Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

Essex Police

Baseline Assessment
October 2006

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Introduction to Baseline Assessment

Since March 2004, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has conducted a periodic, strategic-level performance review of each Home Office police force in England and Wales. For a range of policing activities, forces are assessed as delivering performance that is Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor. The process is known as baseline assessment (BA) and this report covers the assessment for the financial year 2005/06; performance outside this period is not taken into account in determining grades. The assessments focus on the high-level processes of police forces and their results. The assessments are undertaken by regional HM Inspectors, supported by experienced police officers and police staff on secondment.

BA is designed primarily as a self-assessment, with the degree of validation/reality-checking undertaken by HMIC dependent on a force's overall performance and the rigour of its internal assessment processes. It is important to recognise that BA is not a traditional inspection; rather, it helps HMIC focus its inspection effort where it is most needed. A formal statutory inspection may still be necessary where there is evidence of systemic underperformance and poor leadership.

In addition to the qualitative assessments contained in this report, force performance is also measured by a series of key quantitative indicators. The most important indicators are statutory performance indicators (SPIs), which are determined each year by the Home Secretary and which Police Authorities/forces must report to the Home Office. Examples of SPIs include crime incidence and detection rates, as well as relevant management information such as sickness absence and ethnic recruitment rates. Results for these SPIs are also graded using the Excellent, Good, Fair and Poor categories. These SPI grades are added to HMIC BA grades to provide a fuller picture of police performance; the joint results are published annually in October and can be found on the internet at police.homeoffice.gov.uk/performance

Policing has undergone significant changes in recent years as the country adapts to new forms of terrorism and criminality. As policing is dynamic, so also must be the form of assessment. Dominating much of HMIC's recent thinking is the need for the service to modernise its workforce while providing better 'protective services', as identified in the *Closing the Gap* report published in 2005. On-site activity for the 2005/06 baseline concentrated on these areas, but could not – given ministerial priorities – ignore volume crime and the roll-out of neighbourhood policing. As forces and Police Authorities consider options for change to meet new challenges with constrained resources, a force-by-force balance sheet of strengths and areas for improvement is critical contextual information.

Priority Frameworks

Seven BA areas were designated as priority frameworks for on-site validation, to reflect the need to improve protective services and deliver key policing objectives. These were:

- managing critical incidents and major crime;
- tackling serious and organised criminality;
- providing specialist operational support;

- strategic roads policing;
- protecting vulnerable people;
- neighbourhood policing; and
- leadership and direction.

These areas were the key focus of on-site validation by HMIC staff; the first five can be loosely classified as protective services. Other frameworks were assessed primarily by desk-top reviews of the evidence submitted by forces, using the framework key issues and specific grading criteria (SGC) as an indicative guide.

Force Amalgamations

Following the challenges highlighted with regard to protective services capability and capacity in the summer of 2005, all forces undertook significant additional work on options to 'close the gap'. The Home Secretary directed that business cases should be prepared and submitted by December 2005. The BA report thus reflects, in many of the frameworks, activity and effort to produce and assess options for change. It is vital to acknowledge the energy and commitment given to the prospect of a major restructuring of the service, which inevitably gave rise to some turbulence during this period.

At the end of July 2006, the Home Secretary indicated that the restructuring of forces would not be pursued at this time. The agenda to improve protective services is to be advanced by forces and Police Authorities through alternative means such as collaboration. Progress to 'narrow the gap' between existing capability and that which is needed will be assessed by HMIC in future inspection activity.

The Grading Process

Forces have been graded for both service delivery and direction of travel. It is important to remember that, for most activities, delivery is measured through the use of most similar force (MSF) groups, whereby forces are compared with peers facing similar policing challenges. For direction of travel, the grade is awarded largely in respect of the force's own previous performance. A vital component of the grading process is SGC, which outlines, for each activity, what represents Excellent, Good, Fair and Poor levels of performance. The criteria were developed in conjunction with expert practitioners and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) business/portfolio leads, who were also involved in the national moderation process to help ensure that these criteria were applied fairly and consistently.

Service delivery grade

This grade is a reflection of the performance delivery by the force over the assessment period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006. One of four grades can be awarded, according to performance assessed against the SGC (see full list of SGCs at http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/methodologies/baseline-introduction/ba-methodology-06/?version=1.

Excellent

This grade describes the highest level of performance in service delivery – eg top quartile, where relevant – and achieving full compliance with codes of practice or national guidance. It is expected that few forces will achieve this very high standard for a given activity. To achieve Excellent, forces are expected to have attained **all** the criteria set out in Fair and the vast majority of those set out in Good. In addition, two other factors will attract an Excellent grade:

➢ The force should be recognised, or be able to act, as a 'beacon' to others, and be accepted within the service as a source of leading-edge practice. Examples where other forces have successfully imported practices would be good evidence of this.
➢ HMIC is committed to supporting innovative forces and we would expect Excellent forces to have introduced and evaluated new ways of improving performance.

Good

Good is defined in the Collins dictionary as 'of a high quality or level' and denotes performance above the norm – in many cases, performance that is above the MSF average. To reach this standard, forces have to meet in full the criteria set out in Fair and most of the criteria set out in Good.

Fair

Fair is the delivery of an acceptable level of service. To achieve a Fair grading, forces must achieve all of the significant criteria set out in the Fair SGC. HMIC would expect that, across most activities, the largest number of grades would be awarded at this level.

Poor

Poor represents an unacceptable level of service. To attract this very critical grade, a force must have fallen well short of a significant number of criteria set out in the SGC for Fair. In some cases, failure to achieve a single critical criterion may alone warrant a Poor grade. Such dominant criteria will always be flagged in the SGC.

Direction of Travel Grade

This grade is a reflection of the force's change in performance between the assessment period and the previous year. For BA 2006, this is the change between the financial years 2004/05 and 2005/06. The potential grades for direction of travel are as follows.

Improved

This reflects a **significant** improvement in the performance of the force.

Stable

This denotes no significant change in performance.

Declined

This is where there has been a significant decline in the performance of the force.

Good Practice

In addition to assessing force performance, one of HMIC's key roles is to identify and share good practice within the police service. Much good practice is identified as HMIC conducts its assessments; in addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit examples of its good practice. HMIC has selected three of these examples to publish in this report. The key criteria for each example is that the work has been evaluated by the force and is easily transferable to other forces. (Each force has provided a contact name and telephone number, should further information be required.) HMIC has not conducted any independent evaluation of the examples of good practice provided.

Future HMIC Inspection Activity

Although HMIC must continue to maintain a watching brief on all performance areas, it will become more risk-driven in its future inspection activity. Protective services will be the core of inspection programmes, tailored to capacity, capability and the likelihood of exposure to threats from organised criminality, terrorism and so on. Until its full implementation in April 2008, neighbourhood policing will also demand attention. Conversely, those areas where strong performance is signalled by SPI results, such as volume crime reduction and investigation, will receive relatively little scrutiny.

The Government has announced that, in real terms, there will be little or no growth in Police Authority/force budgets over the next three years. Forces will therefore have to maintain, and in some areas improve, performance without additional resources. This in itself creates a risk to police delivery and HMIC has therefore included a strategic financial assessment for all forces in its future inspection programme.

Baseline Assessment 2006 Frameworks			
1 Citizen Focus (PPAF Domain A)			
1A Fairness and Equality in Service Delivery • Equality of service delivery • Community cohesion • Engaging with minority groups • Hate-crime reduction and investigation	**1B Neighbourhood Policing and Problem Solving** • Effective mechanisms for obtaining community views • Responding to local priorities • Effective interventions and problem solving with partners and communities • Operational activity to reassure communities • Use of media to market success • Uniformed patrol and visibility • Extended police family • Performance in reducing fear of crime	**1C Customer Service and Accessibility** • Quality of service to victims and witnesses • Customer care • Responding to customer needs • Accessibility of policing services	**1D Professional Standards** • Investigation of public complaints • Improving professional standards • Combating corruption and promoting ethical behaviour • Reducing complaints and learning lessons
2 Reducing Crime (PPAF Domain 1)			
2A Volume Crime Reduction • Crime strategy • Performance in reducing volume crime • Levels of crime compared with peers • Problem solving • National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) compliance			

3	**Investigating Crime (PPAF Domain 2)**	
3A Managing Critical Incidents and Major Crime • Detection rates for murder, rape and other serious crime • Integration with overall crime strategy • Compliance with Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) murder manual • Early identification of critical incidents that may escalate into major inquiries	**3B Tackling Serious and Organised Criminality** • Crime that crosses basic command unit (BCU) and/or force boundaries • Support for regional intelligence and operations • Asset recovery (Proceeds of Crime Act – POCA) • Effective targeted operations • Quality packages with the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA)	**3C Volume Crime Investigation** • Crime strategy • Crime recording • Investigative skills, eg interviewing • Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) • Detection performance
3D Improving Forensic Performance • Specialist scientific support • Use of National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS), DNA, etc • Integrated management of processes • Performance in forensic identification and detection	**3E Criminal Justice Processes** • Quality and timeliness of case files • Custody management/ prisoner handing • Youth justice • Police National Computer (PNC) compliance	
4	**Promoting Safety (PPAF Domain 3)**	
4A Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) • Non-crime activities of crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) and other partnerships • Use of ASB legislation, tools, etc	**4B Protecting Vulnerable People** • Child abuse • Domestic violence • Multi-agency police protection arrangements (MAPPA)/sex offender management • Missing persons	
5	**Providing Assistance (PPAF Domain 4)**	
5A Contact Management • All aspects of call handling and call management • Initial incident response • Early identification of critical incidents • Performance in answering and responding to public calls	**5B Providing Specialist Operational Support** • Management of central operational support • Police use of firearms • Capability for policing major events/incidents	**5C Strategic Roads Policing** • Effectiveness of arrangements for roads policing • Integration/support for other operational activity • Road safety partnerships

6	Resource Use (PPAF Domain B)	
6A Human Resource (HR) Management • HR strategy and costed plan • Key HR issues not covered in 6B or 6C • Health and safety • Performance in key HR indicators	**6B Training, Development and Organisational Learning** • Costed training strategy and delivery plan • Key training and development issues	**6C Race and Diversity** • Action to promote fairness in relation to race, gender, faith, age, sexual orientation and disability • Performance in meeting key targets
6D Managing Financial and Physical Resources • Resource availability • Effective use of resources to support front-line activity • Devolved budgets • Finance, estates, procurement and fleet management functions • Demand management	**6E Information Management** • Information systems/ information technology (IS/IT) strategy and its implementation • Programme and project management • Customer service • Adequacy of key systems • Business continuity/disaster recovery	**6F National Intelligence Model (NIM)** • Extent to which structures, processes and products meet NIM standards • Integration of NIM with force planning and performance management • Use of community intelligence • Application of NIM to non-crime areas
7	Leadership and Direction	
7A Leadership • Extent to which the chief officer team is visible and dynamic, sets and upholds a vision, values and standards, promotes a learning culture, and sustains a well-motivated workforce • Effectiveness of succession planning • Promotion of corporacy	**7B Performance Management and Continuous Improvement** • Effective performance management structures and processes at all levels • Quality and timeliness of performance/management information • Internal inspection/audit/ quality assurance (QA) systems • Effectiveness of joint force/PA best value reviews (BVRs)	

Force Overview and Context

Geographical Description of Force Area

Essex Police covers 1,404 square miles and has a number of large towns spread throughout of between 100,000 and 150,000 in population (Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow and Southend). It also includes a number of medium-sized towns (Maldon and Braintree) and smaller market towns (Hadleigh and Saffron Walden) with significant agricultural links. Population densities vary significantly; the larger urban communities tend to be found in the south along the Thames corridor and more rural communities to the north.

The county's towns are linked by a number of key roads including the M25, M11, A12 and A13. Essex polices one of the largest expanses of coastline in the UK. This, together with Stansted Airport (the third busiest London airport) and the ports of Tilbury and Harwich, links the UK to other external societies and sees many of the UK's visitors entering the country through Essex.

Demographic Description of Force Area

The county has a population of just over 1.6 million people, an increase of 5% since 1991, which is forecast to rise by 24% to over 2 million by 2021. Essex had 72,000 residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in 2001. There were 38,000 residents from ethnic groups other than white and 34,000 from white minority groups. People from all BME groups made up 3.5% of Essex residents in 2001, the largest group of which come from India, with a smaller number from Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani and Chinese heritage. Across England 13.0% of people belong to BME groups. People from ethnic groups other than white made up 2.9% of Essex residents. Three times as many people across England were from these groups (9.1%). White minority groups made up 2.6% of the Essex population compared with 3.9% across England.

The average earnings for a full-time employee are £31,755; this is above the UK average of £28,210. The average pay for males within the county is a third higher than that of an average female equivalent. A high percentage of residents work as management or senior officials, closely followed by administrative and clerical occupations.

Over 15% of residents hold qualifications to the level of degree or equivalent; almost 30% of residents have no formal qualifications at all.

Local authorities in Essex set some of the lowest council taxes in the country. Like other police forces, Essex is dependent on central government for 75% of its funding; the remaining 25% is met by council tax funding. This means that a gearing effect arises, whereby council tax increases are high in percentage terms if the annual increase in government financial support is significantly less than the increase in the annual budget requirement. This forms the backdrop to what Essex perceives as an uncertain grant-funding future. To address these uncertainties around funding and expenditure, the force has devised a three-year medium-term approach to financial and service planning to ensure delivery of operational goals.

Structural Description of Force Including Staff Changes at Chief Officer Level

The force headquarters (HQ) is situated in the town of Chelmsford, centrally positioned within the county and located within the central basic command unit (BCU). Essex Police consists of 3,296 police officers and 2,282 police staff. Essex has a county council, two unitary authorities and 12 borough or district councils served by six BCUs. The BCUs are coterminous with a number of local government structures and crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs):

- Eastern – has two district authorities, Colchester Borough and Tendring;

- South Eastern – has one unitary and two district authorities, Southend Borough, Castle Point and Rochford;

- Central – has four district authorities, Chelmsford Borough, Braintree, Maldon and Uttlesford;

- South Western – has one unitary and one district authority, Thurrock and Basildon;

- Western – has three district authorities, Brentwood Borough, Epping Forest and Harlow; and

- Stansted Airport, which forms the sixth BCU.

Mr Roger Baker succeeded Mr David Stevens as Chief Constable of Essex Police on 1 July 2005. Mr Baker leads a chief officer team based at HQ comprising the deputy chief constable (DCC), the assistant chief constable (territorial policing) (ACC (TP)), the ACC (protective services (PS)), the ACC (operational support (OS)) and the director of finance and administration (DFA). While some specialist resources are co-ordinated centrally, the focus is on front-line area-based staff delivering local solutions. This focus has been supported by moving or re-designating over 200 extra police officers to the front line between July 2005 and March 2006.

Since July 2005, changes have been made to the chief officers' portfolios. The ACC (previously crime) is now the ACC (PS) (crime division and mobile support unit); the ACC (previously operations) is now the ACC (OS) (human resources (HR), criminal justice department (CJD) and force information room (FIR)), and the ACC (previously personnel) is now the ACC (TP) (territorial divisions and TP department). There are no changes to the portfolios of the DCC or the DFA.

Strategic Priorities

Essex Police Authority PA and Essex Police strategy outlines the strategic objectives for the policing of Essex over the next three years and provides a framework for the local policing plan. It represents the shared aim of Essex PA and Essex Police to deliver a first-class policing service that is focused on the needs of the citizen.

Essex Police is committed to delivering a style of policing that is visible and accessible, and that improves face-to-face contact with the public.

The strategy reflects local consultation and contains the following priorities:

- to increase police visibility and reassurance;

- to improve both the timeliness and the quality of response to calls for assistance; and

- to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and disorder.

National priorities for the police outlined in the national policing plan 2006–09 are also supported, they are:

- to reduce overall crime by 15% by 2007/08, and more in high crime areas;

- to bring more offences to justice in line with the Government's public service agreement (PSA);

- to provide every area in England and Wales with dedicated, visible, and accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs) and reduce public perception of ASB;

- to tackle serious and organised crime, including improved intelligence and information sharing between partners; and

- to protect the country from both terrorism and domestic extremism.

Essex Police aims to achieve these priorities through the delivery of high-quality services, maintaining the highest professional standards and enhancing public reassurance and levels of confidence in policing. Together with partners they aim to:

- focus on the needs of the citizen and put the customer first;

- reduce crime and disorder;

- investigate and detect crime;

- promote public safety;

- provide assistance to those in need; and

- use resources in the most efficient and effective way.

Impact of Workforce Modernisation and Strategic Force Development

The SHARP (strategic human resources processes) group has been established to manage workforce planning and profiling. The group is chaired by either the ACC (OS) or the DFA and balances the resources and skills within Essex Police to deliver maximum performance through human resourcing. This group will be essential to ensure the delivery of resources to neighbourhood policing.

The recent restructuring of BCUs, and front-line action group (FLAG) exercises have resulted in the movement or re-designation of more than 200 police officers to the front line. FLAG is a working group that has examined in detail all police officer posts within the force and identified those officers who could be returned to front-line policing.

The Chief Constable pledged to have 200 additional officers on the front line by March 2006 and Essex Police has already achieved this promise. The first phase of 25 officers moved on 1 August 2005 and by the end of October the same year this had increased to 90. The force restructuring review released a further 100 officers to the front line. Police community support officers (PCSOs) and special constables are key players in this overall strategy to

ensure that Essex Police is match-fit for the future challenges of the police service, and there are longer term plans to significantly increase their number.

The force has an ambitious strategic development plan that has seen the delivery of the following:

- Force restructuring in six months that delivered 100 extra police officer posts which has led to £3.8-million efficiencies that have been put into the front line.

- IT developments that are leading in the NSPIS applications.

- The lead on the police response to the eastern region spatial strategy, which is seeking to bring policing into the funding structure for major Government-led development.

- The 'freeze' put on the contact management programme (CMP) has resulted in key aspects of the strategy being driven in other ways, eg greater focus on performance of call handling, the introduction of incident management units on divisions and plans for an interim crime and intelligence bureau.

Major Achievements

Within three days at the start of July 2005, more than 500 suspects were arrested above and beyond the routine daily business. This was against a backdrop of resources being redeployed as part of a national commitment to policing the G8 summit. Since July 2005, more officers and police staff have been returned back to the front line.

The force restructure took six months to complete, reducing the number of BCUs from nine to five, excluding Stansted. (Stansted Airport remains unaffected.) The restructuring programme has provided efficiency savings of £3.8 million.

Operation 'days of action' at the start of July 2005 set out the future policing style for Essex Police and in two months there were almost 4,000 'action' arrests above 'business as usual' prisoners, taking the total to over 10,000. Over 3,000 individuals have been charged to appear before the courts and there are investigations into more than 3,000 other individuals who are currently on police bail. Over 500 warrants have been executed for matters other than non-payment of fines, and use has been made of cautions, reprimands, warnings and fixed penalty notices (FPNs). Sanction detection rates have increased incrementally.

Prior to July 2005 the force averaged 107 arrests per day; the daily average is now 169, a 58% increase.

Detections that have led to a conviction or other sanction/remedy have also increased. In July, August and September 2004 there were 7,279 sanction detections. In July, August and September 2005 there were 9,795 sanction detections, a 34.6% increase.

Essex Police aims to have neighbourhood policing fully implemented by July 2006, ahead of the Government deadlines of April 2007, and dedicated NPTs embedded into every area by 2008.

Other work includes consultation with the public and partner agencies and setting up problem-solving groups.

Essex Police is recognised nationally as a lead police force on youth issues. The proactive Essex Police youth strategy (PEPYS) has six strands of delivery from early engagement with young people, pre-crime prevention to focusing on priority and prolific young offenders. Independent evaluation of the strategy shows considerable success and supports further investment and focus through PEPYS.

During 2004 the Essex Police investigative review team (IRT) reviewed the unsolved murder of an elderly woman that occurred in 1978. This was the first such historic murder brought to trial since the creation of the IRT. After a lengthy re-investigation and media appeal the offender was brought to justice and found guilty of the rape and sentenced to life for murder, with a recommendation that he serve a minimum of 23 years, and ten years for rape, to be served concurrently.

Major Challenges for the Future

Essex Police intends to ensure a positive and active approach to 'doing business differently' to ensure any protective services gaps are closed and shared services are developed while at the same time providing the police service that the public desire and effectively managing any change issues.

Another long-term challenge will be the management of the Thames Gateway corridor, and the ambitious house-building programme within Essex.

Central government has plans to accelerate the provision of housing, particularly in the four 'growth areas', two of which are within Essex – the Thames Gateway and the M11 London–Stansted–Cambridge–Peterborough corridor. The regional spatial strategy for the East of England sets out plans for 123,400 new homes within the county in the period up to 2021 which will bring about an increase in population of some 9%. Further major development within the county is expected as a result of the following:

- London Gateway, Shell haven – major new port, logistics and business park;
- Bathside Bay, Harwich Port – making it the second largest container port in the country; and
- further expansion of Stansted Airport to 35 million passengers per annum plus a possible second runway.

The force has recognised the need to take a strategic view of the extensive development planned for the county in the next 15–20 years and has created the post of strategic regeneration project manager. An Eastern region regeneration working group has also been set up which reports direct to ACPO Eastern region. A significant challenge will be to ensure that policing performance does not suffer because of the move to strategic forces. Essex Police will have well-developed plans, processes and clear leadership to ensure this does not occur.

Summary of Judgements	Grade	Direction of Travel
Citizen Focus		
Fairness and Equality in Service Delivery	**Good**	**Stable**
Neighbourhood Policing and Problem Solving	**Fair**	**Improved**
Customer Service and Accessibility	**Good**	**Stable**
Professional Standards	**Fair**	**Not Graded**
Reducing Crime		
Volume Crime Reduction	**Good**	**Improved**
Investigating Crime		
Managing Critical Incidents and Major Crime	**Fair**	**Stable**
Tackling Serious and Organised Criminality	**Fair**	**Improved**
Volume Crime Investigation	**Good**	**Improved**
Improving Forensic Performance	**Fair**	**Improved**
Criminal Justice Processes	**Good**	**Improved**
Promoting Safety		
Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour	**Good**	**Stable**
Protecting Vulnerable People	**Poor**	**Stable**
Providing Assistance		
Contact Management	**Good**	**Stable**
Providing Specialist Operational Support	**Good**	**Improved**
Strategic Roads Policing	**Good**	**Stable**
Resource Use		
Human Resource Management	**Good**	**Improved**
Training, Development and Organisational Learning	**Good**	**Improved**
Race and Diversity	**Good**	**Stable**
Managing Financial and Physical Resources	**Good**	**Stable**
Information Management	**Good**	**Improved**
National Intelligence Model	**Fair**	**Improved**
Leadership and Direction		
Leadership	**Good**	**Not Graded**
Performance Management and Continuous Improvement	**Good**	**Improved**

1   Citizen Focus (Domain A)

1A   Fairness and Equality in Service Delivery

Grade	Direction of Travel
Good	**Stable**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	15	28	0

Contextual Factors

The PA and force are committed to providing a quality service and have embraced citizen focus. The strategic independent advisory group (IAG) is fully engaged, regularly consulted and kept informed of police performance, especially in relation to hate crime. Recognising the importance of the IAG function, the force has introduced IAGs at BCU level.

During 2005/06 the detection rate for racially aggravated offences was 33.7%, above the most similar force (MSF) group average of 32.8% and this is an improving trend. Satisfaction rates for victims of racist incidents are low. Of the 287 questionnaires sent to victims during 2005/06 only 94 (32%) were returned (although follow-up letters are sent). Increasing the response rate to surveys will provide a reliable starting point for the force to analyse underlying reasons for the low level of satisfaction. IAGs and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) have agreed to work with the force to identify what can reverse this trend.

Strengths

- There is clear chief officer involvement in promoting equality and diversity. The Chief Constable chairs the force equality board (renamed from the equality of service strategy group) and the ACC (TP) attends the strategic IAG meetings.

- Race, fairness and diversity feature in all police officer and support staff performance development reviews (PDRs).

- Chief officers have been closely involved in critical incident forums with IAGs. An example is the murder of a member of the Hindu community where three IAG members sat on the Gold group and provided advice on cultural and faith issues around the post-mortem procedure as well as assisted with overseas liaison.

- The strategic diversity day is an annual event hosted by Essex Police to promote diversity: attendees include chief officers, representatives of police staff associations and support groups, members of strategic and local IAGs and other stakeholders.

- Financial support has been provided for officers and staff to attend national diversity events such as Gay Pride and Celebrate. A financial contribution has also been given to the Ann Frank touring exhibition.

- Following internal restructuring of BCUs, local IAG boundaries have also changed to reflect the new position. All IAGs are independently chaired and meet quarterly.

- The equality scheme steering group is chaired by the ACC (OS); this group is responsible for implementation of the race equality scheme (RES). The latest version was published in May 2005 and is accessible internally via the intranet and externally through the force website.

- IAGs and staff support groups have been consulted during the preparation phase of the RES. IAGs and the PA receive information on stop and searches carried out by force officers.

- There is effective monitoring of gender and race in terms of selection, training and progression whether by promotion or transfer to specialist departments.

- Key recommendations from national reports and thematic inspections, internal or external (such as HMIC), along with actions arising, are entered onto a database. Activity against actions is monitored by the equality board.

- Demonstrating a commitment to take positive action and improve the quality of service to victims, domestic violence and hate-crime units (DVHCUs) were introduced during 2005 into all BCUs. A hate-crime policy was published in 2005.

- The diversity manager (HR) and equality manager have now been co-located within the same accommodation.

- Detainees in custody have access to food, and account is taken of religious and/or dietary needs. Provision is made for detainees to have access to interpreters.

- A Race Relations (Amendment) Act training plan has been written and is being delivered to all officers and staff including initial induction.

- Diversity features in all specialist courses. Examples are a seminar for DVHCU staff involving lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) staff, and homophobic awareness training for PSD and family liaison officers (FLOs). Priority has been afforded to staff from DVHCUs in attending Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme (ICIDP) courses.

- All HQ buildings are accessible to people with disabilities (see Work in Progress).

Work in Progress

- Work is ongoing to increase the number of third party reports of hate-crime incidents and this will continue throughout 2006. CDRPs have been engaged to deliver this piece of work using libraries as access points and through the distribution of leaflets.

- Policy regarding police contact with LGBT communities is being reviewed to ensure it matches the hate-crime policy.

- A post-implementation review will be carried out on stop and account/stop and search policy.

- Initial submission of some CSD3s (forms used for reporting of racial or homophobic incidents) has been poor and work is under way to improve the overall quality as well as to revise the forms to ensure relevant information is captured for sharing with partner agencies. This will be completed by August 2006.

- The force Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) programme of works will be completed during 2006/07 by which time all 34 of the remaining operational police buildings will be compliant with the DDA.

Areas for Improvement

- There are plans to introduce what will be a unique IAG for Stansted Airport to include the interests of a diverse workforce as well as customers travelling through the airport.

- A domestic violence (DV) and race hate crime pack is being developed to improve the level of service provided to victims.

- Neighbourhood policing will enable the force to improve the collection of community data and hate-crime intelligence, improving the quality of risk assessments.

- Raising further awareness of the needs of vulnerable victims and witnesses will continue throughout 2006.

- The diversity training manager post is still vacant but the role is being filled by a temporary replacement.

- The force recognises that more work needs to be done to ensure all officers and staff are fully up to date with equality issues.

1B Neighbourhood Policing and Problem Solving	**Grade**	**Direction of Travel**
	Fair	**Improved**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
4	18	20	1

National Position

Neighbourhood Policing (NP) is a national programme and its expectations are based on national research. This framework differs from others because the grade awarded reflects the force's ability to roll out NP progressively, year on year, until its implementation date of April 2008. This focus on programme delivery and the need for continual improvement are reflected in the grades. Therefore, in this framework it is significantly more challenging for a force to maintain the same grade as last year.

HMIC has awarded an Improved direction of travel where forces are actively progressing implementation, have improved their performance and have allocated significant resources to deliver NP. As a result, most forces have an Improved direction of travel. However, this assessment has also highlighted the significant demands of the NP programme and the vulnerability of some forces that are failing to maintain the pace of implementation.

Contextual Factors

The stated aim of the neighbourhood policing project is to get "the right people, in the right places, in the right numbers, tackling crime, nuisance and disorder to make Essex safer".

Some 144 neighbourhoods have been identified and prioritised. Minimum staff levels have been agreed for each of the priority 1, 2 and 3 neighbourhoods; the force intends to have all resources allocated by July 2006.

The first NPT was introduced into St Andrew's and St Anne's, Colchester, in January 2006. Additional teams will cover the remainder of the Colchester and Tendring districts by April 2006.

Positive publicity has been received in the local media about the introduction of neighbourhood policing, with expectations from local communities understandably high.

More detailed work needs to be done around introducing policies, supporting systems, processes and fully engaging communities. Chief officers are confident they will achieve all of the national aims and principles of neighbourhood policing well in advance of the target date in 2008.

During 2005/06 the British Crime Survey (BCS) of Essex residents indicated that 51.1% had confidence in their local police. This was above the MSF group average of 49.0%. Residents in Essex have a significantly low fear of domestic burglary, vehicle crime, violent crime, perceived public disorder and drug misuse.

Strengths

- The Chief Constable provides demonstrable leadership by personal attendance at all neighbourhood policing launches.

- The ACC (TP) is the chief officer lead for neighbourhood policing and is chair of the neighbourhood policing project board. Neighbourhood policing is being project managed using projects in controlled environments 2 (PRINCE2) methodology and is incorporated under the CMP. The project board includes representation from the PA as well as the head of HR, head of information technology (IT), each BCU, the Police Federation and UNISON.

- The neighbourhood policing strategy outlines how NPTs will be mainstreamed into all aspects of police activity and support functions.

- Priority neighbourhoods have been identified by principal analysts using demographic profiling and assessing crime trends. Consultation has also been carried out with partners and communities.

- Essex Police is designating 70% of operational uniform resources to NPTs. With clear focus on tackling priority crimes, arrests and detections the challenge will be to effectively and fully engage with communities and then sustain the required level of engagement.

- Pathfinder NPTs are in place and it is anticipated resources for the remainder will be complete by early July 2006.

- PCSOs and special constables are an integral part of NPTs. The Special Constabulary commandant is a member of the neighbourhood policing project board. A number of special constables have already been assigned to priority neighbourhoods. A recruitment campaign is under way to increase the number of special constables to 1,000. The force is also looking at ways in which to integrate volunteers into NPTs.

- There are examples of collaborative working especially within the youth field such as co-located and joint-staffed youth offending teams (YOTs), secondment of an officer to the county children's trust and co-locating of officers in local authority buildings including an NPT based at a primary school. Intervention workers for children and young persons from the charity Rainer are located in four police stations.

- Training on neighbourhood policing to officers and police staff is being delivered via three or one-day courses or a one hour training session dependent on the post held.

- The Essex Police website provides easy access to information on neighbourhood policing and provides contact numbers for NPT officers. Business cards and team leaflets have been produced along with the name and contact number for each officer; some cards also carry a photograph.

- A range of marketing and publicity give-aways have been designed, eg notepads and pens with the Essex neighbourhood policing strapline 'right up your street'.

Work in Progress

- Work is being carried out to produce a performance management framework incorporating a range of measures designed to reliably monitor and assess neighbourhood policing.

- Officers and staff interviewed gave evidence of limited access to IT owing to the lack of computer terminals. The force is aware of this and will review the locations of terminals once neighbourhood policing has been fully implemented.

Areas for Improvement

- The neighbourhood policing engagement strategy is in draft form; communities have not yet been able to fully influence local target setting according to their concerns.

- Communities have not been mapped out at this stage. Now that teams are in place they need to have the capacity to carry out this process in order to set up appropriate engagement processes.

- The national intelligence model (NIM) has not been fully integrated into neighbourhood policing; the director of intelligence now sits on the neighbourhood policing project board and will be in a position to influence and accelerate developments in this area.

- Each NPT will have a nominated problem solver to co-ordinate community intelligence and problem-solving activity via the NIM. The collation of community intelligence needs to be developed and forms part of the Essex intelligence model (EIM) project. Recent changes have been made to CID 61 intelligence forms to aid identification of community intelligence.

- While there is significant evidence of sharing of information between partners a number of protocols are in need of review.

- The communications manager has been tasked with forming a communication managers' network with partner agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach to publicity and marketing. All BCUs either have or are in the process of recruiting their own communications officer; part of the role will be to publicise, market and provide feedback to communities on neighbourhood policing.

- Although officers and staff are receiving training on neighbourhood policing, courses have been held in isolation from partners. There are plans to include partners in joint training at a later stage.

- Although problem solving does occur, the current system for recording and capturing it is not robust.

- NPTs require dedicated resources; to ensure these resources are not inappropriately diverted, an abstraction policy is being produced in consultation with divisional commanders and team members.

- Further clarity needs to be provided around the respective roles and responsibilities of neighbourhood support teams (response officers) and those assigned to NPTs.

GOOD PRACTICE

TITLE: Front Line Action Group (FLAG)
PROBLEM: With his appointment as new Chief Constable in July 2005, Mr Baker pledged to move at least 200 officers from support roles, to the front line to support the new policing style in tackling crime, nuisance and disorder on the streets.
SOLUTION: Initial scoping by Chief Officers identified that by moving people, posts and funding towards the front line, a headline figure of 200 could be achieved by 31st March 2006. The Home Office definition for "operational" posts was used as the initial basis for the target. An additional set of criteria for the Essex definition for front line posts was devised to ensure moves concentrated on the front line. In order for a post to be designated as front line, an officer occupying the post would have to either: Regularly attend incidents of crime, nuisance and disorder, or Regularly investigate crime, nuisance and disorder, or Regularly patrol in uniform in high visibility crime reduction/reassurance roles, or Regularly deal with prisoner handling/processing. The project, managed by Assistant Chief Constable (Personnel) and ACC (Operational Support), ran from July 2005 to March 2006. Details below summarise the components of the delivery of 220 posts to the front line. FLAG Phase 1 and 2 from HQ to Basic Command Units:- 33 Officers Transfer of police officers from BCU support functions to the front line:- 26 Officers School Liaison Officers 19:- Officers Divisional Training Officers 12:- Officers Extra police officers funded from pay budget setting calculations :- 24 Officers FLAG phase 3 BCU restructuring savings reinvested for additional police officers 75 Officers Incident managers converted into front line posts 31 Officers In addition to these movements of staff, the Special Constabulary have increased their numbers from 346 on 1st April 2005 to an estimated 459 by 31st March 2006.

