

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2024

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

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Chief Officer:	ACO Fiona Henderson
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Author on behalf of Chief Officer:	Tim Bamforth-White, Planning & Risk Manager, Continuous Improvement Team
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COG meeting date / date of approval (Please indicate whether paper presented to COG or not)	29/05/2024 (COG)

1.0 Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the previous paper presented to the January P&RSB on the actions taken and progress made by Essex Police against the 14 areas for improvement (AFIs) identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICFRS) during the Force's PEEL 2021/22 inspection and two separate and specialist elements of PEEL; Serious and Organised Crime and Vetting and Counter Corruption.

Information presented in the previous update has not been repeated in this update unless it provides significant background or context as a reminder.

2.0 Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the report and progress made.

3.0 Executive Summary

HMICFRS published their PEEL inspection report and judgements of our Force in October 2022. Subsequently, in May 2023, HMICFRS published the Serious & Organised Crime (SOC PEEL) inspection report and in June 2023 published the Vetting and Counter-Corruption inspection report. All three elements make up the final PEEL inspection report for the Force.

Overall Performance

As highlighted in the previous update, in 2021/22 HMICFRS made significant changes to the inspection programme moving to a more intelligence-led, continual assessment approach rather than the annual PEEL inspections in previous years.

HMICFRS use inspection findings, analysis and professional judgment to assess how good forces are in ten areas of policing. For the first time in the 2020-22 round of PEEL inspections a new grade of ‘adequate’ was introduced moving from a four-tier grading system to a five-tier grading system of ‘outstanding’, ‘good’, ‘adequate’, ‘requires improvement’ and ‘inadequate’.

HMICFRS provided formal judgements for Essex Police in those ten areas of policing, as set out in the table below;

OUTSTANDING	GOOD	ADEQUATE	REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT	INADEQUATE
	Treatment of the public; Developing a positive workforce; Use of resources; Serious and organised crime; Vetting and counter-corruption	Investigating crime; Preventing crime; Protecting vulnerable people; Managing offenders	Responding to the public	

HMICFRS identified a total of 14 areas for improvement (AFIs) for the Force; four under responding to the public, two each in preventing crime, investigating crime and managing offenders and one each in protecting vulnerable people, use of resources, serious and organised crime and vetting and counter-corruption.

These judgements reflected our own internal assessment, challenges identified in our Force Management Statement 2022-23 (FMS 22 / FMS 23), strategic investment decisions and the investment decisions in our change programmes.

The Force has strong governance and oversight processes in place to monitor progress against each AFI as set out below which includes a robust assessment of the evidence presented and progress against each AFI:

- The respective ACC/ACO led monthly Governance Board;
- A dedicated DCC led HMICFRS Recommendations and AFI Star Chamber
- Chief Officer Group (Quarterly HMICFRS Activity Report).

The Force expects to be in a positive position for all AFIs ahead of the final HMICFRS PEEL evidence gathering window at the end of December 2024.

4.0 **Introduction/Background**

HMICFRS concluded inspection activity as part of PEEL 2020-22 for all 43 Forces in England and Wales in the last quarter of 2022. The inspection framework for the 2023-25 inspection cycle has since been published by HMICFRS and inspections have re-commenced with 13 reports having been published to date¹.

Essex Police is expecting their next PEEL inspection to formally commence from June 2024 with a document request, body worn video and case file analysis and a crime data accuracy audit, with fieldwork later in 2024 and the report published in the first quarter of 2025.

5.0 **Current AFI Work, Performance and Direction of Travel**

Appendix 1 provides an update against each of the 14 AFIs, but the table below provides a snapshot overview of the current status as the time of writing as captured on the HMICFRS Monitoring Portal². It should be noted that PEEL AFIs are not normally closed by HMICFRS until the next PEEL inspection and therefore the positive position of the Force ahead of our PEEL inspection this year.

Red	Amber	Green	Green and Proposed for Closure	Closed
0	5	2	3	4
Previously 0	Previously 6	Previously 4	Previously 0	Previously 4

Appendix 2 provides the quarterly RAG assessment for each AFI.

Following the DCC led HMICFRS Recommendations and AFI Star Chamber on 8 February 2024, the DCC agreed the Force closure of AFIs 10 and 11:

- AFI 10 was; “The force needs to ensure that it has the capacity and capability to undertake nationally recognised risk assessments in a timely manner. It should also

¹ Force reports published to date for Cambridgeshire, North Yorks, Gloucs, Northants, West Mids, Surrey, TVP, GMP, Durham, Kent, Dyfed-Powys, Suffolk and Merseyside. After submission of this paper but before P&RSB in June, HMICFRS will have also published PEEL Reports for Derbyshire and South Wales (on 24th May 2024).

ensure that the quality and timeliness of supervisory reviews are of a standard that helps it to effectively manage the risk posed by Registered Sex Offenders.”

