

<b>Report title:</b> Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures – Quarter 4 2020/21	
<b>Report to:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
<b>Report author:</b> The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex	
<b>Date:</b> 17 June 2021	<b>For:</b> Noting and comment
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> 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 (as extended for 2020/21), based on data and other information to the end of March 2021.

## **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 seven priorities set out in the Plan.
- 3.2 To put into context the circumstances in which these levels of performance were achieved:
- Call demand was 10% lower in Quarter 4 than during the previous quarter but 19.2% higher than during the same quarter the previous year. March was the busiest month, with around 3,200 more emergency calls received than in either January or February.
  - The force received 2.8% fewer non-emergency calls in Quarter 4 of 2020/21 than in Quarter 3 but 4.7% more than during Quarter 4 of 2019/20. Again, the highest volume of calls was received during March.
  - The force received approximately 67 contacts per day via Live Chat that would otherwise have been routed via 101. This is the highest volume recorded since the service was introduced, with March seeing the greatest volume of interactions.
  - All crime fell by 11.4% during the whole of 2020/21 compared with 2019/20, with national restrictions on movements and gatherings due to the coronavirus

pandemic having a significant impact on crime volumes. With the relative easing of restrictions with effect from 8 March 2021, crime volumes in March were just 0.1% lower than those experienced in March 2020.

### 3.3 During Quarter 4, highlights with regard to performance include:

- As at 1 February 2021, the headcount of Essex's Special Constabulary stood at 530, compared with 513 at the same point last year. During Quarter 4, Special Constables recorded 51,866 hours, with 17,211 hours of high visibility policing. This is equivalent to having an additional 106.9 full time officers, who would attract an annual salary cost of £5.6m. Activities undertaken by Special Constables during Quarter 4 include Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) operations, response policing, crime prevention patrols, community policing of protests and execution of search warrants.
- New Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams were launched across the county on 1 March 2021. There is now a dedicated team in each of the three Local Policing Areas to work alongside partner agencies to support victims of domestic abuse (including by breaking down barriers to victim engagement with the criminal justice system) and to work with offender management officers to target perpetrators of abuse. Early successes have already been seen, with support provided to vulnerable victims, perpetrators apprehended, and victims re-engaged with police investigations. This is the latest in a series of improvements which contributed to a 14.4% increase in the number of solved domestic abuse outcomes during the whole of 2020/21 compared with 2019/20.
- An Eastern Region Child Abuse Investigations Group has been created to share information and good practice relating to child deaths, child exploitation (including sexual exploitation), child abuse, legislation, procedures and training.
- During Quarter 4, Essex Police's Serious Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) completed extensive activity to tackle the importation and supply of class A and B drugs. 18 people were arrested and six were charged. Consequently, 21kg of class A drugs with a street value of £2.1m and £165,000 in cash were seized. This concluded a year of significant police proactivity in this area, during which 37.3% more trafficking of drugs offences were recorded than during the previous year, and during which arrests for trafficking of drugs grew by 6.9%. The number of Organised Crime Group (OCG) disruptions undertaken during the whole of 2020/21 was more than twice (130 more than) the number undertaken in 2019/20.
- The Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT) completed accredited grading training with the Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Proactive Teams, thereby becoming nationally accredited to grade indecent images of children in order to improve consistency and provide less experienced staff with the confidence to undertake this difficult area of work.
- Hate Crime Officers (HCOs) grew the county's third-party reporting network to more than 800 Ambassadors working across 50 Hate Incident Reporting Centres. Volunteers across Essex are now also able to take reports of hate crime and provide advice and support to those affected. Four volunteers were recruited during Quarter 4 to work alongside the HCOs.
- The PFCC funded an online hate crime campaign to encourage people to report hate crime anonymously. The social media posts received more than 1.2m impressions.

- Every district policing area now has an Independent Advisory Group (IAG).
- There was a 22.5% reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured on Essex roads in Quarter 4 of 2020/21 compared with the same period last year. Within this, there was a 50% reduction in the number of fatalities. For the whole of the financial year, there was a 21.9% fall in the number of people killed and seriously injured on Essex roads compared with 2019/20. Though this is welcomed, it is likely to be at least partially attributable to the reduction in traffic volumes due to coronavirus restrictions.

### 3.4 In terms of areas for continued focus:

- Referrals to Victim Support for hate incidents fell by 29.7% in Quarter 4 of 2020/21 compared with the same period the previous year. This is believed to be at least partially linked to coronavirus restrictions. During this time, the Strategic Hate Crime Prevention Partnership worked with the Essex Resilience Forum to issue guidance and reassurance to victims and to send letters to communities across Essex, including members of faith groups, encouraging them to report any hate crime they experienced during periods of lockdown. Residents with public-facing job roles also received hate crime awareness resources to encourage them to report incidents and access support.
- During the whole of 2020/21, proactive roads policing led to a 5.1% increase in drink / drug driving offences being recorded compared with 2019/20. However, there was a 17.8% reduction in the number of drivers arrested for drug driving in Quarter 4 of 2020/21 compared with the same quarter the previous year. Again, this is likely to be at least partially attributable to a reduction in traffic volumes in consequence of coronavirus restrictions. Backlogs in the processing of road traffic toxicology samples through the National Forensic Science service may pose a future threat to completing cases within the statutory time limit. This is currently being risk assessed by the force. In the meantime, new working processes have recently been agreed by forces with the provider to help clear the backlog.

## 4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Police and Crime Plan 2016 - 2021 Quarterly Update – Quarter 4 2020/21