OUTCOME(S):

The 'Days of ACTION' relate to the number of days that HQ based Police officers have been released from their usual role to work an operational shift on a BCU. These days have been targeted in line with local hot spots for crime. The provision of these hours from HQ staff equates to 6 additional Police officers on the street for a year.

The moving of over 200 Police officers to or closer to the frontline is the equivalent of investing £7.7million in core service fighting business. Such a sum, if funded by the taxpayer, would add 12% to the Council tax precept.

Work continues in 2006/07 to identify further posts and financial savings that can be directed to the front line. These savings will be identified within the context of the funding difficulties in the Medium Term Service and Financial Plan as well as the protective services investment required in strategic forces.

Force contact**:** Chief Inspector Adrian Coombs HMIC liaison officer 01245 491491

	Grade	Direction of Travel
1C Customer Service and Accessibility	**Good**	**Stable**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	**19**	**22**	**2**

Contextual Factors

The DCC leads on both the quality of service commitment (QoSC) and the CMP. CMP staff are actively engaged in the delivery of the QoSC and are working with other delivery units to ensure the force is fully compliant.

Essex Police actively involves the community in the design, delivery and evaluation of training that underpins QoSC. Strategic partners and other external agencies, eg hospitals and women's refuges, provide input on probationer, post-probation and crime training programmes.

An accountability meeting has been established which incorporates all departments and BCUs responsibility for QoSC. The group monitors progress and ensures that positive actions are taken to achieve compliance. The force is aligned with the national QoSC regional group to ensure consistency of process across local forces.

The force is well placed to meet the requirements of the Victims' Code, having set the minimum standards as a No Witness, No Justice (NWNJ) pilot area. Policy and process changes to meet the national standard have been identified and many are now in place. All changes will be operating by 3 April 2006.

During 2005/06 customer satisfaction surveys indicate that for each of the component survey fields – ease of contact, actions, follow up, treatment and whole experience – Essex Police was at or very near the MSF group average.

Strengths

- The DCC leads on the QoSC and CMP.

- A QoSC accountability group comprising representatives from BCUs and HQ departments meets every six weeks to deliver the programme of work on behalf of the DCC.

- Local service standards are publicised at police stations and on the force website.

- In order to increase accessibility to policing services and reassurance, a decision has been taken to increase the opening hours of police stations. From 1 July 2005

police stations throughout the county have been open for an additional 270 hours per week.

- Essex Police meets its target for answering 999 calls and has improved performance on answering non-999 calls, being just short of target (see 5A Contact Management).

- Twenty police sergeant posts have been allocated to perform the role of incident manager. Incident managers perform limited telephone investigation roles and quality assure officers' submissions, eg DV forms.

- The FIR has introduced national vocational qualification (NVQ) training in customer services for its staff, many of whom are the first point of police contact for members of the public.

- The ICIDP addresses officers' behaviour and attitude when dealing with incidents where utmost sensitivity is required, eg rape and trauma. All interview courses address victim and witness care throughout the investigation process.

- During all training courses students are monitored for appropriate behaviour and given feedback on their interpersonal skills where necessary. ICIDP students have tutorials at the commencement and the end of the course to ensure that they have an appropriate investigation style. Any issues of concern that are identified during the course are addressed.

- Feedback from complaints and civil proceedings has been used to prevent similar incidents and improve on service delivery. To prevent reoccurrence, feedback is provided to officers who have been subject to claims and line managers notified. Where appropriate, depersonalised information on lessons learnt is shared force-wide.

Work in Progress

- The estates strategy is currently being reviewed to ensure appropriate accommodation is in place for communities to access NPTs.

- The force is confident that the QoSC will be met by November 2006.

- Although customer service is featured within BCU plans it is not included within performance reviews. Work is under way to ensure customer service is a standing item during relevant performance meetings.

Areas for Improvement

- A customer services manager will be introduced within the communications division that is about to be formed. The post holder will provide the tactical lead for improvement in customer relation management.

- Although users of policing services are surveyed to gauge satisfaction levels there have not been any up-to-date summaries provided to BCUs. The process is to be reviewed to identify how BCUs have been using data to improve customer service.

1D   Professional Standards

Grade	Direction of Travel
Fair	Not Graded

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
2	16	25	0

National Position

In view of the recent focused inspection activity of professional standards departments across the country, the grade allocated in the national moderation process and publication of the reports in January 2006 will be applied for the purposes of baseline assessment.

The inspections were conducted using a substantial framework of questions under EFQM4 (European Foundation for Quality Management) headings. This framework of questions was forwarded to forces in line with normal baseline methodology, requesting self-assessment and submission of relevant evidence and supporting documentation. This material was then analysed and followed by HMIC inspection teams visiting forces to carry out validation checks and supplementary interviews of key staff and stakeholders. The baseline inspection reports include recommendations as well as areas identified for improvement.

Evidence was gathered, consolidated and reported upon in individual force baseline assessment reports which can be found on the HMIC website: http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/inspect_reports1/baseline-assessments.html

2 Reducing Crime (Domain 1)

2A Volume Crime Reduction

Grade	Direction of Travel
Good	**Improved**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	18	20	4

Contextual Factors

This assessment is written in the context of an overall decrease of 2% in total crime per 1,000 residents. For the last quarter (January to March 2006) there was a decrease of 8% when compared with the same period in 2005. Essex is positioned significantly below the MSF group average.

Instances of domestic burglary have increased during 2005/06 but have now levelled out and yet are significantly below the MSF group average. Vehicle crimes have increased to be just above the MSF group average and the trend line is levelling out. Instances of robbery reduced slightly during the year and the level is below the MSF group average. There has been a decrease in violent crime which is now significantly below the MSF group average.

An important consideration when assessing performance in volume crime reduction is compliance with National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS). At the start of 2006, Essex was graded by the Audit Commission as Good for data sample and Fair for management arrangements. An action plan is under way to address the auditor's recommendations.

The Chief Constable has set more demanding timescales for recording crimes: 12 hours for priority crimes and 24 hours for all other types, this is against a 72-hour target under the NCRS. He has also introduced a significant shift in policy as officers now attend all reports of crimes with the expectation that statements are obtained from witnesses.

Strengths

- The chief officer-led Gold Cougar group has superseded the sanction detection group. Focus within Cougar is on prevention as well as detection. Support is provided to BCUs in the form of resources either financial or by tasking HQ support departments to provide staff officers for specific operations. There are clear accountability processes for volume crime reduction.

- Daily force level meetings, chaired by a chief officer, scrutinise volume crime performance. BCU commanders are held to account for performance during these meetings and display good operational knowledge of crimes and trends within their

areas along with information on preventative and/or enforcement activity taken as a result.

- The monthly force strategy group and quarterly strategy and performance meetings take a longer-term view on performance.

- BCU resources are tasked through daily and level 1 tactical tasking and co-ordination group (TTCG) meetings to tackle volume crime issues.

- HQ resources regularly assist BCUs by being tasked through NIM and fully participating in pre-planned 'action' arrest days.

- There is evidence of active chief officer participation and commitment to CDRPs at the strategic level. The ACC (TP) attends Essex local strategic partnership (LSP), chief executives' meetings and the safer stronger communities group.

- The ACC (TP) is also the lead for developing partnerships: a superintendent has recently been appointed to head up the new partnership and TP department.

- BCUs provide support for CDRP audit and strategy and there is evidence of appropriate information sharing.

- Police Standards Unit (PSU) good practice guides are available to all officers via the community safety web page on the force intranet.

- The force is committed to restorative justice where it is appropriate to do so. Diversionary projects cover ages: 8–13 years (early intervention) education for 8–13 year olds and youth crime 10–17 year age group.

- With regards to adult diversionary work a pilot has commenced in Eastern BCU involving a dedicated police officer and a member of the drug action team (DAT) targeting prolific and persistent offenders.

- Essex Police is the only police force in the country to have a full-time police officer seconded to a pathfinder children's trust. This investment is anticipated to bring benefits in the form of long-term crime reduction.

Work in Progress

- The force crime strategy is currently being updated to reflect a change in policy to mandatory attendance to reports of crimes and internal force restructuring.

- The DCC is lead for the ACPO youth issues group. As part of this Essex Police is leading the development of a 'youth toolkit' for neighbourhood policing. When introduced, the toolkit will assist in crime reduction.

Areas for Improvement

- The force has engaged partners in responding to the increase in domestic burglary, including the introduction of 'no cold calling zones' to reduce the number of distraction burglaries.

- In tackling the increase in vehicle crime, which is mostly attributable to theft from motor vehicles, including the emerging national trend of theft of satellite navigation

equipment, the force has introduced a number of reduction and enforcement measures such as using dummy satellite equipment in covert cars.

- As with the intelligence system, the crime recording system used by the force is outdated. Decisions to replace both has been delayed during the police force merger debate.

- Attendance by partners to level 1 TTCG meetings is not consistent throughout the force. Partners do not yet attend level 2 TTCG meetings.

- The force recognises the need to ensure problem-solving initiatives are properly evaluated. Analysts are now starting to carry out results analysis, but this needs to become a part of normal business to complete the problem-solving model.

3   Investigating Crime (Domain 2)

3A   Managing Critical Incidents and Major Crime

Grade	Direction of Travel
Fair	Stable

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
5	17	17	4

Contextual Factors

Essex Police has a dedicated major investigation section (MIS) comprising 80 officers and staff. The MIS comprises four teams, each led by a detective superintendent – senior investigating officer (SIO). Teams are geographically based at Harlow, Stanway, Brentwood and Rayleigh.

During 2005/06 some 88 investigations were referred to the MIS, which was 17 less than in 2004/05; however, this included 21 murders against 9 in the previous year. The murder rate for 2005/06 exceeded anticipated demand by a significant margin and had a corresponding impact on the MIS; a limited number of BCU resources were required to assist during the peak periods of demand. The level of life-threatening and gun crime has reduced by 12% during the year and is below the MSF group average.

Strengths

- The ACC (PS) is the chief officer lead for major crime and critical incidents and is chair of the review commission.

- The force has adopted the national definition of critical incidents and there is evidence of more widespread understanding and knowledge of this within all levels of the organisation. FIR supervisors and staff have all received critical incident training.

- The strategic assessment recognises critical incidents and major crime including violent crime, the risk/threat of firearms and counter terrorism.

- An annual strategic firearms threat and assessment is prepared by the mobile support division (MSD).

- Critical and potentially critical incidents are flagged by the FIR and discussed by chief officers and BCU commanders during force-wide daily dashboard briefings. Critical incidents are fed into the NIM processes.

- There are dedicated resources to deal with firearms and critical incidents. These include sufficient firearms assets to meet demand across the range of tactical options.

- The force has the capability and capacity to provide 24-hour strategic and tactical advice and has call-out procedures in place to access specialist support and commanders. Firearms commanders are nationally trained and accredited.

- All firearms operations are reviewed by a chief inspector (firearms). Lessons learnt are circulated to Silver commanders as well as forming the basis for the senior officer firearms training programme (SOFT).

- Policy has been written for the investigation of unexplained and violent deaths including suspicious deaths at hospitals, Ministry of Defence estates and prisons.

- Major crime is reviewed through the review commission process with all reviews and action points monitored by the director of specialist investigation. The crime operations group, which includes BCU crime managers and HQ-based senior detectives, has good practice agenda items.

- The review commission meets every six weeks to review undetected major crimes. Two uniform chief superintendents represent the interests of BCU commanders when resource levels from BCUs to major investigation teams (MITs) are determined.

- IAGs are activated and consulted during major investigations and critical incidents. Examples include the murder of a Lithuanian national and the murder of an Indian male by a West Indian. An SIO attends the force-level IAG as a police member of the group.

- IAGs were consulted following the reporting of the controversial Norwegian cartoon and potential public order issues identified. Briefings were also presented to the IAG at South Eastern BCU when refusal of bail for street robbery was likely to have a disproportionate impact on black males, as offenders were displaced Somalian street robbers from the Metropolitan Police Area. This resulted in IAG support for the policy.

- Community impact assessments (CIAs) are regularly carried out during major investigations, examples being Operation Zephaniah, investigating the drug-related murder of a black male, and Operation Sandy, a joint investigation with the probation service into a paedophile.

- Community tension is monitored by the crime division through the vulnerable victims inspector post. The post holder has lines of communication with each BCU single point of contact (SPOC) who in turn shares and receives information with community leaders.

- Out-of-hours intelligence searches are available through the FIR. A detective sergeant is on duty throughout the night period within the FIR as investigative tactical adviser.

- The force has identified high-risk policing functions for review, examples are the recently completed thematic review on sex offenders and the rewriting of the missing persons policy.

- SIOs are trained to professionalising the investigative process (PIP) level 3 and every MIT has level 5 trained interview advisers/co-ordinators.

Work in Progress

- Performance indicators are being developed for major investigations.

- Reviews of historic unsolved murders are conducted using retired senior detectives to carry out this work. The force has had a recent and well-publicised case; however, only limited resources are dedicated to this type of work.

- A murder suppression strategy is currently being written and will be introduced during 2006.

Areas for Improvement

- The force will be taking steps to ensure that 72-hour and 28-day murder reviews are carried out in all cases and in accordance with force policy.

- There is no protocol for regional collaboration in the event of exceptional demand.

- The force does not include detailed community profiles in its strategic assessment, although there is evidence of community profiles at BCU level, ie Jewish community at Southend.

- Sudden deaths are not systematically analysed to identify patterns.

- Community intelligence is not collected from all available sources or subsequently shared with partners. Introduction of the EIM will result in all intelligence sources being fully exploited.

- Homicide and major investigations are costed although the force recognises further work is required in this area.

- To cope with demand and provide resilience there are plans to increase the pool of SIOs by using detective chief inspectors (DCIs) in the role.

- Following the successful use of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) police community and cultural resources unit the force is now considering introducing its own team.

3B Tackling Serious and Organised Criminality	**Grade**	**Direction of Travel**
	Fair	**Improved**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
7	21	13	2

Contextual Factors

A number of changes have been made by Essex Police to tackle serious and organised crime. Serious crime investigation now sits under the serious organised crime directorate (SOCD) within the crime division and the force is now able to clearly identify organised crime enterprises (OCEs).

SOCD consists of an investigation wing of two teams of 13 officers, 2 sergeants and 1 inspector. The financial investigation unit (FIU) has an inspector, a sergeant, police staff supervisor, 6 police officers and 7.5 police staff. The special operations unit comprises 2 sergeants and 3 full-time equivalent police officers. The high-tech crime unit (HTCU) has 2 police officers, 1 sergeant and 1 police staff member.

What remains a challenge for the force is its ability to fully resource investigations into serious and organised crime as well as contributing to regional cross-border operations. While there is evidence of good cross-border co-operation, Essex Police (in common with many others) is not in a position to be able to resource all regional requests.

Strengths

- A review has recently been undertaken as to how serious and organised crime is identified and tackled. New intelligence-led processes have been introduced to enable early identification of OCEs.

- Subjects (potential OCEs) are assessed by a dedicated review panel. The panel uses an evaluation matrix to the nominated subject and decides whether to accept or refuse the nomination. Where a nomination is accepted the OCE will become tasked. The review panel will accept and handle a maximum of five OCE operations at any one time.

- The evaluation matrix is the only vehicle for scoring the merit of each OCE nominated. A significant factor in deciding the acceptance of any nomination will be the consideration of the impact on volume crime if the nomination was accepted or refused.

- Regional tasking is held every six weeks and acts as a commissioning point for joint regional operations. All other intelligence flow is directed to the force intelligence bureau (FIB) and disseminated to central, local and national (Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), HM Revenue & Customs, etc) resources. Force central tasking (ECTCG) is held every two weeks and follows the BCU TCG. Using this model, all current intelligence can be captured. Essex Police has contributed an officer to operate within the regional intelligence cell.

- During 2005/06 Essex Police crime squad, (covert tactical capability at NIM level 2), was tasked with 27 covert investigations from the TCG. Of those 27, some 19 have been successfully concluded resulting in criminal charges and imprisonment.

- There is good collaboration with other police forces including Operations Dawn, Harvest, Arctic and Eaglewood. Operation Movement is a recent operation (high value car crime), which involves Essex, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Kent.

- Other joint operations include: Operation North West with the MPS, where some 1,870 kilos of cannabis resin were recovered (street value £7 million) and three persons were sentenced to six years in custody; Operation Gumboots, the importation of 1,000 kilos of cannabis resin, carried out in conjunction with Norfolk Constabulary and HM Revenue & Customs; and Operation Sandbank, an investigation into the exploitation of illegal Vietnamese minors in cannabis factories and commercial nail bars. Working with the UK Immigration Service, some 11 persons were arrested for immigration-related offences and cannabis production. Cash seizures in excess of £50,000 were made and over 50 cannabis factories operated by Vietnamese crime groups within London identified.

- A policy is in place to cater for the issuing of Osman warnings. The force has a dedicated witness protection unit with 24/7 capability to respond and deal with witnesses who require acceptance onto the protection scheme. Essex Police has the regional lead for witness protection.

