



PFCC
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
2022-2023



POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

+ Roger Hirst welcoming new recruits to Essex Police



This year has marked an important milestone in the development of Essex Police as we have completed our multi-year growth programme. Since 2016 we have increased the annual investment into Essex Police by £86m. This has come from a combination of increased central government funding, local funding through the police precept and efficiency savings.

Since 2016 we have increased the annual investment into Essex Police by **£86M**



As a result of this increased investment the Chief Constable has been able to recruit an additional 905 officers, taking the total officer establishment to 3,755. Extra staff and more equipment have also been funded to ensure officers are supported to be out in their communities with the right level of resources to do the job. This is the largest the force has been in its 183-year history.

Throughout the year we have seen a downward trend in long term crime levels. This trend has become more evident since the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020-2022 passed through our crime data. Overall crime is now below the level seen leading up to the pandemic with a 2.4 % fall between 2019-2020 and 2022-2023. Since 2019-2020 is the last pre-pandemic figure it provides a useful baseline for comparison.

The small reduction in overall crime is supported by the continued reduction in anti-social behaviour and burglary, significant reductions in homicide and early signs of a long-term reduction in violence against the person offences. These patterns, taken together, show a long-term reduction in traditional forms of crimes.

While traditional forms of crime have reduced over the last five years and all crime has reduced compared to the pre-pandemic levels the five-year trend in reported crime has increased. This is because new offences have been introduced, such as stalking and harassment, and changes have been made to how crime is recorded. Essex Police has been rated as outstanding for its crime data accuracy, so we know that the reported level of crimes gives us a good picture of what is happening in communities.

The changes to reporting levels are particularly marked in domestic abuse cases. Since 2016 we have seen a significant increase in the recording of domestic abuse.

This has been mainly driven by increased levels of reporting and the positive decision by the government to introduce new offences of stalking and harassment as well as controlling and coercive behaviour. These are awful crimes that have devastating effects and need to be stopped. Nobody should have to go through this and the more we can do to prevent these forms of crime, the more people can live their lives free from fear.

We have worked hard, through the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board, to encourage victims to come forward, to try new innovative approaches to preventing perpetrators from causing harm, while continuing to firmly prosecute those that offend. This year the cumulation of this hard work has started to show with a 9.1% reduction in the number of cases compared to the year before. This is a small but significant start and one that goes against the national trend.

Another continued area of sustained effort has been on our fight against drug driven violence. Essex Police has continued to build its capacity to tackle hardened criminals, organised gangs, drug dealers and county lines, successfully targeting and closing entire lines. This work is supported by our Violence and Vulnerability Unit which works in partnership across Essex to prevent young and vulnerable people from getting involved in gangs. This is having a positive impact with 8,000 children, young people and young adults reached each year in communities and direct interventions.

During the year we have also successfully secured £1.183m from the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund to make our streets safer, especially for women and girls. Together with local match funding from Councils and wider partners we have been able to invest £2.002m in four projects across Essex where local communities have told us they feel unsafe. Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey, Witham Town Centre, the Greenstead area of Colchester and

Colchester Town Centre will each receive funding for a range of activity to improve the physical environment, promote community involvement, and create safer spaces. This includes investment in redesigning walkways, lighting, CCTV and activities to strengthen community engagement, including with schools, young people and businesses.

This is the **largest** the force has been in its **183-year** history



The force, together with partners, has also been working hard to prevent violence against women and girls. A new tool has been developed to help Community Safety Partnerships understand areas of concern in their communities and focus their prevention activity. The force has also continued to improve the way sexual offences are investigated, learning from national programmes to work together better with criminal justice partners and ensure victims are at the heart of how they investigate. This has led to a 6.3% reduction in the number of sexual offences committed against females compared to the previous year and a 2.1% increase in the number of cases solved. While there is still much more to do in this area these are important steps in the right direction.

While there remain many challenges to face, at the end of the year we have a police force in Essex that is bigger than it has ever been before. We have strong and productive partnerships with councils, voluntary

services and communities. We are well positioned to get crime down and have a committed force which has the tools available to it to make this difference.

As we continue to progress and improve how we keep our communities safe, I recognise the huge commitment and difference that our team in Essex Police makes, and the many partners who support and help them to deliver. I would like to thank each and every one of them for their contribution and in particular the Chief Constable and his senior team for their ongoing commitment, openness and transparency. They make a difference every day and on behalf of the people of Essex I want to thank them for their hard work in making our communities safer.



ROGER HIRST
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

PFCC
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

+ Roger Hirst and the Deputy Chief Constable at the launch of the ASB Hotspot Pilot in Brentwood



CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

The Chief Constable addressing new officers at a police pass out parade



Essex Police has grown to be the biggest it has ever been with an establishment of 3,755 officers, 2,427 police staff, 102, police community support officers and a strength of 327 special constables. Public trust in the force remains high with 75% of people in Essex stating that we do a good or excellent job.



Most importantly, reported crime is down by 1.3%. Essex Police continues to put the new and existing resources at its disposal to best use to protect and serve the county. This report relates to the first full financial year since the introduction of the 2022 - 2025 Essex Police Force Plan, which is focused on victims, violence, vulnerability, and visibility.

The number of officers, funded by both central Government and the local precept, increased during 2022/23 with this being the final year of the national police uplift programme. By March 2023, we had an officer establishment of 3,755, an increase of more than 900 since 2016.

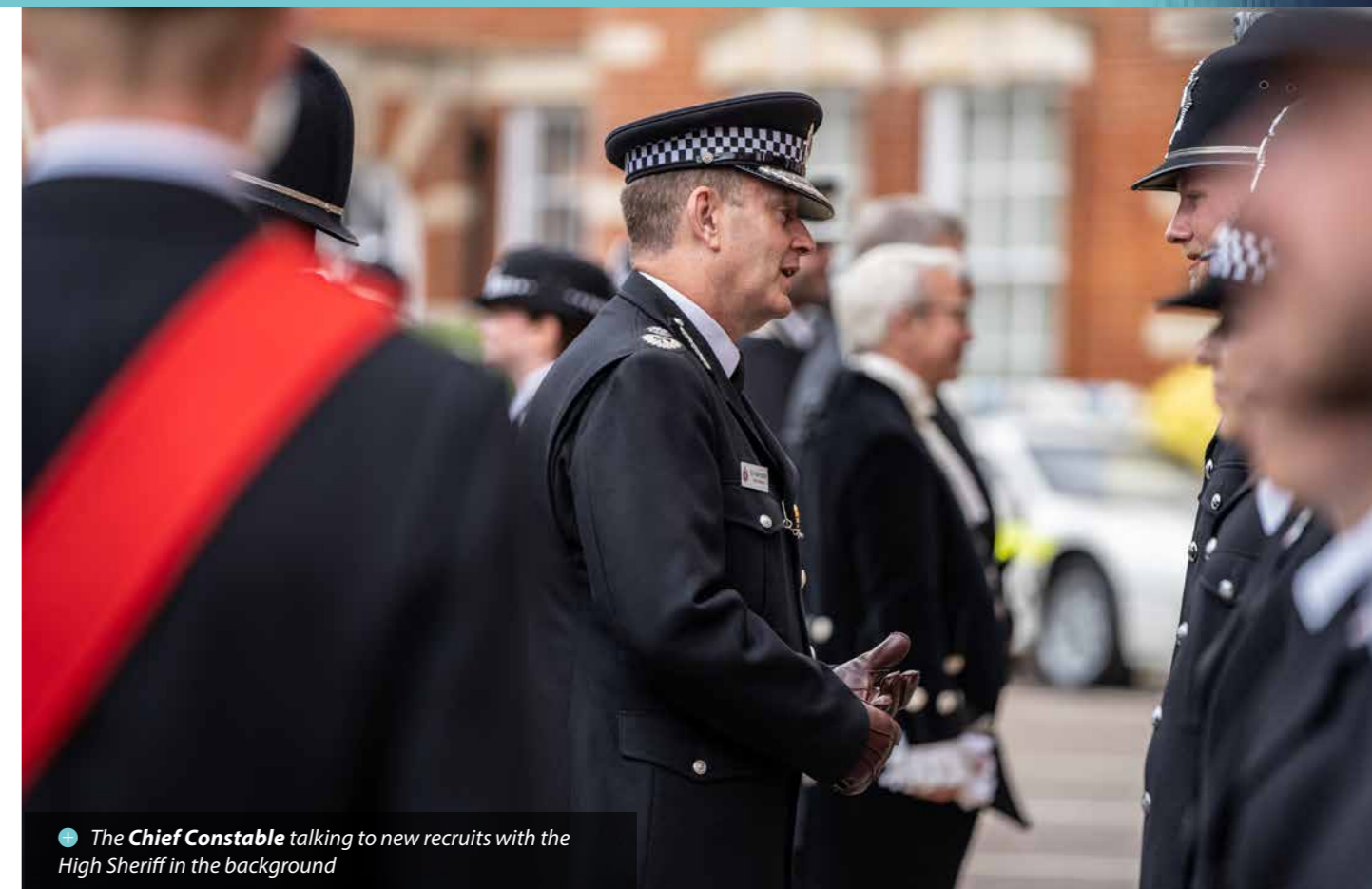
My attention now moves towards ensuring that we have an effective recruitment pipeline and focus on retention and progression, developing the capabilities of the hard-working officers, staff and volunteers within the force to ensure that they are appropriately skilled, equipped and enabled to serve the public to the best of their abilities.

As Chief Constable, I am immensely proud to lead such hardworking officers, staff and volunteers who are dedicated to delivering justice to every victim of crime and who work tirelessly to maintain the trust and confidence of the communities that they serve, help people and keep our county safe. In March 2023 Baroness Louise Casey published a report into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service which exposed significant failings across the organisation which contributed to a culture of misogyny, racism, homophobia and sexism. It is moments like this that make us stop and think as events like these, linked to policing nationally, impact on public confidence across the UK. Although the public's confidence in Essex Police remains high this is not something that I am complacent about and I am ensuring that we understand

our own position against the review findings by adopting a strategy of listening and understanding as well as undertaking an assessment of our practices and processes. Working in conjunction with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) our approach to ensuring that we behave with integrity, demonstrate strong commitment to ethical values and respect the rule of the law is explained within the Annual Governance Statement that is included within this Statement of Accounts.



2022/23 has been a particularly busy year with the need to respond to Just Stop Oil protest activity at petrochemical distribution sites in West Essex and petrol station forecourts. Protestors began a prolonged period of disruptions on 1st April 2022 using a wide range of tactics simultaneously across multiple sites in Essex. There were further protests in October 2022 including two protestors who scaled the Dartford River Crossing bridge causing it to be closed for two days. The cost to the force was £5.6m. I worked together with the PFCC to approach the Home Office for Special Grant funding and to date the Home Office have reimbursed £4m with the force having to fund the remaining £1.6m.



The Chief Constable talking to new recruits with the High Sheriff in the background

Following the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, we played a key contributory role to the events leading up to and including her funeral. This included an extensive security operation at Stansted airport, demonstrating the key role and effectiveness of the Force in providing its contribution to the Strategic Policing Requirement.

We have had many successes during the year but one that has demonstrated exceptional teamwork has been the soft launch of our Rapid Video Response (RVR) in the Force Control Room. RVR is having an immediate positive impact, as an additional and effective way of providing a fast time, face to face consultation with an officer, in response to the needs of our victims of Domestic Abuse. This is seeing

faster response times and more effective evidential capture at the initial point of contact, supporting victims to report offences being committed against them. This is just one project that has demonstrated how we effectively use our financial resources to improve outcomes for victims of crime.



THE FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



The Group Accounts for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex and Essex Police explain the Group's financial activity during the financial year 2022/23, as well as the financial position at 31st March 2023.

The accounts are prepared and presented in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting In the United Kingdom 2022/23 (the Code). The Code is prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), which have been adopted as the basis for public sector accounting in the UK.

