

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 127-23

Classification: Not Protectively Marked

Title of report: Specials Recruitment Plan and Delivery

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide

Report by: Jenny Brouard (Citizens in Policing Commander)

Chief Officer: Superintendent Naomi Edwards

Date of report: 18th July 2023

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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the allocation of up to £10,000 for the Special Constabulary to support a continuous recruitment campaign across the county which would ensure our Special Recruitment Ambassadors can attend recruitment and engagement events to increase the number of Special Constables in Essex. This would meet the aims of the PFCC's Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024, which has the ambition to increase the number of Special Constables and is also in line with the Essex Police Plan on a Page, which has the ambition to have a Community Special Constable in every parish.

2. Recommendations

That the PFCC approves the allocation of £10,000 from the PFCC's carried forward budget from the 2022-23 underspend to fund the services set out in section 3 that are required to support the campaign strategy.

3. Background to the proposal

Within the Police and Crime Plan, the ambition is to grow the current establishment and have a Community Special Constable in every town and parish. Due to the success of the regulars' Police Officer Uplift Programme, we have seen on average 10 Special Constables a month leave the Special Constabulary to become a regular Police Officer.

Now the uplift programme has come to an end, the proposal is to fully equip our Special Constables for each of our Local Policing Areas with a recruitment tool kit which comprises of a gazebo, banners, tablecloth and general merchandise to support the recruitment and growth of our Special Constabulary.

#MyOtherLife was launched 1 April 2017, which was a three-year recruitment campaign to support the PFCC's ambition to double the size of our Special Constabulary from 352 to 700 specials. This was a proactive campaign led by our Media Campaign Team, who attended weekly meetings with the Specials Command Team. The campaign included adverts in cinemas, live Facebook interviews, media coverage of shifts, ride alongs etc. During this period, we were receiving 150 applications a month.

During 2019, Media tried a different approach to attract an audience we had not reached yet. They employed an external advertising company to produce a new campaign and spent money on social media that would target suitable candidates. This was an expensive campaign and unfortunately was never really very successful.

In 2020, it was decided to launch #MyOtherLife Version 2. A big Media launch was planned at a venue in Uttlesford, with the PFCC, guests and media. There were new photos taken and these were all planned to be going onto the side of buses. The launch was planned for the end of March 2020 but obviously Covid got in the way. The launch was cancelled, there were no outreach opportunities and, although adverts appeared on buses, the country went into a series of lock downs.

Since 2020, there has been limited Media support for our campaign but nowhere near the level we saw during 2017 – 2020. Regular Uplift started in April 2020. We reached our highest number of specials in June 2021 with a command of 540 – these would have been applicants who had applied 7-9 months before at the end of 2020. Since June 2021, our Command size has reduced consistently with about 30 - 35% leaving to join our Regular Officers.

Over this time, we have requested a new Media campaign and highlighted our concerns at various levels and boards. Essex Police is actively recruiting, however the focus is often on Police Officers and Staff, and Specials can get lost in this message. Our campaign needs to target individuals who wish to volunteer, and this is a very different audience than those looking for paid employment.

A new Working Party has recently been established, with Media and the Specials Command represented, where we are looking at new ways to deliver a bespoke Specials Campaign. In the meantime, having the tools for our Specials to actively campaign at all their engagement events would certainly support in increasing Special Constable applications and interest.

4. Proposal and associated benefits

This proposal, if accepted, would support the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's commitment to enlarge the Special Constabulary by increasing the number of recruitment activities the force can undertake and their impact.

5. Options analysis

There are a number of options that have been considered, and we have recently set up a working party group, with the Specials Command and Essex Police Media Department represented, on how we can look at re-shaping a bespoke Special Constabulary campaign in order to attract a wide range of candidates. We also continue to work with the Essex Chamber of Commerce around recruiting Community Special Constables and encouraging businesses to sign up to our Employer Supported Policing Scheme.

A decision to do nothing would also be a possible option, but this would not support the Commissioner in fulfilling his pledge to increase the number of Special Constables within the county, which in turn builds public confidence.

6. Consultation and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken with the PFCC's Office and the Chief Officer Group.

7. Strategic links

The growth in Special Constable numbers is integral to both the Police and Crime Plan and Essex Police Plan on a Page. They support the delivery of both Plans and assist in the delivery of the Community and Engagement Strategy.

[Police and Crime Plan](#)

8. Police operational implications

Successful recruitment of Specials will make additional capacity available to the force and help strengthen the link between the force and local communities. Both would have a positive impact on operational policing. There are not direct implications on operational policing regarding the use of this recruitment activity.

9. Financial implications

The initial £10,000 is for specific costs to ensure all three Local Policing Areas within Essex Police Special Constabulary can support the ongoing recruitment campaign for Specials. There will be no other new costings as the Special Constables are volunteers and their mileage and expenses costs are already within the existing mileage claim budget set out by Essex Police and the Police Staff that support the Special Constabulary are already planned within the Essex Police staffing budget.

The £10,000 would be funded from the PFCC's carried forward budget from the 2022-23 underspend.

10. Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications, as all IT systems or hardware that have been agreed are with Essex Police IT Security and are compliant with GDPR.

11. Staffing implications

There are no direct staffing issues however, if the number of Specials applications increased, consideration would need to be given to have bespoke support from the Essex Police Vetting Department and Essex and Kent Business Services in order to process applications in a timely manner.

12. Equality and Diversity implications

This campaign would support the Commissioner's duty to develop clear and accessible information and encourage groups with protected characteristics to understand and engage with Essex Police and give them the opportunity to make a difference in their local community.

13. Risks and mitigations

There is no specific risk associated with this proposal, although not to spend this money could risk the Commissioner's ability to achieve the increase in the number of Special Constables recruited within the county due to the continuous campaign to recruit regular Police Constables that is leading to Specials leaving to join the regulars.

14. Governance Boards

The Commissioner's Corporate Management Team reviewed and discussed this proposal on the 24.7.2023. It was also discussed at a Chief Officer Group Meeting. The PFCC and Chief Officers would receive updates throughout the course of the year through the Performance and Resources Board and the Special Constabulary Review Board.

15. Links to Future Plans

Ensuring the growth of the Special Constabulary across the county delivers and supports the Communications and Engagement Strategy, which in turn supports the PFCC to communicate how the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan are being delivered. Listening and engaging effectively with our residents and stakeholders will help to develop future versions of these plans for the PFCC.

16. List of Background papers and Appendices

Please see below the last Specials Performance and Resources Board paper



5.0 Specials Report
1st November 2022 -

Report Approval

The report will be signed off by the OPFCC Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign: ...*DHorsman*.....

Print: ...Darren Horsman - Deputy Monitoring Officer

Date: ...18.8.2023.....

Chief Financial Officer

Sign 

Print: Janet Perry

Date: 18 August 2023

Publication

Is the report for publication?

YES

NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (*Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable*)

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If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet? YES
NO

2. Of Appendix? YES
NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

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Date redaction carried out:

Treasurer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign:

Print:

Chief Executive/Treasurer

Date signed:

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 18/08/2023

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....
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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: