

PEEL: Police efficiency (including leadership) 2017

An inspection of Essex Police



November 2017

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ISBN: 978-1-78655-449-9

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs

Contents

Introduction	3
Force in numbers	5
Overview – How efficient is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?	6
How well does the force understand demand?	8
How well does the force understand current demand?	8
How well does the force understand things that affect demand?	12
Summary of findings	15
How well does the force use its resources?	16
How well does the force understand the capability of its workforce?	16
How well does the force understand the capability of its leaders?	19
How well does the force allocate resources?	20
How well does the force work with others?	24
Summary of findings	26
How well is the force planning for the future?	28
How well does the force predict likely future demand?	28
How well is the force planning for the future, in terms of workforce?	30
How well does the force plan for likely future demand?	32
Summary of findings	34
Next steps	36
Annex A – About the data.....	37

Introduction

As part of our annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)¹ assesses the efficiency and leadership of forces in England and Wales.

What is police efficiency and why is it important?

As with all public services, the police service must operate in a way that makes the most of its available resources. To do this, police forces must understand what their demand is – by which we mean what work they can reasonably predict they will have on any given day – and ensure that they have the resources they need, in the right place, to meet that demand. To stay efficient they must have good, realistic and evidence-based plans for the future. Our efficiency inspection assessed all of these areas during 2017.

As part of the 2017 inspection, we also integrated aspects of leadership into our assessment of efficiency, as the two areas are closely linked. We assessed how police leaders are driving innovation in policing, within their own forces and further afield. We also inspected how well forces are planning for the future with regards to their leadership.

Between 2010/11 and 2015/16, central government funding for the police service in England and Wales fell by 19 percent, or £1.7 billion in cash terms. Police forces met the required budget reductions until November 2015, when the government announced that overall police spending would be protected from further cuts, to enable the police to continue to adapt to emerging crime threats while taking further steps to improve efficiency. While that was a more favourable funding settlement for policing than was expected, reductions in spending by other public services will still create additional pressure for police forces.

¹ This inspection was carried out before 19 July 2017, when HMIC also took on responsibility for fire & rescue service inspections and was renamed HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. The methodology underpinning our inspection findings is unaffected by this change. References to HMICFRS in this report may relate to an event that happened before 19 July 2017 when HMICFRS was HMIC. Citations of documents which HMIC published before 19 July 2017 will still cite HMIC as the publisher.

Our report on Essex Police's legitimacy inspection will be available on our website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2017/essex/) at the end of 2017. HMICFRS reports on police effectiveness will be published in early 2018. Previous PEEL reports are also available on our website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2016/essex/.

More information on how we inspect and grade forces as part of this wide-ranging inspection is available on our website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/).

Force in numbers



Financial position

Forecast change in total gross revenue expenditure

2017/18	2020/21	Percentage change
£269m	£269m	0%



Workforce

Planned change in officer numbers

2016/17	2020/21	Percentage change
2,819	2,850	+1%

Planned change in total workforce

2016/17	2020/21	Percentage change
4,840	5,050	+4%



Calls for assistance

999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2017

Essex Police	England and Wales force average
150	135



Recorded crime

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2017

2015/16	2016/17
62	68

Percentage change in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2017

Essex Police	England and Wales force average
+9%	+11%

For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

Overview – How efficient is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

Overall judgment²



Good

Essex Police is judged to be good in the efficiency with which it keeps people safe and reduces crime. Our overall judgment is the same as last year. The force has maintained a good understanding of demand; its use of resources to manage demand is assessed to be good; and its planning for future demand is also judged to be good.

Overall summary

How well does the force understand demand?



Good

How well does the force use its resources?



Good

How well is the force planning for the future?



Good

Essex Police has a good understanding of current and likely future demand for its services, and assesses continually its ability to respond effectively. It also has a good understanding of crime that is hidden, such as domestic abuse and female genital mutilation. The force has, over the previous two years, necessarily moved a substantial number of people into the public protection department to help it to provide better support for people who are vulnerable. This movement of staff has put pressure on other areas of the force, despite efforts to reduce and manage demand. The force needs to take action as soon as possible to reduce the high rate of 101 calls being abandoned by the public. In addition, the victim satisfaction rate for the force has been falling steadily since 2011, from 83.1 percent to 73.4 percent. The force is undertaking work to understand the reasons for these problems and to make improvements.

² HMICFRS judgments are outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

The force understands the skills and capabilities it needs, and how these will change in the future. It has undertaken a meaningful skills and capabilities audit and uses this information to plan recruitment and training. The force is having some success in increasing recruitment from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. It also makes good use of national schemes aimed at bringing people with diverse backgrounds and different experiences into the police service.

Essex Police has a strong commitment to joint working to improve efficiency and make savings. This is particularly so with Kent Police and as part of the seven-force strategic alliance, but also with partners such as the local authority in community safety hubs. The force's detailed 2020 change plan forecasts and tracks potential savings, costs and investments for the future. Consolidating and rationalising its building stock to meet future operational needs is a crucial element of its plans for the future. The force is considering a number of affordability options and has brought in outside expertise to lead strategic change. It has yet to develop its savings plans fully beyond 2017/18, but this work is in progress. The force's plans are realistic, innovative and based on prudent financial assumptions, but they may be difficult to achieve.

Area for improvement

- The force should review its efforts to reduce the levels of abandoned 101 calls to ensure that the changes are effective, and it should seek to reduce the levels of abandonment to more acceptable levels as soon as possible.

How well does the force understand demand?

To be efficient, it is essential that police forces have a good understanding of the demand for their services. This means that they should not only understand what sort of incidents are likely to be reported on a normal day, but also what they need to do in advance to prevent crime. They should also understand the crimes and other activity in their area that are often hidden and are less likely to be reported, such as modern slavery or child sexual exploitation, and take action to uncover them.

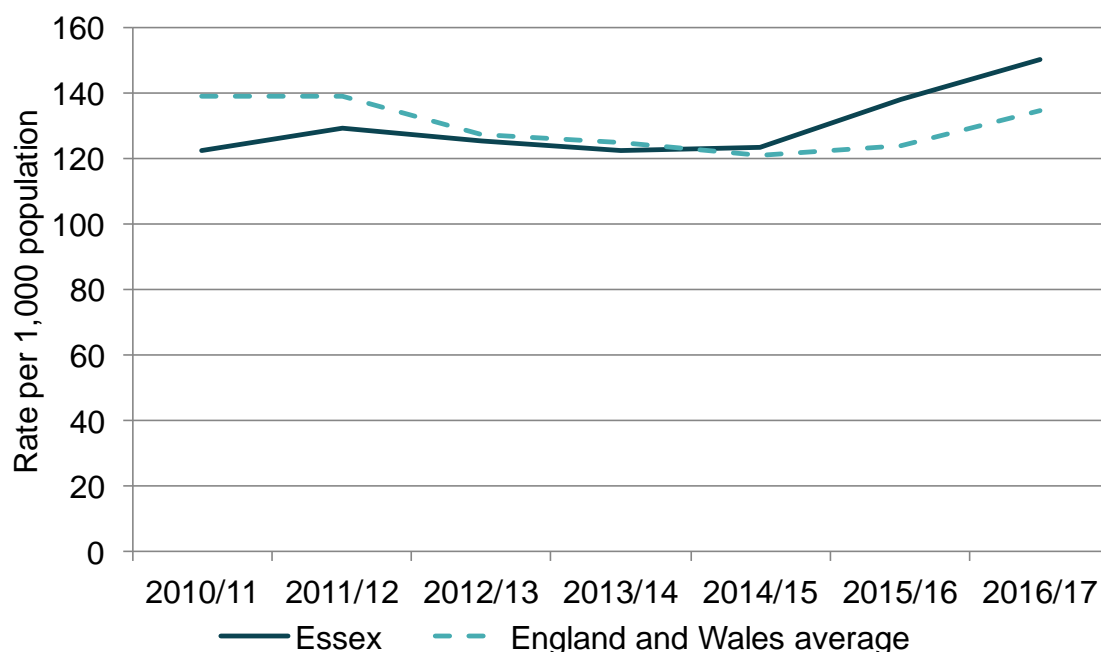
Forces should be able to identify and reduce work that is unnecessarily created internally through inefficient processes. Similarly, forces should be looking for ways to identify processes and ways of working that are more efficient. Forces also have to make decisions about how they prioritise and respond to the demand for their services and should be able to demonstrate that their approach to prioritisation does not cause them to overlook some of their demand.

How well does the force understand current demand?

HMICFRS inspected how well Essex Police understands the demand for its services. These demands can range from answering and responding to 999 calls to protecting victims and uncovering crimes that would not otherwise be reported. It is important that police forces understand the work that they need to do so that they can ensure that they have resources in place.

Forces deal with much more than responding to emergencies and investigating reports of crime. However, the number of calls for service (999 calls and 101 calls) and the levels of recorded crime can nonetheless be used to make simple comparisons. In particular, they can give an indication of whether demand has changed or is particularly high or low. Figure 1 shows how the number of 999 calls has changed since 2010/11, while figure 2 illustrates how crime has changed since 2010/11.

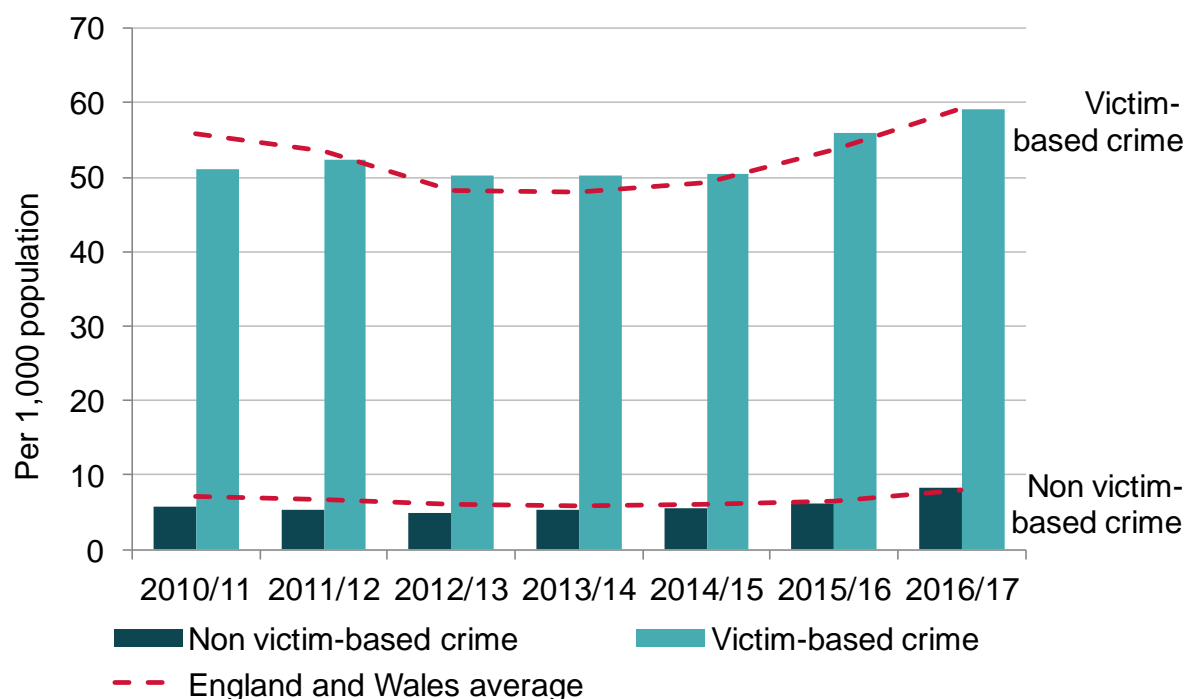
Figure 1: Rate of 999 calls recorded per 1,000 people in the local population in Essex Police compared with England and Wales as a whole, from 2010/11 to 2016/17



Source: Home Office Annual Data Requirement

Essex Police recorded 150 999 calls per 1,000 population in 2016/17. This was broadly in line with the England and Wales force average of 135. The rate has increased from the 123 calls per 1,000 population recorded in 2010/11 and increased since 2015/16 when the rate was 138 calls per 1,000.

Figure 2: Police-recorded crimes per 1,000 population in Essex Police compared with England and Wales from 2010/11 to 2016/17



Source: Home Office Police-recorded crime data

Victim-based crimes (those where there is likely to be a specific victim) include violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery and other theft, criminal damage and arson. All other crime is considered non victim-based.

The rate of victim-based crime per 1,000 population in Essex in 2016/17 was 59.2 crimes. This is higher than the rate in 2010/11 of 51.2 crimes. The rate of victim-based crime decreased between 2010/11 and 2013/14 to 50.2 crimes per 1,000 population before increasing to the 2016/17 rate. The rate of victim-based crime per 1,000 population in England and Wales decreased from 55.8 to 48.1 crimes between 2010/11 and 2013/14 before increasing to 59.3 in 2016/17.

In the local population of Essex Police the rate of non victim-based crime per 1,000 population in 2016/17 (8.3 crimes) was higher than in 2010/11 (5.8 crimes). The rate of non victim-based crime per 1,000 population decreased to 5.0 crimes in 2012/13 before rising again to the 2016/17 rate. The rate of non victim-based crime per 1,000 population in England and Wales in 2016/17 was 7.9 crimes. This decreased from 7.1 in 2010/11 to 5.9 crimes in 2012/13 before increasing to the 2016/17 rate.

Understanding demand

As a result of using an extensive range of management information, Essex Police is good at understanding current demand for its services. The force runs its demand modelling process annually; this is a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify all current demand and to model likely future demand, based on local and national crime trends. The assessment of data is used by the force's strategic change team to inform its work in reshaping the force, and to inform the demand management board (which an assistant chief constable chairs), which oversees the development of responses to changing and increasing demand. It is also used to inform specific problem profiles³ and other strategic documents and to assess, among other things, the deployment of officers and staff, and guide future recruitment activity. The force continues to assess specific areas of demand for its services and its ability to respond effectively to it. For example, it recently carried out a review of demand management in the force's control room, which brought forward recommendations to improve quality assurance in the control room in an effort to improve public satisfaction.

The force has a broad understanding of demand for its services. Analysis includes detailed assessment of demand across geographical areas and time frames and the use of a predictive calendar to identify anticipated peaks in demand and predict spikes in crime types at certain times of the year, based on previous data. Demand is also assessed in terms of complexity, time taken and harm. Work to understand

³ A problem profile is intended to provide the force with greater understanding of established and emerging crime or incident series, priority locations or other identified high-risk issues. It should be based on the research and analysis of a wide range of information sources, including information from partner organisations. It should contain recommendations for making decisions and options for action.

and manage avoidable demand⁴ better is advanced and includes both internal and external demand. The strategic change team uses demand and process mapping to identify and resolve such inefficiencies. Examples include the crime allocation rationale assessment (CARA) process, which is the latest iteration of an initiative designed to use THRIVE principles⁵ to determine whether police attendance is required to resolve an incident. Where it is decided that police attendance is not needed, a desk-based investigation is undertaken and the victim is informed of the outcome. Work is also continuing to resolve how officers record crimes through the crime bureau, which has been identified as taking too much time and causing delays. The strategic change team produces detailed reports regarding demand, in which it acknowledges and uses the work undertaken by the College of Policing on future demand. This indicates a likely reduction in traditional crime types and a continued increase in more complex crimes. The reports also take account of the forecast of population change and growth within Essex. The chief officer team uses these reports in its deliberations regarding the future structure and workforce make-up.

More complex demand

In HMICFRS' 2016 efficiency report⁶ we described how the force was using communities, partners, academic institutions and charities to inform its understanding of hidden crime. This included working with Barnardo's to improve the identification and reporting of female genital mutilation. In this inspection, we found that the force has built on this work and, although the work identified in 2016 continues, it has sought more ways to identify hidden demand for its services. The force has recruited a public engagement manager whose role includes developing effective mechanisms to seek feedback from, and communicate with, those groups with less trust and confidence in the police. As part of this work, a public perception and user experience survey has been created for the force by an independent market research company. The survey uses innovative techniques to engage with communities who are less likely to complain or take part in traditional forms of engagement. This includes obtaining the views of those victims who are entitled to

⁴ Avoidable demand is demand that is created by inefficient processes, demand that could be prevented from occurring in the first place or demand that the force should be dealing with in the first place.

⁵ The threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) model is used to assess the appropriate initial police response to a call for service. It allows a judgment to be made of the relative risk posed by the call and places the individual needs of the victim at the centre of that decision.

⁶ PEEL: Police efficiency 2016 – An inspection of Essex Police, HMIC, 2016. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-efficiency-2016-essex/

an enhanced service under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime:⁷ those who are vulnerable, intimidated, persistently targeted or victims of the most serious crimes. This work is assisting the force in identifying how best to engage with those victims who are sometimes less likely to report crime.

The force has ensured that demand that might be hidden is taken seriously. It has produced a pictorial strategic document ('plan on a page') that sets out what the force will focus its resources on and includes areas of hidden demand. Its understanding of the extent of hidden demand and its work to respond to it is best shown through its efforts to improve its service to vulnerable victims. The force continues to work with partner organisations⁸ and victims to understand better those crimes that are under-reported or hidden, such as domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. It has changed some of its processes to give better support to victims who are vulnerable and has sought to obtain data from partners such as the health service to help inform its response. A full review of the public protection department was undertaken, after which a significant number of extra staff were deployed into the department – around 100 posts. Similarly, the force reviewed its cyber-capability and recognised the amount of hidden demand; again, additional officers have been deployed to this area. Importantly, the force is being proactive in seeking to increase reporting and understanding of demand in these and other areas of so-called hidden demand.

How well does the force understand things that affect demand?

HMICFRS inspected how well Essex Police reduces the demand that inefficiency can create internally. Forces can do this by identifying and eliminating inefficient processes, by ensuring they monitor work to get the best outcomes and by encouraging officers and staff to suggest new and better ways of doing their jobs.

⁷ All police forces have a statutory duty to comply with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, which sets out the service victims of crime can expect from all parts of the criminal justice system. The code states that all victims of crime should be able to make a personal statement, which they can use to explain how the crime has affected them. Victims should also be kept updated about the progress of their case. For more information, see:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF

⁸ Public sector entities, such as those concerned with health, education, social services, the criminal justice system and the management of offenders, which work together to attain their common or complementary objectives.

Managing, prioritising and filtering demand

Essex Police has effective governance processes to ensure that it is efficient. The force is good at identifying threats and risks from criminality using the National Intelligence Model⁹ including an overarching strategic threat assessment that helps to ensure that its operational policing is as effective as possible. A series of meetings, culminating in the force performance meeting chaired by the deputy chief constable, assess how well the force is managing and prioritising demand for its services. A specific element of the overall change programme is to promote more efficient working practices and the force also analyses the data gathered in respect of demand for its services, to identify efficiencies in how it uses its resources.

The force has processes in place to identify wasteful or inefficient activity. These processes are taken seriously by leaders, with the principal governance being from the demand management board which oversees and authorises initiatives designed to improve efficiency. This board has authorised the removal of forms and processes that have been identified as duplicating work, such as filling out two separate forms for the same incident. The demand management board also supports research into processes and systems that are thought to be inefficient. An example of this is the work to encourage the public to engage with the force online whenever possible, thereby reducing the demand on call-handling services. The force has an ideas scheme where ideas are submitted through an electronic mailbox for consideration by the demand management board; the workforce is aware and supportive of the scheme.

Essex Police takes a structured approach to dealing with demand for its services and has processes in place to avoid suppressing it. Call takers use the THRIVE system to assess calls and then grade them accordingly for response. This process works well and has enabled the force to reduce the previously unacceptable high levels of unresolved open incidents in the control room; we found that there are now around 600, with efforts continuing to reduce this number further. The force has recognised however that its current call-handling structures are under pressure and has undertaken a review of call handing. The review found that while the abandonment rate for 101 calls is 23 percent or around 200 calls a day, a number of these calls are abandoned for positive reasons such as the caller moving to the force website or accepting a call-back offer following prompts on the force's messenger service. A number of calls were also identified as wrong numbers with callers often seeking the NHS 111 service and abandoning their call upon the realisation that they had called the police by mistake. In this way the force calculates that their true abandonment rate is around 14 percent.

⁹ The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is a well-established business and decision-making model within policing. It provides a standardised approach to gathering, co-ordinating and disseminating intelligence which can be integrated across all forces and law enforcement agencies.

Although the level of knowledge afforded by the review is commendable, the current levels of abandoned 101 calls remain unacceptable and the force is not providing the public with an adequate service in this area. Frontline officers and staff report that they are sometimes overloaded with demand. This is backed up by some senior officers and by the number of incidents where 'no resource is available' is recorded on the log of events to explain why officers have not attended as required. Officers who are unable to undertake full duties have been deployed to local policing areas to resolve low-risk incidents. These officers are having a positive effect on reducing unresolved open incidents, but we found that they do not all fully understand the extent of their role and have not been dealing with some incidents that would have benefited from their involvement. The victim satisfaction rate for the force has been falling steadily since 2011 and is now at 73.4 percent, and the force is conducting several pieces of work to understand the reasons for this and to seek ways to improve matters.

Essex Police has a good track record of establishing robust processes to ensure that it achieves benefits from change. The force's transformation plan is the main strategic document that sets out the force's ambition. This plan forecasts and tracks potential savings, additional costs and investment across future years, taking account of any significant change to the force's funding in the medium-term financial plan. It has an established regime of assessing change ideas, projects and programmes. It systematically reviews initial business cases using criteria to identify the extent to which they support the force vision and the likely savings and impact that the change will achieve. Examples of recent business cases include the mobile data project and streamlining of the force's transport services (such as vehicle servicing and a reduction in garages). The force is also good at identifying unintended consequences of change, an example of which is the current discussions on allowing officers to record crimes directly from their mobile device onto the force system. The force is aware of the possible negative effect this approach might have on data quality and is therefore proceeding with care, allowing only a small number of officers to record crimes directly in the first instance.

Leaders promoting innovative thinking

A suggestion scheme for the workforce has been in place for many years. However, a new ideas scheme was launched in April 2017 on the force intranet. In its first week, 45 ideas were submitted. Suggestions currently under consideration include an idea to implement an annual leave purchase scheme and the creation of a first aid app that can be downloaded onto smartphones and tablets. Members of the workforce are able to upload their ideas easily and quickly. Ideas are reviewed by the appropriate senior officer force lead and any suggestions assessed as suitable are progressed. The scheme updates the individual as to the outcome of their particular idea, and allows others to see what ideas have been put forward and which have been adopted. The chief officer team has encouraged leaders and staff to bring ideas forward, including allowing officers to visit other forces to assess ideas

and ways of working that might be transferrable to Essex Police. The force commendation process seeks to acknowledge innovation and the workforce is supportive of the approach taken in this area. It is expected that the new suggestion scheme will enhance this further.

Summary of findings



Good

Essex Police is good at understanding current and likely future demand for its services and it continually assesses its ability to respond to it effectively. The force's understanding covers geographical areas, time frames and predicting peaks in demand or spikes in crime types at certain times of the year. It also assesses demand in terms of its complexity, time taken and harm. It has a good understanding of crime that is hidden, such as domestic abuse and female genital mutilation. The force has, over the previous two years moved a substantial number of people into the public protection department to help it to provide better support for people who are vulnerable. This was due to the public protection department being under-resourced for the demand faced and the very real risks this created for victims who are vulnerable. This movement of staff has placed pressure on other areas of the force, despite initiatives and innovations that are designed to reduce and manage demand better.

The force has a structured approach to dealing with demand and assesses and grades calls using the THRIVE system. However, the number of abandoned 101 calls to the force is too high, and the victim satisfaction rate for the force has been falling steadily since 2011 and is now at 73.4 percent. The force is undertaking work to understand the reasons for these issues and to make improvements.

Essex Police has effective governance processes to ensure that it is efficient. The force has a good record of establishing robust processes to ensure that benefits are realised from change programmes and that it identifies any unintended consequences. It encourages its workforce to submit ideas and suggestions for innovation; its suggestion scheme has been in place for many years and it recently introduced a new ideas scheme on the force intranet.

Area for improvement

- The force should review its efforts to reduce the levels of abandoned 101 calls to ensure that the changes are effective, and it should seek to reduce the levels of abandonment to more acceptable levels as soon as possible.

How well does the force use its resources?

Police forces have finite resources with which to do an increasingly complicated job, so must ensure that they deploy and use their resources in the best way possible. The biggest resource that policing has is its workforce and it is important that forces make sure that they have access to the skills needed to police effectively now and in the future.

It is also important that forces make sophisticated decisions about how to spend and invest their resources in order to get the best value for the public. This means forces need to have a good understanding of what they can achieve within a particular budget.

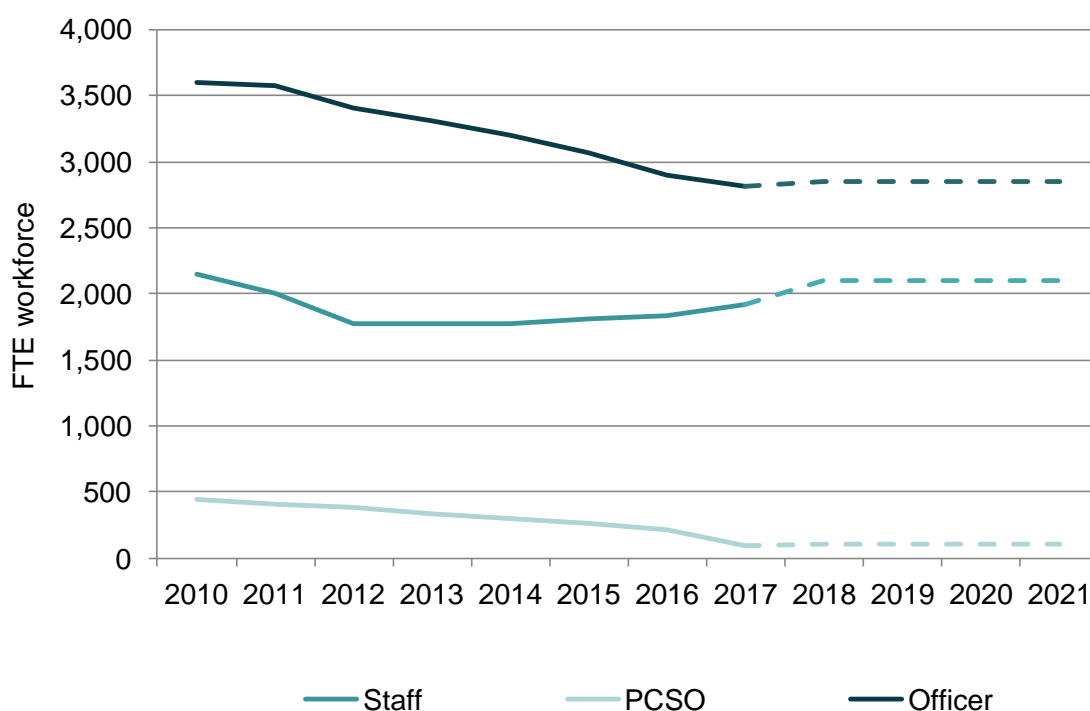
Forces cannot provide services efficiently in isolation, and must work with other police forces and local organisations to ensure they provide the best service to the public at the most appropriate cost.