RESULTS FOR 2022/23

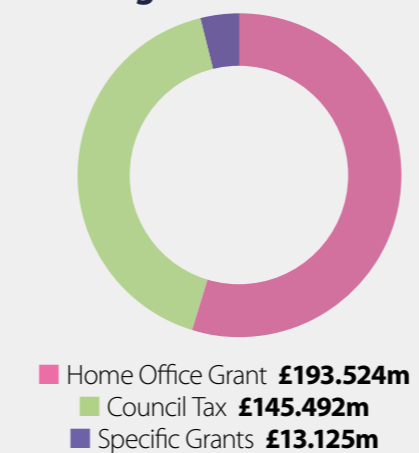
The Group ended the year on a funding basis, with a deficit of £3.030m funded with a transfer of £1.606m from earmarked reserves and £1.424m from the General Reserve. This deficit excludes adjustments for items required by regulation for the accounting basis, as shown on page 49. The main adjustments are for the cost of pensions, the cost of capital, and other minor technical accounting adjustments. The reconciliation of the adjustments is summarised on page 80 of these accounts.

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

In 2022/23 we continued to receive the Essex share of the additional government funding for the Police Uplift Programme, to increase the number of police officers across the country by 20,000. The PFCC increased the precept by 4.79% (£9.99 per year on a Band D property) resulting in an overall level of resources for 2022/23 enabling us to deliver against the ambitions set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2021 to 2024, the Government's Beating Crime Plan, meeting our legal responsibilities, and our national obligations to the Strategic Policing Requirement and helped make a significant difference to our ability to positively affect the communities we serve.

The chart below shows an analysis of the PFCC's key sources of funding in 2022/23 of £352.141m. The Home Office core grant paid to the PFCC accounted for 55% of the total funding. These grants and income raised by council tax were used to fund the net revenue expenditure for 2022/23 of £355.171m, with the balance of £3.030m funded by a transfer of £1.606m from earmarked reserves and £1.424m from the General Reserve.

Funding Sources 2022/23



One of the challenges we face is, that nationally, Essex is the second lowest funded force (funding from grants and council tax) per head of population and has the lowest spend per head of population (Source: HMICFRS 2022 Value for Money Profiles).

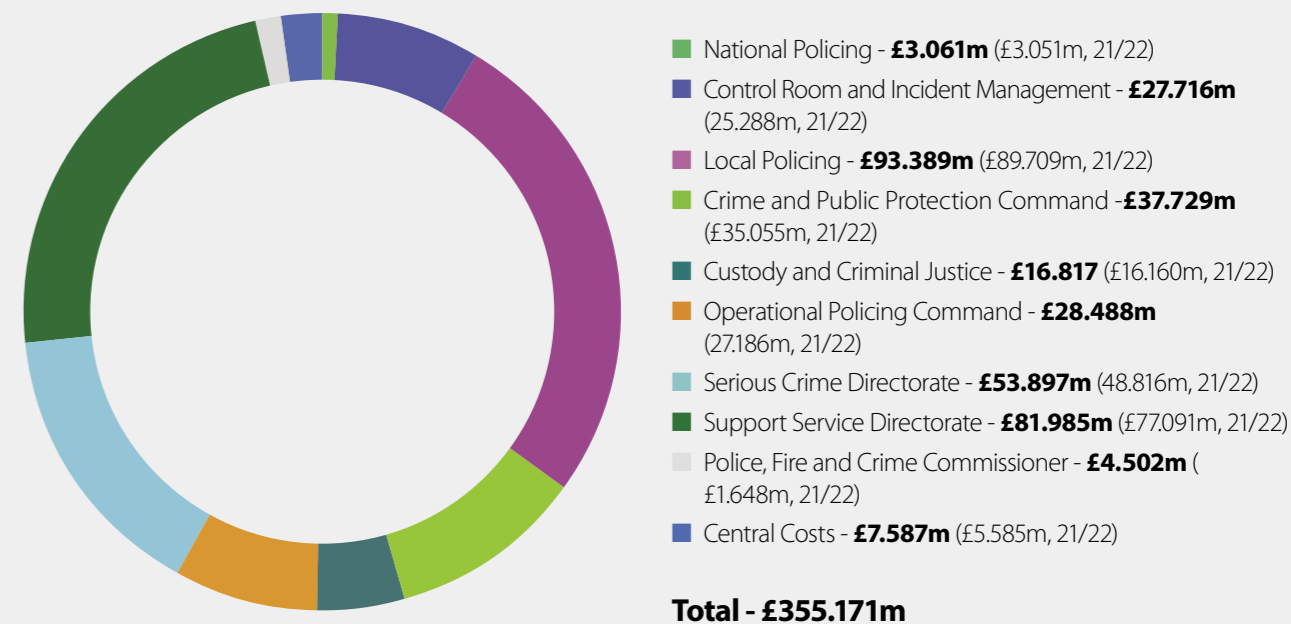
Essex Police has a good track record of delivering cash and efficiency savings to maximise the benefit out of every penny. In 2022/23 £4.6m savings were delivered with £3.8m of these recurring annually, and there continues to be an ambitious savings programme with £12.2m programmed to be delivered in 2023/24.



+ One of our Special Constabulary out on patrol

WHAT THE MONEY IS SPENT ON

The graph below shows an analysis of the Group's net revenue expenditure.



FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

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 police staff along with police officers and PCSOs are employed by the Chief Constable. The Chief Constable in turn has operational control of police officers, PCSOs and police staff. While the PFCC has strategic control of all assets, income, PFCC staff and liabilities and is responsible for establishing most reserves and controlling all cashflow.

The table below shows budgeted and actual net expenditure, with the latter also included in note 9 (Expenditure and Funding Analysis). 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 accounting practice. The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how the funding has been used and provides a link to the figures reported in the CIES.

The net expenditure budget of £351.694m, as presented at the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in February 2022, was funded by £352.2m from Budgeted general grants and council tax, with the balance of £0.506m being transferred to reserves (£0.712m to earmarked reserves and £0.206m from the General Reserve). The actual position for the year was a deficit of £3.030m. The total contribution from the General Reserve for the year was £1.424m, and there was a £1.606m contribution from earmarked reserves.

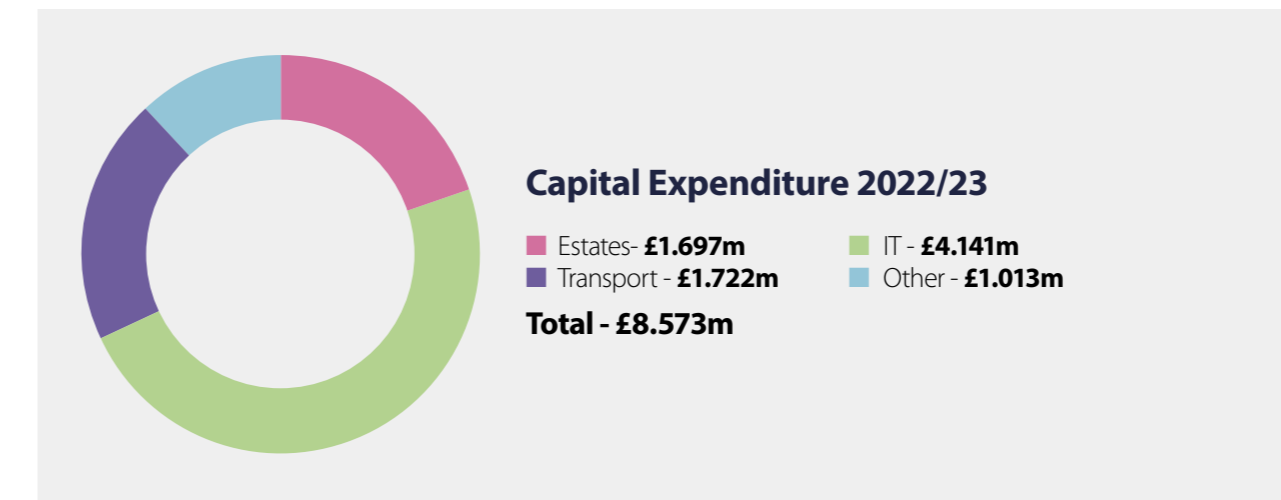
The main contributing factor to the overspend was the need to respond to the Just Stop Oil protest activity at petrochemical distribution sites in West Essex, petrol station forecourts and other sites across Essex which began on 1st April 2022. Large numbers of protestors disrupted multiple sites using a range of tactics. In total this cost Essex Police £5.584m. The PFCC and the Chief Constable worked together to seek financial assistance from the Home Office which resulted in £4.003m of funding being received to part cover the costs. This additional income and the fact that Essex Police attracted an additional £1.020m of funding from the Home Office for overachieving on the national police uplift programme, resulted in significantly more income to cover part of the associated overspends against budget.

	2022/23				
	Original Budget	Virements	Current Budget	Actual	Variance over / (under)
Employees					
Police Officer pay and allowances	215,313	4,678	219,991	223,599	3,607
PCSO pay and allowances	3,615	(124)	3,492	3,455	(37)
Police staff pay and allowances	93,899	1,537	95,436	93,497	(1,939)
Ill-health/medical pensions	4,247	480	4,726	4,735	8
Training	1,852	157	2,009	1,926	(82)
Other employee expenses	547	138	685	803	118
	319,473	6,866	326,339	328,015	1,676
Other Service Expenditure					
Premises	9,611	24	9,635	10,842	1,207
Transport	6,204	112	6,316	7,390	1,074
Supplies & services	42,688	489	43,177	43,708	531
Third party payments	7,874	94	7,968	10,182	2,214
	66,378	719	67,096	72,122	5,026

	Original Budget	Virements	Current Budget	Actual	Variance over / (under)
Gross Operating Expenditure	385,851	7,584	393,435	400,137	6,702
Income	(35,006)	(9,443)	(44,449)	(50,621)	(6,172)
Net Cost of Services	350,845	(1,858)	348,987	349,516	530
Other Expenditure / (Income)					
Other Expenditure / (Income)	52	0	52	(417)	(470)
Capital & other adjustments	796	5,279	6,075	6,072	(3)
	849	5,279	6,128	5,655	(473)
Net Expenditure	351,694	3,421	355,114	355,171	56
Sources of funding					
Police grant	(126,537)	-	(126,537)	(126,537)	-
Formula funding grant	(66,987)	-	(66,987)	(66,987)	-
Council tax precept	(143,276)	-	(143,276)	(143,276)	-
Council tax support grant	(10,992)	-	(10,992)	(10,992)	-
Council tax freeze grant	(2,113)	-	(2,113)	(2,113)	-
Collection fund surplus	(2,275)	-	(2,275)	(2,215)	59
	(352,200)	-	(352,200)	(352,141)	59
(Surplus)/ Deficit before Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	(506)	3,421	2,914	3,030	116
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	712	(2,318)	(1,606)	(1,606)	(0)
Transfer to/(from) the General Reserve	(206)	(1,102)	(1,308)	(1,424)	(116)

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

A capital investment programme of £17.889m for 2022/23 was presented to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in February 2022, to maintain the infrastructure needed to support an effective and efficient police service. By March 2023 capital approvals had been increased to £18.510m. However, the force has experienced delays in the delivery of the capital programme including problems with supply chains, shortage of labour and other issues due to the on-going effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has also been significant slippage in delivery of the fleet replacement programmes due to issues with the National Vehicle Framework agreement and worldwide shortages of semi-conductor chips. Taking these factors into account, actual capital investment for the period only totalled £8.573m.



The estates capital expenditure of £1.697m, includes £1.105m on delivering the estates strategy, of this £0.586m was on the refurbishment of the site at Boreham. The remainder of the estates capital expenditure was primarily spent on maintenance of the estate.

The capital expenditure on information technology of £4.141m includes expenditure of:

- £2.414m 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;
- £0.870m on the roll out of laptops to local policing teams; and
- £0.481m on the migration of a data centre

The capital expenditure for transport of £1.722m, included £1.666m for the annual fleet replacement programme.

