

Meeting	Police and Crime Panel
Date	3 rd September 2020
Report Title	Operation Uplift Update
Report presented by	Angus Macpherson, Police and Crime Commissioner
Author	Kieran Kilgallen, Chief Executive

Purpose of report

1. This report provides an update on the progress of Operation Uplift.

Introduction and background information

2. As raised within the previous paper presented at the June Panel meeting, the national Uplift programme is an opportunity to increase resourcing and re-invest in policing further to a ten year period of austerity and a fall in police officer numbers.
3. The service has been asked to introduce 2,000 extra officers by March 2020, rising to 6,000 extra officers by March 2021.
4. Wiltshire has been allocated 49 extra officers by March 2021. High level assumptions continue to be made on financial and workforce plans for beyond March 2021, which suggest a total number of 147 extra officers by March 2023.
5. In order to achieve the uplift numbers, in addition to maintaining the numbers required due to officers leaving the organisation, Wiltshire will be required to recruit over 400 officers up to March 2023. It is estimated at this stage that one in eight applicants get through the process, resulting in needing approximately 3,200 applicants for police officer jobs in Wiltshire – this is a huge requirement.
6. The current intakes and 'landing' dates are as follows:

Start Training	Officers	Landing in teams	Finish Tutorship
Oct-19	37	Apr-20	Jun-20
Feb-20	20	Aug-20	Oct-20
Jun-20 (first PEQF)	40	Nov-20	Jan-21
Oct-20	20	Apr-21	Jun-21
Jan-21	40	Jul-21	Sep-21
Mar-21	20	Aug-21	Oct-21

Figure one: Officer intake timeline

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

7. Having a Police Force which is reflective of the community it serves is a vital pillar of British Policing. The planned 20,000 uplift in police officer numbers announced in 2019 offers policing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to dramatically improve the diversity of its police officer workforce. Many suggest that diversity in policing must be addressed urgently if forces are to retain the confidence of minority communities.
8. Wiltshire Police's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team have been a key function to work with communities and break down barriers to full representation across the organisation. Through the work that has been done to date, it is clear to recognise just how challenging it is to make quick progress in this area.
9. The team have been extensively supporting protected characteristics which are under-represented within the organisation (BAME and/or Female), and carrying out a range of support mechanisms from explaining what Policing is all about at engagement events, to outlining and supporting the process of the SEARCH assessment to applicants.
10. To make a real difference in the make-up of the organisation, we have to start at the beginning by understanding the current barriers and encourage people from protected characteristics to join Policing. We know that there is a long period of time between application and joining an intake as a Student Officer and so this means that significant efforts can take a long time before they are realised.
11. I continue to be encouraged with the mind-set, leadership and activity to address diversity within Wiltshire Police, and recognise that this is a strand of work which requires long term commitment. We are starting to see some positive movement in the volumes of applicants within the most recent campaign in March 2020, and this is expected to continue throughout the Uplift Programme.

Current officers in training

12. It was reported in the previous report that the College of Policing communicated an ability for Forces to derogate training, ensuring accreditation for an initial period of three months until 18th June 2020. This was subsequently extended for Forces up to 18th September 2020 to enable Forces to deal with subsequent backlogs of training.
13. The amount of training the Force can do is increasing which is good news. Face-to-face training remains limited to mandatory refresher courses, to ensure officers and staff members remain accredited in particular skill sets, such as personal safety training (PST) and driver training. The Force remains in the period of derogation, therefore they are focussing efforts to ensure officers and staff are prioritised for this training, according to expiry date. All face-to-face training is conducted in a COVID secure environment, with adapted course content to ensure COVID secure practice. Online training continues for Student Officers and will be utilised for PCSOs and other courses in the future where possible and appropriate.
14. Essential training continued during the response to COVID, and was defined as Police Officer intakes currently in training having started in October 2019 and February 2020 (IPLDP 34 and 35 respectively) and fitness tests for new police officer recruits (June 2020 – PEQF and the Special Constables in training intake 35). All other training which required face to face delivery was paused, including PCSO (originally scheduled in May 2020) and LCI (originally scheduled in June 2020) recruitment and training.

15. Outlined in figure one, the Force received and started training 37 officers in October 2019 who were due to arrive within community policing teams in April 2020. On 17th March, the Force made the decision to end IPLDP 34 three weeks early in order to release officers into CPTs across the County, providing additional resilience at a time when the workforce would likely be under strain. Officers joined their CPT on 23rd March and missed out on practical scenario and role-play sessions that will be addressed through tutorship, assessment and further inputs as required during their probation.
16. IPLDP 35 was also assessed to see if this course could be finished earlier to provide resilience to the frontline. Where at all possible, IPLDP 35 initial learning was delivered online, or remotely (i.e. not face-to-face). Where face-to-face delivery was unavoidable, social distancing and universal hygiene measures (and if relevant, PPE), were in place. However due to COVID, there were limitations to the level of training that could be provided.
17. In early April 2020, Gold Command made the decision to reduce this course by 6 weeks, with students therefore leaving training and starting in CPT on 1st June 2020. This was due to the limitations that the COVID situation would enforce on the training. Students predominantly lost guest speakers, a trip to Court and role play exercises.
18. The student officers that have been released early have been under close support and monitoring since leaving the People Development department. Local officers, the assessment team and HR advisors have been supporting this and providing any feedback on the cohorts that have been released early, indicating any patterns of performance (adverse or positive) as a result of their early release from training. At this time, no notable exceptions have been identified. A number of student officers have been assaulted which is disgraceful to hear about, however further work is underway to analyse that before drawing conclusions or linking those assaults to an early release from training. Any gaps in knowledge, not covered through tutorship, will be addressed through the assessment team working with individuals and/or inputs from the People Development training teams later in the year.