How well does the force understand the capability of its workforce?

HMICFRS inspected how well Essex Police understands the skills it needs, the skills it actually has in the workforce and what steps it is taking to ensure that they match. Police forces spend around 80 percent of their budget on staffing, so it is vital that the workforce is as productive as possible.

Figure 3 illustrates the workforce profile (the number of officers, staff and police community support officers (PCSOs)) since 2010 and projections to 2021. Between March 2017 and March 2021, it is projected that the number of officers will increase by 31.4 FTE (1 percent) from 2,819 to 2,850. In contrast, the number of officers across England and Wales as a whole is projected to decrease by 2 percent.

Figure 3: Essex Police's planned full-time equivalent workforce (FTE) as on 31 March from 2010 to 2021



Source: Home Office Police workforce statistics and HMICFRS spring data collection

The number of staff working in Essex Police is projected to increase by 175.7 FTE (9 percent) from 1,925 to 2,100 between March 2017 and March 2021. Staff numbers across England and Wales, however, are projected to decrease by 2 percent. The number of PCSOs in Essex is projected to increase by 3.5 FTE (4 percent) from 96 to 100 over the same period. For England and Wales as a whole, PCSOs are projected to increase by 0.2 percent.

Essex Police has a good understanding of the skills and capabilities it needs, including how the necessary skills and capabilities will change in the future. It continues to use a profiling tool which enables it to identify workforce skills, capabilities, gaps and potential gaps, such as those caused by people retiring. It uses this information to plan both training and recruitment. For digital skills, the force's overall transformation plan recognises the need for continued investment in the force's response to digital crime, and this is being addressed through immediate, short-term action as well as by longer-term planning. Thus a cyber-crime unit has been set up in collaboration with Kent Police, which provides technological expertise and guidance to divisional officers investigating computer-enabled crime. Staff working in the unit are being trained using the College of Policing's nationally accredited cyber-detective pathway.

In order that its work to audit the skills and capabilities of its workforce is meaningful, the force has ensured that its audit complies with the National Police Co-ordination Centre conventions for naming skills, in that there is only one title for any given skill.

The workforce recognises the value of the approach taken and can see the benefits from the force having a good understanding of any skills gaps and any projected future skill gaps in the force. The force is able to be agile in its response to changes in the workforce; it has recently experienced significant numbers of its authorised firearms officers (AFOs) leaving the force, mostly to join the Metropolitan Police Service. A number of these AFOs have sought to return to Essex Police which the force welcomes, but it is also training new AFOs to replace those lost.

The people and learning strategy underpins all efforts designed to ensure that the force has the skills it needs now and in the future. This document is extensive and sets out a very clear pathway towards having a workforce with the skills that match what the force requires now and in the future. The amount of detail obtained by its audit profiling skills and capabilities enables the force to plan recruitment and training; the learning and development department has been able to use the information as a foundation for its five-year training plans. This information is held in the very detailed resource, redirection and growth plan 2016–20, including what new jobs during this period will require in terms of skills and capabilities, recruitment, training and resourcing. The human resources (HR) department is also beginning to assess the personal characteristics of its leaders, going beyond traditional skills monitoring, such as what qualifications a person has, to gain a broader and more useful understanding of its leaders.

The force continues to seek recruits from across its communities (including from minority communities), and from organisations and academic establishments. In HMICFRS' 2014 crime inspection, we judged that the force was lacking in the appropriate number of officers with nationally accredited skills to fulfil their investigative duties. The force's response has been to increase its detective cadre through internal recruitment and development. At the time of our inspection the force had 718 detective posts, and officers in these posts are either fully accredited or are on the College of Policing's detective career pathway, which requires that they pass the prescribed exam and complete their professional development portfolio. The force, together with Kent Police, has developed an 'investigate first' programme (similar to that being developed by the College of Policing), which aims to fast-track suitable new recruits into detective roles. The successful recruits will be eligible to investigate serious and complex crime and incidents within two years. All detectives are required to comply with the College of Policing's re-accreditation requirement to complete the NCALT¹⁰ package on case file quality and provide five examples of continuous professional development. These elements are monitored through the personal development record that all officers maintain.

¹⁰ The National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) is a collaboration between the College of Policing and the Metropolitan Police Service that provides local and national e-learning products across a range of subjects to the police service.

The apprenticeship levy came into force in April 2017, with Essex Police's contribution amounting to approximately £900,000.¹¹ The force has recognised the opportunity the levy offers to recruit new skills, such as technology skills; it has taken a proactive approach and is in the early planning stages of its response. Where required skills are not available within the workforce, the force continues to work with academia and consultants to provide these skills or capabilities, particularly in the area of IT but also in audit and survey work, and business planning.

How well does the force understand the capability of its leaders?

HMICFRS inspected how well Essex Police understands the skills it needs and the skills its leaders have, and what steps it is taking to ensure that they match.

The Essex Police and Kent Police leadership strategy establishes the ambition of both forces to develop and maintain a leadership that is fit for purpose now and in the future. This strategy pulls together the forces' thinking about what skills they will need in their future leaders and how they intend to succeed in their joint ambition. Essex Police has a detailed understanding of its leadership's skills and it is developing its understanding beyond recognised skills and qualifications by using processes that identify personality traits and individual preferences. This information will allow the force to gain a better understanding of what types of leaders they have and what gaps they have in terms of personality types. Several leaders from local policing commands and the HR department have been through the enhanced skills and personality analysis process to date, and the information has been used to inform resource planning. The intention is to develop and extend the profiling activity over the coming year.

The knowledge drawn from its workforce profiling tool is used to identify leadership skills, capabilities, gaps and potential gaps (such as those caused by people retiring), in the same way that it does for the entire workforce. This information is used to plan leadership training and recruitment and underlies the force's decision to recruit leaders not only from within its own workforce but also from outside, including use of the College of Policing's Direct Entry and Fast Track schemes.¹² The force continues to use recognised academic research¹³ on the workplace requirements of

¹¹ Any employer with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million each year must pay the apprenticeship levy each month from 6 April 2017. It is set at 0.5 percent of the total pay bill. The levy is designed to encourage employers to support apprenticeships.

¹² For more information about College of Policing leadership programmes, see: <http://recruit.college.police.uk/Officer/leadership-programmes/Pages/Fast-Track.aspx>
www.policenow.org.uk/the-programme/about-the-programme/

¹³ The Hudson report, *The Great Generational Shift*, considers how different generations think, act and lead. The report discusses four generations: Baby Boomers 1946–1964, Generation X 1965–1979, Generation Y 1980–1994 and Generation Z 1995+.

different generations as the basis to assess the future skills requirements of its leaders. It has concluded that due to the likely changing values and communication preferences of its workforce, in future its leaders must be able to adopt a more mentoring approach and be aware of opportunities to assist staff in their development, which will not always be in the form of promotion.

The force is working on developing leaders to meet the needs of future demand for its services. Its succession planning processes seek to ensure talent is identified, developed, retained and used in the best interests of the force and the public. Succession planning processes are in place for senior levels and this is being developed for wider implementation across the force at all levels during the coming year. The 'develop you' scheme is now established; it is well-supported by the workforce and provides lateral development opportunities for the workforce and leaders, including secondments. To date, 401 people have applied for the scheme: 294 officers and 107 police staff.

The force's positive action strategy underpins efforts designed to increase the diversity of the workforce and leadership. The force has made concerted efforts to increase officer recruitment from BAME communities, with some success. The range of recruitment opportunities is a credit to the force, with direct entry at both superintendent and inspector level, and involvement with the Police Now scheme. The inclusion of external candidates in promotion processes has brought new ideas and skills into the force, and there is a perceptible vibrancy in the senior levels of the force as the impact of these recruitment decisions begins to be felt. Internal progression is supported by use of the fast track constable to inspector scheme, which seeks to bring talented individuals rapidly through the ranks to strengthen leadership. At chief officer level, with the exception of the chief constable, the team has completely changed, with officers new to Essex being brought in to add strength and depth to the team. Local talent has also been recognised and the newly appointed assistant chief constable for local policing is an Essex officer. The chief officer team includes police staff equivalents who have been employed to bring a wealth of experience and professionalism that complements the policing skills of the officers.