- There is regular dialogue between SIOs and the PSD to ensure high standards and integrity. Examples are PSD attendance and contribution to Gold groups for operations where possible compromise and integrity issues are anticipated or have been flagged by intelligence.

- The FIB houses the single point of contact and confidential unit, for liaison with HMIC, National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and National Crime Squad (NCS) (now SOCA). The relationship is positive and enables two-way flow of intelligence sharing from level 1 to level 3 criminality.

- The force receives intelligence disseminations from NCS and HMIC and supplies a 24/7 Flextel number for contact with an intelligence officer. A recent outcome of intelligence sharing from HM Revenue & Customs resulted in the arrest of two men for robbery.

- Significant investments have been made to increase the level and range of technical support available to operations.

- Essex Police met its Home Office target, more than doubling the number of confiscation orders from 18 (£290,000) in 2004/05 to 50 (£524,000) during 2005/06.

Forfeiture orders for the same period increased from three (£72,000) to four (£128,000).

Work in Progress

- A strategy and action plan have been written to maximise opportunities for asset recovery. This includes a communications element to increase the levels of awareness amongst officers; this is especially needed for BCU officers including some senior management teams (SMTs). An additional two financial investigators were appointed in July 2005.

- Funding for seven additional financial investigators has been agreed for 2006/07.

Areas for Improvement

- Although the force contributes to regional level 2 work it is not able to meet all requests for support made by the regional TCG.

- There is a skill shortage of undercover officers and TP co-ordinators. The gap is currently being bridged with the deployment of SOCD investigation staff.

- A limited range of harm indicators are in use, ranging from the number of people in communities receiving drugs treatment to the monitoring of armed response vehicle (ARV) deployments. Under the EIM the force intends to develop these indicators further.

	3C **Volume Crime Investigation**	**Grade**	**Direction of Travel**
		Good	**Improved**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
3	20	16	4

Contextual Factors

Significant effort has been placed into increasing detection rates, with officers and staff acutely aware of the Chief Constable's drive to improve on performance in this area. Essex Police is ranked first for sanction detections of overall crime against its MSF group with a rate of 26.1% for the period April 2005 to March 2006.

Sanction detection rates for the period April 2005 to March 2006 are as follows:

- Domestic burglary: 17.3% (an increase of 0.5%)

- Vehicle crime: 11.2% (an increase of 2%)

- Violent crime: 49.4% (an increase of 7%)

- Robbery: 21.8% (an increase of 1.5%).

Chief officers are not complacent about the increases or the positioning against MSF. They have set a higher sanction detection target of 30% for 2006/07 and BCUs have been set stretching targets for detections.

The NCRS compliance audit graded the force as Good for data quality and Fair for management arrangements. The HMIC detections audit for 2005 rated the force as Fair.

Strengths

- Robust systems are in place to enable early identification of deteriorating performance. The force daily meeting, chaired by a chief officer, reviews operational incidents from the previous 24-hour period, including those designated as critical. The meeting also examines crime performance and other indicators. BCU commanders and heads of HQ operational departments are scrutinised on performance during these meetings. The daily grip on performance is reflected within BCUs.

- The monthly force strategy group and quarterly strategy and performance meetings take a longer-term view on performance.

- Enforcement activity is co-ordinated through level I and 2 TTCGs. HQ departments contribute resources to 'action' arrest days.

- The crime strategy consists of a high-level strategic plan with a second tier containing five core elements. Each of these elements has a third level of detail including process maps used by BCUs to check for quality and compliance.

- Under Operation Focus, work was undertaken to ensure consistency of recording and detecting crime by appropriate application of NCRS and the following up of all investigative leads on undetected crimes.

- Dedicated analysts are in place, located on BCUs and centrally at HQ. Although line management arrangements for BCU-located analysts are not fully supported by all BCU commanders, the force has made a decision to retain central management of the function. This arrangement appears to be working satisfactorily.

- VIPER and PROMAT suspect identification systems are in use to speed up the identification of suspected offenders.

- Essex Police college (EPC) delivers the ICIDP course internally ensuring sufficient numbers of officers are accredited at PIP level 2 to meet local requirements. This includes monitoring the submission and quality of professional development portfolios and assessing the BCU needs for tutor detective constables. External training is provided for chief inspectors and above for SIO PIP level 3.

- The EPC has the capability to deliver all five tier interviewing courses and ensures staff are trained at tier 4. Force policy clearly defines the structure of the five-tier interview strategy and EPC delivers training to officers ensuring suspects, witnesses and victims are dealt with in an understanding, professional and ethical manner in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) investigative interview strategy.

- Effective mentoring of younger serving officers was evident at Harlow BCU investigative support unit. Many patrol officers interviewed were complimentary about the function of the unit as well as the dedication of teams staffing it.

Work in Progress

- The scientific support department (SSD) is contributing to the investigative process by attending more scenes of priority crimes than before. Further work needs to be done to incrementally increase DNA recovery and matches as well as fingerprint identifications from scenes.

- Funding has been approved for two additional support staff crime trainers. A PIP implementation officer will also be appointed to ensure compliance with all levels of investigative training.

Areas for Improvement

- There is room to improve the quality of investigative training for operational front-line officers and some supervisors. This includes improving the quality of witness statements, obtaining admissions and processes surrounding taking offences taken into consideration.

- The force does not have comprehensive and up-to-date minimum standards of investigation for the priority crimes of vehicle, violent crime and robbery.

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- Plans exist to introduce a centralised crime bureau under the newly formed communications division.

- The force recognises the need to develop skills of analysts and ensure the full range of products is produced in a consistent format. This forms part of the EIM project.

3D Improving Forensic Performance	**Grade**	**Direction of Travel**
	Fair	**Improved**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
3	16	21	3

Contextual Factors

The SSD has seen significant growth over the last two years. The force restructure has provided an opportunity to realign scene of crime officers (SOCOs) closer to BCU boundaries in order to provide a more efficient service.

In September 2005 the force benchmarked performance against the scientific support work improvement (SWIM) package. The subsequent report by the Lanner Group (based on 2004 performance data) acknowledged that Essex Police had increased scene attendance rate. This has been maintained with the force holding a better than average position against MSF for all crime scenes examined. The same positioning applies for the recovery and conversion to identification of fingerprints from crime scenes.

A wide range of improvements has been carried out within scientific support over a period of time including the rectifying of under-reporting of detections; this has consequently improved the conversion rate of fingerprint and DNA identifications to detections.

Strengths

- The scientific support manager (SSM) is the operational lead and attends a number of groups where forensic science can contribute to performance, ie crime operations and sanction detections.

- A scientific support strategy has been produced with links to the force long-term strategy, crime and disorder strategy and the Home Office police and science technology strategy. The strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive performance monitoring package including individual staff performance and turnaround times for key work processes.

- The SSM is responsible for monitoring and managing budgets for forensic science and pathology. A submissions policy provides clear guidance on the control of submitting items to the forensic science service (FSS).

- To improve performance, more challenging in-force targets were set during 2005 for finger impression, DNA hits and turnaround times from scene examination to identification.

- Policy has been amended to reflect new procedures and legislative changes following the taking of DNA samples for intelligence and casework purposes. DNA samples are taken and loaded for all potential police officer recruits.

- Fingerprint bureau staff are actively involved in the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) regional user group and IDENT 1 user design team. NAFIS was upgraded to IDENT 1 in Essex Police in September 2005 and a number of technical issues have been addressed.

- Forensic awareness input is provided to all student officers: sexual offence trained officers, trainee detectives and newly promoted sergeants. Information for operational officers including ACPO DNA good practice and FSS advice on forensic submissions is published on the scientific support web page.

- During 2005 a sexual offences protocol was introduced, ensuring improved quality and timeliness of forensic submissions in rape cases.

- A number of improvement initiatives have been introduced such as sample fingerprint identifications and use of digital imaging to capture and transfer finger mark images electronically to the fingerprint bureau for immediate searching against the national database.

- To measure and improve on quality, SOCOs undergo an annual competency test at HQ.

- Modern technology has been used to present hi-definition 360 degree images of crime scenes in the form of R2S crime imagery camera equipment.

Work in Progress

- The force intends to take advantage of forensic opportunities in archiving and matching footwear impressions. Policy and procedure will be introduced during 2006/07 along with the purchase of SICAR, a computer programme for identifying shoes from shoe prints.

- Forensic awareness among patrol officers is regarded as good by staff within the SSD; this will be further enhanced following the recent appointment of a full-time trainer. The scientific support website displays good practice and printed guidance is circulated to BCUs.

- To improve the quality of service, funding has been agreed to further extend the longer than average operating hours in the fingerprint bureau to include weekend working.

- 'Livescan' is currently utilised only at Harlow BCU; it will be extended to ten sites during autumn 2006.

Areas for Improvement

- Although comprehensive performance data is provided by scientific support to chief officers and BCUs in the form of a monthly package, performance management of the department and staff located within it could be improved. The reintroduction of

service level agreements (SLAs) between the SSD and BCUs would assist in improving performance.

- The force is not taking full advantage of workforce modernisation opportunities, the majority of scenes of crime officers are police officers. More officers, as opposed to police staff, were recruited during 2005/06 to replace those that had retired.

- Although there is a requirement to do so, not all BCU-based scenes of crimes supervisors attend level 1 TTCG meetings.

3E   Criminal Justice Processes

Grade	Direction of Travel
Good	Improved

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	15	27	1

Contextual Factors

The Chief Constable is a permanent member of the local criminal justice board (LCJB) supported by the head of the CJD. The CJD has corporate responsibility for criminal justice (CJ), custody and associated areas.

The force has recently joined the statutory charging scheme. Minimum standards have been designed for custody, improving accountability on the taking, packaging and storage of CJ samples.

Performance during 2005/06 indicates that the number of offences brought to justice (OBTJs) had increased to 33,390 and met and exceeded the target of 28,432. There has been a reduction in the number of ineffective crown court and magistrates' courts trials to 12.2% and 22.4% respectively. The 71-day pledge for the number of days between arrest and sentence for persistent young offenders (PYOs) has been consistently met and exceeded with performance varying from 49 to 63 days. The number of outstanding warrants has been reduced significantly to 925 and met and exceeded the LCJB target. Overall, public confidence in the CJ system in Essex has increased to 44%, which also met and exceeded the local target.

Strengths

- The Chief Constable sits on the LCJB, and the ACC (PS) is chair of the LCJB confidence action team. The ACC (OS) is the ACPO) national lead on victims and witnesses. Essex Police participated as a pilot site for NWNJ.

- The DCC leads on the national youth agenda for ACPO and is chair of ACPO youth issues group.

- There is a comprehensive youth strategy, PEPYS. Safer school partnerships are in place with evidence of effective problem solving.

- Six dedicated police officer posts have been committed by the force to providing operational support for the YOTs and the force has contributed funding over and above planned spend to enable effective delivery.

- Several BCU-based police officers have been trained to operate final warning sessions using restorative justice. Schools and YOT officers have been provided

with a youth toolkit which provides a comprehensive range of interventions for young people. Custody officers receive training regarding the detention and treatment of children and young persons.

- Police National Computer (PNC) performance is closely monitored during force-wide daily meetings. PNC access has been provided in all YOT offices.

- Close working relationships have been established with partners at all levels. To compliment LCJB meetings the head of CJD holds regular meetings with the chief crown prosecutor (CCP) and director of HM Courts Services (Essex) to ensure close working is maintained. Positive comments have been received from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) regarding chief officer commitment to partnership working.

- Processes to monitor compliance with the charging scheme are now embedded locally and at force level to identify appropriate cases for referral to the CPS and to 'gate keep' the quality of investigation.

- CPS duty prosecutors maintain a monitoring log at each location, to record details of cases inappropriately referred.

- By use of prosecution team performance management (PTPM) data at force and local levels, performance of the scheme is monitored; this includes the percentage of cases charged, no further action and bail for further enquires.

- A recent contract awarded to Essex medical forensic services has seen an immediate improvement in response times and standard of medical services in custody suits.

- Magistrates' court witness care units (WCUs) operate effectively and the CJD is working hard to assist crown court units (staffed by the CPS) to reach the same standards.

- The same processes for administration and enforcement of fail to appear warrants is now applied to community penalty bench warrants with daily focus on performance against targets with CJD and BCUs. SWARM is proving to be a valuable tool in this regard.

Work in Progress

- In light of the significant number of changes to CJ since the Glidewell recommendations were implemented, agreement has been reached between the force and Essex CPS to review current structure, systems and processes. Victim support in Essex is also restructuring; any work will link closely with it.

- Business excellence models have been developed for criminal justice units (CJUs) and are being developed for evidential media handling, activity on behalf of HM coroner and trials units.

- A new custody suite at Basildon police station is due to be opened in August 2006. This is part of a five-year programme of refurbishment for all 12 designated custody facilities which will also include the installation of new CCTV systems.

- The structure of the CJD is currently being reviewed to identify where further resource contributions can be made to front-line activity.

Areas for Improvement

- Victims of crime are not always offered the opportunity of contact and support from victim support by operational officers. Timescales between a crime being recorded and the referral being made to victim support are not meeting targets as listed within the agreed protocol. IT enhancements are being made to the crime/victim support link and should be delivered by June 2006.

- The national debate on restructuring has placed on hold the decision to adopt VIPER or PROMAT: both identification systems are currently used.

- Dedicated custody managers will be appointed in each of the restructured BCUs. Part of their role will be to monitor compliance with law, policy and performance in key custody processes.

- PNC performance is being adversely affected by delays incurred in obtaining court results from HM Courts Service (HMCS). As an interim measure crown court liaison staff (police staff) are assisting HMCS with the backlog whilst a long-term solution is being worked on.

4   Promoting Safety (Domain 3)

4A   Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

Grade	Direction of Travel
Good	Stable

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	8	35	0

Contextual Factors

This framework has close links with 1B Neighbourhood Policing and Problem Solving. Essex Police has recognised that training of officers to tackle ASB requires improvement. With the rapid roll-out of neighbourhood policing, training is being delivered on ASB to officers and staff. Further training will allow individuals to develop the necessary skills to enhance the multi-agency approach for medium- and long-term ASB reduction.

The force is currently rewriting its ASB policy, which will update and consolidate existing guidance in relation to ASB and the procedures used to tackle it. The policy will also set minimum standards for tackling ASB in a multi-agency environment to meet national PSA 2 targets.

The BCS carried out during 2005/06 indicates that Essex residents have a low fear of domestic burglary, vehicle crime, violent crime, drug misuse and ASB. In all these indicators force performance was below or significantly below the MSF group average.

Strengths

- ASB was included in the force strategic assessment document in early 2005 and reductions in levels of ASB became a target for the first time in 2005/06. ASB features in control strategies and currently sits at level 1.

- An HQ-based problem-solving team of two police officers and a police staff member work closely with BCUs ensuring the implementation of the scanning, analysis, response, assessment (SARA) based problem-solving tool for tackling ASB issues and volume crime reduction. The team has recently been included in the neighbourhood policing implementation team.

- Under the new force structure each BCU has a superintendent who is responsible for neighbourhoods and partnership, who takes a tactical lead for issues such as ASB. Each district has a commander (superintendent or chief inspector) who engages with the local CDRP and authority.

- Southend has a multi-agency ASB reduction team at Westcliff police station co-located with staff from the local authority and representatives for housing stock management. The team is accountable to the local authority's assistant chief executive and the neighbourhoods and partnership superintendent.

- Harlow has been cited as best practice by the ASB unit at the Home Office and will feature in guidance documentation for the work the multi-agency ASB team has carried out with ASB injunctions and the effective use of dispersal orders. The Prime Minister has visited the BCU to examine ASB prevention and the use of the dispersal orders.

- The together working group, consisting of representatives from each of the 14 local authority areas, meets on a quarterly basis and exchanges information and good practice. The group is attended by the CPS, probation service, all YOTs, Connexions and the HM Courts Services.

- BCUs are responsible for delivering partnership working under the Together programme; each district has a SPOC for local authority ASB co-ordinators. The list of contacts is contained within the police/CPS protocol in relation to the progression of post-conviction ASB applications.

- The ASB co-ordinator at Harlow searches the force command and control system daily and liaises with the local authority ASB team which establishes a priority listing for ASB issues. The priority listing triggers interventions from a letter through to multi-agency case conference or direct joint action to obtain interim anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) or anti-social behaviour injunctions.

- The Harlow BCU ASB co-ordinator and council ASB team provide joint training to PCSOs, police officers, local authority housing staff, head teachers and tenants' participation schemes. Thurrock community safety problem-solving team have organised a series of training days for local councillors, volunteers and council staff.

- Records are maintained of the tools and powers used to tackle ASB.

- Three ASB hotlines in the county at Harlow, Southend and Tendring are funded by Together Action Zone money.

- PEPYS is a multi-agency problem-solving strategy to deal with ASB. As part of the PEPYS strategy the use of acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs) has proved effective in adjusting young people's behaviour. Since November 2002 some 650 ABCs have been made, of which 442 are for those aged 17 or under. Of the 650 only 20 have gone on to be targeted with ASBOs and form part of the 219 ASBOs made of which 97 (44%) are people under the age of 18.

- Southend BCU is piloting restorative justice techniques to resolve community ASB issues. A number of other BCUs have made use of mediation services.

