



POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

ANNUAL REPORT

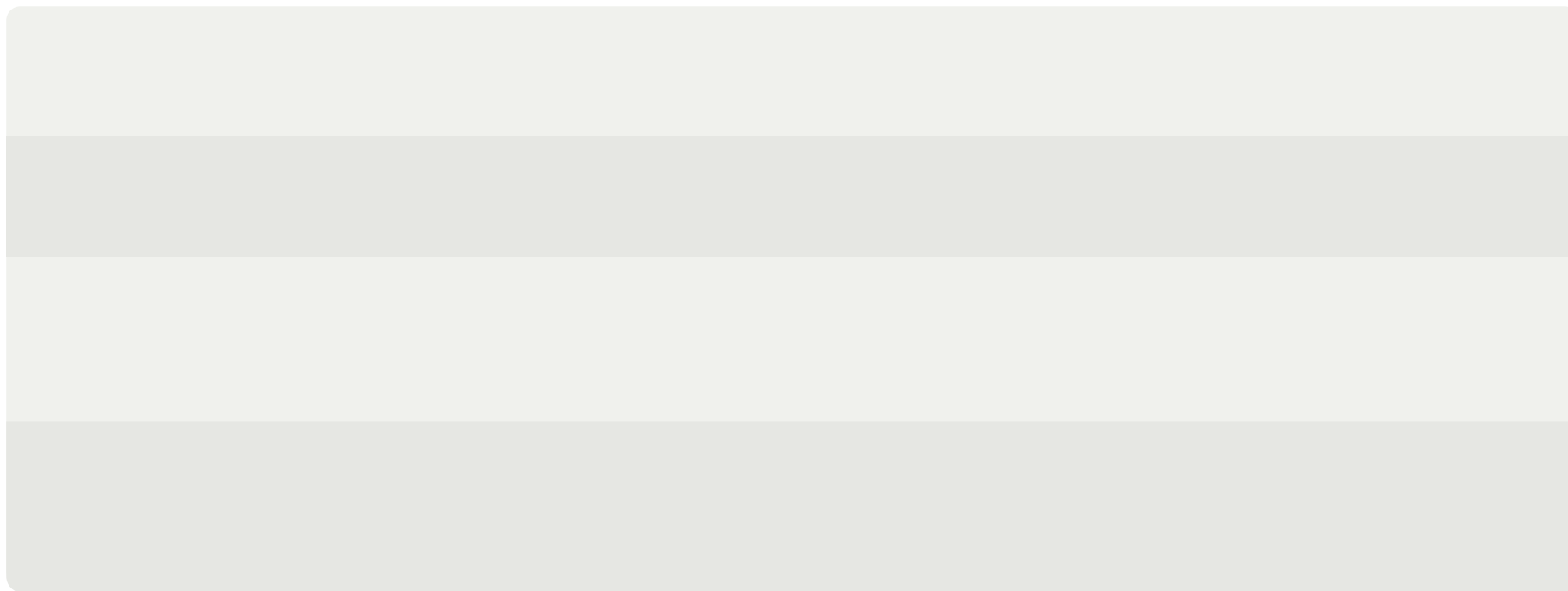
2023-2024

[ESSEX.PFCC.POLICE.UK](https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk)

PFCC 
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX



POLICE AND CRIME PLAN ↓



Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Report

Safe and secure communities are the bedrock on which we build success, prosperity, and well-being for all.



Since 2016 all of us together have invested in making our police force, more accessible, more visible and better connected to our local communities.

1 In April 2023 we hit our growth target with 905 extra officers recruited into the force taking total officers to 3,755, a number which has been sustained throughout 2023/24.



This extra strength is making a difference. In the past twelve months recorded crime has continued to fall, proof that our strategic commitment to preventing crime is working. 2 There was a 6.5 per cent decrease in All Crime in the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023, while violence against the person was down by 10.6 per cent.

Following increased investment in community policing, our officers are working with partner agencies to address the root causes of issues that are inflicting the most harm on communities.

These extra officers are making a difference through focused visible patrols, targeted prevention work and intelligence led proactive work with anti-social behaviour down by 26.8 per cent over the year.

The local approach to tackling crime in our communities was further boosted by the government's £1.1m of funding to tackle ASB hotspots across the county. The funding formed part of the government's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy designed to deliver high visibility patrols, public engagement, targeted youth outreach and early intervention. Of the eleven areas identified as hotspot zones, all have seen a marked reduction in anti-social behaviour, crime, and disorder, making a real difference to the day to day lives of residents and businesses.



We are continuing to take a robust approach against drug driven violence. We know drugs are inextricably linked with knife crime and gangs and create a cycle of violence that has a devastating impact on communities. By working at a national level with the National Crime Agency, on a local level through the Essex Police Serious Violence Unit, and at a preventative level through our Violence and Vulnerability Unit, we are successfully reducing serious violence in our communities, cutting the number of Organised Crime Gangs operating in the county and driving down knife enabled crime.

Alongside Essex Police and partners, we have been working hard to break the cycle of domestic abuse by supporting victims and taking a preventative approach by tackling aggressive, dysfunctional behaviour early to stop it escalating. Through investment in services and resources and a partnership approach, Essex has seen a reduction of around 13.2 per cent in reports of domestic abuse in the twelve months to March 2024. As Essex Police continue to improve processes and recording of domestic abuse, we hope to see rates of domestic abuse reduce further.

Reducing violence against women and girls (VAWG) is an area that requires continued focus and Essex is utilising a range of initiatives to help women and girls feel safer in their communities. Through the government's Safer Street Fund and our own locally funded scheme we have invested £1.5m in 2023/24 to help create safer public spaces. Working

together with Community Safety Partnership this is making a difference by creating spaces where people, especially women and girls, feel and are safer. Partnership engagement has been essential in tackling VAWG, with collaborative working leading to the development of several projects such as the Essex County Council VAWG Charter, Project Minerva and the Essex County Council VAWG Mapping Programme.

For people who unfortunately become victims of crime, we continue to fund 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.

However, there is still more to do. We need to continue to drive down drug driven violence by tackling organised criminals while protecting our young and vulnerable people from being exploited.

We need to target neighbourhood crime to address robbery, the surge in vehicle thefts and shoplifting. Crime must fall further and with the investments we have made over the last five years we want a 40 per cent reduction in crime from the twelve months to the end of March 2024.

As the Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2024 draws to a close, and I reflect on the progress made in the past year, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of Essex Police alongside the many partners who support and help them to deliver so many impactful initiatives across the county. I would also like to thank the Chief Constable and his senior team for their ongoing commitment, openness and transparency. Together with our police officers and staff, they make a real difference to people's lives and Essex a safe place to live, work and thrive.

● Roger Hirst in front of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership Vehicles at our prevention conference



Chief Constable's Report

With the support of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) and through the Police Uplift Programme Essex Police is the biggest it has ever been, maintaining an establishment of 3,755 officers.



All forces were set a target of recruiting officers under the Police Uplift Programme, and I'm pleased to report that Essex Police have exceeded this target and we are at our greatest strength in officer numbers in our history with a full time equivalent strength at the end of the year of 3,758 officers. This has been supported by 2,083 police staff, 93 police community support officers and 251 special constables.

As Chief Constable, I am immensely proud to lead such hardworking people 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.

Essex Police is the biggest it has ever been, maintaining an establishment of 3,755 Officers

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. Policing by consent is fundamental to everything we do. National commentary has recently described trust and confidence as 'hanging by a thread'. Following recent criminal cases involving Metropolitan Police Officers there has justifiably been outrage regarding police services,

vetting procedures and professional standards. I am pleased to report that public trust in Essex Police is still high with the most recent public survey showing 74.9% of respondents stating that Essex Police do a good or excellent job. I am, of course, not complacent.

Contributing to this, Essex Police, with the support of communities, the PFCC, criminal justice and community safety partners, has been able to make some real inroads into reducing crime, bringing justice for victims and reducing anti-social behaviour. To the end of March 2024 crime overall has decreased by 6.5% in the previous 12 months, meaning 10,690 fewer unique victims compared to the 12 months to March 2023. Notably this included key reductions in rural crime, domestic abuse, violent crime, violence against woman and girls and sexual violence and numbers killed or seriously injured on our roads. This demonstrates that Essex Police continues to put the new and existing resources at its disposal to best use to protect and serve the county and does so whilst providing some of the best value for money of any force with the 2nd lowest spend per head of population nationally as reported by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in the 2023 Value for Money dashboard.

Across the force, we have been investing in our estates and buildings and we are now seeing much-needed refurbishments and improvements being delivered. Policing is always changing, and where we work must be fit for purpose to take on the demands of the next generation and beyond.



⊕ Officers out on patrol around Essex's coastline

In addition to investing in our estate we continue to invest in technology and one new area of technology that I'm particularly proud of is Rapid Video Response (RVR). This is a victim focused investigative tool to support victims of domestic abuse and it has been particularly well received with victims feeling more supported with faster response times and more effective evidential capture at the initial point of contact.

Another way that we have used technology over the last year has been Live Facial Recognition technology with it being utilised in Essex within Southend and Chelmsford during October and it led to three people being arrested. Whilst we piloted use of this technology this year using equipment on loan from South Wales police it is something that we intend to invest in next year. The technology is targeted to focus on people wanted in connection with specific offences. It compares live camera feeds of faces against a predetermined database or 'watch list' of people of interest.

I am also pleased to see that our new innovative approach to tackling drug-related offences is paying dividends with a new Drugs Drying Unit set up and running and means we are able to dry and crop cannabis in exactly the same way as the criminals would and importantly, we are able to produce the same level of yield in order to value the drugs accurately and achieve stronger sentences on conviction.

These are just some of the projects that demonstrate how we effectively use our financial resources to improve outcomes for victims of crime.



BJ Harrington
Chief Constable of Essex



Report of the Chief Financial Officer, PFCC

The Group Accounts for the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex explain the Group's financial activity during the financial year 2023/24, as well as the financial position at 31st March 2024.

The accounts are prepared and presented in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting In the United Kingdom 2023/24 (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 2023/24

The Group ended the year on a funding basis, with a deficit of £1.568m funded with a transfer of £0.796m from earmarked reserves and £0.772m from the General Reserve. This deficit excludes adjustments for items required by regulation for the accounting basis, as shown on page 52. 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 83 of these accounts. Violence Unit, and at a preventative level through our Violence and Vulnerability Unit, we are successfully reducing serious violence in our communities, cutting the number of Organised Crime Gangs operating in the county and driving down knife enabled crime.

Where the Money Comes From

In 2023/24 the PFCC increased the precept by 6.84% (£14.94 per year on a Band D property) 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 to make a significant difference to our ability to positively affect the communities we serve.

