

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2022

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

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1.0 Purpose of Report

This paper provides an update on the progress of the Acquisitive Crime Electronic Monitoring Pilot and it's anticipated future growth.

2.0 Recommendations

There are no recommendations, the Board is asked to note the contents, key issues and opportunities identified.

3.0 Executive Summary

Essex Police has been part of the Acquisitive Crime Electronic Monitoring Project since September 2021. The project is led by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and Probation with the Priority Offending Team (POT) in Essex taking the lead for the force.

The three key benefits of this project for policing are Crime Mapping, Routine External Access Requests (EAR) and Live Location Data. Currently there are 22

monitored subjects in Essex, with 15 of them currently wearing a Global Positioning System (GPS) monitor. There have been 50 proximity alerts received by Essex Police. When an alert is received this is reviewed and the alert assessed. To date there have been two alerts which indicated that there was a high likelihood that the suspect was involved in the crime.

Initial indications suggested that approximately 100 offenders could be monitored in Essex under this project, however the increase in monitored offenders has been slower than anticipated.

At present the workload of reviewing the alerts is manageable within the Priority Offending Team however, if the number of subjects being monitored increases then continuing to provide a high level of service may become a problem.

As the project becomes business as usual, the use of the EAR within investigative teams will be further promoted within investigative teams. The POT is able to provide expert guidance and advice as they are based in local policing districts and regularly attend tasking and briefings.

Changes within Probation have led to several subjects who should be candidates for GPS monitoring not having the condition on their licence. However, the partnership between Probation and Essex Police continues to be strong and it is anticipated that instances of subjects being missed for monitoring will decrease as learning is embedded within Probation.

The Acquisitive Crime Electronic Monitoring Project has been running smoothly since it began, and it is expected the project will continue to grow. With more subjects included on the project it is anticipated that there will be more opportunities to use the GPS data to link suspects to or rule suspects out of investigations.

4.0 Introduction/Background

As part of the Government's ambition to reduce neighbourhood crime, the project focuses on GPS tagging adult offenders convicted of serious acquisitive crime¹ serving sentences of 12 months and over. This is because acquisitive offenders have amongst the highest levels of reoffending.

Offenders are managed through the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Framework to enhance collaboration between Police and Probation. Electronic monitoring is now a compulsory licence condition for qualifying offenders.

The project is being rolled out nationally in a phased approach, with the project live in six police force areas from April 2021 and a further thirteen went live in late September 2021 which included Essex.

¹ Serious Acquisitive Crime also known as Neighbourhood crime includes Burglary, Robbery and Vehicle Theft offences

The application and administration of this project is the responsibility of the MOJ who have responsibility for ensuring tags are fitted and in dealing with any breaches.

The project provides three key benefits for policing:

- Crime Mapping – On a daily basis, the location of acquisitive crimes in Essex is mapped against the movement of offenders. Where an ‘alert is identified, this is further validated, and the Investigating Officer will be notified. An alert is considered where an offender is tracked within 100m of the crime location during the offence window.
- Routine External Access Requests (EAR). The daily movement of offenders is only assessed against acquisitive crimes. Where a justified policing purpose is identified, officers and staff can request the whereabouts of an offender in relation to other matters through an EAR. This could prove or disprove the offender’s presence at an incident
- Live Location Data (Through probation only) There is capability for probation to locate an offender in live time where necessary and proportionate e.g., a high-risk missing person or wanted for an offence.

The project is overseen within Essex Police by the Priority Offender Teams and briefings have been carried out with investigative teams to raise awareness of the project and it’s benefits to Policing.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

As of 29 March 2022, there are currently 22 monitored offenders subject to this project in Essex with 15 currently wearing a GPS tag². Since launching on 29 September 2021 there have been 50 proximity alerts reported to Essex Police by the MOJ.

All these alerts have been reviewed in detail and investigated by the Electronic Monitoring (Buddi) Intelligence Co-ordinator and the POT.

Following investigation, alerts have been separated into several categories.

- Offender’s home address is in the vicinity of a crime location and no evidence they travelled to the scene or were involved in the crime
- Evidence indicated they were travelling past with no opportunity to commit the offence identified
- Inaccurate or too wide crime time/date window recorded to indicate involvement

² Eligible offenders may not be monitored if the tag has not been fitted or they have been recalled to prison.