- Proactive use is made of the local media to publicise the partnership successes in tackling ASB. Leaflets have been distributed in Chelmsford to notify a community of ASBOs taken out in their locality.

Work in Progress

- Current knowledge among some officers of ASB legislation is limited despite the work of BCU-located ASB co-ordinators and information contained on the intranet. To tackle this the force has ensured ASB is delivered during training for neighbourhood policing.

- Essex Police, the County Council and 10 out of 14 local authorities are currently engaged on a joint project to implement the first multi-agency ASB recording, monitoring, tracking and case management system. The system will allow storage and searching of data in relation to ASB incidents and as well as individuals, victims and locations of ASB, and allow multi-agency designed responses to identified ASB issues.

Areas for Improvement

- The ASB policy guideline document is still being written. When complete, it will consolidate existing guidance in relation to ASB and procedures used to tackle associated issues such as ASBOs, dispersal orders, seizure of vehicles, etc. The guidance will also provide minimum standards for tackling ASB.

- While there is some evidence of partners attending level 1 TTCG meetings, in particular to contribute to ASB issues, this is not reflected throughout every BCU.

4B Protecting Vulnerable People	**Grade**	**Direction of Travel**
	Poor	**Stable**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
8	32	3	0

National Position

This framework replaces two frameworks used in 2005 – Reducing and Investigating Hate Crime, and Crimes against Vulnerable Victims – which covered hate crimes (predominantly racially motivated), domestic violence and child protection. Following consultation with practitioners and ACPO leads, a single framework was introduced for 2006 with four components: domestic violence; child protection; the management of dangerous and sex offenders; and vulnerable missing persons. Hate crime is captured in framework 1A. It is therefore inappropriate to compare this framework with last year's results; the direction of travel reflects HMIC's judgements about changes in domestic violence and child protection, and the work that forces could evidence in the other two areas, for example that they had improved their structures, processes and resources.

The four areas are discrete but share a common theme – they deal with vulnerable victims where there is a high risk that an incident can quickly become critical, and where a poor police response is both life-threatening and poses severe reputational risks for the force. For this reason, the grade is an overall grade capped at the level of the weakest area of performance. Aggregating four components to a Fair grade – which is defined as being an acceptable level of service – when HMIC (and in many cases forces themselves) recognises that at least one area merits a Poor would be unsafe.

Contextual Factors

The grading process outlined has identified an acceptable level of service is provided in Essex Police with the exception of DV and public protection.

Prior to this assessment, the force had already identified a need to improve in these areas and had commissioned self-critical reviews into public protection (focusing on sex offender management) and DV. An outcome from the DV review was the introduction of DVHCUs during the summer of 2005 with resources allocated accordingly. Although staff are in place there is recognition that more work needs to be done to ensure officers and staff are working to common systems and processes.

The force is confident that it will deliver the required improvements during 2006 and raise the level of service for public protection and victims of DV to that of the other functions categorised under protecting vulnerable people.

Strengths

Child Abuse

- The ACC (PS) is the ACPO lead for protecting vulnerable people and is a member of Essex safeguarding children board (ESGCB). He is also the lead for public protection and sits on the area strategic management board.

- The two BCU commanders responsible for policing the areas covered by the unitary authorities of Thurrock and Southend sit on the area safeguarding children boards (ASGCB). There is good representation by the force on every working group sitting under the ESGCB and ASGCB.

- A newly appointed DCI manages officers who form the child abuse investigation unit (CAIU). Five teams are located throughout the force. Officers and staff within the CAIU have defined role profiles and job descriptions.

- A joint SSD and police working protocol has been in place for some years, which clearly defines thresholds for single agency and joint response, as well as lines of accountability.

- All sergeants and inspectors within the CAIU are trained detectives. All CAIU constables are, or are working towards, detective status. It is mandatory for CAIU investigators to complete the ICIDP accreditation programme and to have received 'achieving best evidence' training. All new staff are mentored.

- Although joint training does not take place during the induction process, courses are held at the police training centre where social services professionals and CAIU staff undertake joint training.

- Regular multi-agency meetings are held to discuss operational activity, ie quality and standards and local children's forum. There is a policy of 100% attendance at initial case conferences and this complies with guidance for joint investigations.

- There are clear terms of reference for child abuse referrals. All are entered onto the Protect database. Joint working protocols for working with partners in this area are available via the force intranet.

- Monthly quantitative performance indicators are produced for child abuse investigations which capture the number of referrals, number of incidents recorded as crimes and crimes detected. Qualitative measures include the checking of every live file fortnightly by the supervisors, dip sampling of these by inspectors and sampling by the DCI during weekly office visits. The force is working with Cambridgeshire and Avon and Somerset to share best practice and further develop performance measures.

- PEPYS provides a strong focus on children and young people who may become victims and highlights those that are potentially at risk.

- Essex Police has been the first police force to contribute a full-time officer to a pathfinder children's trust (at Braintree).

- The occupational health department provides specialist debriefing for public protection officers and CAIU staff. It also has a number of trauma risk management trained officers and staff.

- Any person entered onto the Protect database is flagged on the force intelligence database with a marker prompting contact with CAIU or the relevant department. At the conclusion of a CAIU investigation, an entry is placed on the intelligence system, CAIU supervisors are responsible for ensuring this task is completed.

Domestic Violence

- DVHCUs have been introduced into every BCU. Policy and procedures are consistent with ACPO guidance on investigating DV. Each unit has dedicated investigators who are either accredited detectives or working towards achieving ICIDP status.

- The DV policy clearly spells out the requirements for non-specialist officers attending the scene of DV. Positive action at the scene is a requirement of attendance and this is regularly promulgated to all staff and reinforced by quality checks into the handling of DV incidents. All policies and procedures are available on the intranet.

- All DV cases are reviewed by supervisors to ensure consistency of investigation. If the command and control system records a DV incident it cannot be finally closed until an appropriate cross reference has been made to the crime recording system – ensuring the incident is logged as such and investigated.

- The force is committed to working within the CDRP hate-crime subgroups to deliver DV reduction and support at a local level. This is incorporating social and local authority landlords covering housing provision and consideration of breach of tenancy agreements for offenders.

- CDRPs have data-sharing agreements based on an agreed policy, allowing relevant sharing between partner agencies. CDRPs have held seminars and training for front-line and specialist staff to ensure full understanding of DV. Essex County Council has appointed a full-time DV co-ordinator who works with all partners county wide to encourage actions against perpetrators as above and to carry out education work with potential victims at neonatal and postnatal classes.

- Information relating to DV is also held on the Protect database and is available to all officers.

Public Protection

- Performance management is assured through the production of quarterly performance figures. Over the past year there have been two force-wide audits in respect of the management of sex offenders and a further localised audit in respect of the monitoring of sex offenders. Information collated has been used to assist in the commissioning of the review as outlined above.

- The force part funds a post for a multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA) manager and has a dedicated public protection co-ordinator who deputises for the MAPPA manager. A further three staff are employed in support of this area of work.

- All actions from MAPPA meetings are subject to regular review. Action points are disseminated within 24 hours of the meeting.

- Risk assessments are carried out upon initial registration of sex offenders and are used to set an initial management plan that is reviewed after three months, following consultation with the probation service.

- Essex Police has implemented the Violent and Sex Offenders' Register (ViSOR) monitoring system with key personnel trained. Each BCU has access to the database via a SPOC.

Missing Persons

- The missing person policy was reviewed in October 2005 in line with ACPO guidelines. The policy covers all aspects of dealing with missing persons. Missing person incidents are recorded on the command and control system and managed by local Inspectors. Regular reviews at command team level are mandatory and there are well-documented procedures setting out recording processes and risk assessments.

- High-risk missing persons are flagged to chief officers and other BCUs at the force-level daily briefing.

Work in Progress

- A review of public protection has been commissioned by the ACC (OS) to identify options for strategic restructuring leading to operational improvements.

- Recognising the need to satisfy itself that the CAIU is operating effectively within such a high-risk area of business, terms of reference have recently been drafted for a review of the structure and resource levels of the function. DVHCUs are subject to review together with other associated public protection areas of work to ensure a joined-up approach to protecting vulnerable people.

- Staffing numbers within the HTCU have increased from two to four, but owing to demand there are still delays of up to three months in analysing computer equipment seized from suspects. The situation should improve over time as the additional resources clear the backlog.

Areas for Improvement

Child Abuse

- Although there are operational policies and a detailed force order on dealing with child abuse there is no overarching strategy.

- Owing to an increase in workload including referrals within the CAIU no proactive work is currently being undertaken.

- The force recognises qualitative performance indicators are underdeveloped in the CAIU.

- Detective sergeants within the CAIU do not have training specific to their role.

Domestic Violence

- DVHCUs have developed in isolation; although terms of reference remain the same across the force, working practices are not corporate or consistent between units.

- There are not sufficient resources within the DVHCUs to deal with all DV and hate-crime incidents.

- Although there have been a number of presentations given to DVHCU staff there is no specific job-related DVHCU training package. The force recognises the need to ensure specialist staff within these units are adequately trained; a training course is being planned.

- Reports of DV are not always flagged on the command and control system and there is a lack of clear understanding among some staff within the FIR as to who should open incidents flagged as DV-related.

Public Protection

- A review has recently been carried out by the force on how sex offenders are managed. Medium- and low-risk offenders are managed by BCUs. Visits are not as co-ordinated and as consistent in approach as they should be and there are risks associated with having split responsibility for management of offenders, ie between HQ and BCUs. Insufficient supervision both of staff and case management was also identified by the review. The force has introduced a programme of work reporting to the ACC (PS) to implement recommendations.

5 Providing Assistance (Domain 4)

5A Contact Management

Grade	Direction of Travel
Good	Stable

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	18	20	4

Contextual Factors

The force has a single tier command and control system: call handlers and dispatchers are sited within the FIR at HQ. Non-emergency calls including those to police stations are managed by switchboards located at stations throughout the county.

The majority of work contained within the multi-million pound CMP has been placed on hold until decisions have been made concerning strategic forces. Some elements within the CMP continue, eg the formation of a new communications division. Essex plans to be part of wave 2 in implementing a single non-emergency telephone number (SNEN).

Activity during 2005/06 increased: 999 emergency calls rose by approximately 3% and non-emergency calls rose by 13%. Some 94.9% of 999 calls were answered within 15 seconds, a slight improvement from the previous year, while some 76% of non-emergency calls were answered within 30 seconds, an improvement of just over 8%. In line with National Call-Handling Standards (NCHS) the 999 target time will be reduced from 15 to 10 seconds from April 2006. The target of non-emergency calls answered within 30 seconds will increase to 90%.

Strengths

- The DCC leads on the CMP and the ACC (OS) is operational chief officer lead for operational aspects of contact management.

- As part of the CMP the force has a call management strategy. Although the project is currently on hold, elements of the strategy are still relevant.

- Daily call management data from FIR, emergency and non-emergency calls, is scrutinised at the force daily performance briefings chaired by a chief officer.

- Demand by hour of day and month is examined by the dedicated performance manager. Data is subsequently shared with the resource management unit to ensure resources match predicted demand.

- Guidance on the grading of calls within emergency, priority, routine and non-attendance response categories has been produced. Practical call-handling scenarios are used to measure the ability of new staff to accurately grade calls. Attaining a satisfactory standard is mandatory before progression to live call handling. Developmental training to dispatcher level revisits guidance.

- Call takers and dispatchers have access to an internal website which gives deployment examples for over 210 specific incident types. Call taker 'cue cards' list mandatory questions and grading in relation to core crimes. Call takers and dispatchers have immediate access to the force intelligence systems and PNC.

- Call takers are trained to give realistic feedback to callers regarding expected response times and will explain the procedure for calling back if a delay in attendance occurs. This process is quality assured by supervisors. Feedback is given to staff members and informs the PDR process. The operations manager oversees this process and provides a monthly return to corporate support.

- The low level of complaints in relation to FIR has been maintained, with only three formal complaints being recorded during April to September 2005.

- Full support functions are provided within FIR including a support manager, resource management unit, training and coaching. A number of staff are undertaking NVQ training in customer service.

- Regular surveys are carried out and feedback is provided to managers and teams. One in three victims of crime is contacted by BCU supervisors to assess the level of service provided.

- The special operations room located within FIR has been fitted with upgraded interactive IT equipment to further support special operations and major incidents.

- Business continuity planning is currently being established across the organisation. Within the FIR, business continuity plans already exist and were recently tested with a satisfactory conclusion. The FIR fallback plans include recovery and operation from another site.

- Turnover of officers and staff in FIR has reduced to 11% from a high of 15% during 2004/05. The force attributes this in part to a new shift pattern.

Work in Progress

- Essex Police has used its current command and control system for several years; it is upgrading to the latest version provided by the manufacturer which will enable additional features and functionality for call takers and dispatchers.

- The NCHS will be monitored from April 2006, ahead of the requirement to do so (November 2006).

- The facility for members of the public to contact the force by text messaging will be introduced during the summer of 2006.

Areas for Improvement

- A new communications division will be introduced during 2006; this will comprise the FIR, the soon-to-be created crime and intelligence support bureau, collisions information and firearms enquiries.

- Switchboards still remain at nine sites within the force and owing to limitations with IT are unable to have calls routed or diverted in the case of excessive demand. An IT solution has been identified (costing an estimated £300,000), but has been delayed until decisions on strategic forces have been finalised. In the meantime, limited overflow facilities are in place between switchboards located within the same newly structured BCU. Hours worked by switchboard operators will also be reviewed to ensure periods of peak demand are adequately covered.

- There is a need to further develop standards of customer care: a post of customer service manager has been approved.

- From April 2006 a new complaint classification will be introduced to enable all force-wide contact management issues to be identified. The communications division will review and assess these areas introducing service improvements where necessary.

- Although the FIR has a performance and review manager it will not have a dedicated analyst until CMP is fully implemented.

- Although sickness has reduced within the FIR, it is still high by comparison with other areas of Essex Police. The average number of days lost through sickness absence for police officers was 18.7 days (149.6 hours) and police staff was 11.8 days (94.4 hours).

- A significant amount of overtime has been allocated to the FIR during 2005/06; this high spend continues and has increased by 16.5% to £400,000.

5B Providing Specialist Operational Support	Grade	Direction of Travel
	Good	Improved

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	23	19	1

Contextual Factors

The ACC (PS) is the chief officer lead for specialist operational support. The MSD is the predominant supplier of these services and makes a significant contribution to supporting front-line officers.

A documented action plan has been signed off by chief officers and agreed with the National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE). Full compliance is expected before November 2006. EPC is implementing a plan to ensure compliance with the national curriculum. All Silver commanders are accredited.

Tasking and co-ordination of resources is through the Essex Police central tasking group. Urgent requests are made through the head of intelligence and assessed by the intelligence bureau.

In partnership with other police forces, Essex Police has two multi-agency emergency planning and co-ordinating groups. It is a lead member of the Thames counterterrorism partnership, and has a memorandum of understanding with Essex Fire and Rescue, health authorities and local authorities to deal with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) issues. Joint training takes place with relevant bodies including Hertfordshire and Suffolk police forces.

There is adequate capability for other specialist roles and a cadre of specialist Silver commanders are trained for dealing with incidents of CBRN, major disaster, public order and major sporting events.

Strengths

- The force has a proactive lead in the ACC (PS). All assistant chief police officers are nationally accredited Gold commanders. Essex Police has a firearms user group that meets quarterly and links into the firearms policy review group (FAPRG) which also provides robust performance review.

- Silver commanders are all accredited. They undergo annual refresher training where competency is tested. They are required to maintain a PDP with a minimum of two operations per year, and attend tactics training and annual refresher training.

- Essex Police training centre is implementing a plan to ensure compliance with the national curriculum on firearms training. All Essex Silver commanders are accredited. All officers seeking promotion to chief inspector and above must pass a SOFT assessment.

- The number of authorised firearms officers (AFOs) is monitored through the AFO template. Levels are reviewed and recalculated by the FAPRG in response to threat assessments.

- All firearms operations are debriefed by a Silver or Bronze commander with immediate issues dealt with by the operational firearms manager. Longer-term issues around policy are raised through the firearms user group.

- AFOs are equipped with TASER and baton guns. Both of these 'less lethal' options are deployed to all spontaneous and pre-planned firearms operations. Other less lethal options include CS spray and batons. Firearms operations are supported by negotiators and tactical firearms dogs.

- Essex Police is one of the police forces working with the NCPE on the firearms command training working group.

- Tasking and co-ordination of resources is through the central tasking group. Urgent requests are made through the head of intelligence and assessed by the intelligence bureau.

- An auditable training record is maintained which forms part of the National Strategy for Police Information System (NSPIS) HR officer records system. Training is audited on the database and records are kept by relevant specialist training groups. This ensures requalification and accreditation dates for officers are identified.

- Public disorder features in the force strategic assessment in relation to football and violent disorder and anticipated events such as the policing and enforcement of hunt legislation.

- CIAs are carried out prior to any policing operation where public disorder is anticipated.

- The force has a cadre of nationally trained public order commanders who receive in-force refresher training. Records of training for all ranks are maintained. Suitable PSU and support vehicles are available for public order and firearms incidents.