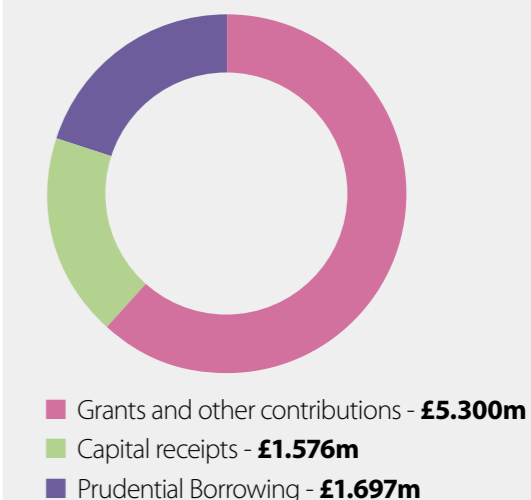
Other capital expenditure of £1.013m includes investment in body armour of £0.443m, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) of £0.287m, and other capital equipment to support operational policing of £0.283m.

CAPITAL FINANCING

Capital resources available to fund capital investment come from four main sources, primarily from capital receipts, revenue contributions and government grants and contributions. Where capital investment exceeds these available resources the PFCC can borrow to finance the capital investment providing we can demonstrate we are complying with the Prudential Code of Practice which requires any borrowing to be affordable, prudent and sustainable. There was a need to finance 2022/23 capital investment with £1.697m of prudential borrowing (In this instance this was internally financed and did not lead to external borrowing).

Capital financing resources applied in 2022/23 are shown below.

Capital - Financing Sources



The £5.300m of grants and contributions included £5.279m that was applied from the Future Capital Funding Reserve which is a revenue earmarked reserve to hold funds for this purpose.

RESERVES

The revenue reserves are key to our financial strategy, ensuring that there is 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:

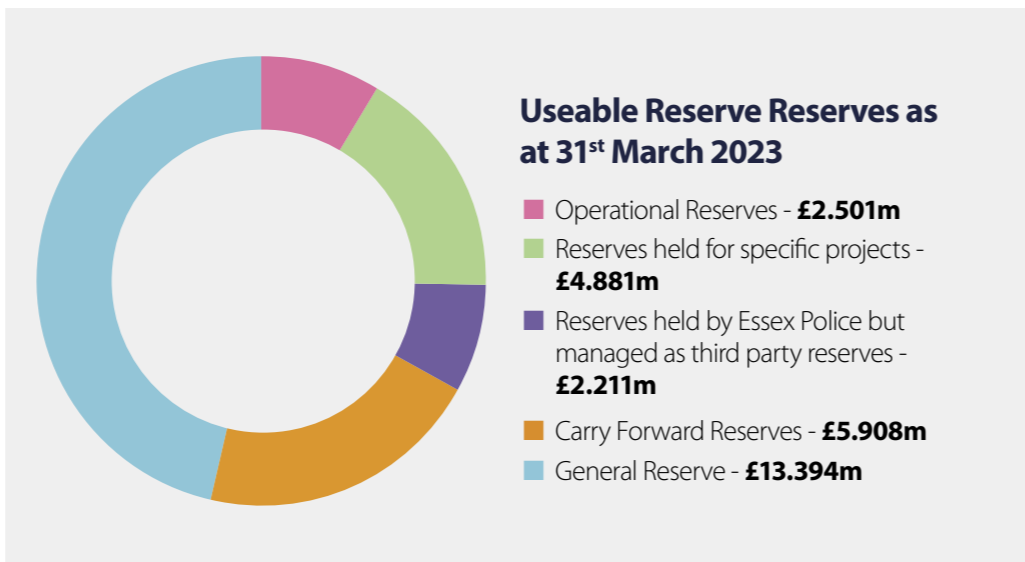
- To establish a General Reserve position of 3% of net revenue expenditure by the end of 2024/25 and to then maintain the General Reserve at 3% by each year end, in the three following years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, for unknown and/or unforeseeable events;
- Earmarked reserves will be created to cover for possible known significant risks and future commitments;
- The PFCC will apply a prudent approach to reserves and risk management although this will be balanced with ensuring the public of today benefit from today's funding;
- The PFCC will take a long-term approach to protecting, maintaining and investing in all its assets supporting policing for the long term as well as short term;
- Reserves not required for the above purposes will be clearly identified as available for other discretionary opportunities; and
- The PFCC will where possible build up and maintain a level of reserves for investment, borrowing only where the life of the asset and economic environment make it the most efficient way of financing investment.

The General Reserve is held to provide a working balance to protect against unexpected cost pressures. The balance on the General Reserve as at 1st April 2022 was £14.818m. The 2022/23 net withdrawal from the General Reserve of £1.424m reduced the balance to £13.394m, 3.8% of net revenue expenditure.

Earmarked revenue reserves total £15.501m at 31st March 2023 (a reduction of £1.6m since 31st March 2022). Included within these reserves is £2.211m of monies held by Essex Police which are managed as third party reserves, mainly comprising of income originating from police seizures which the force has rights to retain, including receipts received through the Asset Recovery Incentive Scheme (ARIS) to fund crime reduction-related expenditure. The levels of usable reserves at 31st March 2023, are shown in the chart below.



Officers out on patrol



FUTURE PENSION PAYMENTS AND LIABILITIES

We are required under accounting standards to include the total liability of future pension payments in the Balance Sheet. There are statutory and contractual arrangements in place for funding these pensions.

Accounting standards require that the total future assets and liabilities in respect 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 43) include net assets of £95.734m (2021/22 net liability of £193.569m) for police staff and £2,209.838m net liabilities (2021/22 £3,297.849m net liability) for police officers.

The PFCC group has an agreed position with the pension administrator regarding the future liability provision. The statutory arrangements for funding the police officer pension liability and the PFCC group arrangements for funding any police staff pension deficit, therefore, mean that the financial position of the PFCC group remains sound. It should be noted that the police staff pension value actually reflects an asset for 2022/23, however this position can change annually.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The significant increase in inflation over the last year has had an impact on the cost of supplies and services and is expected to impact further during 2023/24. We have reviewed the impact of these pressures over the next two years and our sensitivity analysis demonstrates we will be able to manage the cost of supplies and services in the short-term. However, with staff being such a significant percentage of our costs, the impact is more likely to come from pay award increases affected by these rising costs. We must also factor in the programmed capital investment over the next five years to support the vision and strategic priorities within the Police and Crime Plan. An ambitious programme of transformation continues to help prepare us to meet the demands of today and the future, involving police estates, technology and an enhanced police operating model.

We will continue to consider the various impacts of our costs in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as we develop the budget for 2024/25. The MTFS reflects the impact of investment, cost pressures and efficiencies over five years, starting with the first year of the budget being developed. The MTFS we are currently developing considers the period 2024/25 to 2028/29. We have a detailed sensitivity analysis within the MTFS, and we will consider various scenarios, in order that we are able to act promptly to the pressures we might face.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I do hope that the readers of these accounts will find the information valuable and of interest and I would like to acknowledge and thank the Chief Constable's Corporate Finance Department for all the hard work that has gone into producing such a comprehensive set of accounts. I am also very grateful for all their hard work and support throughout the year, with the production of the budget, monitoring statements and updates to the MTFS.



Officer parading in front of friends and family

FURTHER INVESTMENT IN CRIME PREVENTION



Over the last seven years we have successfully increased investment in policing, to grow the force, increase visibility and accessibility of policing and help to prevent crime. Between April 2022 and the end of March 2023 a further £21.9m has been invested in frontline policing in Essex. Over the last seven years £85.9m has been invested. This has been achieved because of increases in central government funding, increases in the local policing precept and significant improvements in the efficiency of the force enabling more funding to be directed to frontline services.



15 + Officer out on patrol

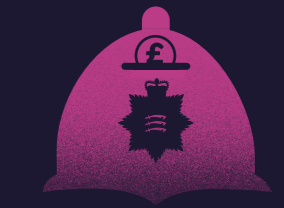
With this extra investment we have successfully undertaken the biggest police recruitment programme in a generation. By the end of this year, we had completed this programme, meaning there are 905 more officers in Essex Police than there were in 2016. In the last year 200 of those new officers have been recruited.

Essex Police now has an establishment of 3,755 officers, making it the biggest it has been in its 183-year history. This is well above the additional 800 that was committed to in the 2021-24 Police and Crime Plan.

The increase in officers has provided a significant boost to neighbourhood policing, with the focus on driving down crime in our communities. Significant investments have been made in Town Centre Teams with 90 new officers located in key areas across the county, in our Community Safety Teams and in Children and Young People Officers.

Various operations have been implemented across the county including Operation Showboat in Clacton where high visibility patrols have been deployed in the town centre after it was identified as an ASB hotspot following reports of low-level criminal damage, street drinkers and public order offences. During 2022-2023 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) were given to 14 youths offending in the area.

Further investment in partnership working is also continuing, with Essex Police implementing a 'whole system' approach to reducing crime, which encompasses earlier intervention and diversion, to help break cycles of crime. This means by working with partners such as Safer Essex, Community Safety



A further **£21.9m** has been invested in frontline policing in Essex

Between April 2022 and the end of March 2023

Partnerships and voluntary services Essex Police can take a long-term problem-solving approach that actively addresses the root causes of issues such as domestic abuse (DA), ASB and Violence Against Women and Girls. A key example of this type of initiative was Operation Union in Southend over the summer of 2022. Due to its success in preventing crime and bolstering public confidence, it will return in 2023 working once again with partners, providing a visible policing presence in the Southend area to engage, respond and proactively deter offending at identified hotspots.

In March 2023 the government launched their National Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Action Plan and Essex Police was chosen as one of 10 forces to receive investment in hotspot policing. The Action Plan built on many of the good initiatives tried in Essex. Essex experienced a 31.4% decrease (9,618 fewer) in ASB incidents for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022. There was a decrease of 49.8% ASB reports in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to December 2019 (20,919 fewer incidents). The 2019 figure is used as it avoids the impact on crime recording from the national COVID lockdowns.

To ensure the downward trend in ASB is maintained, a newly formed Local Policing Support Unit Strategic Coordination Group was introduced earlier in the year to coordinate and direct specific mobilisations of Police Volunteers, Specials, Accredited Persons and Active Citizens (over 1,500 people) across all 10 policing districts. These mobilisations help drive down ASB by providing high levels of visibility in targeted areas to support Neighbourhood Policing Teams. They are shown to have a significant positive impact on levels of ASB. This initiative also supports the positive impact the Community Safety Engagement Officers (CSEOs) have had in increasing levels of engagement with local communities since they were first introduced in 2020.

This positive, proactive and targeted approach to preventing crime is starting to have an impact and there was a decrease in all crime rates of 1.3% for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022. When compared to the 12 months to December 2019, all crime decreased by 2.9%; this equates to 4,933 fewer offences. In our latest Crime Harm Data, the force has seen a slight increase from 14.1 to 14.5. (These scores are based on the level of harm caused by each offence and is calculated by using the default length of sentence and offender would receive). These are measures for the 12 months up to January 2023 and the 12 months over the same period a year before. This shows us that, while all crime is starting to go down, we continue to see a shift in the types of crimes being committed from lower-level offences to those that would attract a longer custodial sentence.

Over the year public confidence has also reduced from the record high of 80.1% in the 12 months to December 2021 to 75% in the 12 months to December 2022. This is still well above the pre-pandemic level of 64.7% which was measured in the 12 months to December 2019. This measure tracks the number of residents who rate Essex Police



Officers out on patrol

as either good or excellent. The survey reaches over 8,000 people per year and provides a reliable statistical analysis of confidence in policing in Essex.

In terms of accessibility, Essex Police received 27,708 fewer 101 calls to the Force Control Room (FCR) over the last 12 months to March 2023 (229,895 calls) compared to the 12 months to March 2022 (257,603). This is a 10.8% reduction. There was a 21.6% decrease compared to the 12 months to December 2019 (293,049 calls).

