stop & search and intelligence submissions undertaken. This is expected to continue to develop as the officers gain further experience in their new role and the next cohort of officers start to make an impact.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the amount of traffic on our roads there has also, unfortunately, been an increase in the number of incidents involving motorcyclists. Overall, motorcyclists remain the most at-risk group, representing 23 per cent of all recorded collisions involving death and serious injury.



A study of collisions during the COVID period has also shown that while there have been far fewer collisions, the severity of those that have happened have been far higher, due mainly to increased vehicle speeds. Across Essex, we have seen a 15 per cent increase in vehicle speeds during the COVID-19 lockdown period - a worrying trend that has had a real impact on people's lives.

15 per cent increase in vehicle speeds
during the COVID lockdown period



In response, we developed a new strategy referred to as "Unpredictable Visibility" that delivers more visible roadside activity using detection devices such as TRUCAM. Enforcement takes place in specific locations identified to maximise the overall impact of the tactic within one district. The tactic has been shown to reduce reoffending rates by 10 per cent and provide a stronger impact on drivers caught in 30mph zones than the use of static speed cameras. To support this activity the Commissioner has recently approved the purchase of three LASERCAM 4 devices which also allow for activity at night.

During October 2020, two separate fatal road traffic collisions highlighted links to drivers who were driving stolen vehicles, with links to organised car theft. This led to the development of a successful target operation focused on high harm cross boarder criminality that is conducted in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, Havering & Dagenham.

A similar proactive approach has been taken with our approach to commercial vehicles. Historically, the focus with



these vehicles was upon mechanical defects and drivers' hours offences. Whilst these offences remain critical to improving safety on the roads, opportunities are now taken to gain valuable intelligence around organised immigration crime and wider threats to national security. Both proactive and reactive operations have been taken to target organised illegal immigration at Essex Ports and key service stations.

An important part of our approach to reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads is Community Speed Watch. This provides a valuable additional resource in the fight against speeding but also

builds community participation and is vital to achieve the cultural and societal change that is essential for us to deliver our ambitious goals of zero deaths in Essex by 2040. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant restrictions on our Community Speed Watch Groups with most groups having to suspend their activity based on national guidance. This was disappointing for the members of the groups and for us. We have worked hard during the later stages of the pandemic to develop ways to get as many groups as possible active again. A full review was conducted, and the scheme restarted fully in March.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The PFCC chairs a Performance and Resources Board that holds the Chief Constable and the force to account for the performance of the force officers and staff against the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

On a monthly basis, the current performance data of the papers and minutes of the Performance and Resources Board are published on the OPFCC website at:

www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/scrutiny/essex-police-performance/

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel receive a quarterly report on the progress against the seven priorities in the Police and Crime Plan.

Crime, including violent crime, has risen. This is in line with the national trend for crime increase. While some of this increase is due to the means by which Stalking & Harassment is now counted (following changes to Home Office Counting Rules in April 2018), and internal improvements that Essex Police has employed to ensure better Crime Data Accuracy (CDA), the trend is now stabilising.



Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Police Priority Indicators	12 months to March 2020	12 months to March 2021	Number Difference	% Difference	Direction of Travel
Priority 1 More local, visible and accessible policing	Percentage of people who have confidence in policing in Essex ¹	64.7	76.3	11.6	-	Improving
	<i>Confidence Interval²</i>	1.1	0.9			
	Confidence in the local police (CSEW) ³	46.9	48.6	1.6	-	Stable
	<i>Confidence Interval²</i>	4.5	3.9			
	Number of all crime offences	167,266	148,135	-19,131	-11.4	Improving
	Harm (Crime Severity) Score - All Crime ⁸	-	12	-	-	-
	Emergency response attendance within 15 minutes (urban) or 20minutes (rural)	77.2	82.6	5.4	-	Improving
Priority 2 Crack down on anti-social behaviour	Number of anti-social behaviour incidents	41,262	60,329	19,067	46.2	Deteriorating
	Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to ASB is improving (internal survey) ⁴	64.0	70.3	6.3	-	Improving
	<i>Confidence Interval²</i>	1.1	1.1			
Priority 3 Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse	Number of incidents of domestic abuse	42,767	41,518	-1,249	-2.9	Improving
	Number of repeat incidents of domestic abuse	20,776	19,165	-1,611	-7.8	Improving
	Percentage of domestic abuse arrests	12,232	14,214	1,982	16.2	Improving
	Number of domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Protection Orders (DVPOs)	198	224	26	13.1	Improving
	Number of domestic abuse offences solved	2976	3406	430	14.4	Improving
Priority 4 Tackle gangs and organised crime	Number of homicides ⁷	63	18	-45	-71.4	Improving
	Number of violence with injury offences (new definition from Nov 2017)	15,262	13,204	-2,058	-13.5	Improving
	Harm (Crime Severity) Score for Violence with Injury, Rape, Other Sexual Offences and Robbery of Property ⁸	-	7.4	-	-	-
	Number of Violence with Injury, Rape, Other Sexual and Robbery of Personal Property Offences solved	2,747	2,936	190	6.9	Improving
	Stop and search for weapons	3,348	2,257	-1,091	-32.6	Deteriorating
	Knife enabled crime ⁹	1,108	1,528	420	37.9	Deteriorating
Priority 5 Disrupting and preventing organised crime	Number of Organised Criminal Group disruptions ⁵	122	252	130	106.6	Improving
	Trafficking of drugs arrests	1,877	2,007	130	6.9	Improving
Priority 6 Protecting children & vulnerable people	Number of child abuse outcomes ⁵	323	319	-4	-1.2	Deteriorating
	Child abuse offences	5,547	5,458	-89	-1.6	
	Child abuse solved rate	5.8	5.8	0.0	-	Stable
	Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation Investigations	1,974	2,056	82	4.2	-
	Modern Slavery referrals made to the National Referral Model (NRM)	132	109	-23	17.4	Deteriorating
Priority 7 Improve safety on our roads	Number of driving related mobile phone crime on Essex roads ¹⁰	1,530	478	-1,052	-68.8	Improving
	Number of driving under the influence of drink and/or drugs on Essex roads	3,694	3,883	189	5.1	Deteriorating
	All people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road collisions ⁶	821	641	-180	-21.9	Improving

Note 1 - Question from the independent survey commissioned by Essex Police (Percentage of people who have confidence in policing in Essex). Results are for the period 12 months December 2020 versus the 12 months to December 2019.

Note 2 - The confidence interval is the range +/- between where the survey result may lie. This is mainly influenced by the number of people answering the survey. The more people that answer the survey, the smaller the interval range.

Note 3 - Crime Survey of England and Wales data are no longer available at Force level. Data are for the 12 months to March 2020.

Note 4 - Question from Essex Police's own confidence and perception survey (Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to ASB is improving). Results are for the period 12 months to December 2020 versus the 12 months to December 2019

Note 5 - Solved outcomes are crimes that result in: charge or summons, caution, crimes taken into consideration, fixed penalty notice, cannabis warning or community resolution.

Note 6 - 'Killed or Seriously Injured' (KSI) refers to all people killed or seriously injured on Essex's roads, regardless of whether any criminal offences were committed. 'Causing Death/Serious Injury by Dangerous/Inconsiderate Driving' offences (detailed on p.11) refers to the number of crimes of this type.

Note 7 - Please note that on Wednesday 23 October 2019 the bodies of 39 Vietnamese nationals were discovered in a lorry trailer in Grays. This tragic incident is reflected in the Homicide numbers.

Note 8 - Crime Severity Score measures 'relative harm' of crimes by taking into account both the volume and the severity of offences, and by weighting offences differently. Data are for the 12 months to January 2021.

Note 9 - The number of knife crime offences is an indicator of how effective Essex Police is at identifying knife-enabled offences, and is not necessarily reflective of the number of these offences that have been committed in the county. This is because the identification of these offences is reliant on the appropriate indicator being manually added to the crime record. A manual review of knife flags was conducted and missing flags were added retrospectively. Additionally a new data quality process was introduced in June 2020. Whilst this has enabled us to better understand knife crime in Essex, the process has consequently inflated the figures. As such, no inferences can be drawn as to the current trend.

Note 10 - The year on year data for driving offences related to mobile phones are not comparable due to a legal appeal (which occurred in October 2019). The current phone use legislation is awaiting clarification in the courts, which has been delayed due to the impact of COVID-19. Since the appeal, fewer offences have been prosecuted.

ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Structure

The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) was established by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (PRsRA) as a corporation sole with a separate body of Chief Constable, also as a corporation sole. Mr Roger Hirst was elected Police and Crime Commissioner on 5th May 2016 and appointed Jane Gardner as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

From 1st October 2017, the PCC also took on the governance of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, becoming the country's first Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). The governance arrangements of the PFCC and Chief Constable are included in the joint Annual Governance Statement.