- AFI 11 was; “The force should introduce a system of intelligence checks to improve its risk assessment process for cases involving online child abuse awaiting enforcement action.”

Both have been proposed for closure awaiting formal verification by HMICFRS on their monitoring portal.

Further to an HMICFRS Monitoring Visit to the Force Control Room on 12 February 2024, AFI 4 was proposed for closure awaiting formal verification by HMICFRS on their monitoring portal.

- AFI 4 was; “The force needs to make sure that repeat callers are routinely identified.”

The remaining AFIs, RAG rated ‘Amber’, take into consideration insight from the most recent PEEL Inspection reports and discussions with HMICFRS directly, to introduce an operational assessment (how the work is embedding across the force) for each AFI.

This is not a reflection on performance against those AFIs but the taking of a prudent approach until such time as the systems and plans implemented and actions taken to address each AFI are fully embedded and operationally tested by HMICFRS in our next PEEL Inspection.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

There are no current issues or risks recorded on the Force Strategic Risk Register relating to the remaining AFIs. Instead, they are recorded and tracked on the Force Action Tracker and HMICFRS Monitoring Portal and reported on monthly and quarterly as set out in section three. The remaining AFIs will continue to be internally monitored until they are formally assessed by HMICFRS either before or during our next PEEL inspection.

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

The PEEL performance assessment framework (PAF) links to all priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan. Action to meet the AFIs makes a positive impact and contributes to one or more of the priorities with an emphasis on the six priorities below:

- Further investment in crime prevention
- Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse
- Reducing violence against women and girls
- Improving support for victims of crime
- Supporting our officers and staff
- Increasing collaboration

6.2 Demand

The DCC led Strategic Demand Board and ACO led Resourcing Panel review how effectively the Force is working internally and with our partners to make sure officers and staff are given the time, space and support to focus on our priorities of preventing crime and catching criminals.

This includes any impact on the force in delivering against one or more of the AFIs.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

If AFIs are not delivered there is potential risk of HMICFRS issuing a cause for concern about the force's performance, which in turn poses potential risk to members of the public and the levels of public confidence in our force. As described under section three, there are strong internal governance processes overseeing the progress of each AFI to ensure appropriate action takes place to identify and mitigate any risk.

In his last meeting with the Chief Constable, HMI Roy Wilsher confirmed there are no concerns about the Force which would move Essex Police from the HMICFRS 'Scan' to the 'Engage' Phase (enhanced monitoring).

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

There are no protected characteristics adversely affected by the PEEL assessment. Whilst there are no specific equality and/or human rights implications identified in providing progress updates against the PEEL AFIs, any activity or changes required will take account of such matters, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and the force Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy. This includes the completion of an Equality Impact Statement for any amendments to existing or development of new policy and procedures.

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

No Health and Safety implications have been identified in the provision of progress updates. Any activity or changes required will take account of health and safety implications and ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

7.0 Consultation/Engagement

All Strategic leads have been consulted and agree with the assessment discussed with the DCC.

Chief Constable (COG 29 May 2024)
DCC Prophet
ACC Nolan
ACC Mariner
ACC Baldwin
ACC Pritchard
ACO Richard Leicester

ACO Fiona Henderson
Claire Heath, Head of Continuous Improvement

8.0 Actions for Improvement

The report provides detailed updates, the current and previous RAG status against each of the AFIs from the PEEL Inspection Report. Progress is monitored through the internal governance arrangements described in section three.

9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

Regular update meetings are held between the Essex Police HMICFRS Force Liaison Officer (Claire Heath) and the temporary HMICFRS Force Lead Inspector (Roger Essell). Any areas of concern in our progress against the AFIs will be reported to the Chief Officer Team. The Force expects to achieve all AFIs with formal review and closure in our next PEEL Inspection.

In April 2024, the Force were notified by HMICFRS that they had been selected as part of a national thematic inspection on investigating crime. Fieldwork for this inspection commences 24 June 2024 and preparations are well in hand. Positively, the Force has already been contacted by HMICFRS who have identified potential areas of promising practice to be included in the final report.

In addition, commencing 20 May 2024, HMICFRS began their three-week custody inspection in the Force, part of the rolling programme of inspections for all 43 forces in England and Wales.

Appendix 1 – PEEL AFI Update Presentation - Separate attachment.

Appendix 2 – PEEL AFI Progress / Direction of Travel Dashboard - Separate attachment.