More concerning was that 37.5% of 101 calls were abandoned in March 2023, an increase of 25.5 % points when compared to the same period the year before (12.0%). There was an increase of 3.5 % points when compared to December 2019 (34.0%). The average wait time increased by over nine minutes in March 2023 when compared to March 2022, and an increase of over five minutes when compared to

December 2019. A similar pattern can be seen in the Resolution Centre where there has been a 19.1% decrease in calls compared to the 12 months to December 2019 (107,347 calls). Over this period 17.7% of calls were abandoned in March 2023, a decrease of 5.8 % points when compared to December 2019 (23.5%). The average wait time increased by over six minutes in March 2023 when compared to March 2022, and an increase of over two minutes when compared to December 2019.

This is a worrying trend and, due to performance in this area, Contact Management is subject to one of the force's major change programmes, which aims to optimise and improve its processes.

On a more positive note, the number of online reports increased by 47.2% (11,538 more) compared to the 12 months to December 2019.



REDUCING DRUG DRIVEN VIOLENCE

Drugs have a huge impact on our communities. They lead to violence, the exploitation of vulnerable people and a destructive cycle of harm and crime.

It is vital we protect young or vulnerable people from gangs while we deal with the hardened criminals who prey on them and protect our communities from criminal activity that is the cause of increased violence.

To tackle drug-driven violence we have been investing in both prevention, through our Violence and Vulnerability Unit, and enforcement, by working with the National Crime Agency and investing in the Essex Police Serious Violence Unit.

In 2021-2022, we increased our investment in the Essex Police Serious Violence Unit and the Serious Crime Directorate and recruited a further 30 officers to these teams. This growth has had a significant impact over the last 12 months with the number of drug related homicides reducing from seven to three in the 12 months to March 2023.

Essex Police also conducted 25.3% more Organised Crime Group (OCG) disruptions (85 more) for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022. This continues a significant year on year increase in our activity to tackle the hardened criminals that fuel drug driven crime in our county.

The Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) continues to develop intelligence and lead on enforcement activity against Class A drug supply networks. This enforcement extends from those involved in importation, local distributors and street level dealers within the county. Through this layered and targeted approach, utilising a range of overt and covert tactics, we are making Essex a more difficult environment for individuals and gangs to target vulnerable people through drugs supply.

The use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) as a preventative tool is well established in Essex. A safeguarding and diversion approach is being taken

30 officers recruited in the Essex Police Serious Violence Unit and the Serious Crime Directorate



In 2021-2022

regarding the youths that are operating within the county lines. The Raptor Teams provide a force-wide response in preventing, dismantling, and disrupting violent street gangs who cause harm to communities. Within each Raptor team there is a Safeguarding Officer who is part of the multi-agency Violence and Vulnerability Unit, supervised by a central Detective Sergeant working with partners in a 'public health approach' to try to prevent violence and young people from joining or being affiliated to gangs through active community engagement and partnership working. This additional local investment, combined with additional central government funding to support the National Drugs Strategy, and the increased use of innovative enforcement tactics, such as using human trafficking charges, has led to a significant improvement in investigations and prevention activity. Our data shows that the level of violence related to drugs is either falling or steady across the county and the level of risk associated with county lines has fallen dramatically since October 2021.


As well as tackling those who drive drug driven crime, we have also significantly increased our investment in activity to prevent young or vulnerable people from being drawn into a life of crime. Following

confirmation in April 2022 that the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit would receive three years of Home Office investment and investment from local partners a three-year business case was developed to expand the programme with £8.3m to be invested in prevention activity over the next three years. This extra investment is being used to tackle serious violence and drug driven harm linked to gangs and county lines for those under 25 years of age.

The Violence and Vulnerability Unit delivers a number of diversions for children, young people and young adults. This includes professional early help teams who work closely with schools to understand and intervene at earlier points with a child and their family. They work alongside the School Enrichment Project that works with young people in identified schools through activities that help them develop a positive relationship with trusted adults. In the first half of 2022-23, 124 children and young people took part in this programme. Following the project, those ready to learn increased by 31%, while persistent non-attenders reduced from 71% to 47%.

Meanwhile, the Fearless Futures / Knife Crime Violence Model is also being used across the county. These approaches use focused deterrence through tailored interventions in response to identified behaviours for high-risk individuals. They work with these young people to communicate the consequences of violence and offer support with positive routes away from crime. Between April and September 2022 there were 42 less offences – totalling £92,862 'avoided costs'.



 Officers out on patrol with partners in Chelmsford

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE



Giving a voice to those who need protection, supporting the vulnerable and reducing the number of people who fall victim to crime in their communities or their homes is key in reducing the level of harm in our communities.



It involves controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse. It affects an unacceptable number of victims, which is why breaking the cycle of domestic abuse is a priority.

Essex experienced a 9.1% decrease (2,815 fewer) in the number of recorded domestic abuse offences for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022. The force recorded 1,019 fewer offences in the three months to March 2023 compared to the three months to March 2022 (6,419 v. 7,438).

This is a significant result and one that goes against the national trend.

Currently, stalking and harassment offences account for about a fifth (19.9%) of all domestic abuse investigations. Having identified examples of over-reporting in this area, Essex Police is in the process of auditing and – where appropriate – correcting

stalking and harassment offences which have been recorded too many times. This is having an impact on the data for these offences.

The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) is chaired by the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Jane Gardner, and coordinates the work to tackle domestic abuse across Essex. It commissions a range of specialist victim and perpetrator services and works closely with Essex Police to target perpetrators.

The Commissioner, along with SETDAB partners, commissions a range of services from Victim Support which offers the first line of support to more specialist services such as Next Chapter, Safe Steps and Changing Pathways which are co-commissioned with Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council.

These services deliver an integrated domestic abuse support service including refuges, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and community-based support. These co-commissioned services include the delivery of the Compass Helpline, a seven-day-a-week, single point of access which provides advice and support for victims and professionals.

Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership, a service for victims of rape and sexual abuse including historic child sexual abuse, is also commissioned to deliver specialist support across the county, including therapeutic support, advocacy, counselling and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs). Synergy offers a single point of contact for victims of abuse, ensuring help and advice can be found in a consistent and accessible way.



Essex Police has an important role in safeguarding victims, reducing vulnerability and tackling perpetrators. It solved 3.0% (98) fewer DA offences for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022 and solved 180 fewer offences in the three months to March 2023 compared to the three months to March 2022 (876 v. 696).

There was a 5.5% decrease (1,647 fewer) in DA offences and a 4.7% increase (141 more) in the number of DA offences solved for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to December 2019.



£503,000
in funding from
the Home Office

In the last year we successfully secured £503,000 in funding from the Home Office and invested this in support for survivors of sexual abuse and domestic violence in Essex. This means that we have been able to increase funding to organisations such as Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership, The Children's Society, Wilderness Foundation and specialist domestic abuse charities such as Safe Steps, and Next Chapter.

The PFCC also contributed funding to services including £30,000 to the Community J9 Domestic Abuse Initiative which brings training to residents who are keen to recognise domestic abuse and learn how to respond to survivors.

Essex Police is continuing the programme of investment in dedicated officers in the Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams who work in collaboration with other partners to support high volume, repeat victims and tackle repeat perpetrators.

Following the tragic murder of Ashley Wadsworth, police reviewed how they use data to identify the highest risk perpetrators. Using extensive research by Essex analysts they developed the 'Operation Puffin perpetrator cohort', designed by employing known indicators of domestic homicides based upon both the risks posed by the perpetrator and the relationship. This means officers are now looking more at the type of behaviour which might indicate increased risk, including coercive and controlling behaviour, stalking and a history of violence.


The Claire's Law process has also been reviewed and officers are being encouraged to utilise the 'right to know' aspect where appropriate. Partner agencies can also make applications. Under this review, consideration is being given to having an automatic referral made into the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) for any partner or recent ex-partner of a high-risk offender identified through Operation Puffin.

A lot of work has been put into domestic abuse awareness campaigns including raising awareness for young people; recognising abusive behaviours and seeking support to change; older people's awareness and support services; awareness of stalking behaviours and support services and increased community awareness through our J9 initiative.

Between August and October 2023 domestic abuse experts delivered training to over 1,200 Local Policing officers, who are first responders to calls of domestic abuse. The training focused on officer behaviours and initial interactions with DA victims, better identification of coercion and control, and

**9.1% decrease
(2,815 fewer)**
of recorded domestic
abuse offences

For the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022.



preventative order training, with the outcome being an improved level and quality of the initial response helping the identification and prevention of DA.

We have also been working with partners around human trafficking, modern slavery and organised immigration crime. Together with Essex Police, Justice and Care and Essex Chambers of Commerce, we hosted the Exploited into Essex conference that brought together agencies, businesses and law enforcement from across the country with the overriding message that exploitation will not be tolerated in Essex.



+ Deputy Chief Constable out on patrol as part of our ASB Hotspot Policing Pilot



**OBSESSING.
STALKING.
HARASSING.**

If you are abusive in your relationship
and want to change your behaviour
The Change Project can help.

Telephone: **0845 372 7701** • Email: tcp@thechangeportfolio.org

#REFLECT ON YOUR BEHAVIOUR | the change project | SETDAB | Southend, Essex & Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board

thechange-project.org

+ #REFLECT campaign material



If you are abusive in your relationship
and want to change your behaviour
The Change Project can help.

Telephone: **0845 372 7701** • Email: tcp@thechangeportfolio.org

#REFLECT ON YOUR BEHAVIOUR | the change project | SETDAB | Southend, Essex & Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board

thechange-project.org

REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)



We will not tolerate male violence, abuse and misogyny against women and girls in any form.

In Essex, VAWG offences reduced by **7% (2,777 fewer offences)**

In the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022

A high volume of VAWG offences can be attributed to Stalking and Harassment which account for 40% of recorded offences. While this represents a serious challenge for police it is important that victims feel confident in coming forward and that Essex Police is aware of the level of crime that is happening across our communities.

However, there are many strands which policing cannot tackle alone such as education, the prevalence of VAWG in our communities, and the risks posed by offences committed on the internet. As a result, partnership engagement is key in tackling VAWG and several projects have been developed to promote collaborative working with partners including the Essex County Council VAWG Charter; Southend, Essex, and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB); Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit; and Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPPA) and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and the Operation Minerva and the Essex County Council VAWG Mapping Programme.

During 2022, the Minerva Home Office funded work began with an analysis of every neighbourhood in Essex, with Nottingham Trent University working with Essex Police, Essex County Council and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. The project has so far resulted in the development of detailed local maps showing every hotspot road in the county where women are at increased risk of violence.


Minerva Zones have been shared with the Safer Essex Partnership and Community Safety Partnerships who are working with partners locally to put together bespoke plans to tackle the causes of violence against women and girls in those locations.

During the year we have also successfully secured £1.183m from the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund to make our streets safer, especially for women and girls.

Together with local match funding from Councils and wider partners we have been able to invest £2.002m in four projects across Essex where local communities have told us they feel unsafe. These areas follow the success of projects in the Bunny Walk area of Chelmsford and Grays Town Centre in Thurrock. Both areas benefited from significant funding through earlier rounds of this fund and have seen significant increases in local confidence as a result.

Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey, Witham Town Centre, the Greenstead area of Colchester and Colchester Town Centre will each receive funding for a range of activity to improve the physical environment, promote community involvement, and create safer spaces. This includes investment in



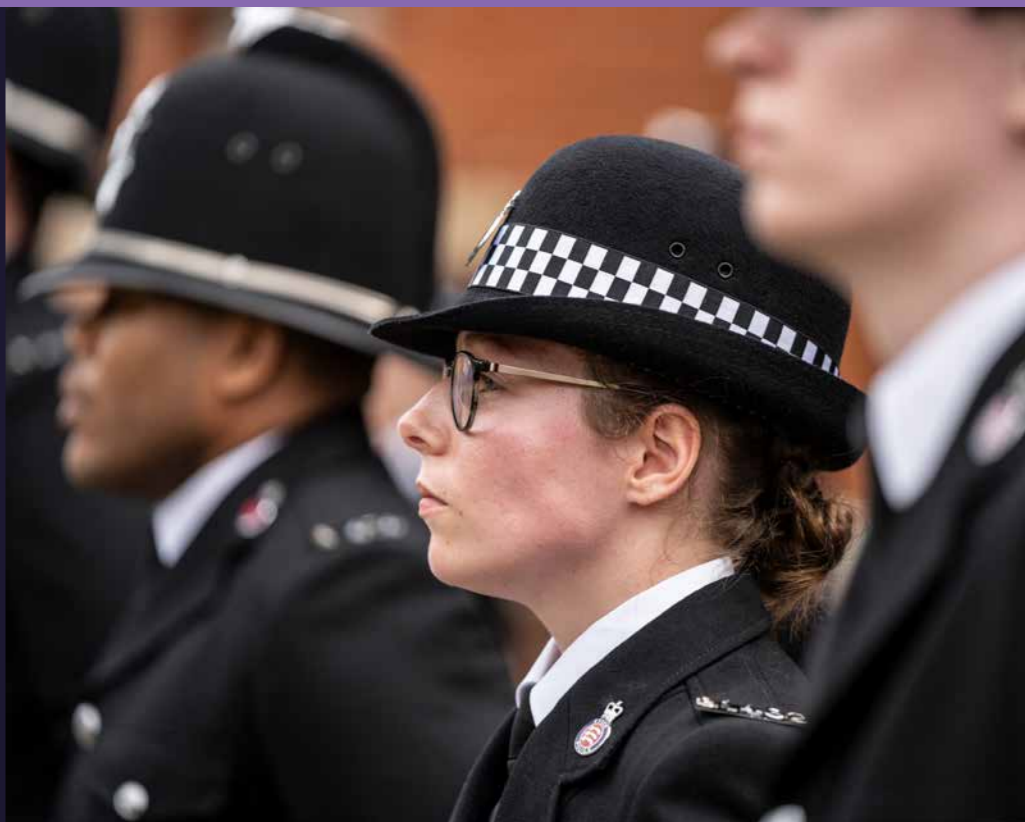
 Officers out on patrol

redesigning walkways, lighting, CCTV and activities to strengthen community engagement, including with schools, young people and businesses.

The Commissioner continues to invest in services to support victims, and we work hard across the county with our partner agencies to encourage survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence to come forward, seek support and report abuse. This includes working with Synergy Essex and rape and sexual abuse specialist services.

Since 2016 the increase in recorded rape is stark and presents significant challenges to investigators trying to manage the sheer volume of cases. There has been a 153% increase in overall recorded rape from 2016 – 2021, a trend that continued in 2022. DA related rapes have also increased exponentially, a 244% growth from July 2016 to July 2022.

Despite these increases Essex continues to outperform other eastern region forces significantly in terms of the investigation length for rape investigations and the solved outcome figures. These measures place Essex fifth in the Most Similar Group (MSG) rankings. However, the investigation and prosecution of rape and sexual offences is an



area nationally that is undergoing significant scrutiny, and this is equally the case in Essex. Our current solved rates are still woefully low and much more work needs to be done both nationally and locally in Essex to drive further improvement.

There is some indication that positive progress is starting to be made. Essex experienced a 7.0% decrease (2,777 fewer) in the amount of Violence Against the Person (VAP) offences committed against females in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022. There was a 4.4% increase (1,544 more) in the number of VAP offences committed against females in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to December 2019.

There was a 6.3% decrease (317 fewer) in the number of sexual offences committed against females in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022, and a 22.8% increase (868 more) compared to the 12 months to December 2019. Essex Police solved six more of these offences in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022 and solved 95 more compared to the 12 months to December 2019. While more work is needed, the increase in the total number of cases solved is a positive step.

There was a **6.3% decrease (317 fewer)** in the number of sexual offences committed against females

In the 12 months to March 2023

The four largest crime categories are Stalking and Harassment, Violence with Injury, Violence without Injury, and Public Order Offences. Since 2016 domestic abuse has consistently accounted for 45% - 50% of VAWG incidents.

Essex Police's reporting is significantly higher than other forces (bringing our overall solved rate down) due in part to the overall efficiency of the Essex Crime Registrars. As mentioned previously, the force is reviewing its recording approach for stalking and harassment offences to resolve any over-reporting. Essex Police has been graded as outstanding by the HMICFRS in respect of our crime recording accuracy and integrity.

Operation Soteria Bluestone is a national academic study funded by the Home Office looking at ways in which the police and the judiciary can improve, by taking a more victim focused approach, by police and the Crown Prosecution Service working better together and by introducing more victim focused ways to provide evidence in court. Essex has been involved from the start monitoring progress, findings and sharing learning.

Many of the recommendations from the project are already in place in Essex, so in many respects, Essex is ahead of the curve, particularly having long established specialist teams investigating these high harm offences, a trauma informed approach to dealing with victims and a solid working relationship with both Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and the Crown Prosecution Service.

However, we recognise there is still much to do in the VAWG arena and it will continue to need significant focus for the next few years.



IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME



Our objective is to recognise and prevent the harm caused to victims and protect those who are most at risk of becoming the victims of crime.

Over the last year we have allocated **over £5m** to support victims



This is a significant increase compared to the previous year when we allocated £2.336m and is a result of increased funding from the Ministry of Justice of £2.3m and additional funding from partners. Our investment in victims' services has been going up each year since 2016-2017 and reflects our growing efforts to provide the best possible level of support.

As well as specialist services, this funding is used to commission Victim Support which delivers the overarching support service for victims of crime throughout Essex. Through them we help victims have a more positive experience of the criminal justice system, enable them to feel equipped and empowered to move on independently of victim services and help them to have a 'voice' to express the way a crime has affected them.

The funding also pays for our Essex Restorative and Mediation Service. This service is delivered by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex's team and brings together people in conflict to give them opportunities to seek answers and understand what drove the crime or incident they were involved in and the impact it had. This restorative approach is designed to help both sides to move on with their

lives in a positive way. A 2022 independent report by WhyMe? suggested that Restorative Justice in Essex delivered benefits in excess of £500,000; reflecting a £12 benefit for every £1 invested.

Essex Police, as part of investigating a crime, has a duty to support victims under the Victims' Code of Practice. That support may be varied and will be determined by the needs of the victim and the complexity of the investigation. Essex Police continues to look to ways to provide greater support, with particular focus on maintaining victim engagement throughout the process. Its specialist teams provide a wide range of support. In addition, there has been recognition of the positive impact that IDVAs and ISVAs have had on maintaining victim engagement in the process. 19% more victims support criminal prosecutions where an ISVA is involved and, as a result, we have been able to invest more to increase the level of service available.

In 2022, the PFCC successfully applied for an additional £730,000 of funding from central government to bolster domestic abuse and sexual abuse services, including more funding for local IDVAs and ISVAs to support victims and survivors through the criminal justice process.

Essex's specialist sexual and domestic abuse support services continue to provide an excellent level of support to victims, with our specialist sexual abuse service reporting that, between December 2022 and the end of March 2023, 92% of those engaged in its community-based services felt more in control of their lives and 95% reported improved health and well-being. The single points of access for victims of domestic abuse and sexual abuse mean clearer and more consistent pathways of referral and support, meaning victims know where and how to access support and can expect the same level of service regardless of where in Essex they might live.

Post charge, the CPS and ISVA work together to carry out joint visits to victims who are at high risk of

Essex experienced a **6.9% decrease (3,305 fewer)** in the number of offences with a repeat victim

for the 12 months to March 2023 (44,575 offences) compared to the 12 months to March 2022

disengaging in the criminal justice process. A great deal of the Witness Care work relates to overcoming hurdles to court attendance, whether this be arranging transport or providing information on the process to address concerns.

Essex Police has a good working relationship with support service providers across Essex and work together with them in support of victims of crime.

Essex experienced a 6.9% decrease (3,305 fewer) in the number of offences with a repeat victim for the 12 months to March 2023 (44,575 offences) compared to the 12 months to March 2022 (47,880 offences) and a 4.4% increase (1,871 more) compared to the 12 months to December 2019 (42,704 offences). Except for August 2022, the year-on-year change for repeat victimisation has decreased each month since March 2022.

The number of individual repeat victims decreased by 1.5% (336 fewer) for the 12 months to March 2023 (22,148 individual victims) compared to the 12 months to March 2022 (22,484 individual victims). There was an increase of 3.9% (841 more) compared to the 12 months to December 2019 (21,307 individual victims).

The average number of days taken to investigate high harm offences increased to 52.1 in March 2023 compared to 43.7 in March 2022 (8.4 days more). There was an increase of 7.9 days compared to December 2019 (44.2 days).



PROTECTING RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS



Essex has a large rural community that makes a huge contribution to our county. We already work well with our rural communities, but we want to make an even bigger difference to their safety and security by helping them build greater resilience, prioritise the crime that matters to them, support victims and protect the vulnerable.

During the past year we have updated the Rural Crime Strategy, so it is relevant and reflective of the needs of communities in Essex. The focus is on preventing crime by building on the strength of rural communities to get crime down together. We have also listened to our rural communities and know they want a better flow of intelligence, more targeted enforcement, and even more visible policing as this helps them feel safe and reassured.

Through continued investment in tackling rural crime, and with Essex Police currently having one of the largest Rural Engagement Teams in the country, we have seen a reduction in types of rural crimes in 2022.

Rural crime decreased by 0.7% (159 fewer offences) in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022. During this period all crime decreased by 1.3%. Comparing this to the 12 months to December 2019 (the last figures available prior to the COVID pandemic) rural crime decreased by 9.2% (2,423 fewer offences) compared to all crime in Essex decreasing by 2.9%.

Essex Police solved 0.5% (-12) fewer rural crime offences for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022, and 15.4% fewer (a decrease of 470) compared to the 12 months to December 2019.


Over recent years Essex Police has been very successful in tackling hare coursing, working with regional forces to provide a coordinated and targeted approach. As a result of this, hare coursing is no longer the main type of wildlife incident recorded in Essex, following a statistically significant reduction in the 12 months to December 2022 versus the 12 months to December 2021. With 173 fewer incidents it is now third after trespass incidents and stray horse incidents.

The Rural Engagement Team works closely with traveller communities across Essex ensuring a positive and proactive approach is undertaken in tackling crime, protecting victims and supporting the vulnerable. Anti-social unauthorised encampments are dealt with robustly and as a result the number in Essex has continued to decrease year on year, dropping from 228 in 2018 to 60 in 2022 (a reduction of 168).

The Tri-Service Rural Community Officer pilot in the Dengie ran successfully up until March 2022 at

Rural crime decreased by
0.7% (159 fewer offences)

in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022.



which point it was extended following an evaluation showing the effectiveness of the scheme. The approach has now been expanded with a second Tri-Service Officer appointed in March 2023 in Uttlesford. Tri-Service Officers works with partner agencies such as parish councils and the National Farmers' Union, and put activities in place to keep people safe, reduce crime, raise the profile of all the services, and to promote health and wellbeing. The collaborative role on the Dengie has seen 25% more residents receive an at-home safe and well visit, previously carried out by the fire and rescue service.



Essex Police Rural Engagement Team

PREVENTING DOG THEFT



Though incidents of dog theft remain low in Essex, the prevention of dog theft is a key objective. Essex Police's Local Policing Support Unit takes ownership of the crime with the Rural Engagement Team taking responsibility for proactive work, investigation standards and community dog events.

Essex Police is now fully integrated into the National Pet Taskforce, effectively tackling crime through review of all investigations, introduction of a proactive ability to respond to intelligence, and joined up working with partners including Crime Stoppers, the RSPCA, and Dog Watch.

Six priorities were identified to tackle dog theft in Essex:

- Improve data recording by adding details of stolen animals, to allow improved searching and greater data accuracy.
- Ensure representation of Essex Police at the National Police Working Group.
- Ensure consistent media messaging in line with the national strategy.
- Consider implementation of preventative measures (DNA, UV marking) to reassure dog owners.
- Respond effectively to intelligence around illegal breeding.
- Work with Operation Opal to improve the national intelligence picture.