- A Silver reserve capability of one PSU is available for 16 hours each day covering potential times of demand. This reduces the impact on front-line staff in the event of a PSU deployment.

- Essex Police contributes to the national mutual aid protocol and has assisted other forces in the region for many years in a wide range of public order deployments.

- Although the force does not police football grounds with any significant crowd capacity it does play a role in major annual events such as the Clacton and Southend air shows and the nationally advertised V pop concert.

- Generic and specific emergency plans have been drafted in consultation with partners. Plans take into account requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act and local risk assessments. Plans are clear in format and accessible via the force intranet.

- A process exists for identifying threats and hazards and allocating resources appropriately. Operational orders are reviewed every 12 months by the contingency planning department as part of a scheduled programme.

Work in Progress

- Completion of the action plan to achieve compliance with NCPE guidance on the police use of firearms is expected by November 2006.

- A force-wide mobilisation plan is in draft form awaiting approval.

Areas for Improvement

- Although DVHCUs identify, through daily tasking, issues around community tension and hate crime, there is not a systematic collection of information and intelligence from various police sources, ie neighbourhood teams or community representatives.

- The MSD performance management framework holds managers and staff to account but needs to be developed to include contingency planning.

- Formal information-sharing protocols need to be written between partner agencies of the Essex local resilience forum, including the police.

- Links between HQ contingency planning and BCUs (including Stansted) need to be improved to ensure representation at appropriate BCU planning meetings and early site of draft plans, eg air shows at Clacton and Southend.

5C   Strategic Roads Policing

Grade	Direction of Travel
Good	Stable

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	7	33	3

Contextual Factors

Essex has a centrally managed roads policing function (part of the MSD) with a higher than average number of officers dedicated to the role. The roads policing unit (RPU) officers account for 9% of the force establishment. RPU officers are located at six bases, each led by an inspector (two in central BCU), and are aligned with the new BCU structures.

The road network in Essex is policed in accordance with the five principles laid out by the ACPO roads policing strategy:

- denying criminals use of the roads by enforcing the law;
- reducing road casualties;
- tackling the threat of terrorism;
- reducing anti-social use of the roads; and
- enhancing public confidence and reassurance by policing the roads.

Essex met its targets for 2005/06 for reducing the number of persons killed or seriously injured (KSI) with a reduction of 6% compared with the previous year. The target was set at no more than 1,077 KSI with actual performance of 1,011.

Strengths

- The ACC (PS) is the lead chief officer for roads policing. All policy and strategy is routed through the respective policy and programme boards.

- The operational head of roads policing is involved at a strategic level and attends the force daily briefings. As a result of a review into the intelligence requirements of the MSD a performance and intelligence team has been introduced. RPUs are intelligence led and operate closely with geographic BCUs, attending weekly and fortnightly tasking meetings. A dedicated roads policing analyst is supported by field intelligence officers (FIOs) at each RPU.

- RPUs are fully utilised to support BCUs, eg 'action' arrest days, and in the absence of investigation work or road-related deployment will, if appropriate, attend crime scenes. If significant resources are required from RPU, bids will be made through level 2 TTCG.

- Essex Police continues to develop ANPR technology to support roads policing and has a dedicated intercept team. RPU officers resource an additional team which is deployed to support MSD and BCU operations.

- A review of ANPR capability was carried out in 2005. One outcome was the reintroduction of patrol motorcycles in March 2006 to provide additional high visibility and support ANPR operations.

- Armed RPU officers located at two bases in the county provide 24/7 ARV capability.

- RPU officers enforce legislation intended to reduce the number of casualties, ie drink driving, seat belts, speeding, inappropriate driving. Media campaigns have been carried out highlighting these areas as well as that of driver fatigue.

- SLAs have been drawn up with BCUs setting out the minimum level of service that can be expected from RPUs. Liaison officers have been appointed within each RPU to further strengthen ties between the units and BCUs.

- Multi-agency work is regularly undertaken, eg Operations Mermaid and Coachman, targeting illegally operated goods and passenger vehicles. There is clear evidence of effective partnership working with liaison and joint activity at BCU level, with local road safety officers and other agencies adopting the partnership approach to solving problems, eg the Bike-Safe scheme aimed at reducing motorcycle casualties.

- A revised pursuit policy has been introduced to provide clear guidance to those involved in managing pursuits which implements all the guidance contained in the ACPO policy.

- Management information for road casualties is obtained from an IT system shared with Essex County Council, drawing on comprehensive data gathered over the last 20 years.

- The ACPO road death investigation manual is utilised with trained FLOs in place. All supervisors attend a road death scene manager's course and inspectors attend the nationally accredited SIO training programme.

- Road death files are monitored for timeliness and quality and all are reviewed by the head of department.

Work in Progress

- The force is reviewing the roads policing function to establish if resource levels are set at an appropriate level.

Areas for Improvement

- Roads policing is incorporated into the strategic assessment but analysis in terms of current and long-term issues is limited.

- Although the force is working at an operational level to the principles of the ACPO roads policing strategy, its own strategy is still in draft form and has not been formally adopted.

- The Essex Safety Camera Partnership is working with draft guidelines; static and mobile speed enforcement cameras are deployed based on intelligence.

6 Resource Use (Domain B)

6A Human Resource Management

Grade	Direction of Travel
Good	Improved

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
2	18	23	0

National Position

The PPAF indicators on sickness and medical retirement continue to be key quantitative measurements of human resource (HR) performance. Increasing significance is being given to the completion of performance development reviews (PDRs) within 60 days of due date. PDRs should be intelligence-driven and link to other HR processes such as promotion and career pathways.

While most forces have conducted some basic workforce planning, this has yet to be extended to all staff, ranks and grades. Workforce planning often concentrates on basic succession planning for key operational police officer posts. Most forces now have a full range of policies to support the work/life balance, often going beyond their legal obligations. The majority of forces need to develop an effective mechanism to manage demand, which ensures that they allocate resources to peak periods. There is limited evidence to show that supervisors and managers have been adequately trained in effective resource management.

Although annual staff satisfaction surveys are common, applying the learning from these surveys, and from employment tribunals, accidents, injuries, complaints and grievances, could be developed further. Much health and safety activity in forces is owned by a handful of key individuals and is rarely integrated fully into day-to-day activity, other than monitoring of accidents, injuries and near-misses. Few forces have accident/injury reduction targets or effective performance management of health and safety activity.

Contextual Factors

The ACC (OS) is chief officer lead for HR and health and safety. After a gap of nearly ten months a new head of HR was appointed in early 2005. HR management has been reviewed in light of the force restructure. Police officer HR managers on BCUs have been replaced by HR professionals aimed at professionalising the business and improving focus. The department aims to deliver a fully competent, professional, well-motivated and diverse

workforce capable of delivering first-class policing at the individual, team and corporate levels. Essex Police was awarded the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development police forum award for 2005/06.

In 2005 all staff undertook risk-assessment training based on dynamic risk assessments. BCU command teams are subject to mandatory health and safety meetings chaired by the BCU commander. Near misses are evaluated and, if necessary, action plans formulated.

HR have fully contributed to FLAG, advising on the returning and re-designating of police posts back to front-line policing as well as assisting with the BCU restructuring exercise. Positive comments from staff association have been received as to how the change has been managed.

During 2005/06 sickness absence increased for officers and staff. The average number of hours lost through police officer sickness was 65.3 hours (8.2 days), lower than the national average of 72.0 hours (9.0 days) but did not meet the national policing plan target of 64 hours (8.0 days). Police staff sickness absence was an average of 74.9 hours (9.4 days) which was lower than the national average of 78.5 hours (9.8 days) but did not meet the national policing plan target of 72 hours (9.0 days). PDR completion rate had reached 96% at the end of the year.

Strengths

- The force has a costed HR plan including performance measures that are reviewed annually. Cost benefits are also included within the plan. The HR plan is agreed annually with the PA which actively scrutinises progress through its diversity panel.

- A linked programme of work including diversity, recruitment, promotions, pay and pensions, employee relations, retention, training and development is managed by the HR Programme and Policy Board which produces a six monthly progress report.

- SHARP is chaired by either the ACC (OS) or the DFA and oversees the work of the HR department.

- Information on absence, ill-health retirements, recuperative and restrictive duties, diversity, recruitment and retention, flexible working, disability, turnover and establishment levels is all monitored and reported to the PA.

- HR management has been reviewed in light of the internal force restructure. Police officer HR managers on BCUs (chief inspectors) have been replaced by police staff professional divisional human resource managers (HRMs), who provide specialist advice and support to SMTs and are either qualified or undergoing training and part qualified.

- Role profiles and descriptions are available on the intranet. All line managers have clear lines of accountability for HR issues affecting staff and there are supporting strategies.

- The health and safety annual plan is developed and monitored by the force health and safety committee and PA. Risk assessments have been completed for all work activities and a risk-assessment template developed for planned operations.

- Local safety committees are chaired by BCU commanders and membership includes both police and support staff safety representatives. Attendance and meeting frequency is monitored, and health and safety support officers attend meetings.

- Health and safety is identified as one of the main competencies for all staff and responsibilities are reflected appropriately in job profiles and PDRs.

- All accidents are investigated to an appropriate standard according to the level of severity and compliance. This requirement is monitored centrally. Accidents are analysed and costed.

- A sickness management group, chaired by head of HR, meets monthly to discuss long-term sick cases as well as staff on recuperative duties. Managers and supervisors take ownership of HR issues including sickness management. The force continues to invest in targeted healthcare, achieving significant benefits by securing prompt return to work of staff that have received it.

- BCU officers and police staff interviewed stated that return-to-work interviews following sickness absence are regularly carried out and are far more robust. Adequate welfare or occupational health support is provided where necessary. Poor performance is challenged; the force has managed a small number of officers under unsatisfactory performance procedure.

- The majority of officers and staff interviewed were well motivated and felt valued. Special priority and bonus payments are paid in addition to informal means of recognition.

- The force has introduced a full-time employee relations manager. Grievances and employment tribunal cases are examined every month. The grievance procedure was updated in 2005. HR forums are held on learning from grievances. DHRMs are trained as mediators with a view to enable resolution of disputes where appropriate at an early stage.

Work in Progress

- Basic HR features are fully operational on the national NSPIS HR system and have been updated to take into account the new BCU structures. Other modules are due to be functional during 2006, including health and safety training records and a duty management system.

Areas for Improvement

- Following the structural and personnel changes within BCU HR functions, work is being carried out to formalise processes between BCUs and HQ HR.

- Although police officers and staff are recruited, trained and developed to meet organisational needs, the force is developing workforce planning with particular focus on succession planning.

6B Training, Development and Organisational Learning	Grade	Direction of Travel
	Good	Improved

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
3	11	27	2

National Position

Learning and development (L&D) is a key driver for forces to improve performance. The requirement is for the right staff to have the right skills in the right place and at the right time in order to achieve or support operational performance.

HMIC has awarded a Good grade where key criteria have been met. Notably, where there is a clear distinction between the role of contractor and client, with the full and sustained involvement of a chief officer and the Police Authority. There should be a single post with accountability for all L&D products and services. Another prerequisite is an L&D strategy which is fully compliant with Home Office guidance and supported by a business plan, an improvement plan and a fully costed 'planned' and 'actual' delivery plan. Finally, a Good grade reflects robust quality assurance and evaluation processes, with clear evidence that the force is engaged in collaborative activity.

Contextual Factors

This section summarises the results of improvement activities which have been undertaken since the last inspection. It facilitates an understanding of the context within which such activities have taken place together with an understanding of the results. The force was graded Good during the 2004/05 baseline process with a number of recommendations made for improvement.

During 2005/06 two key senior positions were filled by new recruitments – the head of training and deputy head of training. Both posts were restructured as a result of the HMIC inspection in June 2004. The head of training is now a professional human resource development (HRD) post, while the deputy post is a police officer post (chief inspector level).

The health and safety costed programme was included in the 2006–09 learning and development (L&D) plan so that all L&D activities are captured in the force L&D plan. The national costing model (NCM) has been fully implemented. This provides costings for the force L&D plan and for divisional L&D plans. The NCM captures all L&D activity; it is proactively managed by the force training planning and co-ordination group (TPCG) and has been approved by the PA.

A draft quality assurance (QA) strategy has been written and it will be implemented during 2006/07. In the meantime EPC is using alternative methods of assessment, eg quality observation of all trainers and instructors.

Restructuring of HR managers to BCUs has meant that BCU-based trainers now report to them.

Strengths

This section summarises areas that are considered to be particular strengths of the L&D function. In the main, for an area to be considered a strength it will have been in place for at least 12 months and will represent practice from which the force is able to evidence demonstrable and ongoing benefit.

- Strong mechanisms are in place to manage the L&D function with robust leadership provided at chief officer and PA level. Additionally, there is a clear client focus to support operational objectives and performance underpinned by established L&D processes with clear accountability mechanisms. The corporate governance process provides a strategic L&D overview and includes key stakeholders

- There are robust prioritisation models for all L&D activities. In addition there is a risk management process and a corporate template for L&D policy changes to ensure a consistent approach that provides an audit of policy changes and the reasons for them.

- The L&D function has established strong links with internal clients: crime, MSD and contact management. It has a good level of facilities and resourcing. The college is an accredited NVQ centre. All programmes are mapped to the integrated competency framework (ICF) and the force has investors in people (IiP) accreditation.

- There is strong regional collaboration, eg using facilities at Wethersfield for firearms L&D activities, joint working with Harlow hospital to provide advanced trauma life support training, commissioning external providers for the senior leadership development programme and establishing EPC's community engagement process, building e-learning (10 computer-based training packages) and using the NCM at force and BCU levels.

- The L&D function works closely with workforce modernisation. The head of training attends a corporate governance board which steers police officer and police staff resource planning. This provides direction for probationer recruits and helps to plan probationer L&D at strategic, college and performance development unit (PDU) levels, plus resourcing the probationer L&D programme (vehicles, classrooms, trainers, tutor constables, etc). The strategic planning also supports the force's succession planning.

- The HR programme of work is reviewed by the DCC and is linked to force priorities. The L&D function achieved all predetermined targets within the HR plan. All L&D activities are evaluated at levels 1, 2 and 3 and since October 2005 the L&D function has produced monthly performance digest which ascertains wastage costs and

cancellation costs, establishes why delegates do not attend and determines if learning needs are being met for key L&D programmes.

- The L&D function has set a strategic pathway for professionalising not only the workforce but also its own staff. For example, the NVQ portfolio has expanded and the NVQ centre grading has been upgraded to A.

Areas for Improvement

This section provides a broad summary of the areas for improvement found as a consequence of the current inspection. Specific areas to address are contained in the detailed assessment guide that the force retains. That document contains scoring of between one and five for 90 specific areas. More immediate effort will be required on those areas scoring three or less than for those scoring four or more. The progress on the areas summarised below will be reported on in the context section of future inspection reports.

- A QA strategy has been written and approved in principle by the TPCG. Due to restructuring, a delay has arisen to recruit the QA post, which is now being progressed. Once the appointment is filled the force needs ensure that the QA policy is formally ratified, firmly embedded and mainstreamed into core EPC and divisional L&D business.

- The force needs to update the L&D function intranet site in order to improve the marketing of the functions products and services and help customers identify how L&D programmes link to performance.

- There is a need to establish an L&D IAG, a BCU training officer forum and to roll out NSPIS HR to divisions to capture all L&D activity.

- A permanent equality and diversity training officer should be appointed to implement the Race and Diversity Leadership Development Programme (RDLDP) temporary funding has been obtained for 06/07. The head of training has been successful in obtaining permanent funding for community engagement officers and is recruiting staff to support the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) and RDLDP.

- The e-learning portfolio should be expanded and a blended learning approach should be taken via the national centre for applied learning technology. Initial discussions have taken place to set up a discovery workshop which will form the college's strategy for this L&D intervention.

- A consultation mechanism should be developed to assess satisfaction from staff and customers and respond to issues raised. These processes have recently started but need to be embedded and ensure continuous improvement is audited.

- The L&D management team need to formalise communications with its staff and plans to have quarterly meetings to facilitate this. This will augment the monthly team meetings and biweekly management team meetings which currently take place.

- While there is an embedded evaluation function this could be further improved by focusing on the impact of L&D activities on results at level 4.

	Grade	Direction of Travel
6C Race and Diversity	**Good**	**Stable**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	14	27	2

Contextual Factors

The diversity strategy is supported by a programme of work focusing on the six strands of diversity. Diversity training has been delivered to all staff and is now part of the training for new recruits. This training will be developed with the implementation of the probationer training units. Race and diversity training is also included in the core leadership development modules.

The force is currently operating an internal partnership approach to diversity with the equality and diversity manager (HR) working in a co-located situation alongside the equality of service manager; HRMs provide day-to-day diversity advice while the diversity manager leads on corporate issues such as policy, equal opportunities survey and ACPO programmes of work compliance.

Implementation of Home Office guidance has taken place in 2005/06 to ensure the application of the DDA. Key staff have been trained, and managers are supported by the HR manager and the force medical adviser on technical issues. There is evidence that specific reasonable adjustments have been made for individuals under the DDA and engagement with organisations such as 'access to work' to provide expertise and funding for specific cases.

There are active and effective consultation and engagement mechanisms in force staff associations and support networks including the Police Federation, maternity network, minority ethnic staff and the senior women's group.