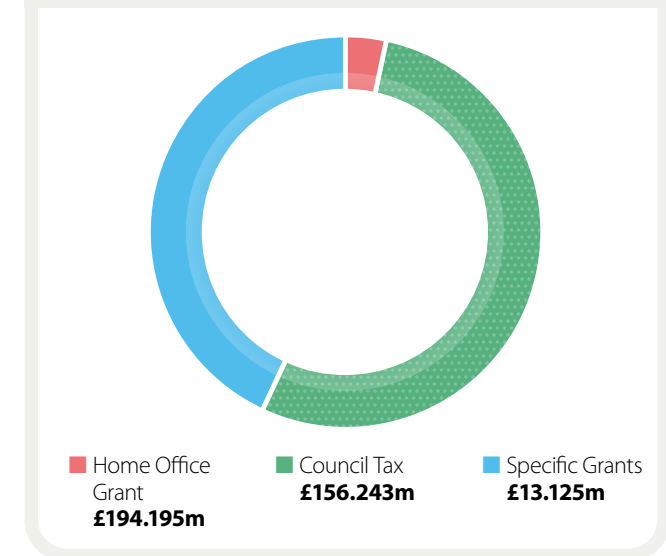
The chart below shows an analysis of the PFCC's sources of funding in 2023/24 of £363.563m. The Home Office core grant paid to the PFCC accounted for 53% of the total funding. These grants and the income raised by council tax were used to fund the net revenue expenditure for 2023/24 of £365.131m,

with the balance of £1.568m funded by a transfer of £0.796m from earmarked reserves and £0.772m from the General Reserve.

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 second lowest spend per head of population (Source: HMICFRS 2023 Value for Money Profiles).

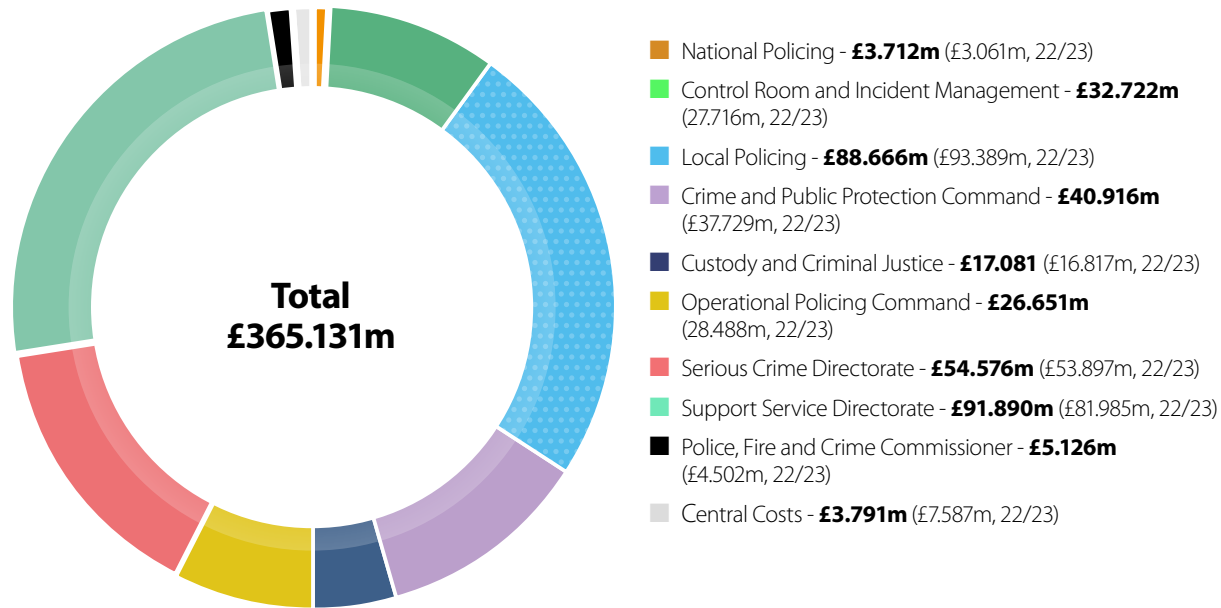
Essex Police has a good track record of delivering cash and efficiency savings to maximise the benefit out of every pound we spend. In 2023/24 £12.2m of savings were delivered with £10.7m of these recurring annually, and we continue with an ambitious savings programme into 2024/25 with £11.3m programmed to be delivered.

Funding Sources 2023/24



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 most police staff along with all police officers and PCSO's are employed by the Chief Constable. The Chief Constable in turn has operational control of police officers, PCSOs and police staff (excluding the PFCC staff). Whilst 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 on page 81 (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 £366.120m, as presented at the Police and Crime Panel in February 2023, was funded by £363.687m from budgeted general grants and council tax, with the balance of £2.433m being planned to be transferred from reserves (£3.145m from the General Reserve offset by a £0.712m transfer to earmarked reserves). The actual position for the year was a deficit of £1.568m. The total contribution from the General Reserve for the year was £0.772m, and there was a £0.796m contribution from earmarked reserves.

The main contributing factors for underspending against the net expenditure budget was over achievement of income from specific grants received from the Home Office which included:

- **£2.265m** for overachievement of the Police Uplift Programme target after the force secured funding for successful recruitment of 55 officers over the original base target headcount
- **£0.720m** of additional funding to reimburse costs in relation to the Just Stop Oil protest activity at petrochemical distribution sites in West Essex, petrol station forecourts and other sites across Essex. The protests began on 1st April 2022 and a grant had been received in 2022/23 but only covering part of the costs and the PFCC and Chief Constable worked together to seek further financial reimbursement.

Group - 2023/24 Financial Performance

	Original Budget	Virements	Current Budget	Actual	Variance over / (under)
Employees					
Police Officer pay and allowances	226,792	8,993	235,785	239,313	3,528
PCSO pay and allowances	3,687	124	3,811	3,716	(95)
Police staff pay and allowances	98,909	3,534	102,443	99,561	(2882)
Ill-health/medical pensions	4,215	(493)	3,722	4,024	302
Training	2,019	(15)	2,004	1,997	(6)
Other employee expenses	399	728	1,128	1,171	43
	336,022	12,871	348,893	349,782	889
Other Service Expenditure					
Premises	12,317	(109)	12,208	12,245	37
Transport	6,934	99	7,033	7,052	19
Supplies & services	42,727	5,571	48,298	49,113	815
Third party payments	7,382	612	7,994	7,976	(18)
	69,359	6,173	75,532	76,386	853
Gross Operating Expenditure	405,381	19,044	424,426	426,168	1,742
Income					
Government grants and contributions	(23,795)	(16,557)	(40,352)	(43,787)	(3,435)
Fees Charges and Other Service Income	16,279)	(2,582)	(18,861)	(19,290)	(429)
	(40,074)	(19,139)	(59,213)	(63,077)	(3,864)
Net Cost of Services	365,307	(94)	365,213	363,091	(2,122)

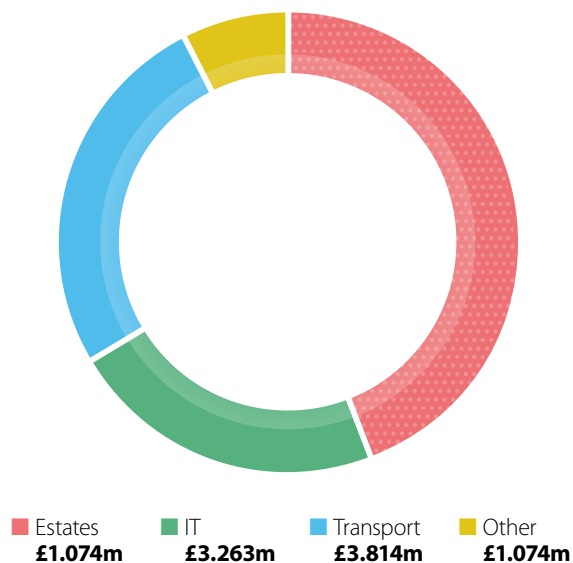
	Original Budget	Virements	Current Budget	Actual	Variance over / (under)
Other Expenditure / (Income)					
Other Expenditure / (Income)	(91)	-	(91)	(1,195)	(1,104)
Capital & other adjustments	904	2,402	3,306	3,235	(71)
	813	2,402	3,215	2,040	(1,175)
Net Expenditure	366,120	2,308	368,428	365,131	(3,298)
Sources of funding					
Police grant	(127,208)	233	(126,976)	(126,976)	-
Formula funding grant	(66,987)	(233)	(67,220)	(67,220)	-
Council tax precept	(154,836)	-	(154,836)	(154,712)	124
Council tax support grant	(10,992)	-	(10,992)	(10,992)	-
Council tax freeze grant	(2,133)	-	(2,133)	(2,133)	-
Collection fund surplus	(1,531)	-	(1,531)	(1,531)	-
	(363,687)	-	(363,687)	(363,563)	124
(Surplus)/ Deficit before Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	2,433	2,308	4,741	1,568	(3,173)
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	712	(2,308)	(1,596)	(796)	800
Transfer to/(from) the General Reserve	(3,145)	0	(3,145)	(772)	2,373

Capital Expenditure

A capital investment programme of £13.999m for 2023/24 was presented to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in February 2023, to maintain the infrastructure needed to support an effective and efficient police service. By March 2024 capital approvals had been increased to £19.941m.

The actual capital investment for the period totalled £14.625m, which meant we underspent by £5.316m, which included underspends of £1.138m, offset by overspends of £0.453m and £4.631m of investment that is now expected to be delivered in 2024/25.

Capital Expenditure 2023/24



The estates capital expenditure of £6.474m, includes £4.416m on delivering the estates strategy, of this £2.608m has been on the continued refurbishment of the site at Boreham which is a

key component of the Strategy and £0.698m on four prefabricated classrooms for the Essex Police College to replace the previous dilapidated units. The remaining capital expenditure on the estate was primarily spent on maintenance.

The capital expenditure on information technology of £3.263m includes expenditure of £2.352m 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 and £0.520m on the roll out of dashcams into our vehicles.

The capital expenditure for transport of £3.814m, included £2.956m on the scheduled fleet replacement programme and £0.200m on a replacement marine unit launch.

Other capital expenditure of £1.074m included investment in body armour of £0.548m, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) related spend of £0.111m and the balance of £0.415m on other equipment needed to support operational policing.