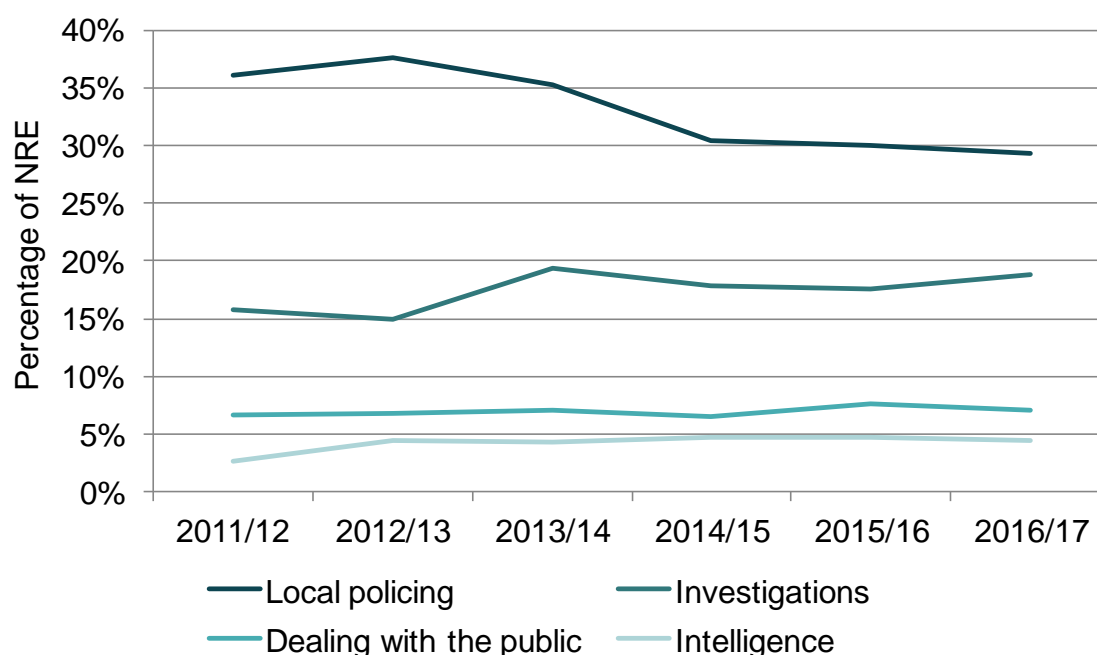
How well does the force allocate resources?

HMICFRS inspected how well Essex Police uses its understanding of demand to prioritise its activities in order to provide the best service to the public. To assess this, we considered the extent to which the force understands what it can provide within a particular budget.

The level of spending on different police functions varies between forces, depending on the particular demands that each force must meet. Higher expenditure does not necessarily mean better services, but it can demonstrate how a force prioritises its resources.

Figure 4 shows how expenditure is distributed across the most common police functions. Local policing covers functions such as incident response, neighbourhood policing and local investigations. Investigation covers areas of specific proactive investigative functions, such as major crime, while dealing with the public includes front counter and control room activities. Intelligence covers the gathering and assessment of intelligence.

Figure 4: Estimated percentage of net revenue expenditure allocated across policing functions in Essex Police from 2011/12 to 2016/17



Source: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

Note: Functions that have not been included as they are equivalent to back office functions or are only a small proportion of expenditure include operational support and road policing.

In Essex, the percentage of estimated expenditure on local policing in 2016/17 has decreased from 36 percent in 2011/12 to 29 percent in 2016/17. Estimated expenditure on investigation has increased from 16 percent to 19 percent, expenditure on dealing with the public is similar to 2011/12 and expenditure on intelligence has increased from 3 percent to 4 percent from 2011/12 to 2016/17.

Prioritisation and cost

Essex Police's decisions on the prioritisation and allocation of resources are based on an understanding of current and future demand for its services, local priorities, national requirements and public expectations. The rationale for decisions is well-understood within the organisation, as the chief officer team and change management team consistently update the workforce. An annual strategic assessment is produced; this detailed and informative report considers a wealth of data, including partnership data, volume and geography of crime, and the time taken to resolve incidents, as well as the harm caused by different crime types. It also considers the context the force operates in. It is used to determine priorities which

are published in the 'plan on a page' control strategy. Future demand modelling is based on national research, local demand modelling and professional judgment. In this way, a forecast of future resource needs has been compiled which identifies that the force will need 200 additional police officer and staff posts by 2020. It has established that many of these posts will be required in the public protection command to manage predicted increases in reports of child abuse and sexual exploitation, other sexual offences, domestic abuse, human trafficking and modern slavery. Other identified areas of growth are fraud, cyber-crime and work to disrupt and dismantle urban street gangs.

Operationally, resources are assigned within the operating model; they are subject to strong governance arrangements which include the demand management board and the resourcing panel, whose role it is to agree where the resources are best distributed across the model to maintain performance. In order to ensure all moves are aligned to force priorities, agreement to recruit to posts internally within the force goes through this panel. The members of this panel are appropriate and include the head of resourcing and operational heads of departments. However, despite this, on occasion, officers face long delays before they are released to roles for which they have made a successful application; this could undermine the work of the panel.

The chief officer team has a clear understanding of what it means to make reductions in one area and invest in another; its discussions inform the strategic decisions within the force's 2020 plan. In HMICFRS' 2015 effectiveness (vulnerability) inspection,¹⁴ Essex Police was judged to be inadequate in how it was protecting those who are vulnerable from harm. The force responded quickly and effectively, using the HMICFRS report and its own detailed report into current and future demand, to make significant resourcing decisions that enabled improvements in its public protection work. The consequence of this has been a noticeable reduction in spending on frontline local policing in 2016/17, with a budget of £76m, which is a 1.8 percent reduction on the previous year. In contrast, investigations, which includes the public protection command, saw an increase in spending in 2016/17, with a budget of £48.9m, which is a 7.8 percent increase from the previous year.

The chief officer team were very aware of the impact of this change in funding and have taken steps to reduce the effect, including better use of officers who are unable to undertake their full duties (restricted officers), who now deal with low-level incidents to reduce the demand on fully operational colleagues. Other work to reduce demand includes use of the CARA process, which assesses more effectively whether a reported crime needs investigation beyond the initial assessment and recording of details from the caller. Further efforts include the online crime reporting

¹⁴ PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) – An inspection of Essex Police, HMIC, 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-essex/

service that removed the need for officer attendance at some crime scenes, and the move to community safety partnership hubs to achieve a more cost-effective operating model. With hub working, among other benefits, demand is properly managed by the most appropriate partner agency, such as the local authority or the fire and rescue service.

The police and crime commissioner (PCC) is supportive of the zero-based budgeting approach and the force's internal auditor was commissioned to conduct a pilot zero-based budgeting exercise. Zero-based budgeting means that all budgets must be justified for each new financial year. Thus, every area of activity starts from a zero base and then every function undertaken is analysed for its needs and costs. Business cases are required for all investments and in order to pass the PCC's requirements, these must include a sound evidence base, milestones, a review and an understanding of the impact of the investment. In order to meet the PCC's requirements better, the force has recruited an experienced and accredited benefits manager who oversees the projects to ensure that savings are properly managed. This is under the management of the chief officer team and the office of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC), which reviews in-year and full-year costs and savings against plans.

Investment

Essex Police has a good understanding of the costs of services in relation to the quality and level of outcomes for its investments, and the force's detailed 2020 change plan projects and tracks potential savings, additional costs and investment across future years. In this way, the force is able to demonstrate that it is making sensible and intelligent decisions about what to invest in by showing the value it has got, or will get, from investments. In 2017, the force has, as it has had for several years, the lowest cost of policing per head of population in England and Wales, at £109.29; this requires it to prioritise investments that help it to make the most efficient use of its staff. As such, its investment in mobile data devices is a crucial programme. The need to enhance the effectiveness of the devices has required a further joint Kent and Essex Police business case to agree the spending of £13m over nine years between the two forces. This is to ensure the full benefits of the initiative, including the purchase of a suitable software upgrade to enable full functionality with the force's and some national systems. In return for this investment, the force projects reduced costs in the control room and crime bureau, and in frontline activities, as officers complete more of their own system updates on their devices and remain on visible patrol duties. The force projects net revenue savings of £18.9m over the next four years as a result of this project.

How well does the force work with others?

HMICFRS inspected how well Essex Police has explored all opportunities to work in collaboration with others to increase efficiency and provide better, more resilient services. This can include working jointly with other police forces, local public sector organisations, the private sector and the voluntary sector. We looked at whether the force has a clear rationale for the decisions it has taken about how it works with other organisations and other forces, and whether it has a good understanding of how successful its joint working is.

