

AGENDA ITEM 5

Essex Police and Crime Panel	EPCP/04/16
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PCC End of Term Report

Report by the Police Crime Commissioner

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1. Purpose of report

- To summarise the key issues, challenges and achievements that have taken place since the PCC took up office in November 2012.
- The report is an overview only and is not intended as an exhaustive account. The PCC will speak to the paper in detail in the Panel meeting.

2. Recommendation

- That the panel note the contents of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 Since the PCC first took up office 3 and a half years ago, there has been a period of significant change both in crime and in communities across Essex. The profile of crime has continued to change, with a shift away from the more traditional crime types such as theft and burglary, towards new and emerging crimes including the more hidden harms of domestic abuse, sexual violence and child sexual exploitation. Many more crimes are now committed on-line, with fraud and on-line abuse of vulnerable people on the increase. This has called for a different type of policing, with a movement away from what some call the 'bobbies on the beat' approach towards a model that has public protection and safeguarding at its core.

- 3.2 In addition, the demographics of Essex are changing. With the significant increase in new homes being built across the county, we see communities growing and changing, bringing with them economic growth and new employment opportunities, but also social challenges. For example, our close proximity to London has resulted in a number of London boroughs re-locating some of their more troubled families into Essex, including the placement of children in care in Essex care homes. We have also seen a rise in the levels of organised criminal activity, much of it drug related, coming into Essex from London and surrounding areas. All of this has an impact on policing and on wider social care agencies.
- 3.3 With a new governance structure, led by the PCC, it has been inevitable that there has been a fresh look at Essex Police itself. The retirement of the previous Chief Constable Jim Barker McCardle allowed the PCC to advertise for and recruit Stephen Kavanagh to the position of Chief Constable from a strong field of candidates. Since then, through support and challenge, the PCC has encouraged the Chief Constable to refresh the culture, lift the standards and build the professionalism of Essex Police.
- 3.4 The combination of both internal and external change has led to what is now a significant programme of transformation across Essex Police involving police estates, ICT, public contact and the development of a new policing model. The creation of the role of PCC has also allowed a new partnership approach to addressing some of the challenging crimes and harms, such as Domestic Abuse. There is significant scope for the further development of this leadership role in seeking partnership solutions to complex problems.

4. Challenges:

- 4.1 Areas of challenge include:

- 4.2 **Child Protection:** The Panel will be aware of Operation Maple. This commenced in autumn 2014 and revealed some significant, systematic inadequacies within Essex Police in relation to the investigation of child abuse and its work with vulnerable people. Responding to these critical performance challenges has been a key focus for both the PCC and the Chief Constable, resulting in a significant increase in investment in public protection and safeguarding across Essex Police. A further critical report by HMIC is anticipated shortly. However, the PCC and the Chief Constable are confident that re-inspections from March this year will begin to show improvements in this critical area.

- 4.3 **Professionalisation of Police Staff:** The deficit of expertise and skills within Essex Police in relation to critical support areas such as ICT, programme and change management, HR and Finance has been a key area of concern. Work is well advanced to address these skills gaps, with a number of recent appointments drawing in new skills and experience into the organisation from outside of policing. Investment in police staff continues to be an important area of focus.
- 4.4 **Financial management:** Essex Police has historically had a traditional, transactional model of financial management but with the demands of modern policing, it now needs one that is much more strategic, transparent and focused on linking resources to outcomes. A recent independent financial review has helped to identify key areas for improvement and an improvement plan is now in place to address these issues.
- 4.5 **Public confidence and contact:** According to national police surveys, confidence in Essex Police continues to be low in comparison to other similar forces. Essex Police needs to be able to communicate more proactively and openly with the public of Essex, speaking about the positive work they do as well as the challenges they face in a language that engages local communities. This needs to translate into how the public can in turn contact and communicate with Essex Police including having access to a wide range of contact channels to improve reporting and local engagement. The new Public Contact programme is seeking to achieve this.
- 4.6 **Police Estates:** The Police estate is expensive, in significant disrepair and not fit for purpose for modern policing. Essex Police needs to embrace more efficient, agile ways of working that move away from large, inefficient buildings towards a smaller police estate that is more responsive to demand. This will reflect the use of mobile policing technology and greater co-location with partners through local community safety hubs.
- 4.7 **ICT:** Essex Police has led a challenging journey through the implementation of the new ATHENA system. The police IT infrastructure is also being rationalised to be more cost effective and easy to maintain. The introduction of fully mobile working has been hesitant with too many false starts over many years - a problem common across UK police forces. The planning of the next phase is well advanced and now needs to be effectively landed to deliver the new operating model.