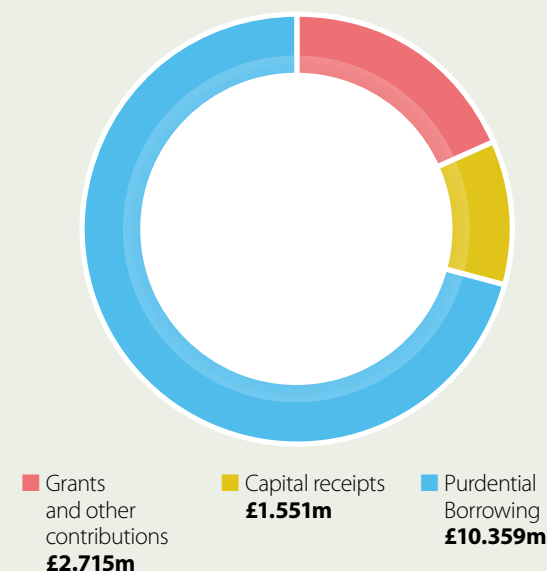
Capital Financing

Capital resources available to fund capital investment come 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 2023/24 capital investment with £10.359m of prudential borrowing (in this instance this was internally financed using cash resources and did not lead to external long-term borrowing). However, this borrowing has increased the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) which was £26.554m as at 31st March 2024 compared to £17.028m as

at 31st March 2023. Charges are made against future years' revenue budgets to reduce the CFR in the form of a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). As cash resources are reducing it is expected that there will be a need to externally borrow in 2024/25 with total capital financing costs (MRP plus interest payment on external borrowing) forecast to increase over the coming years as forecast within the PFCC's Treasury Management Strategy.

Capital financing resources applied in 2023/24 are shown below.

Capital - Financial Sources



The £2.715m of grants and other contributions included £2.402m 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, whilst at the same time ensuring we spend today's money on today's residents. Specific earmarked reserves are held to manage known financial liabilities and possible risks.

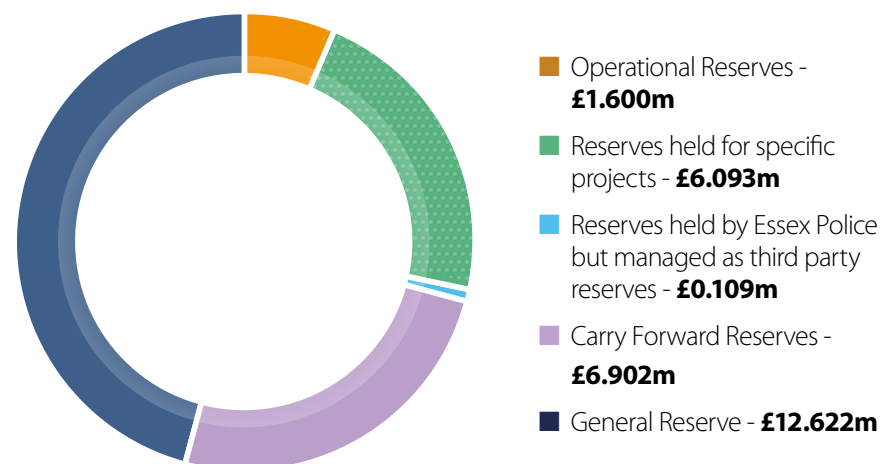
The main elements of the PFCC's reserve strategy are:

- 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 2023 was £13.394m. The 2023/24 net withdrawal from the General Reserve of £0.772m reduced the balance to £12.622m, 3.3% of net revenue expenditure budget for 2024/25.

Earmarked revenue reserves total £14.704m at 31st March 2024 (a reduction of £0.796m since 31st March 2023). Included within these reserves is £0.109m of monies held by Essex Police which is managed as a third-party reserve. The levels of usable reserves at 31st March 2024, are shown in the chart below.

Useable Reserve Reserves as at 31st March 2024



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 within the accounts (see note 45) include a net liability of £3.248m (2022/23 net liability of £1.023m) for police staff and £2,342.382m net liabilities (2022/23 £2,209.838m 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.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The significant increase in inflation over the last couple of years has had an impact on the cost of supplies and services and although inflation has slowed down the impact of previous rises is still being managed. However, with staff being such a significant percentage of our costs, the impact is more likely to come from pay award increases. 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 2025/26. 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 2025/26 to 2029/30. We 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.



Janet Perry FCCA ACMA CGMA

Chief Financial Officer





PFCC
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

FURTHER INVESTMENT IN CRIME PREVENTION

Reduction of

71% ↓

in anti-social behaviour
since 2016



Our strategic commitment to focus energy and effort on preventing crime from happening in the first place is working.

Through targeted prevention and early intervention work, recorded crime in Essex continued to fall month on month throughout 2023/24, with the number of repeat victims also reducing.



1 Since 2016 anti-social behaviour has come down **71 per cent** and incidents of burglary are down 43 per cent.

2 There was a **6.5 per cent decrease in All Crime** in the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to January 2023; this equates to 10,690 fewer offences.

3 Essex experienced a **16.5 per cent decrease** (7,436 fewer) in the number of offences with a repeat victim for the 12 months to March 2024 (37,520 offences).

Following the completion of the police uplift programme in March 2023, 905 extra officers have been added to the force since 2016 with the uplift in numbers sustained throughout 2023/24. This has provided extra strength and capacity to the force allowing it to shift its focus onto prevention and beyond simply providing a reactive rapid response. However, because of the significant uplift in officers the force has 40 per cent of officers with less than five years' experience and a significant number in training. As these officers complete their training and become more experienced, we can expect to see further improvements in capacity and capability over the coming years.

At the core of the crime prevention approach is the investment in community policing, where our officers are local and visible, working with partner agencies, including Safer Essex and the Essex Councils for Voluntary Service to address the root causes of issues that are inflicting the most harm on communities. Our extra officers are starting to make a difference with focused visible patrols, targeted prevention work and intelligence led proactive work.

This local problem-solving approach is working and Essex experienced a 26.8 per cent decrease (5657 fewer) in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents for the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to January 2023.

Pivotal to this success is the close working relationships at a local level within the Community Safety Partners (CSPs). Through these local partnerships we have ramped up prevention activity in local communities across Essex. This includes the continuation of our Community Safety Development Fund, our regular investment in CSPs and the introduction of anti-social behaviour (ASB) Hotspot Patrols, increased Safer Streets Funding, more funding to tackle gangs and knife crime and a plethora of local community driven initiatives.



+ Officers out on patrol in our town centres

In July 2023, the government announced £1.1m of funding specifically to tackle ASB hotspots across the county. The funding formed part of the government's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, launched in Chelmsford by the Prime Minister, and designed to deliver high visibility patrols, public engagement, targeted youth outreach and early intervention.

After collating five years of ASB data and feedback from the public and community safety partners, 11

areas were initially identified in Essex as meeting the criteria, with two more areas identified later in the year, taking the total to 13. Since it started 'Operation Dial', has had a huge impact with targeted areas seeing a big drop in anti-social behaviour incidents. Visible patrols are undertaken by the local police, partners, and council enforcement officers. Nights of action and targeted intervention then complement this extra visibility to provide targeted, evidence-led action at the heart of communities.

Two of the ASB hotspots in Colchester, Greenstead and Cowdray Avenue, benefited from 3,700 extra hours of high visibility patrols, days of action and a youth outreach programme, resulting in a significant reduction of high harm offences and a fall in reports of ASB.

Debden High Street also benefited from 4,157 hours of extra patrols with a focus on arresting persistent offenders, implementing court orders and targeting specific areas of concern. In the 12 months to March 2024, ASB in Epping Forest has decreased by 18.4 per cent.

This activity has been complemented by the government's Safer Streets funding which has continued to have a positive impact on reducing crime, creating communities where people, especially women and girls, feel safer and preventing crime. This central government funding has proved effective and during 2023-2024 the PFCC launched a Local Safer Streets Fund which provided more investment and was funded locally.

Round two of this locally funded programme made £1,722,643 available to communities to improve street safety, with four more areas approved for funding, in addition to the existing six areas. A further £999,967 of Home Office funding via the Safer Streets Round 5 was also made available for Colchester, Basildon and Braintree.

One of the areas, Ninefields in Waltham Abbey, had been suffering ongoing incidents of ASB, and worked with the PFCC to successfully secure £338,000 of Safer Streets funding. This was used to develop targeted community projects tackling neighbourhood crime as well as reducing violence against women and girls. Supported by £169,000 of match funding from community partners including Epping Forest District Council, local interventions included installation of both static and mobile CCTV to target hotspot areas, diversionary



+ Officers out on patrol in our communities

activities through the local youth club and a workshop delivered to parents. The combination of interventions has had a positive effect with ASB down 30 per cent in the 12 months to January 2024 in the district.

In total, Essex has received £3,164,762 of central government funding and £3,929,575 from its own locally funded programme. These investments have been enhanced by local match funding from partners in each of the areas.

Thanks to partnership prevention work, 2023 saw general offending in the night-time economy (NTE) reduce. In the rolling 12 months to September 2023, there was an 18 per cent reduction in recorded crime within the NTE areas. Throughout the summer, Community Policing Teams provided high visibility patrols and continued to work with partners to provide services to keep people safe,

such as SOS buses and street pastors. These help people who may find themselves vulnerable and require assistance in getting home safely.

Southend has been supported by Op Grip funding to provide a safe space on Friday and Saturday nights, where a staffed mobile police station was parked within the NTE area and supported by partners such as street pastors and Community Safety Officers. Local businesses and the public were so supportive of the initiative, it is intended to replicate it in Colchester and Basildon.

Further investment in the reduction of anti-social behaviour has taken place in the area of reducing violence against women and girls. This includes partnership work with Safer Essex on Project Minerva and the Commonplace project which are outlined in the section entitled Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls.

Performance is continuously under review to ensure that Essex Police deliver the best service to the public of Essex when they have need to contact the force. This includes learning from both poor and good performance.

In 2019 Essex Police moved its website platform to the nationally developed “Single Online Home” (SOH) format. It provides the public with the option to report crimes and other matters online as an alternative to calling 101. This improved the accessibility of reporting so members of the public can access the police in different ways that work for them and supports an efficient and effective response.

The number of online reports increased by 10.9 per cent (3,941 more) in the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023.

In partnership with Essex Police, the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service education team delivers a variety of fire-safety awareness programmes. In 2023/24 there were 675 sessions delivered with over 126,547 young people engaged in topics including Home Safety, firework/Halloween campaigns, knife crime and cyber safety.

While our investment over the last three years has grown significantly and crime levels have started to fall as a result, we have also continued to work hard to push for a change in the Government Police Allocation Formula (PAF). This is used by the government to distribute national funding to forces. This formula has not been changed for many years, is based on outdated demographic data, unreflective of our growing county and significantly disadvantages Essex. The funding formula also does not represent the increased cost of policing to rural areas. More work is required to drive this forward as any change will have significant impacts across the country.



+ Officers out on patrol around Essex's coastline



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REDUCING DRUG DRIVEN VIOLENCE



Decrease in Violence with Injury
offences for the 12 months to
March 2024

Drugs and the associated drug driven violence have a hugely negative and damaging impact on our communities.