The Role of the PFCC

The PFCC is responsible for the totality of policing in Essex. The public accountability for the delivery and performance of the police service is placed into the hands of the PFCC on behalf of the electorate of Essex. The PFCC provides the local link between the police and communities, working to translate the legitimate desires and aspirations of the public into action.

The PFCC is responsible for setting strategic direction and objectives of the force through the Police and Crime Plan and setting an annual budget, monitor financial outcomes, approve a medium-term financial plan and capital programme in consultation with the Chief Constable.

The PFCC is also responsible for the scrutiny, support and challenge of overall performance of the force including against the policing priorities to protect Essex and holds the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the force's officers and staff. He prepares and issues an annual report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel on performance against the objectives set within the Plan.

The PFCC has wider responsibilities than those relating solely to the police force, namely:

- Delivery of community safety and crime reduction
- Ability to bring together Community Safety Partnerships at the force level
- Allocate crime and reduction grants within Essex
- Duty to ensure that all collaboration agreements with other local policing bodies and forces deliver better value for money or enhance the effectiveness of policing capabilities and resilience
- Enhancement of the delivery of criminal justice in their area

The Role of the Chief Constable

The Chief Constable has day to day responsibility for financial management of the force within the framework of the agreed budget allocation and levels of authorisation issued by the PFCC. He is accountable to the PFCC for the delivery of efficient and effective policing, management of resources and expenditure by the police force. The Chief Constable is responsible to the public and accountable to the PFCC for leading the force in a way that is consistent with the attestation made by all constables on appointment and ensuring that it acts with impartiality.

The Chief Constable supports the PFCC in the delivery of the strategy and objectives set out in the Plan, and in planning the force's budget. In agreement with the PFCC the Chief Constable enters collaboration agreements with other Chief Constables, other policing bodies and partners that improve the efficiency or effectiveness of policing.

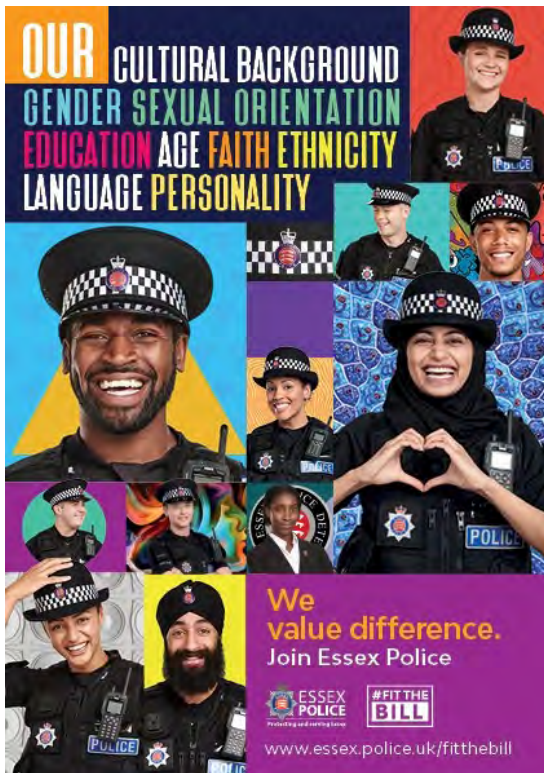
The respective responsibilities of the PFCC and Chief Constable as corporations sole are brought together in legal and accounting terms to form the 'PFCC Group'.



OUR LEADERSHIP AND WORKFORCE

Our Workforce

Essex Police's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2025 recognises that there is a unique life-enhancing power in genuine equality, greater diversity and dignity for all. One of the objectives within this strategy is to attract, recruit, progress and retain a more diverse workforce that better reflects our communities to improve confidence in Essex Police. In 2020, Essex Police launched a new #FitTheBill police officer recruitment campaign, 'We Value Difference', to attract more diversity into the force. Nationally, policing struggles to attract people who are black, Asian, minority ethnic, LGBTQ, female or who declare other protected characteristics. The 'We Value Difference' campaign tackles diversity and inclusion in its entirety and shows that it is our values (Transparency, Impartiality, Integrity and Public Service) which define us and that these values are what policing is most interested in.



Within the first 2 months of the campaign, the number of applications from black, Asian and minority ethnic men and woman double compared to previous recruitment campaigns. The campaign is changing the make-up of the force and making it more representative of the communities it services.

During 2020/21 our police officer strength numbers increased by 120 FTEs to 3,413.

