

The Reform Programme



Parish Councillors' Briefing March 2011

The Reform Programme led by ACC Derek Benson has been set up to look at different areas across the force to find the best way to successfully meet the budget cuts, manage resources and improve productivity. We will ensure that we continue to deliver a high standard of service to the public. As part of the Reform Programme, Essex Police is currently designing a new 'blueprint' for the force.

This will involve a wide variety of changes which will include reforming areas of our business such as our management structures, where our police officers and staff will be located across the county and our shift patterns. Proposals to support force wide changes will be prepared by April 2011.

During May and June 2011, Essex Police and Essex Police Authority will carry out a period of engagement and consultation with the public, listening to their views on the proposals and seeking to understand the impact that any changes will have.

It is inevitable that due to the size of the cuts Essex Police will be reducing the number of Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) and support staff over the next few years in order to meet the budget deficit.

Essex Police will ensure regular communication to you, in light of any changes made.

Reform Strand Updates

Strand 1

Operational Policing *Led by Chief Superintendent Tim Newcomb*

In January 2011 Members of Essex Police Authority were updated on two operational policing models that have been developed for the future of Essex Police. The models have been refined during consultation sessions and workshops with members of Essex Police and Essex Police Authority including senior managers, operational officers and staff of various ranks and grades, Unison, the Superintendents Association and the Police Federation.

Essex Police have now entered the second design phase of the programme where more detailed plans will be developed for each area of business in the operational policing models. This detailed work is being led by senior managers working on different elements of the business alongside the Reform team. It involves creating a 'blueprint' for areas ranging from a dedicated custody unit through to a borderless response command. This phase of work is due to be completed by the end of March 2011 when further decisions on the proposals will be made by Chief Officers.

During this phase the Reform team will be running 'table-top' exercises to assess how each area of the business will perform against the challenges of policing Essex. This will ensure that we are developing a model fit to cope with both the routine and the extraordinary.

Strand 2

Support Services *Led by Chief Superintendent Carl O'Malley*

In order to meet the funding gap left by the Spending Review, the number of support staff is being reduced through voluntary redundancy and compulsory redundancy. There are a total of 14 such plans at various stages of consultation with Unison, having been approved by Chief Officers. These plans include Media, Territorial Policing, Operational Policing Command, Strategic Change Management Department, Finance, Essex Police College, Human Resources, Communications Division, Criminal Justice Unit, Professional Standards Department, a plan for a centralised Resource Management Unit and for a removal of the current Service Desk management structure.

The total recurring budget saving on staff costs, if all of these plans are put in place is £7.03m. A proportion of this would be achieved in the financial year 2011/12.

In relation to our plans for 2012/13, there will be a requirement to further review the Headquarters Departments, with central guidance as to how this might be achieved in terms of the process and principles to be applied. The plans also include consideration of an options paper for Chief Officers on creating a transactional support centre to deal with elements of finance, human resources and administration, together with a further review of Service Desks.

Strand 3

Estate Review *Led by Jules Donald*

The Reform team in conjunction with the Property Services Department are assessing the usage, location and potential of all our current buildings, with reference to the new operational policing blueprint. It is anticipated that a number of our smaller more rural buildings and police stations will be surplus to our requirements for the future. This will benefit Essex Police in terms of one-off capital receipts for the properties (enabling us to continue investment in supporting infrastructure for police officers such as mobile data and Automatic Vehicle Location System). This review will be complete by the end of March 2011. As part of our estates review of our buildings we are considering the following;

1) Those buildings we will definitely retain for the future, with a commitment to improving the standard and efficiency of some of these buildings, using capital monies gained from the sale of other buildings.

2) Those buildings that are smaller and less utilised that can be declared surplus to our requirements and sold.

These are opportunities for potential partnership sharing. We are currently working with Essex County Council and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service on a programme to identify and implement locations where we can share buildings. Tiptree Police Station is the first example of this programme, where the police officers are working out of the fire station and undertaking weekly front counter services from the library. The police stations, in both Wivenhoe and West Mersea, will also be located with partner agencies in the future.

In summary, the key objectives for Strand 3 of the Reform Programme are to reduce the number of buildings used by Essex Police, utilise remaining properties more effectively, and participate in public sector property sharing initiatives where it makes sense to do so.

Strand 4

Transport and Travel *Led by Jules Donald*

The Reform team are working closely with the Transport Services Department to identify and implement initiatives to reduce both the overall cost of the force fleet and the amount that the force spends on travel and transport. The Head of Transport is currently leading on a national procurement framework with other neighbouring forces including Kent to procure and maintain new vehicles at reduced rates through procurement economies and a more standardised approach to the specification of police vehicles. Other initiatives include more efficient usage of fleet at divisional level, including ensuring that vehicle mileage is regularly monitored.

Strand 5

Availability & Demand Management *Led by Chief Superintendent Colin Steele*

Options for effective shift patterns within the new policing model are under development. Consultation with the Federation and the Supt's Association is on-going and has proved very useful in shaping thinking around the advantages and disadvantages of the various shift patterns that are available. Further analytical work is taking place to ensure that the best shift pattern possible is identified for Essex. This will consider officer welfare and work/life balance, provide the best match of resources to demand and ensure that Essex Police, under the new blueprint structure will be able to provide the best service to the public.

Key Decisions

Essex Police Authority and Chief Officers recently discussed a number of topics surrounding the future of Essex Police. The key outcomes of the meeting are detailed below.

Regulation A19

Regulation A19 is the regulation that allows for the compulsory retirement of police officers on reaching 30 years' service in the interests of efficiency. The potential use of such a regulation has been the subject of media coverage across the UK, as police forces decide whether or not to apply this regulation in their force. In Essex, following the recommendations from the Chief Constable the authority has decided that:

1. The force does not apply Regulation A19 at this present time but notes that it may be necessary at any time point in the future.
2. The Chief Constable will keep under review whether there is a need to use Regulation A19 and refer back to the police authority if or when the Chief Constable considers it necessary,
3. The police authority reserved the right to ask the Chief Constable to review the need to apply Regulation A19 at any time.

The future of Police Community Support Officer's (PCSO's)

PCSO's are funded from a variety of sources which include government grants, county and local councils and the private sector. Essex Police is in the process of speaking to its PCSO funding partners to determine whether their funding for such posts will continue in light of the current economic climate.

Once Essex Police has a clearer idea of the funding streams that will continue it will be better placed to determine the impact for our PCSO staff. At this stage Essex Police cannot confirm which neighbourhood policing areas may be affected.

At the police authority meeting it was confirmed that where funding from external partners is withdrawn, the post will be removed subject to consultation, as the force does not have any additional funding to replace this.

Essex Police currently has 461 full time equivalent PCSO posts, 362 are 75% part funded by the central government grant, 72 are 50% funded by partners and 27 are full funded by Essex Police Authority.

The civilianisation of police officer posts

Following a scoping exercise carried out by the Reform team some police officer roles were identified as potentially capable of being civilianised. It was proposed that the detailed work relating to this would be led by the Reform Programme working with police authority lead members and staff associations.