Officers from the Operational Support Group provide extra resources for serious incidents and major operations

Drug driven violence, exploitation of vulnerable people, and the destructive harm caused is evident, and we have worked hard to address this serious issue. Drugs are inextricably linked with knife crime and gangs and create a cycle of violence if left unchallenged, resulting in the devastating loss of lives.

In Essex we take a robust approach, working with the National Crime Agency to tackle and reduce the number of gangs and criminals fuelling drug driven violence and on a more local level through the Essex Police Serious Violence Unit, identifying and dismantling county lines, providing a strong, visible community deterrent through proportionate use of stop and search and other community-based activities.

At the preventative level we work effectively with partners through our Violence and Vulnerability Unit by taking a public health approach and investing in activities proven to divert vulnerable people away from a life of crime.

This combined approach is making an impact; there was a 7.8 per cent decrease (1,232 fewer offences) in Violence with Injury offences for the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023.

As of November 2023, Essex had 53 active Organised Crime Groups (OCGs). To tackle this Essex Police Serious Organised Crime Team (SOC) developed a strategy for Clear, Hold, Build (CHB), in Essex. This government led initiative tackles serious organised crime within the community that requires policing and partners to work together in areas that have a high volume of crime, to force our criminals and prevent their return. This is being trailed through the work of Op Mille, which is the regional focus on cannabis cultivation which has links to organised crime and exploitation. The SOC team are working with Safer Essex, through the SOC crime prevention tactical advisor to devise sustained plans, in line with the Clear Hold Build strategy.

1

403

Organised Crime Group (OCG) disruptions have been ongoing (66 more) over the year.

1 Organised Crime Group (OCG) disruptions have been ongoing, with Essex Police conducting 403 OCG disruptions (66 more) over the year. We have also seen a decrease in violence within our communities. Violence with injury offences and knife enabled crimes have fallen by 7.8 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively in the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the previous 12 months.

In 2022, Essex became one of the pilot forces for Op Grip, the three-year Home Office programme developed to identify and fund hotspot policing for areas significantly impacted by serious violence, including knife crime, drug crime and gangs. This is based around short high-visibility patrols and builds on an initiative first developed in Essex.

In 2023, Essex became the first force to use Op Grip funding to tackle county lines present in the hotspot areas. Formal Home Office evaluation

of Op Grip is yet to occur, but the Essex Police evaluation for year one shows a 7 per cent reduction in serious violence within hotspot areas, demonstrating a positive impact.

The Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU), continues to be essential in tackling the growing threat of county lines, drug driven violence and knife crime. We are now five years into the ten-year programme with strong results, a robust programme of activity and a range of successful evidence led interventions that we know are making a difference.

In 2023 the Serious Violence Duty came into effect, this enshrines the principles of multi-agency working into law and ensures that every local area in England and Wales work together to prevent, tackle and reduce serious violence. Essex VVU was established in 2019 and has a track record of delivering positive outcomes, to reduce serious violence, for the residents of Essex and took a countywide lead on implementing the new Duty. The Serious Violence Duty is a result of the positive work undertaken in Essex and other areas, which have been pioneering a prevention public health-based approach to preventing serious violence.

In 2023, the VVU's knife harm campaign (www.essexvvu.co.uk/knives), which encourages parents to talk to their children about knife crime, was timed to coincide with the Knife Angel visiting the county, to stimulate conversation and amplify key messages of the campaign. Evaluation showed that 84 per cent of parents who viewed the campaign felt it was effective at encouraging parents to speak to their children about knife crime, and 80 per cent of parents would be more likely to talk to their children after seeing it.

Through the VVU grants programme, targeted funding was able to foster a strong and robust network of organisations to provide a wide range of interventions in local communities, responding directly to the issues of local young people (vvu-youth-voices-report-2022-2023-final-pdf.pdf) (ecvys.org.uk). These projects came from across the county, from youth clubs, boxing sessions to after school sport activities for at risk children. Across 2023, these VVU grants reached over 3,000 children and young people. This short film outlines some of the projects funded through the VVU community grants VVU Community Grant Fund in action (youtube.com)

In 2023 the VVU continued to invest in detached youth work, engaging with young people within their own environments where they may be putting themselves at risk. Through the VVU detached youth work, in identified areas, locally known and trusted adults supported over 5,000 children and young people. This short film outlines why the detached youth workers are so important and how they build relationships with the young people they meet. The work of detached youth workers (youtube.com)

The Essex VVU capture the views of children, young people and young adults who take part in their programmes to ensure approaches are responsive. In 2023, using the voices of Essex young people and their real-life experience, the VVU created a short film, this tells the journey that some of the young people and young adults on the VVU prevention programmes have made to turn their lives around.

Local Authorities have seen a significant increase in funding as part of the Government's 'From Harm, to Hope' 10-year drug strategy. This will increase the capacity of treatment services in all three top-tier authority areas and presents the opportunity to increase suitable referrals from policing. In the last year the force has rolled out Drug Testing on Arrest (DToA), supported by Home Office grants. Under the scheme, in place since 1st April 2023, drug tests are required for any 'trigger offences'. Since the roll out over 50 per cent of tests carried out in Essex were positive.

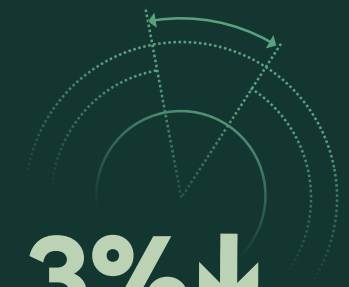
The Government's drug strategy required the establishment of Combatting Drug Partnerships. In Essex this has been delivered through the new Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Drugs and Alcohol Partnership and the coming year will see that partnership develop as a key strategic forum to ensure effective use of funding and coordination of services.



+ Police vehicle outside shops



PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE



12.3%↓

Decrease (3,427 fewer) in the number of recorded Domestic Abuse (DA) offences*

Protecting the most vulnerable in society, when they need it, can lead to a better quality of life, and help prevent them from becoming repeat victims of crime.

1

12.3%↓

Decrease (3,427 fewer) in the number of recorded Domestic Abuse (DA) offences*

Protecting the most vulnerable in society, when they need it, can lead to a better quality of life, and help prevent them from becoming repeat victims of crime.

- 1 Essex experienced a 12.3 per cent decrease (3,427 fewer) in the number of recorded Domestic Abuse (DA) offences for the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023. It is of note that Stalking & Harassment offences account for about a sixth (17.1 per cent) of all Domestic Abuse investigations and changes to counting rules have led to a reduction in number of offences recorded as Stalking & Harassment. Please see slide 21 for further information.
- 2 Essex Police solved 11.2 per cent of DA offences for the 12 months to March 2024 which is the same as the 12 months to March 2023.

There have been two changes in recording process over this time.

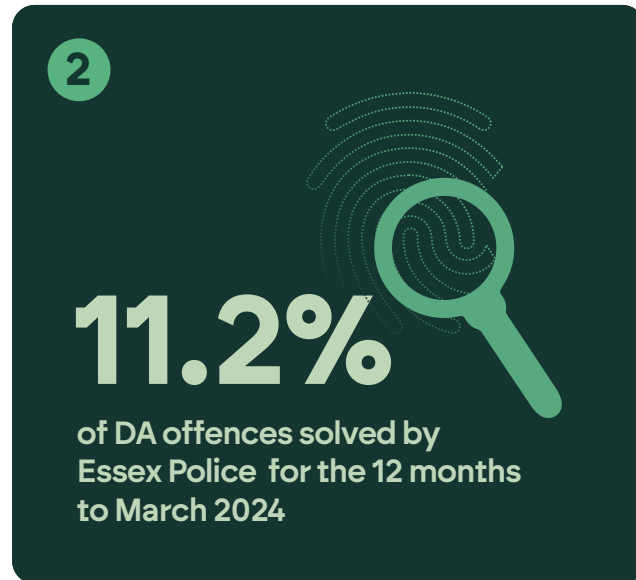
- Essex Police were significantly over-recording harassment cases that required changes to comply with Home Office counting rules. Analytical work suggests this change in process accounts for around 4.5 – 5 per cent of the reductions being seen.
- National 'Home Office' recording rules changed in April 2023 meaning multiple offences are now investigated under one crime, rather than multiple crimes which was the previous case.



+ Officers attending community events

When factoring out these changes Essex are still seeing a 'true' reduction of around 5.5 per cent to 6 per cent.

Driving this improvement is a real partnership effort. In Essex we have invested in services and resources and work together so that the vulnerable, including those who are victims or at risk of Domestic Abuse, are given the help and support they need.



Over the past year Essex Police and partners have been working hard to implement a number of initiatives to tackle domestic abuse, including:

- Project 'DARA' which was introduced in August 2023 as the initial risk assessment tool for police officers to use to improve identification of coercion and control and better risk management.
- Creation of the DA Review Team (DART) to improve consistency in secondary assessments, and improve prevention through the better use of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS – Clare's Law)
- Creation of the Rapid Video Response (RVR) team in March 2023. The RVR team is based in the Force Control Room and aims to dramatically improve the initial response to DA calls and victim confidence and satisfaction.
- Training and refocus of the DA Problem Solving Teams (DAPST) targeting highest threat perpetrators to maximise 'prevention' opportunities through the use of a newly designed 'disruptions matrix'.
- Making better use of technology; through national 'proof of concepts' whereby Essex have piloted emerging technologies (Kulpa) to the purchase of existing technology (TecSafe) that are evidenced based to improve victim confidence and safeguarding.

This investment by Essex Police and the PFCC complements the work undertaken by partners across the wider system. In 2023-4, the PFCC continued to work through the SETDAB partnership, which is chaired by the Deputy Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner, Jane Gardner, to break the cycle of domestic abuse. Work centred around the partnership outcomes including investing £1m of Home Office and local match funding in initiatives to support and disrupt domestic abuse perpetrators to recognise their abuse, and to change their behaviour, so reducing risk and harm to victims.

The PFCC was also successful in continuing to attract almost £1m of additional Ministry of Justice victims' funding to increase the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) in Essex by around 15. During the year, The SETDAB partnership undertook a commissioning discovery exercise which sought external evaluation of the offer to victims. That exercise obtained feedback from 300 victims, perpetrators and stakeholders and found that there was a high-quality core offer for victims, and victims welcomed the availability of a single point of access which is provided via the Compass service.

Compass is being delivered by a consortium of established domestic abuse support agencies which includes Safe Steps, Changing Pathways and The Next Chapter. The aim is to provide a single point of access for callers to speak with a trained member of staff who will complete an assessment and ensure contact is made with the most appropriate support service. There is an easy-to-use online form for both the public and professionals wishing to make a referral.



REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)



Reduction of

7,663 ↓

VAWG offences recorded on the previous twelve months

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) has been brought into stark focus in recent years, with national coverage around high profile cases and news stories outside of Essex impacting public confidence in policing nationally, and poor levels of positive outcomes recorded.