The chart below shows the make-up of the workforce for the group as at 31st March 2021

Our Workforce - FTEs at 31st March 2021



- Police Officers - **3,413**
- Police Staff - **2,132**
- PCSOs - **101**
- Specials (headcount) - **101**

Essex Police is growing and during the 2021/22 year the Police Officer establishment will grow by 184 additional officers, 132 of which are as a result of the government's ambition to recruit an additional 20,000 Police Officers nationally. At the end of 2020/21 the force had recruited 44 additional officers above the established budget of 3,369 officers to assist in meeting the 2021/22 target of bringing the total number of officers to 3,553 FTE by March 2022.

The growth in officer numbers is expected to continue into 2022/23 as part of the final year of the government's national uplift programme.

In addition to making the most of our own workforce, partnership working and collaboration permeates throughout the force and is fully embedded within both force business planning and delivering services. The force uses a wide variety of different models and approaches to maximise the benefits working in partnership brings. The force collaborates with other forces at a national level, regional and local level and has joint operational and support directorates with Kent Police to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

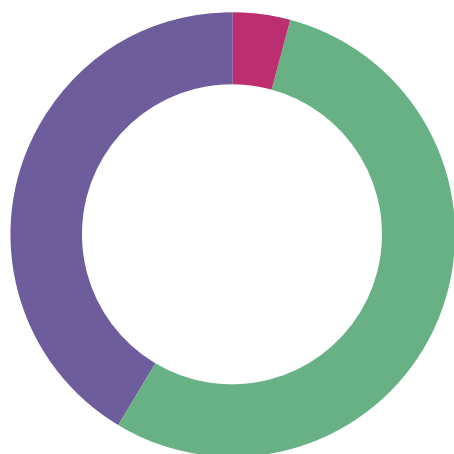
In recognising the respective responsibilities of the PFCC and Chief Constable all assets, liabilities and contracts are in the name and ownership of the PFCC whereas most police staff along with police officers and PCSOs are employed by the Chief Constable.

An ambitious programme of transformation is underway to help prepare Essex Police to meet the demands of today and the future involving, police estates, technology and an enhanced police operating model.

Where the Money Comes From

The chart below shows an analysis of the PFCC's key sources of funding in 2020/21 totalling £314.715m. The Home Office core grant paid to the PFCC accounted for 55% of the total funding. These grants and income raised by Council Tax funded the net revenue budget for 2020/21 of £314.715m.

Funding Sources 2020/21 (£m)



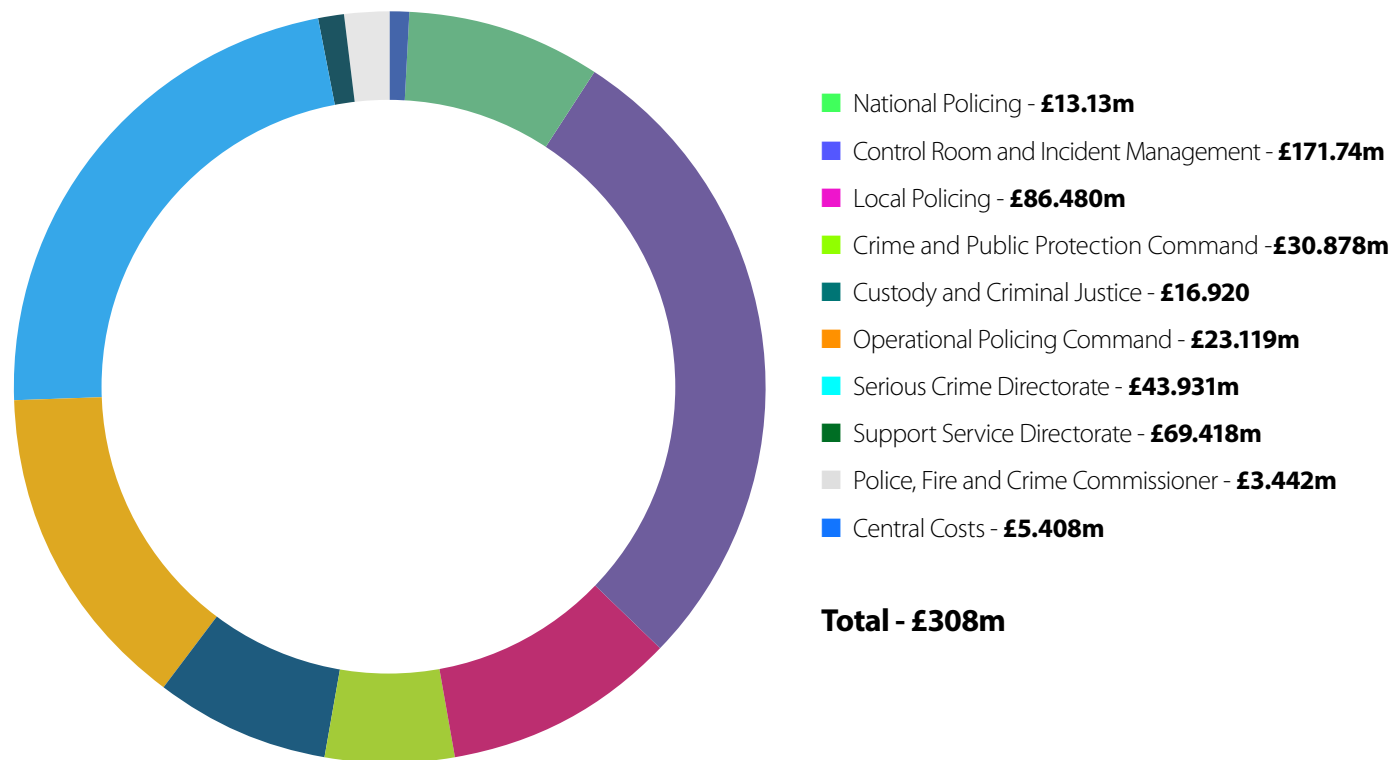
■ Specific Grants - **£13.13** ■ Home Office - **£171.74**
 ■ Council Tax - **£129.85**