- Two proximity alerts however have been identified with a high likelihood of their involvement in the incident.
 - One incident was initially reported as a burglary, enquiries identified that it was not as initially reported, and the victim was unsupportive. Evidence showed the offender clearly spending significant time at the premises involved. Offender recalled to prison for other licence breaches
 - A second proximity alert on 7 January 2022 still under investigation relates to a theft of a running motor vehicle outside a shop. Crime mapping data being correlated to ANPR hit locations shows a strong likelihood the offender was in the stolen motor vehicle as it proceeded through various cameras. Priority Offender Team officers gathered sufficient evidence to enable arrest and the offender is currently RUI with an anticipated future charge.

The number of offenders being subject to monitoring on this project has grown over the past six months. The first phase pilot indicated that Essex could expect to have in the region of 100 offenders being monitored when fully embedded. Initial indications show this increase has been slower than anticipated as outlined in implications below.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

All proximity matches are overseen by the Priority Offender Team. Reviewing an alert can take as little as fifteen minutes up to several hours work. In the case of the theft of motor vehicle incident outlined above, two officers carried out substantial investigative enquiries to ensure that the evidence was well presented and understood by the investigating officer. This alert was recorded as taking more than 13 hours of officer time. Whilst there is capacity within the POT to carry out this function in addition to their core Integrated IOM role, a cohort reaching 100 offenders as expected may impact the ability to continue a high level of service to both areas.

There is a continuing need to raise awareness of the External Access Request (EAR) process with investigating teams. That said, all offenders within the scope of this project are managed by the POT under the IOM banner. This provides a mechanism for the POT to flag and review all investigations that are linked to an offender and to consider whether the EAR is necessary. The POT's are locally based and able to provide expert knowledge and advice to investigating teams

The responsibility for applying for tags and ensuring they are included as part of a licence condition sits with the MOJ and Probation. Administration of tags is contracted to the tag provider by the MOJ. The recent reunification of Probation services has presented some challenges (staffing) however we continue to work together to resolve, and this is improving.

There are currently gaps where the POT's identify offenders who should have had a mandatory GPS tag applied upon release from prison but have not.

Fortunately, the partnership with probation at all levels from head of service to practitioners is strong in Essex and a recent IOM Workshop in March 2022 was attended at all levels from both Police and Probation. It is anticipated that these instances will begin to reduce as resourcing and knowledge improvements occur within probation.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

This project contributes towards the priorities of improving support for victims of crime and reducing business crime, fraud, and cybercrime.

This project is a partnership with the MOJ and Probation. The monitoring of offenders released from prison overall contributes to the long-term reducing reoffending strategy. Within this project, acquisitive crime offender's whereabouts are monitored to either deter or detect instances of reoffending leading to an anticipated reduction in victims of crime.

Crime location mapping enables Police to identify the presence of monitored offenders at acquisitive crime locations. This impacts on improving the confidence of both businesses and victims of crime.

6.2 Demand

As outlined previously, there is capacity at this time to meet demand of this project.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

There is a risk that a significant increase in the number of offenders being managed will impact the capacity of the POT to service both IOM and effectively review all matches. This could be mitigated by providing a more limited evidential review of matches however this would create additional work for the Officer in the Case.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

There are no equality or human rights implications identified.

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

There are no health and safety implications.

7.0 Consultation/Engagement

No consultees involved in this paper.

8.0 Actions for Improvement

As identified earlier, a key area for improvement is ensuring that all offenders who are subject to mandatory GPS tagging are correctly identified and selected upon

release from prison. This is the responsibility of probation however impacts the communities of Essex and ability to match whereabouts to crime locations. The strong relationship between the probation service across Essex and Essex Police has enabled professional conversations and a shared vision to achieve this goal moving forward. At this current time, the POT identify offenders released from prison who have not been given mandatory GPS monitoring licence conditions and this is addressed with probation colleagues. It is too early to say whether this picture is improving.

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

The Local Policing Support Unit are engaged in the National Acquisitive Crime Electronic Monitoring working group. There is a clear vision from the Policing Minister and the MOJ that this project will continue to grow and expand into additional types of Electronic Monitoring. Alcohol monitoring tags³ are already in place in parts of the country. Additionally, expanding the list of offences that are eligible for mandatory GPS monitoring will increase the breadth of offenders being monitored. Whilst this area of business is a MOJ tool, it is clear the benefits and subsequent impact this will have on Policing.⁴

³ [Offenders to be banned from drinking to cut alcohol-fuelled crime - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/offenders-to-be-banned-from-drinking-to-cut-alcohol-fuelled-crime)

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