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) has been brought into stark focus in recent years, with national coverage around high profile cases and news stories outside of Essex impacting public confidence in policing nationally, and poor levels of positive outcomes recorded.

❶ In Essex, for the 12 months to March 2024, there was a total of 32,076 VAWG offences recorded which included violence against the person and stalking and harassment. This is a reduction of 7,663 offences on the previous twelve months.

❷ There was a 11.3 per cent (677 fewer) in the number of Sexual Offences committed against females in the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023.

The night-time economy and design of public spaces often affect women's feeling of safety, and a December 2022 survey found that only 41 per cent of females said they felt safe walking alone after dark.

To help tackle this, the PFCC has supported initiatives such as the SOS Bus, Ask for Angela, Purple Flag and Best Bar None to help women feel safer in the night-time economy. Work has also been undertaken along with CSPs to help create safer public spaces, and use of the government's Safer Streets has been instrumental in making local areas safer.

Our local PFCC Safer Streets fund, referenced in our Further Investment in Crime Prevention chapter, has also helped target areas that have not yet accessed national Safer Streets grants. The fund has been allocated to make communities feel safer and is used to improve street lighting and CCTV, install safety measures and support awareness campaigns in key hotspots across Essex.

The Essex Women's Safety Charter has continued to expand, with flagship stores M&S and John Lewis recently enrolling in the scheme. Companies that signed up to the scheme earlier in 2023 undertook

a formal six-month review which incorporated a general security assessment, including security practices and identifying security concerns.

On a local level Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership meet regularly with an Essex Police designing out crime officer (DOCO) to discuss on the ongoing development of their Women and Girls safety Charter. The DOCO provides an environmental visual audit or crime prevention advice for businesses who have signed up to the Charter and who are suffering a rise in crime or issues that specifically effect women and young girls. Chelmsford Council are producing a tool guide leaflet for the business inclusive of the DOCO's contact details.

Partnership engagement has been essential in tackling VAWG, with collaborative working leading to the development of several projects such as the Essex County Council VAWG Charter, Project Minerva and the Essex County Council VAWG Mapping Programme.



2

11.3% ↓ (677 fewer)

in the number of **Sexual Offences committed against females**

in the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023

During 2022, as part of Project Minerva, Home Office funded work began to analyse Essex neighbourhoods, utilising academic research led by Nottingham Trent University, along with the PFCC's office, Essex Police, Essex County Council and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. The project 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 which are working with partners locally to put together bespoke plans to tackle the causes of violence against women and girls in those locations. The PFCC has provided funding for the Minerva zones with areas such as Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood and Rochford, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Southend, Thurrock, and Uttlesford benefiting.

While work has been undertaken with police and partners to reduce VAWG, the investigation of rape and sexual offences still needs significant improvement. Essex Police has implemented learning and guidance from national programmes to improve the investigation of rape and sexual assaults. The programme has a police-academic focus, with a strong research base to provide a framework to contribute to the development of a national operating model. The research has seen a victim-centred approach, support from Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), and strengthening of case files, with early advice from Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) being sought to increase conviction rates.

Police Priority Indicators	12 months to Dec 2019	12 months to Jan 2023	12 months to Jan 2024	Number Difference 2022/23	% Difference 2022/23
Number of violence against the person (including stalking & harassment offences) against females ***	35,418	37,746	32,670	-5,076	-13.4
Number of sexual offences against females ***	3,811	4,738	4,200	-530	-11.2
Number of sexual offences against females solved***	203	275	318	43	15.6

Essex Police work closely with the Rape and Serious Sexual Violence Offences (RASSO) leads for the region and now have an embedded RASSO Detective Sergeant who works alongside RASSO lawyers as well as performing a gatekeeper role to Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAIT). This helps streamline cases sent for charging advice and throughout the lifetime of the investigation. They also benefit from regular CPS RASSO and Essex Police RASSO lead meetings.

This is an area that will require continued focus in the coming years to ensure that progress is maintained and Essex continues to learn from the experience elsewhere in the country and does the best it possibly can to prevent violence against women and girls.



Officers patrolling the seafront



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IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME



It is vital we improve the support for victims of crime, so they are encouraged to come forward and get the help and support they are entitled to, enabling them to cope with the immediate impact of crime and to move on from the harm experienced.



Confidence of Victims is

15.5%

points lower than confidence of non-victims

In the year to March 2024, Essex experienced a 9.9 per cent decrease (2,203) in the number of offences with a repeat victim compared to the 12 months to March 2023.

Confidence among victims (from the independent survey jointly commissioned and funded by Essex Police and PFCC) is at 61.5 per cent (results to the 12 months to December 2023). This is 15.5 percentage points lower than confidence of non-victims for the same period (77 per cent).

The PFCC is committed to ensuring victims in Essex receive their entitlements under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (VCoP). This is primarily monitored through bi-annual reporting to the Ministry of Justice as well as system-wide compliance checks through the Victim and Witness subgroup of the Essex Criminal Justice Board. The group examines sample cases which are tracked and reviewed through the criminal justice process so that VCoP compliance can be monitored at each stage. The PFCC is also tracking the progress of the Victim and Prisoners Bill, which is likely to strengthen the Code of Practice and introduce additional requirements on PFCCs in monitoring and holding agencies to account for complying with the Code.

Essex Police represents regional forces at the NPCC Victims and Witnesses Governance Group and holds a quarterly regional meeting to inform local activity across the portfolio of work and share good practice. An Essex Police Victims and Witnesses Action Group (VWAG) provides strategic oversight of our service delivery for victims and coordinates work across the force to enhance compliance with the Victims' Code (VC) and increase victim satisfaction and confidence.

A new tactical subgroup was created in early 2023 to coordinate the implementation of the work generated by VWAG, such as the new Victim Closure Discussion document, Victim Engagement Portal, Victim Feedback Panels and Restorative Justice work.

Improvements taking place in 2023 included:

- The Force Performance and Leadership Forum held on the on 29th June 2023 presented an overview of the Victims and Prisoners Bill. The forum allowed for senior leaders across the force to be briefed on the key elements of the Bill for consideration and to begin preparing the organisation.
- Repeat Victim Alert - there are occasions when a victim of multiple crimes has different officers allocated to investigate them, this can cause confusion and frustration. A new process has been established that alerts if they have a repeat victim and if there are any concerns due to this. The information will be sent to the Inspector for the officer dealing with the most recent crime report referenced. It allows for Essex Police to look at the problems holistically and to improve service to the victim.
- Rapid Video Response Team (RVR) - On 22nd August 2023 Essex Police officially launched RVR, following a successful soft launch period. The soft launch included the team carrying out the 1000th consultation and scoring 97 per cent on a satisfaction survey from users of RVR, victims of domestic violence. RVR has been defined in Essex Police as a 'victim focused investigative tool' to support domestic abuse victims.



Officers out on patrol

The PFCC continues to fund 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 PFCC oversees the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service which, now in its ninth year, is continuing to provide support for victims, by bringing 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.

The Multi Agency Victims and Witness Action Team (VWAT) is held every two months and is chaired by the PFCC. This group has attendees from Essex Police, the PFCC, the Crown Prosecution Service and His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service, Probation Service, Essex Criminal Justice Board, and commissioned support services. The delivery plan is overseen by the Essex Criminal Justice Board (ECJB) and feeds into their Strategic Plan.

Work with Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and Independent Stalking Advocate Caseworkers (ISACs) has been expanded to maximise partnership working and further support victims. IDVAs and ISACs are currently in the final stages of vetting to allow them access to police stations to work alongside Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams (DAIT) and the Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams (DAPST).

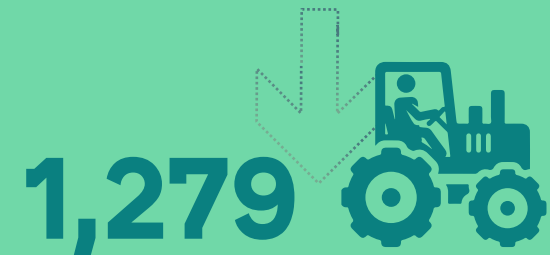
IDVAs and ISACs are vital to maintaining enhanced contact with victims, and anecdotal feedback suggests this access will improve victims' confidence on what is happening with their case. Their interaction delivers a more positive experience of service overall, particularly when explaining what is going to happen next and what the victim can expect. This initiative will shape how we communicate with partners and shape future service delivery for our victims.

Relationships with partners have greatly improved since the launch of the Essex Stalking Intervention Panel (ESIP) as this provides a multi-agency approach to work together and achieve the best outcomes for victims. The ESIP meetings are held on a 6 weekly basis and are chaired by the force lead for stalking. The objective of the meetings is to have a multi-agency approach to the stalking cases selected which are referred in from Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).



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PROTECTING RURAL AND ISOLATED AREAS



1,279

Decrease in Rural Crime offences
in the 12 months to March 2024

In Essex, we have made protecting rural and isolated areas a key priority, with the objective to work with rural communities to help them build greater resilience and make them more safe and secure for all.

Rural Crime offences decreased by 5.3 per cent (1,279 fewer offences) in the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023.

Essex Police solved 4.6 per cent fewer (a decrease of 120) Rural Crime offences for the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023, and 17.5 per cent fewer (a decrease of 534) compared to the 12 months to December 2019.

1 In the 12 months to December 2023 there were 153 recorded Hare Coursing incidents, which is 15.9 per cent lower than the same period in 2022 (182 incidents), a decrease of 29 incidents. This is a sustained reduction from where hare coursing incidents peaked in 12 months to September 2021 (369 incidents). While other factors may have influenced this decline, part of the decrease can be attributed to the positive impact of the cross-border work and the raising of awareness among the public undertaken by the Rural Engagement Team as part of Operation Galileo.

Rural Domestic Abuse (DA) related offences also decreased by 12.2 per cent (Update to March 2024) in the 12 months to March 2024. Rural DA offences account for 17 per cent of all rural crimes, which is more of a proportion than all offences across the Force (16.0 per cent).

In the 12 months to December 2023 Rural Acquisitive crime offences increased by 8.6 per cent (544) to 6,864 when compared to the same period in 2022. Offence levels continue to be lower than those seen prior to the pandemic with volumes having stabilised to a new lower level since the end of the pandemic. An increase in acquisitive offences was seen across Essex, with an of 9.3 per cent to 48,989 offences in 12 months to December 2023 compared to 44,807 offences in the same period in 2022.

Essex Police is one of only 15 forces who have dedicated Rural Policing Teams. In 2023 the team undertook over a hundred engagements around the county, including school engagements where they

conducted road safety and speed enforcement with the children. Instead of issuing speeding drivers with a ticket, they were spoken to by the school children about the impact speeding has outside their schools. The team also continued attending country shows as well as giving presentations to a variety of groups including parish councils, volunteer services and rural organisations.