Essex Police remains one of the lowest funded forces nationally being second lowest in 2020/21 and 4th lowest in receipt of government grant per head of population (Source: HMICFRS 2020 Value for Money Profiles).

Essex Police has a good track record of delivering cash and efficiency savings to maximise the benefit out of every penny. In 2020/21 £5.8m savings were delivered with £4.8m of these recurring annually and there continues to be an ambitious savings programme with £4.5m programmed to be delivered in 2021/22.

What the Money is Spent on

The graph below shows an analysis of the Group's net revenue expenditure totalling £308.008m.



2020/21 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Chief Constable has operational control of Police Officers, PCSOs and Police Staff (excluding OPFCC staff). The PFCC has strategic control of all assets, income, OPFCC staff and liabilities and is responsible for establishing most reserves and controlling all cashflow.

The tables opposite show budgeted and actual net expenditure. The net expenditure excludes depreciation, pensions liabilities, accumulated absences and other items which do not impact on the transfer to or from the General Reserve. These charges are included and accounted for in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) within the Core Financial Statements in accordance with proper practice. The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how the funding has been used and provides a link to the figures reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The net expenditure budget of £315.118m, as approved at the Police and Crime Panel in February 2020, included planned contributions of £0.402m from earmarked reserves. The actual position for the year was a surplus of £6.728m with £2.840m secured and transferred to earmarked reserves for specific operations and projects in 2021-22 and the remainder transferred to the general fund for future use. The main reason for the surplus was £11.692m of extra funding received from the government. As most of the income was received late in the year, the Force and PFCC was not able to utilise all of it in the period.



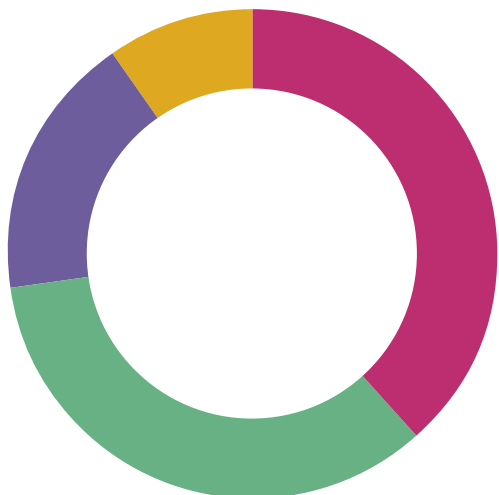
Group - 2020/21 Financial Performance	Budget (*)	Actual	Variance over / (under)
	£000	£000	£000
Employees			
Police Officer pay and allowances	187,159	192,613	5,454
PCSO pay and allowances	3,510	3,549	38
Police staff pay and allowances	87,749	86,474	(1,274)
Ill-health/medical pensions	4,506	4,184	(322)
Training	1,350	1,119	(231)
Other employee expenses	362	874	512
	284,637	288,814	4,177
Other Service Expenditure			
Premises	10,836	9,826	(1,010)
Transport	6,571	5,574	(997)
Supplies & services	37,958	36,295	(1,663)
Third party payments	6,584	9,031	2,447
	61,948	60,725	(1,222)
Gross Operating Expenditure	346,585	349,539	2,955
Income	(33,705)	(45,397)	(11,692)
Net Cost of Services	312,880	304,142	(8,738)
Other Expenditure / (Income)			
Interest (receivable) / payable	3	(17)	(20)
Cost of the disposal of fixed assets	30	-	(30)
Capital & other adjustments	2,205	3,883	1,678
	2,238	3,866	1,628
Net Expenditure	315,118	308,008	(7,109)
Sources of Funding			
Police grant	(115,509)	(111,680)	3,829
Formula funding grant	56,231	(60,060)	(3,829)
Council tax precept	(128,392)	(128,412)	(20)
Council tax support grant	(10,992)	(10,992)	-
Council tax freeze grant	(2,133)	(2,133)	-
Collection fund surplus	(1,458)	(1,458)	-
	(314,716)	(314,736)	(20)
(Surplus)/Deficit before Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	402	(6,728)	(7,129)
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(402)	2,840	3,242
Transfer to/(from) the General Reserve	0	3,887	3,887