The use of positive action initiatives has been used to good effect across departments where under-representation exists, eg open days for firearms and roads policing officers.

Strengths

- The Chief Constable chairs the force equality board. The force has demonstrated commitment to the equality agenda by supporting a diversity day for senior managers.

- The ACC (OS) leads on the implementation of IAGs (and chaired the group in its early stages) and the LCJB staff engagement action team. The ACC (TP) also chairs the equal opportunities committee and the equality scheme.

- The director of Essex Race Equality Council (REC) is a member of the equality scheme steering group.

- The diversity strategy is supported by a programme which delivers towards the six strands of diversity.

- Diversity training has been delivered to all staff within the organisation and is now part of the training for new recruits. This training will be developed further with the implementation of the probationer training units. Race and diversity training is included in the core leadership development modules.

- BCU commanders and heads of departments are set annual diversity PDR objectives by chief officers.

- The annual workforce monitoring report was published in October 2005. Disability, faith and sexual orientation monitoring commences April 2006 (police staff recruitment is currently monitored). The monitoring report also identifies staff grievances, those leaving the force and those subject to discipline across all diversity strands. Training monitoring been possible since NSPIS HR was implemented in 2005.

- A hate-crime policy has been introduced along with BCU DVHCUs.

- Diversity training has been provided for specialist staff; an example is the use of the King formula by investigators in the PSD. A seminar has been held for DVHCU officers to network with LGBT staff to improve understanding and to identify how staff support groups can contribute to operational policing.

- Implementation of Home Office guidance has taken place in 2005/06 to ensure the application of the DDA. Key staff are provided with appropriate training and managers are supported by the HR manager and the force medical adviser on technical issues.

- Within the diversity unit there is a permanent part-time co-ordinator for the support associations of Nexus (LGBT) and the Essex Police Black Police Association (EPBPA).

- There are active and effective consultation and engagement mechanisms in force staff associations and support networks including the Police Federation, maternity network, minority ethnic staff and the senior women's group.

- The use of positive action initiatives has been used to good effect across departments where under-representation exists, eg open days for firearms and roads policing officers.

- The implementation of the 'breaking through action plan' has taken place and Essex Police appears to be on target to achieve ethnic recruitment and retention and progression targets and this work is reviewed frequently to ensure compliance.

- There are comprehensive policy frameworks in place outlining fairness at work issues; these include flexible and part-time working with a number of staff having already taken up the options available to them.

Work in Progress

- Funding has been approved for a disability co-ordinator.

Areas for Improvement

- Work is being carried out by the force to fully engage EPBPA and disability especially in relation to consultation.

- Generic training in community and race relations (CRR) was delivered to all members of the force between 2000 and 2004. Officers and staff attending development or specialist courses will now receive CRR training within these courses. The force will need to ensure that officers and staff that do not attend these courses are identified and that diversity training appropriate to their needs is provided.

- The force recognises the need to ensure specific issues such as sexuality and trans-gender are included within diversity training.

- Although diversity performance is a standing item on the equality board agenda and is monitored by the PA there is not a comprehensive performance management framework for race and diversity. The diversity unit will be leading on work during 2006 to develop such a framework.

	Grade	Direction of Travel
6D Managing Financial and Physical Resources	**Good**	**Stable**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	11	24	7

Contextual Factors

HMIC assessment of this domain is based on the force self-assessment return as well as a consideration of the police use of resources evaluations (PURE) by the Audit Commission's appointed auditor. Set out at the end of this report are the appointed auditor's summarised scores for each theme covered by PURE. Separate more detailed reports on PURE have also been issued by the appointed auditor for the Authority/force.

Work on preparing for force mergers has had a significant impact on the finance department and other support services.

Strengths:

- There are strong budget-making processes within the force with a strong level of budget-holder involvement and the use of 'decision conference' techniques. There are also strong processes for medium-term financial planning with again strong involvement from budget holders and the PA.

- The financial standing of the force is sound with a comparatively good level of general reserves compared with the rest of the service. General reserves amounted to 3.7% of net revenue expenditure at 31 March 2006. Currently the force is in a stable position from the funding formula with very little impact from 'floors and ceilings'. The force also operates a 'separate new development reserve' to address any implications of the merger of strategic forces.

- Savings have been achieved by reducing the number of BCUs from ten to five.

- New financial regulations have been produced after a fundamental review of their scope and application following a joint review by the force finance director and the treasurer of the PA.

- The procurement service has been developed, and since the last assessment additional staffing resources have been obtained that have addressed outstanding issues on contract evaluation.

- Good compliance processes are used on procurement contracts with a regime based on the Agresso system on non-contract spend levels. System reports are also used to develop new contracts from management information provided.

- An innovative initiative on estates management is the provision of a technical service to front-line policing as experts in building/paving cases. This is innovative good practice that could be considered by other forces.

- The force runs a strong vehicle fleet service with the fleet manager taking the lead on national benchmarking of transport in England and Wales. The fleet is constantly reassessed for value for money and size, taking into account benchmarking, vehicle utilisation and whole life costs in order to deliver the best service into front-line policing. The service also includes an online catalogue for vehicle fleet management and a wide range of financial management information.

- Essex Police is also taking the lead and has proposed the 'six force collaboration' on a shared transport service for the Eastern region. This is a good example of a proposed proactive collaboration venture.

Areas for Improvement:

- There is the need to consider the strategy for integrated finance and business systems and reduce time spent on duplicate keying processes, particularly in relation to HR and payroll.

- The force acknowledges that it needs to develop its risk management processes and needs to integrate these with its business plans. There is current development of a risk register for approval by chief officers.

- As with most other police forces, a gap has been identified in funding protective services and this is under current review.

- The force acknowledges that it still requires development and use of results from activity analysis data.

- A best value review (BVR) has been undertaken by external consultants on estates management, but recommendations have been deferred due to the merger agenda. The recommendations will need to be considered when the future of strategic forces has been decided. The force acknowledges that it is not making the best use of its estate and needs to update its strategy, develop space audits and develop performance monitoring of estate contractors.

Audit Commission Use of Resources

Force and Authority: Essex

Element	Assessment
Financial reporting	Not Available
Financial management	3
Financial standing	3
Internal control	2
Value for money	3

Key to grades
1. Below minimum requirements – inadequate performance
2. Only a minimum requirement – adequate performance
3. Constantly above minimum requirements – performing well
4. Well above minimum requirements – performing strongly

The judgements are made by auditors under the Code of Audit Practice and in accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

	Grade	Direction of Travel
6E Information Management	**Good**	**Improved**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	9	31	2

National Position

The convergence of information and technology streams, and in particular the developing role of the chief information officer, is focusing attention on how forces corporately govern information. The aim in this assessment is to differentiate between forces that are taking an information-based approach to delivery and those that are technology-driven. A raft of emerging standards – notably Management of Police Information (MoPI) – is defining metrics against which performance can be measured, and these will ease the challenge in future assessments. Equally, the need for forces to develop medium-term planning, to consider national strategy in their local planning, and to reflect the requirements of the information technology infrastructure library (ITIL) have all provided some clear measures of success.

It has been a particularly challenging 12 months for forces' information services, as much development work was postponed because of amalgamation proposals. This backlog will need to be addressed in 2006/07, together with work on shared approaches to bridge the level 2 shortfall. The challenge of providing information for the cross-regional information-sharing project (CRISP) and the emerging IMPACT system is considerable. This may require the development of 'confidential' networks and work to meet the requirements of the Unified Police Security Architecture (UPSA) as well as MoPI. These carry as yet unquantified but very considerable costs, as well as resulting in major business change. With constrained budgets and increasing demands, the future poses real challenges as to how forces will manage their information assets.

Contextual Factors

The force development board (FDB), chaired by the DCC, steers all IT-related development. An overarching strategy and work programme for information and knowledge management produced and managed under the auspices of the DCC as chair of the FDB has been agreed with the PA as one outcome of a BVR on information systems (IS)/IT completed in 2005.

The IS/IT strategy reflects a longstanding commitment to national strategy (ISS4P). Delivery of HR and custody/case preparation systems is well advanced. The force consistently fulfils national commitments regarding supplying data and meeting technical requirements arising

from the crime recording bureau (CRB)/INI and IMPACT programmes. A robust IT infrastructure and effective, integrated systems for key operational processes are in place; these include provision for up-to-date performance data (the National Management Information System (NMIS)). This has been essential in supporting the transition to a more performance-orientated culture in the force.

Data network bandwidth demand is continually assessed, and enterprise management products used to provide proactive management. The IT service desk satisfaction levels are running in excess of 90%.

Information technology infrastructure library (ITIL) service continuity processes including disaster recovery are complete and being applied system by system as service levels are agreed.

Strengths

- Along with other boards the FDB operates to the principles of PRINCE 2 project management standards. IS/IT contributes to all project boards.

- One of the results from the 2005 BVR on IS/IT was the production of an overarching strategy and work programme for information and knowledge management.

- The head of corporate support and development reports directly to the DCC and is responsible for strategic information management and information and communication technology (ICT) service planning/delivery.

- The three-year forward planning process ensures that resources and priorities for local and anticipated national developments such as the National Science and Technology Strategy and IMPACT are reviewed annually and linked to the planning budget cycle.

- The IT Department (ITD) are subject to the review process and in addition to continuous assessment against delivery of ongoing projects receive an end-of-year chief officer-led review.

- A significant number of national and local IT projects have been delivered on time and within budget. Examples of local projects introduced are the forensic allocation system, used for tracking DNA submissions, and the collision administration system.

- Essex Police has been keen to exploit new technology and has piloted mobile data at Braintree. Around 150 devices have been introduced. Expansion of mobile data has been placed on hold pending decisions on strategic forces.

- An important contribution to force performance management is the provision of NMIS to support daily performance monitoring and reporting.

- Essex Police fulfils national commitments regarding supplying data and meets technical requirements arising from CRB/INI and IMPACT programmes.

- The force was the first non-cross-regional information sharing project (CRISP) force to meet 31/3 IMPACT deadlines. The data repository used to drive this provision is an integral feature of current local intelligence IS support.

- Implementation of the community safety plan (CSP) has achieved an 89% rating under the recent Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) CSP national accreditation compliance survey.

- Information security sits within the corporate support department and operates under the information compliance manager's direction, overseeing CSP, freedom of information and data protection. Formal meetings are now held between information security and the PSD.

- The post of information security auditor has been introduced to assist the information security officer. The force has achieved 89% compliance with ACPO community security policy guidance. A force CSP and programme of work has been introduced.

- The force has a robust IT infrastructure and effective, integrated systems for key operational processes. Data network bandwidth demand is continually assessed, and enterprise management products utilised.

- Implementation of incident, problem and configuration management ITIL systems has been successfully completed. Performance monitoring and service accountability are defined in the ITD SLA, reviewed annually via continuous customer feedback. ITD and CSD are subject to twice yearly chief officer-led reviews.

- Comprehensive arrangements for disaster recovery and business continuity for mission critical systems are in place. Further work is contained within a recently formed business continuity project. Systems are regularly tested and where possible during planned upgrades to minimise disruption to users.

- The IT service desk operates a single point of contact for reporting IT issues from 6 am – midnight seven days a week. On-call staff are available for mission critical systems outside these hours.

- Satisfaction levels run in excess of 90%. This was also reflected in positive feedback from many staff interviewed as to the standard of service received from the IT department.

Work in Progress

- The force IS/IT strategy (along with all other force supporting strategies) is due for review during summer 2006. This will coincide with the updated force policing plan, long-term strategy/plan and neighbourhood policing restructuring. An update of the force business benefits will be included in this work.

- Enterprise management products LanDesk, Quest and Cisco works are being integrated into a new service management solution forming part of the configuration management database, providing a single viewpoint of all network, server, and desktop and operating/application software issues. This work should be complete by end of August 2006.

Areas for Improvement

- There will be a need to increase the number of computer terminals to service requirements of those performing neighbourhood policing roles.

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- ITIL service continuity processes including disaster recovery are complete and being applied system by system as service levels are agreed. A full implementation date is anticipated by the end of 2006.

- Planned work for an additional fallback site has been on hold pending the decision on strategic forces.

	6F National Intelligence Model	**Grade**	**Direction of Travel**
		Fair	**Improved**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	19	22	2

Contextual Factors

An in-depth analysis of compliance with the NIM was carried out in January 2006 in conjunction with the NCPE NIM implementation team. The outcome of this work has been the introduction of the EIM project. The project incorporates a comprehensive programme of work which will position Essex Police much closer to full compliance.

To manage the change to a more effective NIM model the project team has visited BCUs to explain the EIM to command teams and staff. The intranet has been used to provide standard templates for NIM products as well as inform officers and staff of developments with the project. Presentations on NIM and EIM are being incorporated into probationer and development training and plans are being made to extend training to all officers and relevant police staff.

Strengths

- The force intelligence strategy is publicised on the intranet and authorised by the director of intelligence in his role as chair of the strategic intelligence group.

- The force strategic tasking and co-ordination group (FSTCG) meets May and November to assess the force strategic assessment; the group then sets the force control strategy.

- Regional priorities are included within the force control strategy if identified as a threat by the FSTCG.

- There is evidence of strategic prioritisation with policing plans linked to control strategies.

- Force and BCU strategic assessments are compiled by centrally line-managed, locally tasked analysts using a standard NIM-compliant template. The principal analyst is head of profession; analysts take part in NVQ training.

- The force contributes a police officer to the jointly operated regional intelligence cell.

- Information from force strategic assessments is forwarded for assessment, and where appropriate, inclusion into the regional strategic assessment.

- Effective use has been made of covert human intelligence sources (CHISs) with intelligence gained leading to a number of operational successes. The force recognises the need to further exploit this area of intelligence source and have performance indicators in place based on tasking, intelligence submissions and arrests against control strategy priorities.

- Daily dashboard meetings examine critical incidents as well as BCU and operational departmental performance. This provides a relevant operational overview for chief officers and BCU commanders leading to immediate prioritisation and allocation of HQ resources if appropriate.

- Level 1 TTCG meetings are now held on the same day in the force. There are clear links between the strategic and tactical meeting processes.

- The EIM team attends by rotation all TTCG meetings and assesses against standards set out in the EIM. Assessments are written for audit purpose and to provide a baseline against which to measure improvements.

- The hotspot diary links TTCG to daily briefing in an efficient and effective manner.

- The force has an effective intelligence link with the MPS via an analyst at Harlow. The analyst has full access to the MPS criminal intelligence system.

Work in Progress

- Although there is some evidence of officers being tasked effectively on a day-to-day basis there is recognition of the need to ensure briefings are relevant, effective and consistent in format between BCUs. The quality and standard of briefings will improve from July 2006 when a new IT briefing system becomes fully operational.

- A new role of tasking activities manager at either DCI or detective inspector level has been introduced into every BCU to ensure tasks from TTCG are enforced and resources made available.

- To ensure intelligence data contained within various disparate areas is fully captured, ie ANPR, VISOR and Holmes, a project team has been initiated to address issues of data retention and disposal as detailed in management of police information guidelines.

- The force recognises the need to develop its use of NIM and has introduced the EIM. Guidance has been issued to BCUs and departments on structures, systems and processes to be used; this will ensure a consistent and uniform approach leading to full NIM compliance and delivering more effective intelligence-led policing.

Areas for Improvement

- Following the changes to chief officer portfolios an opportunity exists to market and publicise intelligence-led policing by raising the profile of the NIM champion, the ACC (PS).

- The existing IT intelligence system pre-dates NIM and is not seen as user friendly or effective by staff. There has been a history of poor data quality; this has led to inefficient search capability, impacting on performance.

- Current QA processes have led to significant delays in the processing of intelligence forms. The feasibility of a 24/7 intelligence bureau function is being examined.

- Although there is a centrally maintained problem-solving database and a list containing a menu of tactical options, contributions by BCUs are minimal. A number of the data-sharing protocols with partners have been in existence for some years and require revisiting to ensure they are still relevant.

- Although there is understanding of roles and responsibilities in the delivery of NIM, the level and depth of comprehension varies. Tactical assessments require developing and the use of target/problem profiles is sporadic.

- The force plans to introduce annual inspections, assessing NIM compliance. This work will be carried out by the corporate support department as part of the force inspection process.

- Partners attend and add value to TTCG meetings in only some BCUs. Partners do not attend level 2 TTCG meetings.

7   Leadership and Direction

7A   Leadership

Grade	Direction of Travel
Good	Not Graded

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	4	35	4

Contextual Factors

The Chief Constable joined Essex in July 2005. Since taking appointment he has embarked on a significant programme of change which has been implemented at a fast pace. His personal energy and leadership has been widely publicised in local and regional media, and outturn results are impressive within the timeframe.

The policing style has been reviewed and adjusted, internal restructuring has reduced the number of BCUs from nine to five (plus Stansted Airport), performance management is regarded as part of daily business, and officers and staff have been assigned to NPTs. In addition to this 200 officers have returned or been re-designated to operational front-line duties.

The changes as highlighted have taken place during periods of uncertainty for the force and its staff owing to the national restructuring debate. To the credit of the chief officer team they have continued to implement new work and improve on performance without being distracted by speculation or events surrounding restructuring.