Essex Police are also continuing their commitment to prevent rural and heritage crime with the innovative launch of a horseback volunteer scheme in Uttlesford. The idea behind the scheme is that horse riders are in a unique position to spot signs of suspicious activity related to offences such as hare coursing, stolen agricultural vehicles, unlawful metal detecting or theft of lead from protected heritage buildings. The horseback volunteers will be trained in what to look out for and will be able to report any concerns or suspicious activity, helping the force target those committing offences and stop criminality before it happens.

Looking ahead to 2024/25, the Rural Engagement Team are planning more engagement with communities to highlight reporting of hare coursing, undertaking more speed awareness in schools and expanding plant and agricultural vehicle operations at Essex ports.

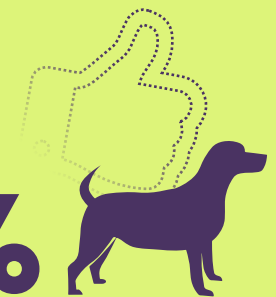




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PREVENTING DOG THEFT

62.8%



Confidence in how Essex Police
and the organisations they work
with are dealing with dog theft

Our objective is to do more to protect our pets and build confidence in how Essex Police handle dog thefts.

1 There were six fewer dog thefts recorded in the 12 months to December 2023 (50), when compared to the same period in 2022 (56). Since 2017 there had been a long-term increase in dog thefts, but the trend appears to have now stabilised.

The number of dog thefts solved for the 12 months to January 2024 (five) has increased by four compared to the 12 months to January 2023 (one). There was an increase of three compared to the 12 months to December 2019 (two).

Confidence in how Essex Police and the organisations they work with are dealing with dog theft (from the independent survey jointly commissioned and funded by Essex Police and PFCC) is at 62.8 per cent for the 12 months to September 2023.



1 Police Dog at public engagement event

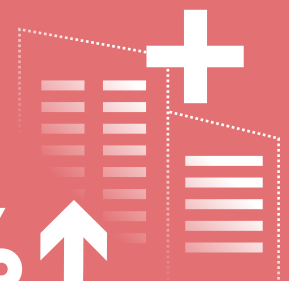


PREVENTING BUSINESS CRIME, FRAUD AND CYBER CRIME

Essex recorded a

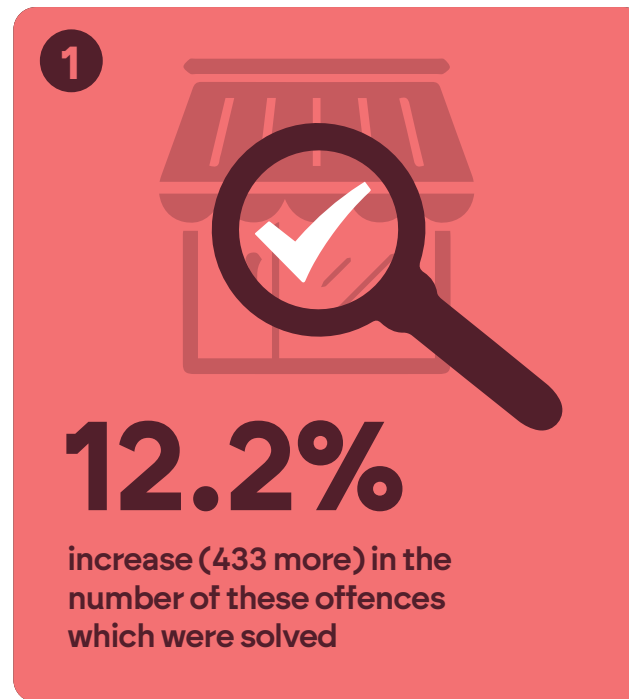
9.7% ↑

increase (2,025 more) in the number of Business Crime offences



❶ Essex recorded a 9.7 per cent increase (2,025 more) in the number of Business Crime offences and a 12.2 per cent increase (433 more) in the number of these offences which were solved in the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023.

The past 12 months has seen a continued rise in shoplifting, which accounts for approximately 51.8 per cent of business crime. Shoplifting is not a low-level crime; it is having a huge impact on retailers and communities and the proceeds of shoplifting can fund other forms of criminality.



We want our retail areas to be safe for visitors and shop workers, which is why it is vital that we encourage retail owners and their staff to report thefts, anti-social behaviour and assaults.

In the 12 months to March 2024, 2,942 shoplifting offences recorded a solved outcome, an increase of 29.8 per cent on the same period the previous year. The solved rate has seen a proportionally greater increase than the rise in offence volumes.

Essex Police are targeting the individuals who are repeatedly committing theft through an array of initiatives, including Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) that limit perpetrator's ability to reoffend.

CBOs also tackle the underlying causes of offending and may require offenders to engage in treatment services, such as drug and alcohol addiction support. It is an offence to breach the terms of a CBO and courts can impose a maximum sentence of up to five years' imprisonment or a fine, or both, for an adult convicted of a breach.



Alongside this, Essex Police are helping those who have issues with drugs to combat their addictions by entering treatment programmes as this can be the root of their offending. Officers are also working with businesses by providing specialist crime prevention advice and information about staff security.

The Business Crime Team launched an initiative tackling shop theft by limiting the ability of thieves to sell on their stolen items. Op Pedlar looks to remove the financial incentive for thieves and, therefore, remove the benefits of theft. If one store is known to buy stolen items, then stores nearby are likely to suffer from thefts.

In January 2024, the Essex Police Prevent and Protect Officer together with Security Awareness Special Interests Group (SASIG+) held its second 'combatting cyber fraud through collaboration' conference 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 where 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.

Essex Fraud Protect are recognised as using best practise when supporting victims of romance fraud through their collaboration with Victim Support in running the monthly Romance Fraud Peer Support Group. Essex Fraud Protect have developed a Fraud Toolkit for officers when dealing with and supporting victims.


Essex Cyber Protect Officers have worked with the PFCC's Youth Assembly to train Cyber Ambassadors who can offer advice to their peers. They have also developed a two-year plan aimed at improving reporting by businesses and collaboration. This has involved working with Security Awareness Special Interest Group (SASIG) in hosting three conferences.

The Cyber Prevent Team also remain engaged with the Essex Digital Partnership (EDP). The partnership, made up of cyber technicians from Essex County Council and Essex Fire & Rescue service meet monthly to discuss current threats & trends along with mitigation opportunities,

ensuring sharing of information across the counties services to build resilience. EDP have provided funding to purchase Cyber Escape Rooms, a tool designed to highlight cyber security and resilience, in line with the National strategy. These will be used to support a 2yr plan, building resilience within the business and council communities.

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.



 Officers out on patrol



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POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

IMPROVE SAFETY ON OUR ROADS



4.9% ↓

Decrease (44 fewer) in the number of those Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) in Essex

Road crime – speeding, drink or drug driving, and using mobile phones at the wheel – kills more people in this county than all other crimes put together.

These deaths, and the devastating impact they have on families and communities across our county, are preventable which is why we are working towards 'Vision Zero', the aspiration to have no road deaths or serious injuries by 2040.

In Essex, promoting safety on our roads is carried out through a partnership approach under the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) and includes representatives from Essex Police, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, Essex County Council, Southend on Sea Borough Council, Thurrock Council, National Highways, East of England Ambulance Service Trust, Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Service Trust and The Safer Roads Foundation (Registered Charity).

There was a 4.9 per cent decrease (44 fewer) in the number of those Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) in Essex for the 12 months to March 2024 compared to the 12 months to March 2023.

Speeding and anti-social driving is something we often hear as a major cause of concern for the public. In response, the PFCC part funded three new Roads Policing Speed Enforcement Officers in May 2023. Alongside Roads Police Officers, they are dedicated to tackling road-related crime and provide reassurance to the public in areas where speeding has been raised as a concern.

Raising awareness in schools and in the community is also vital to the prevention of people being killed and seriously injured on Essex roads. In March 2024, the PFCC held a Community Safety Expo which featured a zone dedicated to promoting safety on our roads. Delegates were able to learn more about initiatives including Extra Eyes, road safety in schools and community speed watch.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service continued to promote road safety through education and information, attending country shows, colleges, and events with their FireBike and Firecar, and the school education team. The safety team also visit schools with the School Speed Watch sessions, that involve children from six priority towns in Essex learning about the dangers of speeding drivers, by allowing them, with a Road Safety and Police Officer, to educate offenders about the dangers and consequences of speeding near to their school.





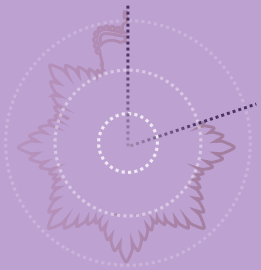
ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT



7,663

Number of cadets in Essex.
As of March 2024

Our volunteers both in the PFCC and Essex Police provide an invaluable contribution to our communities.



20.1%

Fewer special constables (67 fewer) compared to January 2023

Volunteer opportunities are varied; from preventing crime to providing conflict resolution; overseeing the welfare of service dogs to ensuring the dignity of detainees in custody, we are extremely proud and grateful to those who give up their time to help make Essex a safe place to live, work and thrive.

The Local Policing Support Unit (LPSU) in Essex Police proactively supports, the mobilisation of all Special Constables, Police Support Volunteers, Active Citizens, Accredited Persons and Essex Watch. Essex Watch is the collective name for a variety of specialised Watch schemes within Essex and brings together people with similar interests, or activities to help reduce crime in their communities.

Essex Watch groups have grown to include:

- Allotment
- Business
- Caravan
- Dog
- Essex Horse Rider Volunteers
- Farm and Rural
- Heritage (including Faith Watch)
- Marine

Encouraging our young people to become part of our volunteer network also continues with Essex Police Volunteer Cadets scheme. Encouraging our young people to become part of our volunteer network also continues with Essex Police Volunteer Cadets scheme. As of March 2024, there were 177 cadets in Essex.

Essex Police Watch Liaison Officers continue to work with Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) to offer crime and fraud prevention advice. There are currently 2,400 NHW Co-ordinators and 88,580 NHW members across the county.

In June 2023, Witham Town Council celebrated 5 years of Community Special Constables. The town was the first to go live with the Community Special Constables Scheme, funding four Community Specials to target crime and antisocial behaviour in the town.

The number of special constables continued to see a downward trend throughout 2023. There were 267 Specials (as of 31 January 2024), which is down 20.1 per cent (67 fewer) compared to January 2023. This is a national trend and one that forces, including Essex, are working hard to understand and reverse.

During January, there were 35 applications to become a Special Constable. Of the 35 applications, 11 (31 per cent) were ethnic minority applications and 6 (17 per cent) female applications. As of January 2024, there were 60 applicants in the pipeline, with 29 in pre-assessment, 24 in pre-employment and 7 re-joiners/transferees.