(* Budget approved at Police Fire and Crime Panel on 6th February 2020)

Capital Expenditure

A capital investment programme amounting to £22.948m for 2020/21 was approved in February 2020 to maintain the infrastructure needed to support an effective and efficient police service. By March 2021 capital approvals had been updated to £12.330m reflecting decisions to reprofile schemes into future years. The £12.161m invested during 2020/21 is shown in the chart and table below.

Capital Expenditure 2020/21 (£m)



■ Estates - **£4.687** ■ IT - **£4.167**
■ Transport - **£2.153** ■ Other - **£1.154**

Estates

Of a total spend of £4.687m, £3.989m related to the major refurbishment of Chelmsford Police Station with the remainder primarily spent on the maintenance and refurbishment of the estate.

IT

Investment in IT of £4.167m included expenditure on:

- £2.764m for the annual refresh programme including replacement of servers, printers, docking stations, desktop and laptop computers along with the wider IT infrastructure and telephony network;
- £0.644m on digital interview recording infrastructure to replace current end of life solution and provide end to end business process support operationally; and
- £0.262m on additional remote working infrastructure for Covid-19

Transport

Investment in Transport of £2.153m included expenditure on:

- £2.097m for the annual fleet replacement programme; and
- £0.056m on maintenance of the Marine Unit's Rigid Inflatable Boat

Other

This includes investment in Tasers, both replacement of existing units and an uplift in the number of units (£0.221m), OPC laser scanners and handheld cameras (£0.257m), body armour replacement (£0.240m), automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) equipment (£0.203m) and the remaining spend on other specialist equipment.

The Force has a capital investment programme totalling £93m over the five year period commencing 2020/21. There are three main areas of spend, Estates, Transport and Information Technology. The programmed investment will support the vision and strategic priorities within the Police and Crime Plan. The main element of spend relates to Estates, with a forecast investment of £57m and Information Technology with a forecast investment of £23m. This requirement is linked to a historic lack of investment in the estate leading to ongoing requirements for modernisation and maintenance and includes a key project to significantly redevelop and modernise the Force HQ site in Chelmsford. The investment in IT relates to a wide range of national and locally led projects with the overriding objective to provide more efficient digital solutions for all aspects of operational policing and their support services.

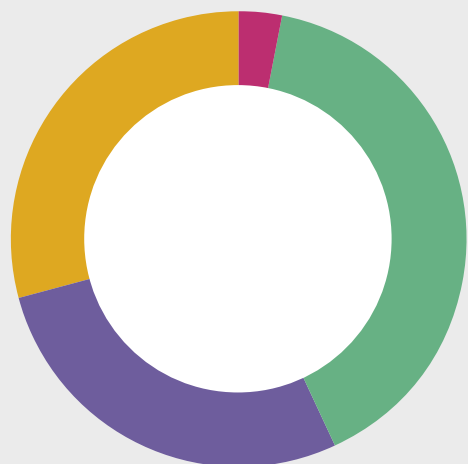


Capital Funding

Capital investment is funded from four main sources, primarily from capital receipts, government grants and contributions and revenue contributions. If capital investment exceeds these available resources the force can borrow to finance its capital investment providing it can demonstrate that it is complying with the Prudential Code of Practice which requires any borrowing to be affordable, prudent and sustainable. There was a need to borrow to finance 2020/21 capital investment but due to the level of cash resources held it has been possible to fund this spend from internal borrowing thereby avoiding interest payments. It is anticipated that there will be a need to externally borrow from 2021/22 onwards to fund future investment plans.