There were seven fewer dog thefts in Essex for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022, making 53 in total.

Significant work was undertaken in 2022 to promote the issue of dog theft via a new leaflet distributed to key partners such as vets, the Dogs Trust, the RSPCA, dog groomers, pet stores, and country parks to raise awareness of preventing dog theft.

We will continue to work with charities and partners to introduce campaigns and promotional activity to increase awareness of dog theft and promote prevention activity, so people know how to keep their dog safe.



Police Dog at public engagement event

PREVENTING BUSINESS CRIME, FRAUD AND CYBER CRIME



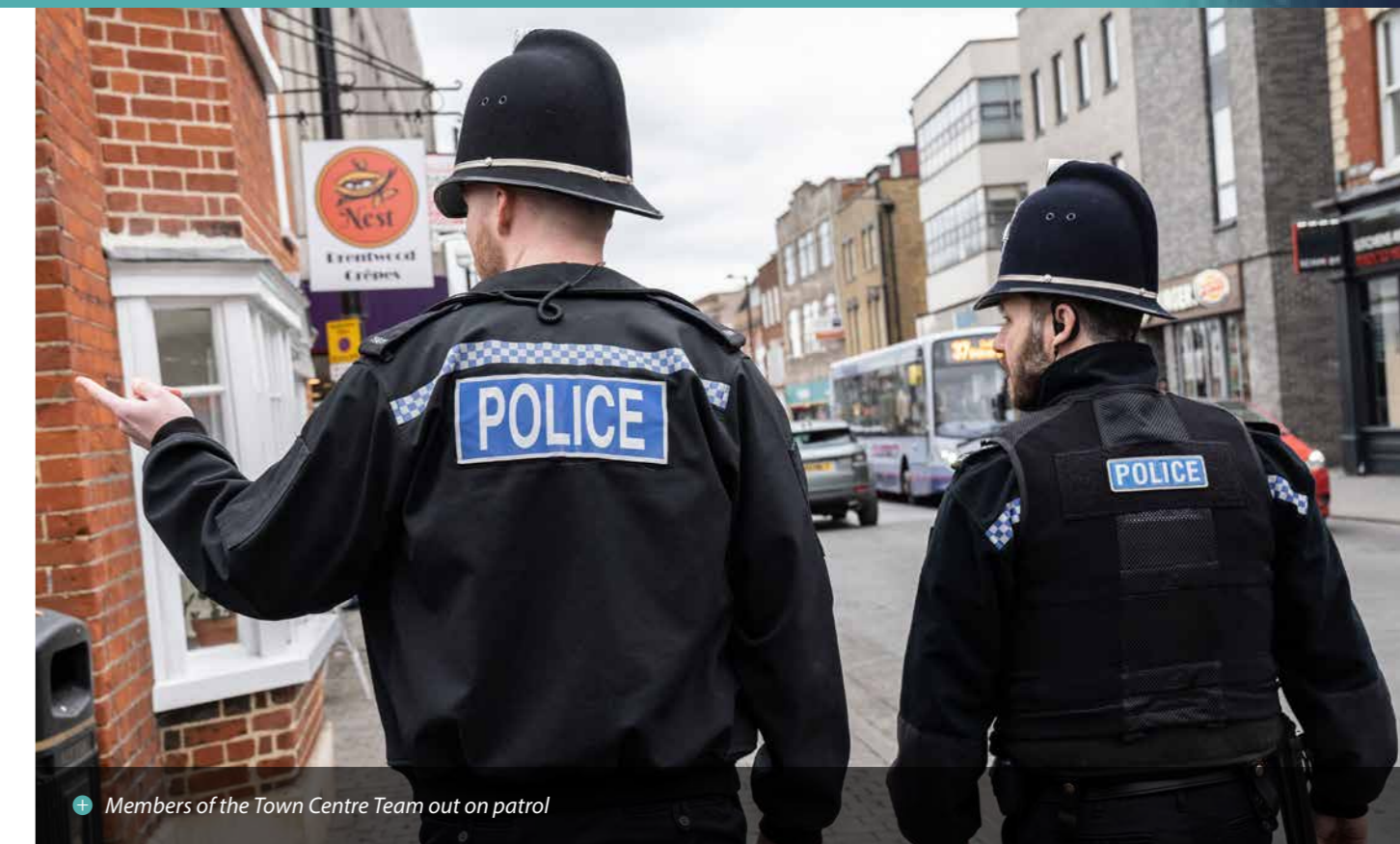
The trend for business crime was relatively stable until March 2020, when restrictions were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in large decreases in the number of offences recorded each month. Since April 2021, although offences have been increasing, they remain below levels seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was a 12.8% decrease (3,075 fewer) in the number of business crime offences and a 31.0% decrease (1,515 fewer) in the number of business crimes solved in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to December 2019.

Shoplifting accounts for approximately 47.2% of business crime and increased by 13.4% in 2022/23, although it has decreased compared to pre pandemic levels - (10,563 Mar 2020 v 9896 March 2023). In the past year the Business Crime Team has actively sought, and been successful in, obtaining criminal behaviour orders (CBO) against those who continue to commit crime against local businesses. A CBO is a set of conditions placed on an individual by a court, which will prevent the person from causing further harm against the business. The conditions could include banning the individual from entering a particular shop or area such as a town centre for a defined amount of time. If the

10.4% decrease in the number of fraud offences related to business crime

In the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022.



Members of the Town Centre Team out on patrol

person breaches the order, it could result in a prison sentence. This has been successful in these cases as it is often a small number of people committing a large volume of crime so targeted, intelligence led tactics can have a big impact.

This equates to 38 fewer offences. There was also a 32.2% decrease in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to December 2019. This equates to 156 fewer offences.

In January 2023, the Essex Police Prevent and Protect Officer together with Security Awareness Special Interests Group (SASIG+) held a conference 'combatting cyber fraud through collaboration' which attracted speakers and delegates from around Essex and beyond and looked at the issue of cyber fraud.

The Prevent and Protect Officer also works with the business crime team to hold regular virtual business cyber clinics whereby businesses can get bespoke cyber protective advice. The officer also attends local business networking events and obtains referrals for the Eastern Cyber Resilience Centre, where they can get expert advice and services.

The Commissioner and Essex Police continue to work closely with Essex Chambers of Commerce through the Strategic Business Crime Board, which invites businesses from across Essex to have an input into how to tackle business crime in their areas. It also continues to support and engage with the Business Crime Team to share best practice and advice to help prevent businesses becoming a victim of crime.

IMPROVE SAFETY ON OUR ROADS



On average, five people are killed on our roads every day in England. Many more suffer life changing injuries. While there was a significant reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads leading up to the COVID 19 pandemic, since 2022 the numbers have increased as poor driving has increased. To tackle this, the Commissioner along with Essex Police and our partners in the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, have committed to 'Vision Zero' – an aspiration to achieve zero road deaths and serious injuries on the roads of Essex by 2040.

There was a 4.5% increase (38 more) in the number of those killed or seriously injured (KSI) in Essex for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022, with the rate of increase slowing more recently. The number of KSIs also increased by 67 in the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to December 2019.

- 45 people died on Essex roads during 2022.
- Death and serious injuries have reduced by 52% between 2005 and 2021.
- 32% of collisions involving death and serious injury involve speed related factors.
- 46% of road deaths occur on rural roads.
- The annual cost of injuries in Essex sits at £205m. £104m Social Care, £19m Emergency response, £4m Police Investigation, lost output £65m, £12.5 property damage

During 2022, Essex Police refreshed its Roads Policing Strategy to align with the Vision Zero ambition and meeting the Police and Crime Plan priority to improve safety on our roads. It is underpinned by four pillars:

- Preventing harm and saving lives
- Tackling crime
- Driving technology and innovation
- Changing minds

The prevention work being carried out includes Operation Calla which is focused on young people and car enthusiasts and works through engaging with drivers by supporting legal driving and reducing anti-social behaviour associated with car meets. Sadly, motorcycle deaths and injuries in the county remain too high and Essex Police has been conducting dedicated patrols along known motorcycle routes with the aim of reducing collisions involving motorcycles.

Our partners also work together on designated days across the county to provide education, and enforcement if required, around poor driving. Each partner has differing responsibilities which, when combined, allow for collaborative focus on road safety throughout Essex.

Throughout the past year, better use of technology is being developed through initiatives such as improving Essex Police public contact systems - so people can report poor driving more easily, enhancing investigations, and streamlining enforcement and offence processing as well as working with partners on further innovation.

Engagement activity has been taking a broader look at how to reduce people killed and seriously injured by changing driver attitudes through education courses such as the National Driver Offender Retraining Courses and influencing and educating members of the public through social media posts. During 2022/23 Essex Roads Policing Unit's Twitter account had 23k followers and growing.

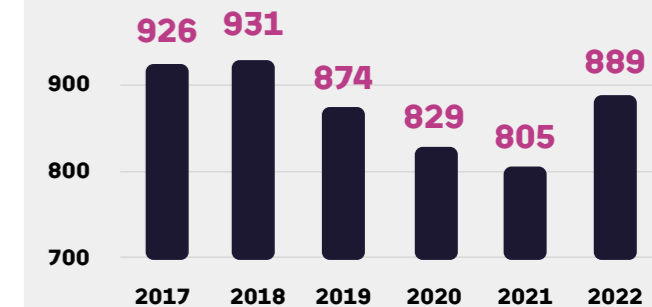
Death and serious injuries have reduced by **52%** between 2005 and 2021.



There was a 12.1% decrease (305 fewer offences) in drink / drug driving offences for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to March 2022. There was a 15.5% decrease (239 fewer offences) in drink driving and a 6.7% decrease (66 fewer offences) in drug driving. There was also a 33.1% decrease (1,097 fewer offences) in drink / drug driving offences for the 12 months to March 2023 compared to the 12 months to December 2019. Of these offences, there was an 11.3% decrease (166 fewer offences) in drink driving and a 50.5% decrease (931 fewer offences) in drug driving. All these offence types are primarily driven by police proactivity in relation to road safety.

The county is also benefiting from major road network infrastructure projects, such as the A12 upgrade, which includes the very latest roadside technology to manage and enforce critical road traffic offences, helping towards casualty reduction.

KSIs in Essex



ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT



We know that encouraging more members of our communities to come forward as volunteers can help towards preventing crime and we are extremely proud of and grateful for those who gave up their valuable time over the year to help support our communities.

Essex Police provides many volunteering opportunities, including serving communities as a Special Constable, providing crime prevention advice to neighbours as an Active Citizen or supporting young people as part of the Volunteer Police Cadets scheme. The Commissioner also has volunteer schemes including Essex Restorative Justice Mediators, Independent Custody Visitors and volunteers who work with the Essex Police dog unit to check on the welfare of police dogs.

Within Essex Police, the Citizens in Policing and the Special Constabulary play an integral part in supporting the force. In 2022, the Local Policing Support Unit (LPSU) introduced a Strategic Co-ordination Group which proactively supports the mobilisation of all Special Constables, Police Support Volunteers, Active Citizens, Accredited Persons and, where appropriate, our Volunteer Police Cadets, with local operations and initiatives.

Essex Watch Liaison Officers continue to work with Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) to offer crime and fraud prevention advice. During 2022/23 the Essex Watch scheme has continued to grow its members including an increase in Dog Watch, Farm and Rural Watch and Heritage Watch volunteers, all helping to keep communities safer. The key positives of the watch schemes are that they are tailored to specific individuals that are linked by their work, activities or interests. For example, Dog Watch brings together individual dog walkers or owners who regularly walk their dogs in areas they know and where they are

likely to spot suspicious or unusual activity in that area, whereas Business Watch is aimed at businesses within a defined location so that each business can take part in the overall security of that area.