Essex Police have 25 Cyber Volunteers within the force, an increase of 7 on 2022. Eight of the Cyber Volunteers work in the Prevent and Protect Fraud Team. Seven of these started as Fraud Police Staff Volunteers but have since gained cyber skills. Three Cyber Volunteers continue to work at a high level around Cyber Crime incidents. Two of them (one a university lecturer and the other who has previous experience in Cybercrime work) support the Prevent and Protect manager for the Intelligence team in the Serious Crime Directorate. The other who is an accountant with expertise in economic crime supports the work of the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU).

The PFCC oversees the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, which enables appointed volunteers to visit police station custody suites at any time of the day or night to check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed.



In 2023/24, 210 visits were conducted to custody suites and 963 detainees were seen directly by ICVs. The Essex scheme hosted the Eastern Region ICV Conference in November 2023, which brought together ICVs from across Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire to share knowledge and develop ideas.

In 2023 the Essex scheme achieved silver accreditation in the ICVA quality assurance framework, demonstrating the knowledge and professionalism of volunteers and scheme manager.

Volunteers were further recognised for their hard work at the PFCC annual Volunteer Appreciation Event where two ICVs received 20 years of service awards. There are currently 21 active members of the ICV scheme.

The PFCC also oversees the Essex Animal Welfare Scheme, which provides an independent monitoring body on police service dogs. The team of dog welfare volunteers inspect the working conditions of the dogs and provide reports to the PFCC. As of December 2023, Essex Police had 47 dogs, with a variety of skillsets including finding evidence, search and rescue, chasing suspects and sniffer dogs trained to seek out drugs, mobile phones and explosives. In April 2023 the dog welfare volunteers attended a one-day refresher training at Dogs Trust in Basildon where they were taught additional skills and acquired knowledge valuable to their role. There are currently five dog welfare volunteers.

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.

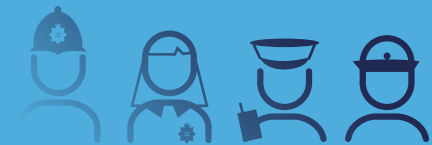
In August 2023, ERMS introduced conflict coaching which is a new process that involves working one-on-one with individuals who are experiencing conflict to discuss their approaches to conflict, how those approaches impact on the conflict, and how perhaps they approaches can be adjusted to improve the situation. Eight volunteers are currently upskilled to deliver conflict coaching with plans to upskill more in 2024/25.

In November 2023 ERMS won the prestigious Lord Ferrers Award which acknowledged the outstanding work they deliver across Essex.

The service also holds regular events to recognise the hard work of volunteers, including a PFCC family picnic, the Volunteer Appreciation Event, and a PFCC volunteer Christmas meal. ERMS currently have 33 active volunteers, with a further 7 volunteers waiting for vetting and their initial training.



SUPPORTING OUR OFFICERS AND STAFF



Supporting our officers and staff is essential to ensure they can provide the outstanding service the public in Essex deserve

Supporting our officers and staff is essential to ensure they can provide the outstanding service the public in Essex deserve. This is about ensuring our teams reflect the communities they serve, are adequately equipped, trained and supported but also that those who put themselves at risk to help the public are also protected.

The PFCC has worked hard with local MPs to push for a Police Covenant to recognise the contribution officers and staff make in much the same way as the Armed Forces Covenant does for our military.

It was positive that the Police Covenant was enshrined in law as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The covenant is the government's pledge to recognise the bravery, commitment and sacrifices of those who work or have worked in policing.

To help protect officers and staff the PFCC has also supported calls for stronger sentences for assaults on emergency service workers and has supported Essex Police's efforts to provide effective support and investment in health and wellbeing services, acknowledging the difficult and challenging situations that officers and staff may experience in the course of their duties.

The PFCC endorses a supportive culture within Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Service and the PFCC's office with an increase in diversity and an inclusive recruitment and development strategy. The PFCC also seeks to invest in those who volunteer for roles within the PFCC's office including Restorative Justice, Independent Custody Visitors and Dog Welfare Visitors to ensure they feel skilled, valued and appreciated.

The PFCC also endorses the Armed Forces Covenant and supports Essex Police and Essex Fire and Rescue Service efforts to support former, and serving, services personnel. As part of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, Essex Police has held a Silver Award since 2014, and has signed a standalone Armed Forces Covenant, which pledges our commitment to supporting former, and serving, services personnel, should they wish to work for Essex Police.

Within Essex Police, there are a number of officers and staff who are former services personnel or indeed serving reservist personnel. The PFCC

supports increasing that number, through the ongoing recruitment work our HR Innovation team is doing with the Ministry of Defence.

Supporting frontline officers was identified as an area requiring better support, especially given the increase in officer numbers, most of whom start their policing careers on the frontline.

Currently the area is experiencing high turnover, challenging resource levels and a lack of feeling valued and several recommendations have been put forward including:

- Assessing career progression in Local Policing Teams (LPTs).
- Looking at reward and recognition to create a culture of support and value officers.
- Assessing how local, community knowledge and relationships can be maintained when there is high turnover within LPTs.

More evaluation has also been undertaken to reflect on the current number of male to female officers and how long it will take to achieve true gender balance. While Essex Police 'We Value Difference' campaign has helped reduce disparity in workforce representation, we know more needs to be done to achieve a fully representative workforce in all respects (ethnicity, gender, disability).

There has been a slight decrease (0.14 per cent points) in the proportion of ethnic minority employees in January 2024 (259) compared to January 2023 (270); this equates to 11 fewer employees. However, in contrast, there has been an increase of 42 compared to December 2019 (217).



In the 12 months to January 2024, 273 new officers started their Essex Police careers. Over the same period, 247 officers left their positions, leading to an overall increase of 26 officers over the last year.

- The average number of hours lost per person due to sickness was less for officers but more for staff in December 2023 when compared to December 2022.
- There was a slight decrease in the proportion of ethnic minority employees at the end of 2023/24 Q3 (260) compared to the same period last year (269); this equates to 9 fewer employees.
- 4.0 per cent of the Essex Police workforce are from ethnic minorities. This is 7.21 per cent lower than the total economically active ethnic minority population.

Following the publication of the Baroness Casey Review in March 2023, analysis has been done to look at what learning Essex Police can take from this report into the Metropolitan Police Service. The report raises important issues about management, culture and staff being properly supported. Following this review Essex Police's Senior Leadership Team has taken a positive, proactive approach to working with teams across the force to identify areas for improvement and positive impact these.



INCREASING COLLABORATION



This year, the Collaboration Programme increased the estimated 10-year Net Present Value of benefits from £14m to £18.9m

The PFCC continued to monitor the Emergency Service Collaboration Programme through a bi-monthly Strategic Governance Board, which is supported by a monthly Programme Board.

This year, the Collaboration Programme increased the estimated 10-year Net Present Value of benefits from £14m to £18.9m, against a target of £15.4m as set out in the local business case for change.

The PFCC's Strategic Governance Board receives annual reviews of projects that have moved to business as usual during the life of the programme. This includes a review of the Collapsed Behind Closed Door project where ECFRS respond to provide quicker access to potentially injured individuals. The estimated 10-year benefits of this project increased from £568,600 to £603,856.

This year, the PFCC also received an update on the Arson Prevention project, including the work of the Fire Investigation Dog, which estimated that £6.9m worth of benefits are attributed to this project over 10 years.

The Tri Service Rural Prevention project expanded to include Uttlesford in 2023. This new role, as well as the previously piloted officer in the Dengie peninsula in Maldon, continues to provide additional visibility and prevention work with the local, rural community.

1 The PFCC is also continuing to track progress of the development of a joint Fleet Workshop between Essex Fire & Rescue Service and Essex Police. This is a complex and multi-faceted project that has the potential to provide a state of the art, shared fleet maintenance facility for emergency services.

This year, in an input to the Home Affairs Select Committee on the effectiveness of the PFCC model, that PFCC noted that one of the biggest benefits in terms of collaboration has been bringing together the protection of vulnerable people by emergency services, including through the joint education team, which helps local school pupils understand how to keep themselves safe.

Community Safety Hubs have been successfully set up in nine of the ten districts (Tendring, Colchester, Braintree & Uttlesford, Chelmsford & Maldon, Southend, Castle Point & Rochford, Epping Forest & Brentwood and Basildon). The



Hubs are a collaborative led initiative involving Community Policing Teams (CPTs), community safety partnerships, local authorities, housing associations, and the NHS. This partnership provides a localised response to local issues including crime, anti-social behaviour and non-crime incidents. Community Safety Hubs provide a central physical site for collaborative joint working. The development of these Community Safety Hubs is led by Safer Essex.

One district is yet to achieve a co-located hub (Thurrock). Activity was put on hold during the Covid-19 affected period, but agreement has since been reached for a site on council premises.

As part of the Essex Partners' Vision, the partnership created the Essex Centre for Data Analytics (ECDA). This is a joint venture between Essex Police, the PFCC, Essex County Council, and the University of Essex. ECDA's ambition is for Essex to be national leaders in data, using the power of analysis, statistics, machine learning, data science and



Artificial Intelligence (AI) to tackle key public policy/ social challenges. The last year has been another important year for ECDA. Building on the data ethics framework and the independent ethics committee, ECDA launched the government 'data masterclass for senior leaders' across Essex. Leaders from the police, district councils and the county took part in the masterclass, increasing data literacy in senior leaders across the county. ECDA has further finalised the Essex Data Declaration; led by the Chief Constable, this declaration aims to ensure that all public sector organisations across Essex use and share their data to improve the lives of the people of Essex.

In 2023 ECDA presented the findings of a Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Project. This involved a statistical analysis of DA suspects from which groups of offender types were identified, along with the types of offences they commit.

ECDA are additionally working on the following areas of focus:

- **ISTV (Information Sharing to Tackle Violence).** This involves working with health sector colleagues to access NHS Accident and Emergency data relating to knife crime.
- **Risk of Serious Harm and Homicide to Children.** This project aims to identify and test indicators for this type of offending with the University of Essex, who intend to subject the data to rigorous statistical analysis.

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 quarterly report on the progress against the seven priorities in the Police and Crime Plan.

As at March 2024 four of the twelve PFCC priorities are graded good by Essex Police (Reducing drug driven violence, reducing violence against woman and girls, protecting rural and isolated areas and Dog Theft), seven are rated adequate and one requires improvement (Improving Support for Victims of Crime).