How the force works with other organisations and other forces

The force demonstrates a commitment to joint working and its collaborative work with Kent Police is extensive, mature and expanding. Significant savings are anticipated from collaboration on shared services between Essex and Kent police forces through to 2019/20, with the rationale of improving services while reducing costs. We were told during our inspection that the total amount of savings from collaboration over the four years to 2019/20 is projected to be just over £10.5m. A review of call handling and incident management across both forces has been under way since the summer of 2016 to assess the feasibility of a collaborative or shared function between the two forces, as well as exploring innovative ways of working with other emergency services. The force is a member of the seven-force strategic collaboration programme;¹⁵ its extremely broad scope covers almost every principal element of operational, middle office and support services for police service provision.

The force continues to pursue closer collaboration with the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) and on 25 July the Home Secretary approved the PCC's bid to take over responsibility for fire and rescue services, as allowed for in the Policing and Crime Act 2017. At the time of inspection, the PCC was scheduled to begin dual governance of Essex Police and ECFRS in October 2017. It is likely that as a consequence of this change, a large number of opportunities for greater efficiency for both organisations will become available, in areas such as shared buildings, training and control rooms, merged community safety teams and streamlined incident command structures. In light of the likely progression of these matters, the PCC has amended the force's strategy in relation to the buildings the force owns and needs in the future (known as the estates strategy) to reflect the developments better.

Elsewhere, collaborative work continues to be based on sound logic. This is most obvious in the community safety hub structure, where the police and local partners, such as the local authority, work from the same building and share resources,

¹⁵ The seven forces in the strategic collaboration are Essex, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk.

thereby making savings and using resources (including people) to the best effect. The community safety hubs are part of the force's and its partners' response to cuts in public service funding. The hubs provide an effective means by which local policing teams can engage with partners to provide a better service to the public in a cost-effective way. Other collaborative approaches include the 'safe house project', where the force works with ECFRS and the Medaille Trust¹⁶ to provide a managed environment for victims of modern day slavery. The OPCC provides financial assistance for the project, which is enough to support up to six victims per week. This collaboration has provided an enhanced service for victims who are vulnerable and it also means resources are used more effectively, as the Medaille Trust staff are better trained to safeguard and support the victims. The force also works closely with mental health services to provide a triage car with an experienced mental health professional working alongside police officers; this means people going through a mental health crisis can be given a better service. The workforce is very supportive of this initiative and report that it produces better results for everyone.

The benefits of joint working

Essex Police's preferred police partner for collaboration is Kent Police. This relationship has brought significant benefits for both forces across a range of areas. The largest part of this collaborative relationship is the serious crime directorate (SCD), which was created in January 2010. The SCD has more than 1,100 officers and staff working together in north Kent providing a range of activities, including a flexible surveillance and operational investigative capacity to target those causing the most harm to communities across Essex and Kent. In HMICFRS' 2016 efficiency report, we said that the forces had contracted independent auditors to review the collaboration arrangements between the two forces and that the auditors confirmed that robust arrangements were in place for the management of the costs and benefits of collaboration. This is still the case. For example, there is an Essex and Kent collaboration governance meeting every two months that brings together the leads of the collaborative projects to discuss progress against milestones in the business plans and to assess opportunities and risks.

Essex Police has led on the development and commissioning of a fully integrated single policing database incorporating the principal policing functions of intelligence, investigation, custody and case file preparation. The innovative IT system is capable of being shared by other forces enabling cross-border access to information. There have been some teething problems with the system which are being addressed. Essex was the first force to go live and so far Norfolk and Suffolk forces have also implemented the same system, with six other forces planning to follow suit.

¹⁶ The Medaille Trust is a UK charity founded by groups of religious congregations in 2006. Its main aim is to end the trafficking and enslavement of women, children and young men to the sex industry.

The OPCC has previously commissioned an independent evaluation of the force's mental health triage car scheme. This concluded that it is cost-effective, achieves improved outcomes for service users and has a positive impact on staff.

Leadership driving innovation

Essex Police is very proactive in seeking out and sharing new opportunities for improvement from outside the force. The chief officer team actively encourage leaders to seek out good practice from around the country and in particular from forces within its most similar group (MSG).¹⁷ Many of the ideas generated by this approach have been implemented successfully, including the stakeholder panel in the promotion process (a panel of a diverse range of individuals from across the workplace), that was developed following liaison with both the National Crime Agency and Hampshire Constabulary. Senior officers meet regularly with the seven forces in the south-east region to discuss new and innovative practices. The strategic change team has visited Durham Constabulary to assess its management processes and local policing review to see if such an approach would bring any benefits to Essex Police. The force also adopted the CARA model from Avon and Somerset Constabulary when it had just completed a post-implementation review which was shared with Essex Police. The force is also part of the project to build digital capability in relation to intelligence and investigation alongside Durham and Gloucestershire constabularies, funded by the government's Police Transformation Fund.

Summary of findings



Good

Essex Police has a good understanding of the skills and capabilities it needs, as well as how these will change in the future. The force has undertaken a meaningful skills and capabilities audit, including of its leaders; leaders have also been profiled for personality traits and individual preferences. The information obtained enables the force to plan recruitment and training. The force's processes for succession planning seek to ensure that talent within the force is identified, developed, retained and used in the best interests of the force and the public. Its positive action strategy aims to increase the diversity of the workforce and leadership and is having some success in its latest recruitment campaign in increasing recruitment from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

¹⁷ MSGs describe groups of local police force areas that have been found to be the most similar to each other using statistical methods, based on demographic, economic and social characteristics which relate to crime; they generally have reasonably comparable levels of crime. MSGs are designed to help make fairer and more meaningful comparisons between force areas.

The force's decisions on prioritising and allocating resources are based on its comprehensive understanding of current and future demand for its services, local priorities, national requirements and public expectations. The chief officer team has a clear understanding of the impact of prioritising one area of work over another and take steps to minimise any negative effects. The force's detailed 2020 change plan projects and tracks potential savings, costs and investments and shows the depth of its planning for the future.

The force continues to demonstrate its commitment to joint working and collaboration. It continues to be part of the seven-force strategic alliance and its collaboration with Kent Police is mature and effective. Significant savings are anticipated from collaboration on shared services with Kent Police. It continues to pursue closer collaboration with the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and works with local partners such as the local authority in community safety hubs. The chief officer team actively encourages leaders to seek out new opportunities for improvement from outside the force as well as examples of good practice from other forces.

How well is the force planning for the future?

To be efficient, a police force needs not only to understand the present, but also to be able to make reasonable predictions about the future in terms of how its demand will change, how its workforce will change and how its partners will be affected. It needs to have adequate, realistic and innovative plans to meet the operational and financial challenges of the future.

How well does the force predict likely future demand?

HMICFRS inspected how well Essex Police analyses trends in its current demand in order to predict likely future demand. We also assessed the extent to which it has taken account of changing public expectations and technology. In addition, we expect forces to be considering how they will work with other organisations and other forces in the future.

Predicting future demand

The force understands trends in demand for its services and is able to evaluate what demand is likely to be in the future. The latest version of its strategic assessment was published in December 2016; it provides a comprehensive analysis of reactive and proactive demand from which to base analysis of potential future demand and trends. Analysis includes use of a predictive calendar to identify anticipated peaks in demand and predict spikes in crime types at certain times of the year based on previous data. Detailed reports on demand, including trends, are produced to inform change management processes and the chief officer team. The analysis within these reports is based on local and national crime trends and includes not just crime, but also harm generated by crime and non-crime incidents. The force uses the Cambridge harm index¹⁸ and Office for National Statistics crime severity score to define the risk within the demand.

The force is able to evaluate what demand is likely to be in the future. On an annual basis, it conducts a comprehensive mapping exercise using all current demand data to help model likely future demand based on local and national crime trends. In its work in this area, the force has taken note of the College of Policing's work on future demand, with the probable reduction in traditional crime types and a continued increase in more complex crimes. It also takes account of the forecasted population change and growth within Essex. The change team produced a detailed report on likely future demand and how well the force was structured to deal with it. This was presented to the chief officer team and it included recommendations to improve the force's ability to respond to the findings in the report.

¹⁸ This index applies a multiplier to a crime type to give a numerical harm score which enables forces to see the relative harm each crime has on a victim.

Future considerations

The PCC holds regular public meetings and works with the public across the county to obtain information to underpin his police and crime plan. In the last year, he has held six workshops involving 220 representatives from partner agencies, conducted an online public survey that attracted 2,127 people, held meetings with volunteer groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and business forums including the Chamber of Commerce, attended strategic county-wide boards such as the Safer Essex board and the Community Safety Partnership Network, and he also held two public Essex Police Challenge meetings. As a result of these interactions, a number of modifications have been made to the plan, including the inclusion of three strategic objectives relating to prevention, communication and engagement, and volunteering. In addition to this, the force conducts a large number of activities involving the public where current and future concerns are discussed; some of these are quite traditional, formal community meetings, while others are more relaxed, such as the 'coffee with cops' initiative. Twitter is also used to inform and engage with the public and gather their opinions.