June 2020 Intake

19. On 29th June 2020 the Force welcomed the first 40 student police officers to embark on their policing careers under the new national Police Constable entry routes, introduced by the College of Policing.
20. They are our first trainees on the Policing Education Qualifications Framework, known as the PEQF, which sets professionally related qualification levels for the police service by rank or level of responsibility. The force had 25 recruits starting the 3 year Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) for non-degree holders and 15 graduates taking the 2 year Degree Holder Entry Programme. Next year we expect applications for the third entry route; graduates who already hold a professional policing degree, completed at university.
21. It has taken more than two years' in the planning and an important new partnership established with the University of South Wales, to co-deliver the training alongside our own police trainers at Devizes HQ.
22. The last few months have been challenging for the programme team, with the course curriculum having to be switched from classroom to online in light of Covid-19. However, we were pleased to be able to bring the students together in two cohorts on day one to formally

welcome them to Wiltshire, receive a briefing and picking up their laptops, while observing social distancing guidelines.

23. Future plans in the PEQF programme include an apprenticeship route for Special Constables and for PCSOs which we hope to introduce next year.
24. Early indications suggest the student officers have, in the main, adapted very well to home working. Whilst it is intense, the training team are making best use of the technology to ensure the sessions are as engaging as possible and that they are listening and adapting the approach based on feedback from the students. All of the students passed their first module exams, achieving notably high scores on average which is great to see.

March 2020 Campaign

25. Wiltshire Police launched a campaign on the 9th March which aimed to bring in 300 applicants to support the next phase of Uplift recruitment. This was achieved within 5 days and is likely to support the next 12 months of recruitment.
26. It is currently unknown how COVID will impact on recruitment figures and processes in the long term. There is a chance that candidates could be more likely to not want to join due to factors such as instability, finances or risk. Alternatively it could attract more positive attention in the way policing has supported the Country through COVID and how the roles can provide some stability in these uncertain times. Only time will tell on this.
27. In the 2019 campaign, awareness events were carried out which proved to be very positive and beneficial to candidates to get an insight into policing. Under the current environment, the Force hosted awareness events via webinars which took place on the 12th, 14th and 16th of May. This was made up of a 1.5 hour session covering a 'Day in the life of a police officer', the PEQF entry route and assessment processes. A high proportion of the candidates attended the three sessions.

Pre-employment medical assessments and Biometrics

28. To enable Occupational Health (OHU) professionals to progress the police application medicals to achieve Uplift objectives, amendments to face-to-face medicals were made by the College during COVID response.
29. A questionnaire was put in place and triaged to identify the need for further clinical investigation of declared health problems and to progress those applicants with no declared health problems through the recruitment process. The assessment was performed by a telephone consultation. This questionnaire temporarily replaced the following assessment performed by the biometrics, preventing face to face contact: Height, weight, BMI, urinalysis, blood, protein, sugar, blood pressure, spirometry visual acuity and colour vision, audiometry and muscular skeletal assessment.
30. Regulations state clearly that biometric vetting checks must be made prior to appointment. Supported by guidance by the College of Policing, both pre-medical assessments and biometrics restarted in Wiltshire on the 15th July and there is no backlog following the initial changes due to COVID.

SEARCH Assessment

31. The ability for forces to continue to recruit new officers during the COVID-19 pandemic is crucial to maintaining police officer numbers and keeping the public safe. To enable the service to continue with planned recruitment, the College of Policing have worked at pace, with colleagues across the service, to develop an interim solution that enables all forces to continue the recruitment of police constables without the need for face-to-face contact.
32. An online assessment process has been developed that enables effective assessment of the required competencies and values and meets the current standards for assessing new recruits. This temporarily replaces the existing SEARCH assessment process for new recruits.
33. The College are working closely with the Police Uplift Programme team and forces on an implementation plan so that the online assessment process is available for all forces when needed. Wiltshire currently has 252 applicants from the March 2020 campaign who will be going through the online SEARCH process on 9th November. The online assessment is a positive for Wiltshire as there was always a challenge to get enough spaces in a neighbouring Force, and ensure travel is not an issue for candidates.
34. As this is a new process, there are unknown elements as to what proportion will succeed, however from previous figures we would expect between 45%-50% to pass the SEARCH assessment.
35. Wiltshire currently has 105 applicants who have previously passed the SEARCH processes and are awaiting finalisation of checks before they will be given intake dates. The Force predicts that this will provide enough student officers through to March 2021, when candidates from the March 2020 campaign will start joining under PEQF. This effectively means that the next time the Force will be starting a new campaign for student officers, will be early-mid 2021.

Summary

36. Overall, there has been a significant amount of change for the Uplift programme due to COVID. It has been a clear priority from the College and the Government to continue with this programme and as outlined in this report, the majority of amendments have supported Forces to continue recruiting new officers, and in some cases provided new opportunities.
37. Wiltshire continues to be meeting the planned intake volumes and expects to meet the Uplift numbers required.