

Report title: Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures – Quarter 4 2022/23	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Report author: The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex	
Date: 15 June 2023	For: Noting and comment
Enquiries to: Suzanne Harris (Head of Performance and Scrutiny – Policing and Crime) 01245 282083 suzanne.harris@essex.police.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Essex Police's progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan, based on data and other information to the end of March 2023.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That members of the Panel note and comment / seek clarity as appropriate on the content of the report and attached appendix.

3. Context / Summary

- 3.1 The attached quarterly report, produced by Essex Police and scrutinised at the monthly Performance and Resources Board chaired by the Commissioner, provides highlight reporting against the priorities set out in the Plan.
- 3.2 This is the first iteration of this report in this format, which focusses on the 12 priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2021 - 2024.
- 3.3 During Quarter 4, highlights with regard to performance include:
- The number of officers grew by 50 during the quarter, to 3,757.
 - Excluding the peak seen during 2020/21 due to reported breaches of Covid restrictions, anti-social behaviour (ASB) has been showing a steady downward trend since the beginning of 2016/17. Essex has been selected by the Home Office as one of 10 ASB Hotspot Policing Pilot areas for 2023/24, which should improve performance further.
 - More than 400 additional resources were deployed during Street Week activities during the quarter, including Special Constables, Essex Watch members and other volunteers working alongside the Business Crime Team, Rural Engagement Team, Community Policing Teams and Fraud Coordinators.

- Drug-driven homicides have been showing a downward trend since the beginning of 2019/20.
- The last two quarters of 2022/23 showed a downward trend in domestic abuse offences, which reduced by 9.3% in 2022/23 compared with 2021/22. Meanwhile, the solved rate improved from 10.1% to 11.2%. Prior to this, the county had seen steady and significant increases due to a combination of changes in Home Office recording rules and additional methods of reporting being made available. The improvement has been assisted by the fact that Essex Police has had all its applications for Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) granted, putting it in the top three forces for success in SPO applications. Essex Police has also funded the training of six new Independent Stalking Advocate Caseworkers (ISACs) (three per Local Policing Area), who tailor support to victims and work alongside Essex Police to support victims to report crime and to facilitate positive outcomes. The PFCC, Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) and commissioned services have also applied successfully to the Home Office for additional funding for further perpetrator behaviour intervention programs, a new stalking perpetrator pilot, and a diversionary cautions pilot, which should further improve the trajectory going forwards.
- Solved rates for hate crimes continued to improve over the year. Operation Knowledge has been running over the past few months, which gives officers in charge of investigating hate crime offences the opportunity to have an early scheduled appointment with a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) solicitor to discuss case progression and the Realistic Prospect of Conviction (RPOC) without having a full file completed or the investigation finished. The objective is to reduce the time taken from initial investigation to resolution through a more focused investigation. This operation continues.
- Although the long-term trend since the beginning of 2016/17 shows sexual offences increasing, gradual reductions in offences of this nature were seen during the second half of 2022/23. During this time, the force secured several convictions relating to sexual offending, including a sentence of 27 years' imprisonment plus five years on licence for one prolific offender.
- During the quarter, the force received its first referral via a new app it is trialling that allows victims to collate and keep evidence on a secure cloud until they are ready to support a prosecution or access more police support. At this point, the evidence can be submitted via the app in an evidential format.

3.4 In terms of areas for continued focus:

- Overall confidence in Essex Police increased during Covid restrictions but has been falling since autumn 2021. The gap between victim and non-victim confidence has narrowed very slightly (by 0.3%), however confidence amongst victims (at 61% for the 2022 calendar year) remains considerably lower than that of non-victims (at 77.1%). The force is addressing this through various mechanisms including a renewed focus on the restorative justice process and enhanced training for staff.
- Although we saw a very slight reduction in Quarter 4 of 2022/23, overall there has been a slight increasing trend in the number of rural crimes reported since the beginning of 2016/17. A new Rural Crime Strategy was launched in

March 2023. During the quarter, the Rural Engagement Team increased its patrols by 24% and doubled the number of Stop and Searches it carried out. The team also achieved a national first by securing a dog banning order for hare coursers. In addition, it provided insight to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Animal Welfare and launched a partnership with New Holland Agriculture using a marked police tractor as an engagement tool. There was also an increase of 10 in the membership of Farm and Rural Watch during the quarter. There are now 757 members of this group who receive a weekly report regarding crimes affecting the rural community so that they can be aware of this and take necessary precautions. They also receive crime prevention advice and are encouraged to report crimes and any suspicious activity through the proper channels.

- Business Crime offences returned close to pre-Covid levels in Quarter 4. Essex Police continues to work closely with the Cyber Resilience Centre and has the highest number of membership referrals in the eastern region. Engagement with the business community continues via various forums and activity is reflected in the Essex Prevent and Protect Two Year Plan. Essex Fraud Protect is also working with various partners and voluntary sector agencies to provide a unique, fully joined up approach to supporting victims of fraud, including peer support. Meanwhile, Fraud Coordinators continue to support hundreds of the most vulnerable victims with the aim of preventing them from becoming repeat victims.
- There were 897 deaths and serious injuries on Essex roads during 2022/23. This is the second highest annual number recorded in the seven-year period since 2016/17. The Vision Zero roads policing operation continues to target the “fatal four” offences of speeding, drink / drug driving, driving while distracted, and non-wearing of seatbelts on the strategic roads network. During the quarter, Essex Police also introduced six new police officers on the motorcycle team to patrol the county, as well as attending school crossing patrol sites to support the promotion of the “Stop Means Stop” road safety campaign. In addition, February 2023 saw the first pilot schools multi-agency day of action, involving school crossing operatives, teachers, parents, Essex Police officers, Safer Essex Roads School Liaison Officers, Parking Partnership Enforcement Officers, local councillors and media teams working alongside vulnerable road users from schools across the county. The Extra Eyes road safety initiative also continues to gain momentum, with an increase seen during Quarter 4 in submissions from vulnerable road user groups such as pedal cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders.
- After peaking in Quarter 1 of 2021/22, the number of Specials has fallen in each quarter since. During Quarter 4, 32 Special Constables resigned, including two who retired, 16 who joined the regulars and two who joined other forces. A revised #MyOtherLife dedicated recruitment campaign is underway to address this.
- There was a very slight reduction (of 0.26%, or 16 fewer employees) in the representation of ethnic minority employees at the end of 2022/23 compared with the same period the previous year. The ‘We Value Difference’ recruitment campaign continues with 330 candidates in the pipeline, 11.2% of whom are from ethnic minority backgrounds and 47.3% of whom are female.
- Audience numbers for the Joint Essex Fire and Rescue and Police Education in Schools Programme fell by 12.5% in the 12 months to March 2023

compared with the previous 12 months, and by 39.6% compared with the 12 months to December 2019. This is largely due to the team having a vacancy and another member of staff being on long term leave for the first six months of the year, as well as taking a more targeted approach to delivery based on data analytics. During the year, the team commenced Project Invoke, whose brief is to introduce a booking system to manage educational bookings. This is due to be completed later in 2023. Analysis work is also underway to ensure that the team has an up-to-date list of all current schools and the programmes delivered by all partners in each district so that it can best join up with these, and a rolling programme of reviewing and assessing lesson content is in place to ensure this remains fit for purpose and age appropriate. The Education Hub created in 2020 also continues to be a source of resources for schools alongside face to face and / or virtual visits.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024 Quarterly Update – Quarter 4 2022/23