The force's understanding of what technology can offer policing and criminals is evident. Its digital strategy acknowledges that emerging technology and new types of behaviour have changed patterns of crime and provided opportunities for policing to use digital methods in order to be more effective. Using the assumption that almost every crime now has a digital footprint, the force is developing its response in collaboration with Kent Police. In January 2017, the forces reviewed their digital strategy and recognised that its scope was too narrow, that it focused solely on digital investigations and intelligence, and that it did not meet the ambition for wider digital change. As a result, a series of recommendations is being implemented to completely refresh and galvanise the forces' digital response over the next eight months.

Good progress has been made in many areas, including the implementation of mobile devices across the frontline and increased use of body-worn video cameras. More recently, the force has purchased three drone devices and plans to buy more. It is expected that the drones will reduce demand and provide a more rapid and effective response in resource-intensive activities, such as open area searches for missing persons. The workforce is very supportive of these operational advancements and has benefited from digital training. The creation of a joint cyber-crime unit with Kent Police, whose role is to investigate pure cyber-crime such as distributed denial of service attacks (DDoSs),¹⁹ is also a positive step.

¹⁹ A cyber-attack where the perpetrator seeks to make a machine or network resource unavailable to its intended users by temporarily or indefinitely disrupting services of a host connected to the internet. Denial of service is typically accomplished by flooding the targeted machine or resource with superfluous requests in an attempt to overload systems and prevent some or all legitimate requests from being fulfilled.

Essex Police has demonstrated a strong commitment to joint working over a number of years, and its plans are designed to meet local demand effectively and to be more efficient. These plans are more sophisticated than simply dividing up demand based on a set of criteria. Essex Police's extensive plans include further collaboration with Kent Police to establish a shared control room which is likely to include the fire and rescue services for both counties. This should bring better service provision as well as financial savings. The PCC becoming the commissioner for the ECFRS has opened up many opportunities to provide improved services and savings, including in buildings, IT and operational practices. This work is in the early stages of development, although some detailed work has already been completed. Essex Police remains an active member of the seven-force strategic collaboration programme that seeks to find efficiencies and improvements in operational, middle office and support services. More locally, the establishment of the community safety hubs across the county is an effective means by which the force and its partners are able to manage demand better and provide a more joined up and effective service to the public. Several other local and county-wide collaboration initiatives are continuing, including the mental health triage scheme, the safe house project for victims of human trafficking, and work to divert young people from gang activity. All initiatives seek to manage demand better jointly and to provide a more effective and responsive service to the public.

How well is the force planning for the future, in terms of workforce?

HMICFRS inspected how well Essex Police has plans in place to recruit, develop and nurture the leaders of tomorrow to ensure it has the right skills and talent in the right roles.

Succession planning

The Essex Police and Kent Police leadership strategy establishes the ambition of both forces to develop and maintain a leadership that is fit for purpose now and in the future. The force has an understanding of its current leadership's skills, including personality traits and individual preferences, and is developing a good understanding of the types of leaders that it requires for the future, beyond simple qualifications and basic skillsets. This information is used to plan leadership training and recruitment. The force has career pathways that allow specialisation in leadership to take place. Other specialist leadership programmes that the force uses include the Police Now national graduate programme and the fast track inspector scheme.

Strategies for talent management and succession planning are in place at the force and local command level, and these continue to evolve. A succession matrix has been produced to assist in the identification of talented individuals and to ensure that they are developed appropriately. This is designed to ensure that future workforce requirements for leaders, and training and promotions for officers and staff, are

planned for and met. These processes support the attraction, development and retention of skilled officers and staff. Guidance is available for supervisors to assist them in facilitating succession and career development with their staff. This approach assists in the identification of talented individuals across the workforce.

Opportunities are available for both officers and staff for lateral development. These include the 'develop you' scheme that provides lateral development opportunities for the workforce and leaders. Under this scheme, the workforce have secondment opportunities to HMICFRS and Kent Police, and also attachments to departments across the force, including the chief officer staff office; the scheme is recognised by the workforce as being beneficial to individual development. The range of officers and staff undertaking 'develop you' activities is indicative of the inclusiveness of the scheme, with almost 30 percent of applicants being police staff. The police staff leadership pathway (PSLP) is a collaborative scheme with Kent Police, and is designed to develop police staff. A small number of staff from across both forces are allocated to this scheme at any one time. Introduced in 2014, the PSLP is available to all police staff, with the aim of attracting those who have the potential to progress to senior leadership roles within the force.

Recruitment

Essex Police is taking a very positive approach to recruiting from outside the force. The force advertises many of its senior posts nationally, including for chief inspector and superintendent promotion. This has brought talented new people into the force, with fresh ideas and approaches. Good use is being made of the recruitment opportunities afforded by schemes such as Direct Entry. The force has recruited a Direct Entry superintendent who has been with the force for 18 months; this scheme opens up the police service to people who bring new perspectives and diverse backgrounds to support the continuous development of policing. Ten candidates are due to join the force in July 2017 under the Police Now scheme. These individuals have been allocated to a local policing district where they will assist in strategic projects. Support is provided for each, including senior officer mentors. The force supports the Police Now scheme nationally by allowing two members of staff to assist with the marketing of the scheme, and five staff to assist with the recruitment and assessment of potential candidates. Internally, the force makes use of the fast track constable to inspector scheme and has a number of development processes in place. The succession planning processes are designed to ensure talent is identified, developed and retained by the force. They link in with the force's 'develop you' programme and the local and force talent and development panels.

The PCC's police and crime plan sets out the objective to double the size of the county's Special Constabulary²⁰ by the end of March 2019, from 350 to 700 officers.

²⁰ The Special Constabulary is the United Kingdom's part-time police force. It is made up of volunteer members of the public who, when on duty, wear a uniform and have full police powers. There are nearly 20,000 Specials serving with police forces across the UK, working in all aspects of policing.

This means an additional investment of £3.2m over three years. This is an ambitious plan, as officers constantly leave the Special Constabulary (often to join the force as full-time regular officers) meaning that the force expects it will need to recruit around 600 new special constables to meet its target. However, early signs are encouraging, as the initial recruitment campaign between January and March 2017, which was promoted entirely on social media at a cost of just £1,000, saw 150 applicants a month. On 15 May 2017, the full recruitment campaign, called #MyOtherLife was launched. This includes a video designed and approved for distribution on satellite TV channels. Early targeted use of the video will allow it to be shown to 10,000 households in the Uttlesford district, the cost of which (£5,000) has been funded by the district council. The programme seeks to establish a Special Constabulary with officers who are valued, integrated and skilled, and who add tangible contributions to policing in the county.

How well does the force plan for likely future demand?

HMICFRS inspected how adequate, realistic and innovative Essex Police's plans for the future are, and to what extent it is planning to make savings in the future, including saving to invest in new systems and approaches.

Plans

In 2016, we assessed that Essex Police's plans were realistic but challenging. This year's assessment remains the same. Plans remain prudent and based on realistic assumptions about future income, costs and benefits, making good use of information on future demand and workforce capabilities. The plans, including the buildings and IT plans, have been subject to external review and scrutiny. The medium-term financial plan is discussed every month between the OPCC and the force. Plans have changed this year as a consequence of decisions made by the PCC towards the move away from any long-term borrowing and the intended re-investment of £20m–£25m from the sale of buildings into IT, including storage for body-worn camera video footage, and IT upgrades for specialist teams, including the forensic units. The consequence of the PCC taking over governance of the ECFRS and the possible impact on the financial plans of the force and ECFRS going into 2018/19 are recognised.

Essex Police remains one of the lowest-funded forces in England and Wales, and is in the bottom ten forces nationally for levels of precept for council tax; under government rules, the PCC could increase the precept for policing by up to 3.36 percent without the need for a local referendum. The PCC agreed a 3.25 percent increase in precept (£4.95 for a Band D property) for the current financial year, but has made it clear to the force that further precept increases will need to be supported by clear principles and sound planning assumptions. As such, the force while developing the appropriate business case, has built its planning on a 0 percent precept increase each year to 2021/22. If there are no further precept rises, the force

will need to save a further £13.5m between 2018/19 and 2021/22. The force will face major difficulties in implementing its plans, with the potential for a substantial impact on its work if there are no annual precept increases or additional funding from any future funding arrangements with the Home Office.

The force's transformation plan explains how future force activity will depend on several factors, including leadership, technology, workforce skills, collaboration, partnership, and an effective operating model. The changes described in the plan represent significant change for the force in how it works, in that there will be more digital systems and processes. For example, the force is investing £13m over nine years to complete the mobile device programme and the emergency services mobile communications programme²¹, in order to create efficiency savings through technology. There will be changes in how it works with others with closer partnership working and enhanced collaboration, and there will also be significant change in where it works as a consequence of the reduction of building stock from 80 to 30 buildings and the opportunities offered by closer working with the ECFRS. In this way, the plans are innovative and will change the way the force operates.