5. Achievements:

- 5.1 The past 3 and a half years have seen a number of significant achievements. Some examples include:
- 5.2 **Holding the Chief Constable to Account:** Arguably this is the key role of the PCC who has made scrutiny of Essex Police performance a key priority, ensuring open, transparent and highly visible accountability through the Essex Police Challenge, through the publication of performance information in public domain and through a comprehensive scrutiny programme.
- 5.3 **Eradication of police targets:** The PCC removed all local police targets and their unintended consequences, and instead pointed to one primary outcome within the Police Crime Plan – that of reducing crime. This has provided an important focus throughout the period and has enabled Essex Police to focus on quality and outcomes instead of chasing volume targets. This has not been without challenge for a force where many managers had become accustomed to meeting targets imposed by senior managers without regard to local circumstances.
- 5.4 **Victims focus and Commissioning:** The PCC made victims a key priority within the Police Crime Plan. He has led the development of new victims commissioning strategy, investing over £2m a year in support to local victims of crime, and ensuring that victims have a real voice in the criminal justice system.
- 5.5 **Domestic Abuse and Hidden Harms:** Domestic Abuse was the only crime type specifically singled out in the Police Crime Plan as a key area of focus, and has continued to be a key priority for the PCC throughout his term in office. This has now expanded to include wider hidden harms. The PCC has invested heavily in tackling Domestic Abuse and hidden harms, and continues to champion the partnership response to this issue through chairing the DA Strategic Board and through his work across the safeguarding boards.
- 5.6 **Community safety:** The PCC has sought to invest and deliver local solutions for local problems through his New Initiatives Fund and Community Safety Development Fund, investing over £2.4m a year in local communities and community safety partnerships and, more recently, helping drive the creation of new Community Safety Hubs to embed close partnership working between Essex Police, CSPs and other key local community safety stakeholders. He has maintained funding for CSPs throughout his tenure and encouraged efficient joint working under the Safer Essex umbrella.

- 5.7 **Partnership working:** The PCC has maintained a strong focus on partnership working, working with and alongside Safer Essex, Essex Criminal Justice Board, Essex Partnership Board, the SET Safeguarding Boards and a range of other forums and bodies to enable systems wide responses to some of the most challenging issues.
- 5.8 **Public engagement and visibility:** The PCC has engaged directly with the diverse communities of Essex through holding regular public meetings in each district and unitary across the county, engaging with more vulnerable communities through specific events and the development of youth forums, and through having an open access approach whereby the public can correspond and speak directly with him and his office.
- 5.9 **Reducing reoffending:** The PCC has worked closely with criminal justice partners to improve criminal justice system wide responses to tackling perpetrators and supporting victims, has through his Deputy set up an out of court disposals panel to review out of court decisions and processes, and continues to support the work of the Reducing Reoffending Board and Integrated Offender Management scheme.
- 5.10 **A focus on the Business and Rural Communities:** Against the backdrop of increasing demand from the busy urban areas of Essex related both to volume crime and to the many hidden harms, the PCC has also built strong relationships with the Business and Rural communities and encouraged Essex Police to listen and respond to their particular concerns. Quality data about crime affecting these communities is now available and is helping to shape Essex Police response to what can be economically damaging crime.

6. Issues for the next term:

- 6.1 Whilst proud of these achievements, the PCC considers there are many 'works in progress' that an incoming PCC will need consider, as well as new tasks to begin. These include:

6.2 In progress:

- Supporting the Chief Constable as he embeds the culture change ;
- Developing the programme through which the Chief Constable and the work of Essex Police is scrutinised by the OPCC, building on the lessons of the first term;
- The on-going delivery of the Strategic Transformation programme;

- Continuing to refine the relationship with the Police and Crime Panel, including resolving the issue of the handing of complaints against the PCC and his Deputy.

6.3 **New Developments:**

- Responding to the Government's desire for emergency service provision to be 'reimagined', seeking improvements in operational collaboration, infrastructure efficiency and governance especially between Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service;
- Working with public and voluntary sector partners to address the critical issue of demand on all public services across the health, social care and community safety sectors, focusing on early intervention and prevention;
- Responding to the new initiatives from the Ministry of Justice, and taking advantage of the lessons learned from the introduction of PCCs, to look to streamline and make more efficient the local delivery of criminal justice across policing, the CPS, courts, probation / the new CRC, and prisons.