Capital financing resources applied in 2020/21 are shown below.

Capital - Financing Sources £m



Capital grant and other contributions - **£0.389**

Capital receipts - **£4.857**

Revenue contribution - **£3.83**

Borrowing - **£3.532**

Reserves

Our revenue reserves are key to the financial strategy of the force, ensuring that we have some resilience to cope with unpredictable financial pressures and long-term financial commitments. Specific earmarked reserves are held to manage known financial liabilities and possible risks.

The main elements of the PFCC's reserve strategy are:

- To establish and maintain a General Reserve position of approximately 3% of net revenue expenditure over the medium term;
- The PFCC will apply a prudent approach to reserves; and
- Earmarked Reserves will be created and held for significant events, change programmes and related costs. This includes transformation and saving programmes.

General Reserve

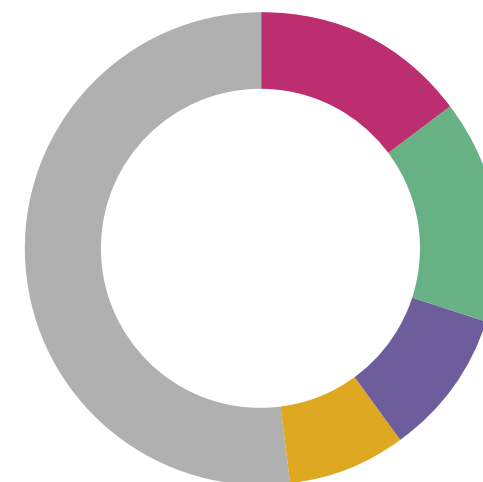
The General Reserve is held to provide a working balance to protect the force against unexpected cost pressures. This is particularly critical during uncertain times such as the COVID-19 pandemic where the force faces financial pressures in responding to the crisis and uncertainties around future funding.

The balance on the General Reserve at 1st April 2020 was £9.275m. During 2020/21 £1.527m was transferred to the general reserve when a Home Office special grant was awarded. The grant funded expenditure that had been incurred during 2019/20 to help the force investigate the discovery of the bodies of 39 men, women and children in a lorry trailer in Grays in October 2019. A further £2.357m was transferred as a result of the year's underspend resulting in a net increase of £3.887m to a balance of £13.162m at 31st March 2021 (4% of the 2021/22 budgeted net expenditure).

Earmarked Reserves

Included under the heading are earmarked reserves and future capital funding reserves as described in the CIES and further referred to as the PFCC's earmarked reserves and total £12.299m at 31st March 2021. Included within these reserves is £2.509m held but managed by third parties, an example of which is a reserve to hold receipts received through the Asset Recovery Incentive Scheme to fund crime reduction related expenditure. The level of reserves alongside the general reserve are shown in the chart below.

Useable Reserves as at 31st March 2021



General Reserve - **£13.162**

Operational Reserves - **£3.783**

Reserves held for specific projects - **£3.918**

Reserves held by Essex Police but managed as third party reserves - **£2.509**

Carry Forward Reserves - **£2.089**

Pension Liabilities

Accounting standards require that the total future liabilities for the cost of pension payments to past and present police officers and police staff are fully reflected in the Balance Sheet. Accordingly, the Balance Sheet figures included within the accounts (see note 42) includes net liabilities of £240.309m (2019/20 £150.015m) for police staff and £3,328.893m (2019/20 £2,849.818m) for police officers.

The statutory arrangements for funding the police officer deficit and the PFCC's arrangements for funding the police staff deficit, however, mean that the financial position of the PFCC remains sound.

Future Trends and Risks

Trends in Crime and the force's long-term vision

Emergency incidents are on an upwards trend, despite changes to demand during COVID-19 restrictions, and are forecast to continue to increase over the next few years. Victim based crime is forecast to increase over the next 4 years and although violence with injury incidents has reduced in the past 12 months they are forecast to increase in volume and therefore increasing the complexity of the investigation workload.

Prevention remains a key focus of the Force building on investment already made during 2019/20 and 2020/21 to strengthen activity to tackle the issues causing the most harm. The Force will continue working with partners to deliver against a Crime Prevention Strategy and whole system approach to enable the force to optimise its investment. The force management strategy aligns existing resources (both financial and people) to unlock additional capacity, capabilities and potential to prevent crime.