**PERFORMANCE
FRAMEWORK →**

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Measures	2019	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Priority 1	All Crime Harm (Crime Severity) Score	166,180	165,353	147,626	165,491	162,868	151,630
	Crimes per 1,000 population	85.5	93.3	82.2	88.7922447	88.990084	82.3
	All Crime Harm (Crime Severity) Score	13.8	13.9	14.1	14.5	14.3	13.9
	Homicide	60	63	19	24	15	13
	ASB	41,706	40,998	60,110	30,592	21,176	15,105
	FCR 101 Calls Received	293,049	291,155	273,143	257,603	229,895	175,352
	FCR % 101 Calls Abandoned	20.16%	21.58%	12.51%	16.33%	27.96%	30.28%
	FCR Average wait time (seconds)	0:03:22	0:03:47	0:02:36	0:03:02	0:07:36	0:06:30
	Resolution Centre Calls Received	107,347	107,925	79,762	86,852	86,846	144,899
	Resolution Centre % Calls Abandoned	4:50:14	5:10:50	1:22:00	1:52:55	6:09:31	2:17:30
	Resolution Centre Average wait time (seconds)	0:17:18	0:15:00	0:03:02	0:04:29	0:21:33	0:07:27
	Online Reports	24,468	24,295	23,186	28,879	36,089	40,030
12 Month Percentage of people who have confidence in policing in Essex	64.70%	64.70%	76.30%	80.10%	75.00%	74.90%	
Priority 2	OCG Disruptions (Quarterly from Apr '21)	99	122	252	336	421	421
	Violence with Injury Offences	15012	14,960	13,197	15,745	15,827	14,496
	Knife-enabled Offences	1638	1,881	1,633	1,634	1,619	1,512
	Drug-driven Homicides	10	9	6	7	2	0
	12 Month Public Confidence in Dealing with Drug Crime	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	61.30%	59.80%	57.60%
Priority 3	Domestic Abuse Offences	29,726	30,239	28,873	30,893	27,927	24,500
	Domestic Abuse Solved	3,057	3,058	3,461	3,248	3,231	2,767
	Repeat DA Victims	8,955	7,830	9,145	9,615	8,238	7,635
	Child Abuse Offences	5,259	5,543	5,434	6,391	6,061	5,724
	Child Abuse Solved	275	327	325	420	453	390
	NRM referrals (Modern Slavery)	98	98	98	168	238	310
	DVPNs	0	0	0	253	162	144
	DVPOs	0	0	0	253	143	123
	Confidence in the policing response to protecting children and vulnerable people	83.20%	83.20%	83.20%	86.30%	86.30%	79.60%

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Measures	2019	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Priority 4	12 Month Violence Against the Person - Females	35,418	35,443	36,168	39,739	39,739	32,076
	12 Month Sexual Offences - Females	3,811	4,005	3,723	4,996	4,996	4,118
	Sexual Offences Solved - Females	203	254	274	292	292	296
	Streetsafe Reports	0	0	0	114	224	124
	12 Month % feel safe walking alone after dark - Females	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	41.20%	43.50%	44.50%
Priority 5	Offences with a repeat victim	42704	42,197	42,380	48,162	44,956	37,520
	Average days taken to investigate High Harm Offences	44.2	43.4	47.1	43.7	51.9	65.8
	Referrals to Victim Support	41068	40,548	27449	28,602	27,888	26,343
	12 Month Victim Confidence that Essex Police are doing a good job	52.70%	52.70%	52.70%	63.50%	61.00%	61.50%
	12 Month Non-Victim Confidence that Essex Police are doing a good job	66.10%	66.10%	78.20%	78.20%	77.10%	77.00%
Priority 6	Rural Crime Offences	26459	26,399	22,992	24,186	23,949	22,670
	Rural Crime Offences Solved	3047	3,017	2,884	2,600	2,633	2,513
	Rural Crime Harm (Crime Severity) Score	8.7	8.9	7.1	8.8	8.3	8.1
	12 Month Confidence in Rural Policing	66.00%	65.00%	80.00%	80.00%	73.00%	76.00%
Priority 7	Dog Theft Offences	57	52	59	60	55	52
	Dog Theft Solved	2	2	1	2	3	3
	12 Month Confidence Essex Police are dealing with Dog Theft	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	63.30%	63.30%	63.80%
Priority 8	Business Crime Offences	24034	23,600	15,928	18,817	20,934	22,959
	Business Crime Solved	4891	4,553	2,874	2,971	3,542	3,975
	Business Victims of Fraud	485	490	410	367	334	347
	12 Month Confidence Essex Police are dealing with Cyber- Crime	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.40%	45.10%

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Measures	2019	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Priority 9	KSIs	823	821	653	852	903	859
	Drink Drive Offences	1467	1,460	1,223	1,517	1,310	1,285
	Drug Drive Offences	1845	1,824	2,266	1,012	968	1,007
	Failure to Provide	399	410	394	362	313	361
	12- Month Mobile Phone Offences	0	0	0	5,727	12,161	25,353
	12 Month Confidence in Policing the Roads	68.20%	68.20%	75.50%	63.90%	66.90%	67.80%
Priority 10	Specials	509	509	520	444	317	252
	Active Citizens	0	0	0	0	56	47
	Police Cadets	0	0	0	0	220	177
	Cadet Leaders	0	0	0	0	86	0
	Cadet Units	0	0	0	0	13	11
	Police Support Volunteers	0	0	0	0	99	91
	Allotment Group Members	0	0	0	0	51	64
	Business Group Members	0	0	0	0	104	103
	Caravan Group Members	0	0	0	0	59	67
	Horse Group Members	0	0	0	0	4	63
	Heritage Group Members	0	0	0	0	199	204
	Marine Group Members	0	0	0	0	61	66
	"Farm & Rural Group Members	0	0	0	0	757	768
	"Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators	0	0	0	0	2,343	2,420
	Dog Group Members	0	0	0	0	2,721	3,209
	Neighbourhood Watch Members	0	0	0	0	79,449	88,704
12 Month Confidence there are opportunities to volunteer to assist policing in Essex	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	52.50%	57.90%	

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Measures	2019	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Priority 11	Workforce % Ethnic Minority	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.29%	4.22%	4.06%
	Number of Ethnic Minority Staff	0.00	0.00	0.00	279.42	272.33	262.42
	Officer Sickness (Avg Days Lost Per Person)	9.41	9.21	6.57	8.55	9.49	8.98
	Officer Vacancies (FTE)	-57.10	26.51	-41.58	-66.49	-27.64	-30.78
	Officer Vacancies (%)	-1.75%	0.82%	-1.23%	-1.87%	-0.76%	-0.82%
	Staff Sickness (Avg Days Lost Per Person)	9.45	10.47	7.09	9.33	8.66	9.19
	Staff Vacancies (FTE)	-193.18	-182.30	-203.56	-166.41	-276.17	-274.85
	Staff Vacancies (%)	-8.78%	-7.65%	-7.04%	-7.17%	-11.83%	-10.41%
	PCSO Sickness (Avg Days Lost Per Person)	6.29	11.13	13.31	15.75	10.89	13.83
	PCSO Vacancies (FTE)	0.54	1.21	-2.12	-6.32	-6.83	-4.97
	PCSO Vacancies (%)	0.5%	1.1%	-2.0%	-6.1%	-6.7%	-5.0%
Priority 12	Audience Numbers	0	0	0	0	126,536	118,015
	Sessions Delivered	0	0	0	0	1,397	1,374
	Primary School Visits	0	0	0	0	725	568
	Secondary School Visits	0	0	0	0	272	282
	Other Educational Visits	0	0	0	0	71	109
	Alt Ed Visits	0	0	0	0	35	47
	Special School Visits	0	0	0	0	12	27
	6th Form/College Visits	0	0	0	0	24	25
	Education Outreach Visits	0	0	0	0	0	10
	Total number of different schools visited	0	0	0	0	642	625
Other	Police Officer FTEs at 31 March	3,063.94	3,292.94	3,412.94	3,571.94	3,743.00	3,758.00

↓ 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. Jane Gardner is the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

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). 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, 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 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'.

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 2024 there has been a 6.5% decrease with 152,595 offences recorded compared to 163,285 in the previous 12-month period to 31st March 2023.

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 Strategy (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 over recent years, Essex Police has a good track record of delivering cash and efficiency savings to maximise the benefit out of every penny. In 2023/24 £12.2m savings were delivered with £10.7m of these recurring annually.

→ CURRENT AND EMERGING RISKS AND MITIGATION

The three-year comprehensive spending review provided some certainty over Home Office funding up to 2024/25 which made it easier to consider demand pressures compared to funding levels. One of the challenges the force faces is that it remains 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 second lowest spend per head of population. Looking forward into 2025/26 there is uncertainty around the level of Home Office funding that will be received for policing, particularly in light of a general election being expected before the end of 2024.

The legacy detrimental impact of COVID-19 on government finances along with increases in inflation over recent years, 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 continue 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 2024/25 of £11.302m.

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:

- **Improvement in the support of victims of crime** – If not achieved public confidence will reduce, increasing harm to victims with the potential for more crime incidents and victims and families become disillusioned with police and the wider criminal justice system.
- **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.
- **Reduction in violence against women and girls** – If not achieved public confidence will reduce, increasing harm to victims including the potential for more homicides or serious sexual assaults and victims and families become disillusioned with police and the wider criminal justice system.

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

EQUALITY ACT 2010 ↓

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Service and PFCC must have due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristic groups.

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's objectives, published in-line with The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010, are:

- Scrutinise the work of Essex Police against their obligations in the Equality Act 2010 and their own equality objectives. This will include a focus on Stop and Search activity.
- Scrutinise the work of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) against its obligations in the Equality Act 2010 and its own equality objectives. This will also include benchmarking against best practice.
- Improve our understanding and connection with communities so everyone has the opportunity to express their views on policing and fire and rescue services in Essex.
- Ensure that key strategic decisions consider the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and provide clear evidence of what has been considered and contributed to the final decision. Where necessary undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment.
- Monitor the effectiveness of our commissioned services in reaching all protected groups and how they are proactively supporting the three objectives within the Equality Act 2010.



→ TEAM DEVELOPMENT

- Support and empower our staff to better understand EDI issues and make better informed decisions to support the Commissioner in delivering against their Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Essex Police has a separate Equality and Diversity Strategy which was launched in 2020. Their objectives, published in-line with The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010, are:
 - Attract, recruit, progress and retain a more diverse workforce that better reflects our communities to improve confidence in Essex Police.
 - Narrow the disparity in respect of the use of police powers such as stops, searches and the use of force.

Improve the experience of policing services without reducing the legitimate use of police powers to protect communities.

- Increase satisfaction and confidence amongst victims of crime and wider communities. Tackle hate crime and address any complaints and concerns raised.
- Adopt and advance the NPCC Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2-25 alongside the Police Race Action Plan 2022.
- Improve inclusive culture and increase awareness and understanding of diversity and equality by nurturing an equitable and inclusive workplace culture which tackles violence against women and girls and promotes dignity for all.


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 Officer

PFCC
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX



Roger Hirst

PFCC

- 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



Ben-Julian Harrington

Chief Constable

- 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 2023-24

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