Within Essex Police, the Citizens in Policing and the Special Constabulary play an integral part in supporting the force



The Special Constabulary remains an important source of recruits into the regular constabulary, and this has contributed to the decline in Specials over the year. The Special Constabulary headcount is currently 317 (as of March 2023). This is down 30.8% (141 fewer) compared to March 2022. Compared to the 12 months to December 2019 this is down 38.9% (202 fewer). The pandemic also saw a significant change, as when restrictions lifted and the cost of living changed many Special Constables were faced with difficult decisions around change of lifestyle, cost of living and personal circumstances which had an impact on their volunteering hours and time to support Essex Police. While our Special Constabulary remains the second largest, after the Met, in the country the challenges of maintaining and rebuilding the size and strength of this important part of the force is significant. However, Essex Police and the Commissioner continue actively to promote the Specials through campaigns such as 'My Other Life' which looks to attract volunteers from across a range of communities.

Encouraging our young people to become part of our volunteer network also continues with Essex Police Volunteer Cadets scheme. Currently there are 220 Volunteer Police Cadets and 86 Volunteer Cadet Leaders across 13 Cadet Units across the

county. The cadets also are part of the Strategic Co-ordination Group and support their Local Community Policing Teams with events.

The PFCC also runs volunteer schemes including the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme which has 15 active members and the Animal Welfare Scheme that has 3 active members. In the past year the scheme manager implemented a new ICV induction training programme designed to equip volunteers to carry out their roles effectively and ensure detainees' rights and entitlements are being adhered to in police custody suites across Essex. The scheme is expanding its volunteer base with four new ICVs joining in 2022, and to support them in their new roles, the scheme has additionally set up a mentor scheme for new volunteers with experienced ICVs.

The Essex Restorative and Mediation Service (ERMS) also sits within the PFCC's remit and works with people who have been involved in conflict, including criminal offences. In June 2022 the scheme received sign off to mediate between domestic abuse survivors and their perpetrators, something that it had not covered before, and which was a huge vote of confidence in the proven efficacy of the scheme. There are currently 37 active ERMS volunteers.



SUPPORTING OUR OFFICERS AND STAFF



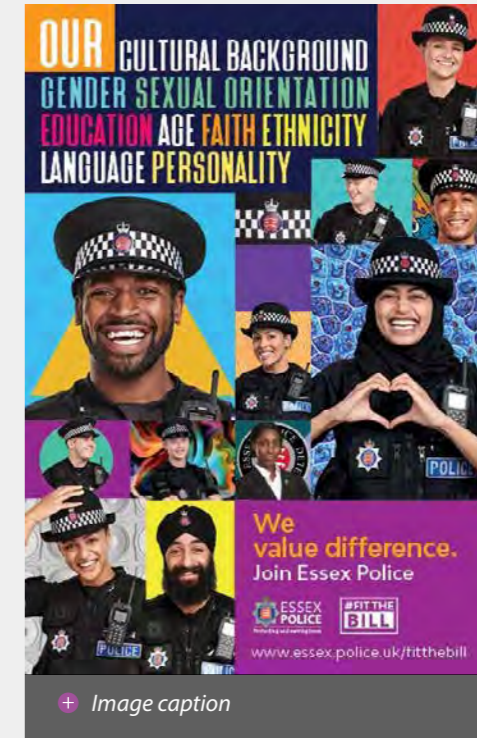
Despite several high-profile police misconduct cases nationally, confidence in police in Essex remains high. However, the Chief Constable and the Commissioner fully acknowledge the importance of upholding and maintaining a framework which sets the standards and behaviours of officers and staff through strategies such as the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy and the Professionalism Strategy.

Essex Police has strong marketing and media campaigns through #Fit the Bill and #We Value Difference, supporting a continuous programme of outreach and recruitment work with the aim of securing the very best talent and maximising diversity, equality and inclusion. In the 12 months to March 2023, 423 new officers took their oaths of allegiance and started their Essex Police careers. The new officers pledged their commitment to police with the consent of every community at a time when the force is welcoming more new colleagues from a range of different backgrounds.

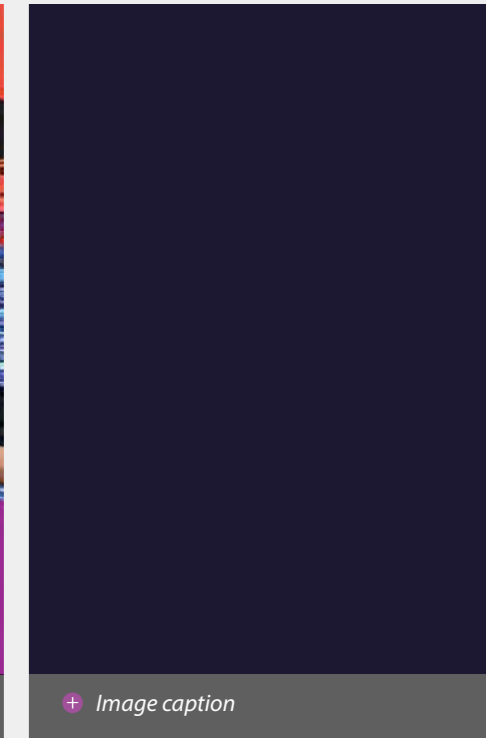
Of the 2017 applications to March 2023, a total of 272 were from minorities. By March 2023 the officer ethnic minority position had increased to 4.10% (as a proportion of all officers). This was measured against the economically active population in Essex from the 2011 Census Data which is 6.56%. The number of females applying to become police officers remains consistently around 40%. By March 2023 the number of female officers represented 37.09%, the highest ever position, as a proportion of all officers.

Supporting and investing in staff welfare continues, with the force receiving several awards from external bodies for the innovative services it provides over the year. It has also embedded many of the processes that the national Police Covenant will seek to introduce nationally. The Police Covenant is a government-led initiative which aims to ensure that officers, staff, volunteers and their families are not disadvantaged as a result of their service in the police.

Officers being assaulted in the line of duty is totally unacceptable and both the Chief Constable and the Commissioner have pushed for the doubling of sentences for assaults on Emergency Service Workers. As of 28th June 2022, the maximum impossible prison term for offences of common assault or battery committed against an emergency worker was doubled from 12 months to 24 months.



+ Image caption



+ Image caption



+ Image caption

INCREASING COLLABORATION



We aim to build a culture of collaboration and continue to unlock resources to reinvest into our emergency services in Essex. Through our Emergency Services Collaboration we have secured benefits (Net Present Value) over 10 years of over £14m. This is against a target benefit of £15.4m by 2027. These savings are being reinvested in the services to help provide a more efficient and effective service and ultimately provide better provision to the people of Essex.

Over the year significant projects have been undertaken through this collaboration. The decision was taken during the year to build a new police station in Harwich on the current site of the Dovercourt Fire and Rescue Service. Not only will this provide an efficient use of resources, it will also help promote operational collaboration between the teams at a local level. While the planning process for this is being undertaken, capital funding has been allocated with the 2023-2024 budget with construction expected to start in January 2024.

Following the successful completion of a Tri-Service Rural Community Prevention Officer, all three services (Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and the East of England Ambulance Service) have agreed to extend the programme. A dedicated Tri-Service Rural Community Prevention Officer has been recruited to work in the Uttlesford area to see how well the initiative can be applied in other areas. The first pilot took place in the Dengie area of Maldon and had a significant impact on the level of prevention work undertaken by each of the services. This visible, coordination role is having a positive impact and a further role was added in April 2023 to cover Uttlesford.

Working alongside our Community Safety Partnerships and academic partners the Board has also developed a hot-spot mapping tool, which identifies hyper-local 'Minerva zones' which are more vulnerable to VAWG offences. These zones have been shared with Community Safety Partnerships which are in the process of identifying and implementing prevention initiatives to proactively address potential activity.

Significant work has also been undertaken in addressing the recommendations from the inquiry into the Manchester Arena Bombing, the development of a joint fleet workshop and a coordinated approach to dealing with new developments in Essex. The work on new developments has already resulted in Essex emergency services being one of the few areas to be included in the local design guides and is continuing to build capacity and influence which is helping to deliver a safer, lower risk, built environment.

The Joint Education Team, which consists of six members and is funded by both Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, has proven to be very effective. The team provide a catalogue of safety education programmes for young people covering home safety, cyber safety, arson and hoax call prevention, knife crime prevention, gangs awareness, road safety, hate crime prevention, anti-social behaviour prevention and firework safety. Since the early stages of the collaboration, the number of young people engaged by these teams has grown by 55% while also delivering benefits of £1,582,214 (Net Present Value) over 10 years.

In 2022-23 the PFCC also received an update report on the Collapsed Behind Closed Doors project, which means medical professionals can reach those in need of emergency attention quicker, reducing the likelihood of serious injury. As well as improving the speed of this response, the project has profiled cost savings of around £600,000 over a 10-year period.



Police Community Support Officer and an officer out on patrol

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 PFCC website at:

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

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

As at March 2023 three of the twelve PFCC priorities are graded good by Essex Police (Reducing drug driven violence, Protecting Vulnerable People and Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse and Dog Theft), seven are rated adequate and two require improvement (Improving Support for Victims of Crime and Improving Safety on our Roads).

PRIORITY 1 FURTHER INVESTMENT IN CRIME PREVENTION

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Police Priority Indicators	12 months to Dec 2019	12 months to Mar 2022	12 months to Mar 2023	Number Difference 2022/23	% Difference 2022/23	Direction of Travel 2022/23
	Number of all crime offences	168,218	165,518	163,285	-2,233	-1.3	Improving
	Harm (Crime Severity) Score - All Crime	13.8	14.1	14.5	0.4	-	Deteriorating
	Number of homicides	61	26	15	-11	-42.3	Improving
	Number of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents	41,975	30,674	21,056	-9,618	-31.4	Improving
	Number of FCR 101 calls received	293,049	257,603	229,895	-27,708	-10.8	Improving
	Number of Resolution Centre calls received	107,347	86,852	86,846	-6	0.0	Improving
	Number of online reports	24,468	28,879	36,006	7,127	24.7	Improving
	Percentage of FCR 101 Calls Abandoned	34.0	12.0	37.5	25.5	-	Deteriorating
	Percentage of Resolution Centre Calls Abandoned	0.2	15.5	17.7	2.1	-	Deteriorating
	FCR 101 Average wait time (mm:ss)	07:00	02:52	12:04	09:12	-	Deteriorating
	Resolution Centre Average wait time (mm:ss)	14:52	11:03	17:06	06:03	-	Deteriorating
	Percentage of people who have confidence in policing in Essex (internal survey)	64.7	80.1	75.0	-5.1	-	Deteriorating
	Confidence Interval	1.1	0.9	1.0			

PRIORITY 2 REDUCING DRUG DRIVEN VIOLENCE

	Number of drug related homicides	10	7	3	-4	-	Improving
	Number of Violence with Injury offences	15,360	15,706	15,823	117	0.7	Deteriorating
	Number of knife-enabled crime offences	1,638	1,634	1,622	-12	-0.7	Improving
	Number of Organised Criminal Group disruptions	99	336	421	85	25.3	Improving
	Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to drug crime is improving (internal survey)	-	-	59.8	-	-	-
	Confidence Interval			1.2			

PRIORITY 3 PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

	Number of domestic abuse offences	29,726	30,894	28,079	-2,815	-9.1	Improving
	Number of domestic abuse offences solved	3,005	3,244	3,146	-98	-3.0	Deteriorating
	Repeat victims of DA	20,558	21,182	18,391	-2,791	-13.2	Improving
	Number of child abuse offences	5,259	6,391	6,050	-341	-5.3	Improving
	Number of child abuse offences solved	275	420	451	31	7.4	Improving
	NRM referrals (modern slavery)	98	170	248	78	45.9	Improving