The buildings plan was developed in 2014; it recognised that the Essex Police buildings stock was over-sized and of poor quality, fragmented, inflexible and under-used, and that it had significant future financial liabilities. A new buildings plan was therefore agreed to consolidate and rationalise the building stock to meet future operational needs, including considering collaboration and opportunities for working with partners at the same premises. The plan set out the objective of reducing the building stock from the 80 buildings held at the time to 30. The original plans had intended the buildings programme to be cost-neutral (realising and re-investing capital in the region of £70m), but the PCC has directed that savings of approximately £20m are to be generated through the buildings plan programme to invest elsewhere. The force is fully aware of the likely value of some of its buildings, particularly those in the south of the county and the headquarters site, which is valued at around £35m. Clearly, the sale of buildings is subject to market forces and, as such, a number of affordability options are currently being considered by the force and it has brought in outside expertise to lead strategic change. The buildings plan is a crucial element of the overall transformational plan and underpins much of the force's future ambition. As a consequence, HMICFRS will continue to pay detailed attention to the buildings plan.

Savings

Between 2010 and 31 March 2017, Essex Police has delivered efficiency savings of over £74m. The medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) identifies a savings requirement for 2017/18 of £3.5m; current identified savings for the year are £3.3m,

²¹ This programme will provide the next generation communication system for the three emergency services (police, fire and rescue, and ambulance) and other public safety users.

which have come from non-pay initiatives such as reviews of the vehicle fleet, IT, police officer pension and injury provision. The MTFS further identifies the savings requirement and predicted shortfalls in required funding through to 2021/22. It records that the force needs to find the following amounts each year: 2018/19 £8.1m, 2019/20 £4.6m, 2020/21 £4.8m, and 2021/22 £4.5m. The transformational plan states that plans for 2018/19 to 2019/20 will be developed during the current financial year. These plans are, in effect, a review of Essex and Kent collaborative efficiency savings, including of the Essex and Kent control rooms, firearms, criminal justice and witness care, and the support services directorate. In addition, the MTFS includes a savings requirement from regional collaboration with the seven forces of £1m in each financial year. If these plans – as yet to be fully developed – fail to provide the necessary savings, the force will face significant difficulty in the years beyond 2018/19, and greater difficulty if there are no annual precept increases. Given the level of risk for the force, HMICFRS will continue to pay detailed attention to the development and implementation of plans.

As of 31 March 2017 the PCC has total reserves of £13.7m, which is 7.0 percent of net revenue expenditure. General unallocated reserves are £9.5m of the total reserves, or 4.9 percent of net revenue expenditure, which is within recognised guidelines. Reserves at this level should ensure that working capital requirements are met in future years; a minimal contingency is available for unforeseen events, which gives the force limited flexibility.

Summary of findings



Good

Essex Police understands trends in demand for its services and is able to evaluate what demand is likely to be in the future. Analysis includes use of a predictive calendar to identify anticipated peaks in demand and predict spikes in crime types at certain times of the year. The force has a good understanding of how new technology is changing patterns of crime and is developing its digital response in collaboration with Kent Police, including using mobile devices, body-worn video cameras and drone devices.

The force has demonstrated a strong commitment to joint working over a number of years, in particular with Kent Police, and it remains an active member of the seven-force strategic collaboration programme. The force has an understanding of its current leadership's skills, including personality traits, and is developing a good understanding of the types of leaders that it requires for the future. It has strategies for talent management and succession planning and makes good use of national recruitment and development schemes.

The force's transformation plans are innovative and will change the way the force operates. Its plans for the future are based on realistic assumptions about future income, costs and benefits, making good use of information on future demand and workforce capabilities, but may be difficult to achieve. The buildings plan is a crucial element of the overall transformational plan and underpins much of the force's future ambition. The force is still developing its plans, so precise information on where the required savings will be made beyond 2017/18 is not available.

Next steps

HMICFRS will assess progress on any recommendations and areas for improvement identified within our reports in several ways. We either revisit those forces where we have identified a serious cause of concern, go back to assess them as part of our annual PEEL inspection programme or receive updates on their progress through regular conversations with forces.

HMICFRS highlights recurring themes emerging from our PEEL inspections of police forces within our national thematic reports on police effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and leadership (see: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/national-peel-reports/). These reports identify those problems that are reflected across England and Wales. They may contain additional recommendations directed at national policing organisations, including the Home Office, where we believe improvements need to be made nationally.

Annex A – About the data

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

Methodology

Please note the following for the methodology applied to the data.

Comparisons with England and Wales average figures

For some data sets, the report states whether the force's value is 'lower', 'higher' or 'broadly in line with' the England and Wales average. This is calculated by using the difference from the mean average, as a proportion, for all forces. After standardising this distribution, forces that are more than 0.675 standard deviations from the mean average are determined to be above or below the average, with all other forces being broadly in line.

In practice this means that approximately a quarter of forces are lower, a quarter are higher, and the remaining half are in line with the England and Wales average for each measure. For this reason, the distance from the average required to make a force's value above or below the average is different for each measure so may not appear to be consistent.

The England and Wales averages will differ slightly from the Value for Money Profiles because we have included City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service within the average in this publication.

Statistical significance

When commenting on statistical differences, a significance level of 5 percent is used.

For some forces, numbers described in the text may be identical to the England and Wales average due to decimal place rounding, but the bars in the chart will appear different as they use the full unrounded value.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator, unless otherwise noted, we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates.

Force in numbers

Forecast change in gross revenue expenditure

These data show estimated gross revenue expenditure (GRE) for the force in 2017/18 and 2020/21. This was gathered from forces by HMIC staff prior to fieldwork (April 2017). Some of the data provided will have been subject to revisions after this time but figures should represent the picture as at the time of inspection. Future forecasts of expenditure are estimates for which forces use different methodologies. As these are estimates care should be taken in interpreting changes.

Workforce figures (FTE) for 2016/17 and 2020/21

These data were obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502. The data are available from the Home Office's published police workforce England and Wales statistics (available from www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales), or the Home Office police workforce open data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables). Figures may have been updated since the publication. Workforce includes section 38-designated investigation, detention or escort officers, but does not include section 39-designated detention or escort staff.²² The data are the actual full-time equivalent figures (or FTE), and figures for 2016/17 are the figures as at 31 March 2017.

For FTE, these data include officers on career breaks and other types of long-term absence, and excludes those seconded to other forces. Projections for 2020/21 are budget-based and therefore likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy, but may not include a projection for absences. In some instances, therefore, an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate the force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Calls for assistance

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441.

Recorded crime

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crimeopen-data-tables).

²² See sections 38 and 39 of the Police Reform Act 2002. Available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/30/section/38

Figures throughout the report

Figure 1: Rate of 999 calls recorded per 1,000 people in the local population in the force area compared with England and Wales as a whole, from 2010/11 to 2016/17

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441. City of London Police does not submit 999 calls data to the Home Office as these are included in figures provided by the Metropolitan Police Service.

Figure 2: Police-recorded crimes per 1,000 population compared with England and Wales from 2010/11 to 2016/17

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables). Total police-recorded crime includes all crime (excluding fraud offences) recorded by police forces in England and Wales. Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime include British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMICFRS inspection. The England and Wales rate given in this figure is a simple average of all forces' rates to reduce the effect of large forces on the average.

Figure 3: Planned full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce as on 31 March from 2010 to 2021

Data from 2010 to 2017 are obtained from the Home Office annual data return (as set out in the Force in numbers section) which is an 'actual' FTE figure. The percentages used in figure 3 are derived from the total FTEs within forces and therefore may differ slightly from the exact figures quoted within the report. Data from 2018 onwards are budget-based projections, therefore depending on a force's planning strategy may not include a projection for absences.

Due to the complex and continually evolving picture of workforce collaboration between forces, not all changes in workforce figures reflect the workforce that is available to forces. Involvement in strategic alliances and/or regional organised crime units would be an example of where changes over time are likely to be skewed. Therefore, sharp increases or decreases need to be considered with caution as they may simply represent accounting changes related to how staff are allocated to forces and not real changes in staffing levels.

At the time of the inspection, the future financial climate was uncertain. Several forces did not have confirmed plans for workforce projections. It is important to note that figures are in many instances unconfirmed estimates provided to assist HMICFRS in our inspection programme and should not be seen as a concrete plan for the future workforce available for policing.

Figure 4: Estimated percentage of net revenue expenditure allocated across policing functions from 2011/12 to 2016/17

These data were obtained from data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for use in the HMICFRS Value for Money profiles (available from www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/our-work/value-for-money-inspections/value-for-money-profiles/#2016). The data define policing functions using the Police Objective Analysis categories.

We have made some adjustments to the original POA data in order to provide valid historical comparisons. For instance, in 2011/12 the POA category "Local policing" included the sub-category "local investigation and prisoner processing", however, from 2012/13 onwards this moved to the "Investigations" category. We have therefore removed "local investigation and prisoner processing" from the 2011/12 figure to provide a historical comparison and not create misleading percentage changes.

For the same reason above, for the 2011/12 "Investigations" figure we have included "local investigations and prisoner processing" for historical comparison.

Furthermore, in 2016/17 "Public Protection" became its own level two category, whereas in previous years it had been included as a sub-category under "Investigations". Therefore for historical comparisons, we have included public protection in "Investigations" for 2016/17.