During the period under assessment the DCC has not been able to fully devote his attention to force business. As a result of the DCC's recognised capability and experience he was asked to carry out an investigation into the conduct of a senior officer in another force. He later became heavily involved in regional restructuring, leading and chairing the regional working group. As a result of the above a process has now been put in place to enable the Chief Constable to back-fill any long-term vacancies within the ACPO team. This will ensure continuity and momentum in portfolio business should a member of the team be abstracted.

There has been renewed focus on performance over the last nine months since the arrival of the Chief Constable. Efforts now need to be turned into improving quality without losing momentum.

Strengths

- The chief officer team contains a complementary blend of skills and provides continuity together with fresh insights. There has been a strong impetus and lead given by the new Chief Constable as to performance improvement and priorities for service delivery. An example would be the focus on sanction detections, and stronger focus on quality of service.

- The vision of policing Essex is set out in strategic documents and plans with resources aligned to force priorities using the Essex resource allocation model and SHARP. Activity analysis and activity-based costing is used to demonstrate the actual use of resources against the PA priorities.

- The Chief Constable has introduced robust daily performance management processes leading to increased accountability as well as visibility and accessibility to chief officers.

- The Chief Constable's vision is well communicated and understood throughout the organisation. Managers and staff interviewed were able to clearly articulate the direction in which the Chief Constable is taking the force.

- The Chief Constable holds regular staff seminars and has reached every supervisor (including police staff) and above and made announced and impromptu visits to police stations and premises. Other chief officers, including the director of finance, have increased their visibility to staff. Formal mechanisms are in place to consult with staff associations and support groups.

- Chief officers' portfolios have been adjusted to build on strengths as well as to develop individuals. All chief officers contribute to ACPO work at the national level, this raises the profile of the force as well as returns a benefit in the form of greater expertise in specialist areas.

- The relationship with the PA continues to be constructive and there is evidence of an even stronger relationship developing. Weekly meetings are held between the Chief Constable and chair of the PA. The chair, vice chair, chief executive and treasurer to the PA now attend force strategy and performance conferences.

- The force has undergone significant change during the last nine months including moving more staff to the front line and restructuring BCUs. Programme and project management processes are well established and adequately resourced in terms of finance and managers to deliver against project plans. Performance delivery has improved during this period. The new focus on delivery and personal accountability is well recognised by staff.

- The ACTION leadership programme, promoting active leadership by all managers, officers and staff has been retained by the Chief Constable.

- ACTION is well publicised and recognised throughout the force and has been cited as best practice by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development and attracted interest from other forces.

- Rewards and recognition are provided in the form of ACTION awards including a high profile presentation dinner. This particular event is well publicised internally and externally. Bonus payments are paid to staff for recognition of significant contributions.

- The Chief Constable provides a lead for diversity and is the chair of the force equality board. The Chief Constable holds regular meetings with minority support groups within the force and chairs an annual diversity strategy day. All chief officers have a diversity-related PDR objective.

- Staff morale, gauged during interviews and visits (including BCU inspections) is broadly good, taking into account change within the force and for some an incremental increase in workload.

- A dedicated post within corporate support undertakes environmental scanning. Issues are fed into the planning process through the strategy and performance conferences and also contribute to the force strategic assessment.

- There is evidence of enhanced focus on customer service/engagement and performing well as the BCS data reveals the force to be below the MSF group average for level of fear of crime in regards to burglary, car crime, violent crime and the perceptions of ASB.

- The Chief Constable has adopted a high profile in the media, including national press coverage on reducing and investigating crime. His direction to any criminals in Essex to 'bring your toothbrush' is quoted by staff.

- There is evident commitment to the broad reform agenda and the need to deliver efficiency, where considerable attention has been focused.

Work in Progress

- While there is clear evidence of risk management at the tactical and operational level the force does not have an up-to-date corporate risk register. Work is under way to introduce robust systems and processes to ensure there is comprehensive risk management at every level of the organisation.

- Respect for race and diversity and for all staff to be treated fairly and equally needs to be continually reinforced by chief officers and senior managers to ensure this message reaches all officers and staff within the organisation and that they have the skills to deal with such issues.

Areas for Improvement

- Although there is a working time policy a number of senior police officers are not recording or submitting details of their working hours. Others regularly exceed their hours, calling into question their operational as well as managerial effectiveness after working prolonged periods without adequate rest.

- The force intends to simplify planning processes especially those involving the PA.

- The force should continue to focus on communication of the vision and expectations of delivery, while at the same time ensuring continued active listening to feedback from staff.

GOOD PRACTICE

TITLE: Action Leadership
PROBLEM: : The Essex Policing style is public focused and aims to deliver: - Increased detection on an overall detection rate of 50% within 3 years. - Crime reduced, a year on year decline above the government target. - More visible front-line staff both Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers working in communities as part of Neighbourhood Policing Teams. - Increased arrests with a particular focus on those areas of public concern. - Impact on anti social behaviour through Neighbourhood Policing and the strategic approach to young people through PEPYS. - Police stations opened longer. - Calls from the public dealt with promptly and effectively.
SOLUTION: All of the above is led and driven by a daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly focus on performance by Chief Officers with mechanisms in place to ensure delivery and accountability. The mechanisms are the daily force wide briefing that involves direct Chief Officer contact with all divisional and operational department command team members; and the weekly *"Cougar"* meetings that ensure performance remains strategic and focused. The monthly and quarterly performance review is Chief Officer led. The Action leadership programme is a key feature of delivery of the Essex Policing Style. ACTION is the force leadership programme: Achievement Focus Customer First Take Responsibility for Performance Inspire High Standards Overcome Hurdles Never Accept Second Best ACTION is for every member of staff of Essex Police, is the bedrock of the way Essex operates enhances service delivery and drive up performance.
OUTCOME(S): The Essex Policing style is a clear area of innovation that could be transferred to other constabularies.
Force contact: Chief Inspector Adrian Coombs HMIC liaison officer .Telephone 01245 491491

	Grade	Direction of Travel
7B Performance Management and Continuous Improvement	**Good**	**Improved**

National Grade Distribution

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
0	12	26	5

Contextual Factors

There is very clear evidence throughout the organisation of focus on performance. The introduction of daily and up-to-date management information has enabled force level daily management meetings to be introduced. The meetings, chaired by a chief officer, and using telephone conferencing for those based on BCUs, provides an opportunity to monitor operational incidents and examine daily crime figures and other information against targets.

Performance management extends to front-line operational staff. Officers and staff interviewed were able to provide first-hand accounts of the significant shift towards holding them to account for their own performance.

Essex Police is committed to continuous improvement when it recognises benefits can be realised by the organisation. An example is the review carried out into NIM and the comprehensive programme of work that has resulted.

Strengths

- The Chief Constable has clearly articulated his vision and strategy for Essex Police which is consistent with strategies of partners, the National Policing Plan and National CSP. Officers and staff throughout the organisation were able to recount key messages and direction articulated by the Chief Constable.

- Finance and HR strategies are integrated with corporate strategy, force and BCU plans.

- The PA receives a quarterly performance report which includes performance against targets along with MSF and BCU comparison. In advance of the report an informal panel meeting is held where members consider the draft report and if necessary ask for further areas to be examined or for additional commentary to be made available for the full committee meeting.

- A force-wide daily briefing, chaired by a chief officer, has been introduced to scrutinise performance and examine operational activity including critical incidents. BCU commanders and heads of department are held to account for performance during these meetings.

- BCUs and HQ support departments hold daily meetings immediately after the one held at force level.

- Performance management was distinctly evident during a revisit inspection to Harlow BCU. Officers and staff are held to account by the SMT and were aware of their own and other BCUs' performance.

- The monthly force strategy group and quarterly strategy and performance meetings take a longer-term view on performance.

- A weekly strategic co-ordination Gold group entitled Cougar has been introduced to provide focus on crime and in particular sanction detections. Cougar has delivered performance improvements and is being adopted into a weekly performance management group to supplement the monthly performance and review process.

- Good performance is recognised either informally from chief officers and managers or through the bonus award scheme or honorarium for police staff. ACTION awards are also presented to staff. Staff interviewed were able to give examples of where they had been awarded bonus payments.

- Every BCU has an inspection officer who ensures compliance with the monthly inspection criteria. The HQ-based audit and inspection team carry out themed reviews falling out of external inspections or chief officer led meetings. Findings are incorporated into either policy or actions plans set, eg NIM review leading to a programme of work for the EIM.

- Reviewers from corporate support are allocated BCUs and departments. Work recently carried out by the review team includes sex offenders, custody compliance, crime investigations, detections and cautions.

- Survey results are included as part of performance assessment. Current objectives include one on victim satisfaction; results appear in the monthly force performance indicator package.

- The Stamping Out Bureaucracy initiative was launched in early 2005. Bureaucracy taskforce groups have since been established in divisions and departments. To date over 600 forms and 120 documents/policies have been discontinued.

- In August 2005 the email management scheme was launched, aimed at reducing emails and improving email management. Police uniform stores utilise the Essex Police integrated procurement and financial computer system to reduce paperwork and increase efficiency.

Work in Progress

- Further refinement is taking place of development and policy boards to ensure governance structures meet new chief officer portfolios.

- Work is being carried out by the neighbourhood policing project team and corporate support department to develop a performance framework that includes indicators on ASB, confidence and satisfaction levels to a neighbourhood level.

- A review is being carried out on all HQ support departments to identify how they can further contribute to front-line service delivery through either reallocation of human or financial resources.

- The corporate support department is able to supply policing performance assessment framework (PPAF) data on request. From July 2006 this data will be available to district level.

Areas for Improvement

- Although performance management is reaching team level, the force recognises the need to further develop performance indicators for individuals.

- Performance frameworks differ between BCUs. An opportunity exists following the reduction in the number of BCUs to introduce a corporate model.

- Although robust daily and weekly performance management processes are in place further work needs to be done to fully incorporate all HQ support departments. Quarterly performance and reviews (QPARSs) with BCU commanders have been publicised as an integral part of the performance management framework. However, QPARS have not been held with territorial BCU commanders since 2004.

- In order to provide additional focus, more objectives for the force and BCUs will be set in relation to public perception for 2006/07.

- The force has a suggestion scheme with a number of good ideas having been submitted by staff. Given the size of the organisation and the number of employees, additional marketing of the scheme along with wide publicity of successful suggestions would lead to further improvements.

GOOD PRACTICE

TITLE: Restructuring of the Force
PROBLEM: Between August and November 2005 the Police Authority and force undertook a best value review of 'Force Structure and Policing Style'. The purpose of this review was to 'increase police numbers and visibility by putting a further 200 police officers on the front-line by 31st March 2006'.
SOLUTION: This was subsequently achieved, as detailed below. On the 5th December 2005 the Police Authority accepted the recommendations of the Review to: 1. reduce the number of Basic Command Units(BCUs) from 9 + 1 (Stansted) to 5 + 1; 2. adopt a geographical command team model; 3. continue to review Headquarters' functions and posts; and 4. redistribute released resources to the front-line. Almost immediately, the force reduced the number of its territorial BCUs with each BCU now comprising two or more local authority areas with which they are fully coterminous.

Work during the review identified considerable scope to achieve back room efficiencies following BCU reduction: both in police officer and police staff posts.

Between December and February 2006 the force began to release these efficiencies by removing posts and seeking to redeploy officers and staff. At an early stage in the review a decision was taken to freeze all but the most critical police staff vacancies, this provided 106 Full-time employed vacant posts that were either removed from the establishment or made available to the 54 members of police staff whose existing posts were identified as redundant. In consequence, the force expects to make only 2 police staff redundant as a consequence of restructuring.

As it restructured, the force moved from functionally based BCU command teams to ones with geographical accountability. BCU Operations Managers were replaced with district commanders reporting to Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership superintendents. The personnel function carried out by chief inspectors (support managers) was professionalised within the territorial BCUs, Crime and Mobile Support Divisions – with HR Managers and associated support functions moved out from headquarters and the role expanded – releasing seven chief inspectors to front-line duties.

The ethos behind the command team changes was to increase alignment of responsibility for partnership working, emphasise senior officer command at a local authority level and support the rapid introduction of Neighbourhood Policing teams across the county.

As part of the Front Line Action Group (FLAG) process, 33 headquarters based police officers/posts have already been redeployed to territorial divisions and the front-line. A review of forensic services provided by the headquarters based Crime Division has resulted in a realignment of resources so that each scenes of crime office covers only one BCU area. A detailed review of administrative functions carried out by headquarters departments will be commenced in the immediate future with a view to releasing further efficiencies and increasing front-line provision.

OUTCOME(S): As a direct consequence of the restructuring exercise, by 31st March 2006 an additional 106 front-line police officer posts have been created.

FORCE CONTACT: Chief inspector Adrian Coombs HMIC liaison officer telephone 01245 491491

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ABC	Acceptable Behaviour Contract
ACC	assistant chief constable
ACC (OS)	assistant chief constable (operational support)
ACC (PS)	assistant chief constable (protective services)
ACC (TP)	assistant chief constable (territorial policing)
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AFO	authorised firearms officer
ARV	armed response vehicle
ASB	anti-social behaviour
ASBO	Anti-Social Behaviour Order
ASGCB	area safeguarding children board

B

BCS	British Crime Survey
BCU	basic command unit
BME	black and minority ethnic
BPA	Black Police Association
BVR	best value review

C

CAIU	child abuse investigation unit
CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
CCP	chief crown prosecutor
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CHIS	covert human intelligence source
CIA	community impact assessment
CJ	criminal justice
CJD	criminal justice department

CJU	criminal justice unit
CMP	contact management programme
CP	child protection
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRB	crime recording bureau
CRISP	Cross-Regional Information Sharing Project
CRR	community and race relations
CSD3s	forms for reporting racial or homophobic incidents
CSP	community safety plan

D

DAT	drug action team
DCC	deputy chief constable
DCI	detective chief inspector
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DFA	director of finance and administration
DHRM	divisional human resource manager
DV	domestic violence
DVHCU	domestic violence and hate-crime unit

E

EIM	Essex intelligence model
EPC	Essex Police college
ESGCB	Essex safeguarding children board

F

FAPRG	firearms policy review group
FDB	force development board
FIB	force intelligence bureau

FIO	field intelligence officer
FIR	force information room
FIU	financial investigation unit
FLAG	front-line action group
FLO	family liaison officer
FPN	fixed penalty notice
FSS	forensic science service

H

HQ	headquarters
HR	human resource(s)
HRD	human resource development
HTCU	high-tech crime unit

I

IAG	independent advisory group
ICF	integrated competency framework
ICIDP	Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme
ICT	information and communications technology
IiP	Investors in People
IPLDP	Initial Police Learning and Development Programme
IRT	investigative review team
IS	information systems
IT	information technology
ITD	information technology department
ITIL	information technology infrastructure library

K

KSI	killed or seriously injured

L

L&D   learning and development

LCJB   local criminal justice board

LGBT   lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

LSP   local strategic partnership

M

MAPPA   multi-agency public protection arrangements

MIS   major investigation section

MIT   major investigation team

MPS   Metropolitan Police Service

MSD   mobile support division

MSF   most similar force(s)

N

NCHS   National Call-Handling Standards

NCIS   National Criminal Intelligence Service

NCM   national costing model

NCPE   National Centre for Policing Excellence

NCRS   National Crime Recording Standard

NCS   National Crime Squad

NIM   National Intelligence Model

NMIS   National Management Information System

NPT   neighbourhood policing team

NSPIS   National Strategy for Police Information Systems

NVQ   National Vocational Qualification

NWNJ   No Witness, No Justice

O

OBTJ	offence brought to justice
OCE	organised crime enterprises
Osman	Osman v UK (1999) 1 FLR 193, where the court established that in certain circumstances the state has a positive obligation to take preventive measures to protect an individual who is at risk from the criminal activities of others

P

PA	Police Authority
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
PCSO	police community support officer
PDR	performance development review
PDU	performance development unit
PEPYS	proactive Essex Police youth strategy
PIP	professionalising the investigative process
PITO	Police Information Technology Organisation
PNC	Police National Computer
PPAF	policing performance assessment framework
PRINCE2	Projects in Controlled Environments 2 (project management methodology)
PSA	public service agreement
PSD	professional standards department
PSU	Police Standards Unit
PTPM	prosecution team performance management
PURE	police use of resources evaluation
PYO	persistent young offender

Q

QA	quality assurance

QoSC   quality of service commitment

QPARS   quarterly performance and review

R

RDLDP   race and diversity development programme

REC   race equality council

RES   race equality scheme

RPU   roads policing unit

S

SARA   scanning, analysis, response, assessment

SHARP   strategic human resources processes

SICAR   computer program for identifying shoes from shoe prints

SIO   senior investigating officer

SLA   service level agreement

SMT   senior management team

SNEN   single non-emergency number

SOCA   Serious Organised Crime Agency

SOCD   serious and organised crime directorate

SOCO   scene of crime officer

SOFT   senior officer firearms training programme

SPOC   single point of contact

SSD   scientific support department

SSM   scientific support manager

SWIM   scientific support work improvement

T

TCG   tasking and co-ordination group

TP   territorial policing

| TPCG | training planning and co-ordination group |
| TTCG | tactical tasking and co-ordination group |

V

| ViSOR | Violent and Sex Offenders' Register |

W

| WCU | witness care unit |

Y

| YOT | youth offending team |