Despite the Force growing, with its allocation of the additional 20,000 officers nationally and investment from increases in council tax, Essex Police has a good track record of delivering cash and efficiency savings to maximise the benefit out of

every penny. In 2020/21 £5.8m savings were delivered with £4.8m of these recurring annually and there continues to be an ambitious savings programme with £4.5m programmed to be delivered in 2021/22. This is in the context of funding challenges from being one of the lowest funded forces in the country.

Current and emerging risks and mitigation

There remains financial uncertainty over the medium term with the originally anticipated three year comprehensive spending review, expected to provide some certainty over funding over the medium term, being replaced with a one year funding settlement for 2021/22. The short term nature of annual funding settlements makes it difficult to plan for the medium and long term with any certainty.

With the detrimental impact of COVID-19 on government finances this is expected to result in significant funding challenges to Essex Police and partners with the potential withdrawal of non-statutory services and these challenges are likely to impact public services for some years to come.

COVID-19 is also impacting funding through the Council Tax, with lower than projected increases to the council tax base and reduced collection rates compared to assumptions previously built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy. There has been financial support from central government in regard to loss of income caused by COVID-19 over the course of 2020/21 but it is not clear to what extent support will continue into the next financial year.

The mitigation to these funding challenges will be the continuation of the work to review services and drive out efficiencies and cashable savings, this includes the review of the Essex Police estate to generate capital receipts to fund other vital capital investment and reduce annual revenue estate running costs.

In addition to the risks around future funding the following are strategic risks that the force and the PFCC is currently facing which are likely or almost certain to have a major impact:

- **Uncertainty regarding future funding levels** – this creates a risk that the PFCC will not be able to set a balanced budget. This risk may be realised due to an imbalance between the resources available from central government grants, precepts, recharges and other sources and the demands placed on the Force and service budgets by the public, central government, inspectorates etc. COVID-19 legacy will have a significant impact on the availability and distribution of public funding, as well as on levels of taxation set and received going forward;
- **Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (EMSCP)** - Cost will continue to escalate due to the continuing delays of the national ESMCP and the Emergency Services Network in delivering a credible, comprehensive, and fit for purpose communications solution;
- **Reduced External Forensic Capacity** – Challenges relating to capacity of external providers to meet national policing needs for forensic analysis;
- **Failure to deliver the local business case for joint governance of Police and Fire and Rescue Service as well as wider collaboration across Seven Forces** – this may lead to the lost opportunity to realise cashable and non-cashable savings as well as other potential benefits.

EQUALITY ACT 2010

Annual Governance Statement Summary

The PFCC and Chief Constable produce an Annual Governance Statement which is published in full at www.essex.pfcc.police.uk. Below is a summary of the governance arrangements in place and the current governance issues being addressed.

Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values by which the work of the PFCC is directed and controlled and the activities through which the Commissioner accounts to and engages with the community. It enables the PFCC to monitor the achievement of their Police and Crime Plan and to consider whether these objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services, including achieving value for money.

Good governance core principles

- ✓ **Focusing** on the purpose of the PFCC and Chief Constable and on outcomes for citizens and service users;
- ✓ **Ensuring** that both the PFCC and Chief Constable perform effectively in clearly defined functions and roles;
- ✓ **Promoting** the values of the PFCC and Chief Constable and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour;
- ✓ **Taking informed,** transparent decisions and managing risk;
- ✓ **Developing** the capacity and capability of the PFCC to be effective, and
- ✓ **Engaging** stakeholders and making accountability real

Governance Structure



- Maintenance of Essex Police
- Ensure it is effective and efficient
 - Complies with law and proper standards
- Public money is safeguarded
- Secure continuous improvement



Roger Hirst



Chief Constable

- Maintains the Queen's Peace
- Direction and control of the force's officers and staff
- Responsible for supporting the PFCC in the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan



Ben-Julian Harrington
Chief Constable

Performance and Resource Board

- Financial and performance monitoring

Strategic Board

- Strategic governance, oversight of Essex Police's strategic transformation programme, Medium Term Financial Strategy and capital programme.
- Primary adviser to the PFCC and Chief Constable in respect of strategic decisions

Joint Audit Committee

- Advise the PFCC and the Chief Constable according to good governance principles
- Adopt appropriate risk management arrangements

Significant governance issues 2021-22

Within the Annual Governance Statement significant issues are addressed and progress against last years significant issues are reported on. For the current year the following significant issues have been identified.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Demand Management</p> | <p>Comprehensive Spending Review 2021</p> | <p>Public confidence and victim satisfaction</p> | <p>Blue light collaboration</p> |
| <p>Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic</p> | <p>Government's PCC Review</p> | <p>Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2024</p> | |