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Police Priority Indicators	12 months to Dec 2019	12 months to Mar 2022	12 months to Mar 2023	Number Difference 2022/23	% Difference 2022/23	Direction of Travel 2022/23
	Number of Domestic Violence Protection Notices	242	273	163	-110	-40.3	Deteriorating
	Number of Domestic Violence Protection Orders	242	252	144	-108	-42.9	Deteriorating
	Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to protecting children and vulnerable people is improving (internal survey)	83.2	86.3	79.6	-6.7	-	Deteriorating
	Confidence Interval	1.0	0.9	1.0			

PRIORITY 3 (continued)

PRIORITY 4 REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

	Number of violence against the person (including Stalking & Harassment offences) against females	35,418	39,739	36,962	-2,777	-7.0	Improving
	Number of sexual offences against females	3,811	4,996	4,679	-317	-6.3	Improving
	Number of sexual offences against females solved ⁹	203	292	298	6	2.1	Improving
	Percentage of females who feel safe walking alone in their area after dark (internal survey)	-	-	43.5	-	-	-
	Confidence Interval			1.5			

PRIORITY 5 IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

	Number of offences with a repeat victim	42,704	47,880	44,575	-3,305	-6.9	Improving
	Average days taken to investigate High Harm offences	44.2	43.7	52.1	8.4	-	Deteriorating
	Number of referrals to Victim Support	41,068	28,601	27,983	-618	-2.2	Improving
	Percentage of victims of crime who have confidence in policing in Essex (internal survey) Victims	52.7	61.0	61.0	0.0	-	Stable
	Confidence Interval	3.5	3.5	3.0			
	Percentage of victims of crime who have confidence in policing in Essex (internal survey) Non-Victims	66.1	82.1	77.1	-5.0	-	Deteriorating
	Confidence Interval	1.1	0.9	1.0			
	Percentage disparity between victims and non-victims	13.4	21.1	16.1	-5.0	-	Improving

PRIORITY 6 PROTECTING RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Police Priority Indicators	12 months to Dec 2019	12 months to Mar 2022	12 months to Mar 2023	Number Difference 2022/23	% Difference 2022/23	Direction of Travel 2022/23
	Number of rural crime offences	26,459	24,195	24,036	-159	-0.7	Improving
	Number of rural crime offences solved	3,047	2,589	2,577	-12	-0.5	Deteriorating
	Harm (Crime Severity) Score for Rural Crime	8.7	8.8	8.8	0.0	-	Stable
	Percentage of people who have confidence in policing of rural areas in Essex (internal survey)	64.2	82.9	77.4	-5.5	-	Deteriorating
	Confidence Interval	2.1	1.7	1.9			

PRIORITY 7 PREVENTING DOG THEFT

	Number of dog thefts	57	60	53	-7	-	Improving
	Number of dog thefts solved	2	2	2	0	-	Stable
	Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to dog theft is improving (internal survey)	-	-	63.3	-	-	-
	Confidence Interval			1.4			

PRIORITY 8 REDUCING BUSINESS CRIME, FRAUD AND CYBER CRIME

	Number of business crime offences	24,034	18,810	20,959	2,149	11.4	Deteriorating
	Number of business crime offences solved	4,891	2,952	3,376	424	14.4	Improving
	Number of fraud offences related to business crime	485	367	329	-38	-10.4	Improving
	Total number of fraud offences	2,076	1,462	1,931	469	32.1	Deteriorating
	Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to tackling cyber crime is improving (internal survey)	-	-	50.4	-	-	-
	Confidence Interval	-		1.7			

PRIORITY 9 IMPROVING SAFETY ON OUR ROADS

	All people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road collisions	823	852	890	38	4.5	Deteriorating
	Number of driving under the influence of drink and/or drugs on Essex roads	3,312	2,520	2,215	-305	-12.1	Deteriorating
	Failure to provide offences	399	365	306	-59	-16.2	Deteriorating
	Number of driving related mobile phone crime on Essex roads	2,269	475	1,635	1,160	244.2	Deteriorating
	Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to policing the roads is improving (internal survey)	68.2	63.9	66.9	3.0	-	Stable
	Confidence Interval	1.1	1.1	1.1			

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Police Priority Indicators	12 months to Dec 2019	12 months to Mar 2022	12 months to Mar 2023	Number Difference 2022/23	% Difference 2022/23	Direction of Travel 2022/23
	Number of Specials	519	458	317	-141	-30.8	Deteriorating
	Number of Police Support Volunteers	117	99	99	0	0.0	Stable
	Number of Active Citizens	60	56	56	0	0.0	Stable
	Number of Volunteer Police Cadets	296	221	220	-1	-0.5	Deteriorating
	Number of Volunteer Cadet Leaders	90	87	86	-1	-1.1	Deteriorating
	Number of Cadet Units	10	13	13	0	0.0	Stable
	Number of Neighbourhood Watch - Co-ordinators	-	-	2,343	-	-	-
	Number of Neighbourhood Watch - Members	-	-	79,449	-	-	-
	Percentage of people who feel there are good opportunities for those who want to volunteer to assist policing and reduce crime in Essex (internal survey)	-	-	52.5	-	-	-
	Confidence Interval			1.1			

PRIORITY 10 ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

PRIORITY 11 SUPPORTING OUR OFFICERS AND STAFF

	Ethnic Minority employees: percentage of total workforce	3.53	4.36	4.11	-0.25	-	Deteriorating
	Vacancies (Full Time Employee): Officers	-21.07	17.00	-11.87	-29	-169.8	Deteriorating
	Vacancies (Full Time Employee): Staff	-204.13	-165.75	-284.03	-118	71.4	Deteriorating
	Vacancies (Full Time Employee): PCSO	-0.91	-9.19	-8.43	1	-8.2	Improving

PRIORITY 12 INCREASING COLLABORATION

	School Visits	-	-	361	-	-	-
	Programmes Delivered	-	-	1,347	-	-	-
	Audience Numbers	-	-	122,599	-	-	-

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 re-elected again in May 2021.

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). Jane Gardner is the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. 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 directly elected by the public and has a statutory duty to hold the police to account on their behalf for the delivery and performance of the police service in 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 the strategic direction and objectives of the force through the Police and Crime Plan, setting an annual budget and precept, monitoring financial outcomes and approving 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. The PFCC 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 is responsible for and accountable to the PFCC for the delivery of efficient and effective policing and the management of resources and expenditure by the police force.

He remains operationally independent in the service of the communities of Essex. 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. He has day to day responsibility for the financial management of the force within the framework of the agreed budget allocation and levels of authorisation issued by the PFCC.

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 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 2021, Essex Police continued with the #FitTheBill police officer recruitment campaign, 'We Value Difference', originally launched in 2020, 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.

The campaign is changing the make-up of the force and making it more representative of the communities it services. Whilst application numbers for police officers slowed in 2022/23 compared to previous years, ethnic minority and female proportions have remained strong. The officer ethnic minority position was 4.11% (as a proportion of all officers) as at 31st March 2023 compared to 4.36% a year earlier and female officers represented 37.09% as at 31st March 2023 compared to 35.84% on 31st March 2022.

During 2022/23 our police officer strength increased by 171 full-time equivalents (FTE) to 3,743.

The chart below shows the make-up of the workforce for the group as at 31st March 2023



Essex Police has seen a welcome but rapid period of growth over the last few years as a result of the government's ambition to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers nationally. In 2022/23 the police officer establishment grew by 200 additional officers, 180 of which were funded by the national uplift programme and 20 by an increase in precept. At an officer establishment of 3,755 Essex Police is the biggest it has ever been enabling the force to be more effective and efficient. 2022/23 was the final year of the government's uplift programme and moving into 2023/24 the focus is on investment to consolidate the growth and continue the positive progress already made in protecting and serving the people of Essex. Priorities are now shifting to developing the capabilities of the workforce as well as ensuring that there is an effective recruitment pipeline and focus on retention and progression to provide the best service to the public.

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.



Essex Police's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

FUTURE TRENDS AND RISKS

TRENDS IN CRIME AND THE FORCE'S LONG-TERM VISION

Despite there being a high demand for policing services, due to both the volume of crime and incidents, and their severity and increasing complexity, in the year to 31st March 2023 there has been a 1.3% decrease with 163,285 offences recorded compared to 165,518 in the previous 12 month period to 31st March 2022.

Prevention remains a key focus of the force building on investment already made during 2019/20 to 2022/23 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 Statement (FMS) 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 2022/23 £4.6m savings were delivered with £3.8m of these recurring annually.

CURRENT AND EMERGING RISKS AND MITIGATION

The three-year comprehensive spending review has provided some certainty over Home Office funding up to 2024/25 which will make it easier to consider demand pressures compared to future funding levels. One of the challenges the force faces is that it is the second lowest funded force nationally (funding from grants and council tax), and the ninth lowest in receipt of government grant per head of population. It also has the lowest spend per head of population.

The detrimental impact of COVID-19 on government finances along with significant increases in inflation over the last year, driven by both domestic and global factors, has impacted the costs of supplies and services, and this is resulting 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.

The mitigation to these funding challenges will be the continuation of the work to review services and drive out efficiencies and cashable savings including deliver of an ambitious savings programme for 2023/24 of £12.212m.

In addition to the risks around future funding and increasing costs of services, 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:

- Operation Hazel Cost not fully funded by Home Office – Costs for Operation Hazel (the Essex Police response to the Just Stop Oil protestor activity) total £5.584m with £4.003m funded by the Home Office. £1.584m remains unfunded impacting on financial resilience due to the need to draw on reserves which will need to be replenished.
- Prevention of business crime, fraud and cyber crime – Levels of fraud and exploitation, especially of vulnerable people within the community continues to grow, increases in levels of unreported criminality and the business community suffering financially leading to lower levels of economic activity across Essex and increased deprivation and levels of crime.
- Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse and reduction in violence against women and girls – A risk of increase in harm to victims with the potential for more domestic homicides or serious sexual assaults. Priority may not be realised due to various potential issues including conflicting priorities against police budgets

Strategic risks and associated mitigating actions are reviewed regularly by the force, the PFCC and Joint Audit Committee.

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.

Seven core principles of good governance:

- ✓ Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- ✓ Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- ✓ Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
- ✓ Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- ✓ Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- ✓ Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- ✓ Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Governance Structure

Police, Fire and Crime Panel

- Scrutinise the Police and Crime Plan and Annual Report
- Scrutinise senior appointments
- Review the Council Tax precept
- Hear certain complaints against the PFCC and Deputy PFCC
- Confirm the appointment of a new Chief Constable or Chief Fire Office

PFCC
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX



Roger Hirst

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

ESSEX POLICE
Protecting and serving Essex

Chief Constable



Ben-Julian Harrington

- Maintains the King'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

HMICFRS

- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is responsible for carrying out inspections of police forces in England and Wales.

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 2022-23

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



Demand Management



Review of Police Funding Formula



Public confidence and victim satisfaction



Blue light collaboration



Devolution

STRATEGIC POLICING REQUIREMENTS

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) sets out those threats which, in the Home Secretary's view, are the biggest threat to public safety and must be given due regard by PFCCs when issuing or varying Police and Crime Plans. It supports PFCCs as well as Chief Constables to plan, prepare and respond to these threats by clearly linking the local response to the national, highlighting the capabilities and partnerships that policing needs to ensure it can fulfil its national responsibilities.

A revised version of the SPR was published in February 2023 which provided strengthened detail around the action required from policing at the local and regional level to the critical national threats. The 2023 SPR sets out seven identified national threats.

These are as follows: Serious and Organised Crime (SOC); Terrorism; Cyber; Child Sexual Abuse; Public Disorder and Civil Emergencies. These remain from the 2015 version with the addition in 2023 of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), reflecting the threat it presents to public safety and confidence.

Given this annual report is for the year April 2022 to March 2023, it will not respond in detail to the revised SPR due to the timing of its publication. However, as Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, I am confident I have given due regard to the six threat areas identified in the previous SPR in my Police and Crime Plan and in my role holding my Chief Constable to account. VAWG, while not previously contained in the SPR, is a key priority in my Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 and has been included within my scrutiny programme.

More information about the scrutiny of these issues is available on my website at www.essex.pfcc.police.uk



