



MINUTES

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES BOARD

28 February 2020, 1000am to 1300pm, GF01, Kelvedon Park

Present:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Rick Hylton (RH)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Karl Edward (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Jo Thornicroft (JTh)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC's office
Claire Putnam (CP)	Board Support Officer, PFCC's Office (minutes)

Apologies

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire, Crime Commissioner
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive, PFCC
Moira Bruin (MB)	Director of Operation, ECFRS
Dave Bill (DB)	Director of Innovation, Risk and Future Development, ECFRS
Leanne Little (LL)	Performance Analyst, ECFRS
Colette Black (CB)	Ass CEO, People, Values and Culture, ECFRS

1 Welcome and apologies

JG welcomed all to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from RH, PBI, MB, DB, LL and CB. There were no other apologies.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

Page 5 of the minutes under Update on Pension Arrangement, JTh requested amalgamating Action 8 & 9 to one action point. All agreed.

There being no further amendments the minutes of the previous meeting of 31 January 2020 were approved and there were no matters arising.

3 Action Log

40/19 JG to spend time with DB to understand Innovation and Change – Structure is almost complete - so close action
43/19 Going back to full budget rather than condensed. New style budget report to be brought to the April P&R – so action can close as it will be put on the Forward Plan
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50/19 Technical Fire Safety Action Plan. MB and KE to put together a business plan and present to RH in February 2020 – Close Action
01/20 Action Log, Review of Existing Risk, Cladding, High Rise Residential building and Student – Due date April so remain open

02/20 NC to speak to CB to find out why money hasn't been spent on BAU Training – Spend is committed for next year - so close action

03/20 NC & JTh to look into the Forecast Additional Resource from Reserves table. New style budget report to be brought to the April P&R – so action can close as it will be put on the Forward Plan

04/20 NC to look into the £314,000 figure under Operational Income, Government Grants – NC confirmed it is a specific Section 31 Grant relating to Business Rates support. Action can close

05/20 MB and KE to look into a more formal assessment around reporting personal data breaches to the ICO – Due date March so remain open

06/20 JTh and KE to look at bringing the Deep Dive around Absenteeism forward – Scheduled for 16th April so action can close

07/20 KE to establish number of people affected by the pension interim solution and update RH outside of P&R Board – Dates given for RH to meet with James Durrant and David Goulding from ECC Pensions Office and also dates have been sent over to RH for the Pensions Advisory Board which DB chairs. James has sent figures over to RH of the people affected by the pensions interim solution however RHy believes that the figure sent only represents claimants. So, the Service are awaiting full figures from James which includes claimants and non-claimants. **Action can close but JG wants it noted that the final number is still outstanding.**

08/20 & 09/20 Update on Pension Arrangements and meetings being arranged for RH to understand how the scheme works and then KE to put a paper together on how the scheme works - Actions have merged and can both close

10/20 CB to speak to Unison in regard to their concerns around training. KE will pick up with CB – Action can close.

11/20 KE to brief RH on the current position of on-call conversions and check the budget to ensure it's reflective of the conversion timetable. RHy spoke to RH and gave assurances that the conversions are on track and also KE confirmed that it is in the budget – Action can close.

RHy mentioned that NC is looking at re-profiling day crew plans/conversions and when it's likely (if at all) to receive benefits in regard to savings. DB will bring a revised timetable to the next P&R Board.

Action: 12/20

DB to bring a revised timetable to the P&R Board in March in regard to day crew plans/conversions and cashable benefits.

4 Budget Review January 2020

- 4.1 NC confirmed there had been no change from last month and £1.9million better off than original plan. £700,000 lower employment costs, £400,000 better on non-pay (travel and IT consumables), £400,000 better on additional income and £317,000 better on business rates.
- 4.2 NC confirmed the forecast for Business as Usual shows a surplus for the year of £154,000 and additional resources requested by Budget Holders forecast of £1,029million will be funded from earmarked reserves.
- 4.3 NC confirmed that in regard to the Capital Programme £4.3million is the final anticipated spend but there are still questions around the timings of the ICT deliverables. Also, from a Property stand point, things have been tied up with the heating system which has taken up a lot of resources. With that in mind NC believes the Service will come in lower than £4.3million.
- 4.4 JG stated there are slight concerns in regard to Control, they are £23,000 under budget, £20,000 underspend on staff pay, £4,000 overspend on staff overtime and

£7,000 underspend on staff pay on-costs. Is there something underlying that we need to be concerned about? KE explained that there's a lot of flexible working arrangements in Control which may contribute to an imbalance between day and evening shifts, although a more formal assessment of this is required, but may be a contributing factor to a lot of evening shifts either not being covered or being covered on overtime. There's also been a mix up in regard to planning. RHy explained that failures have occurred where there hasn't been a supervisor to run the Control room. This is being addressed with a Training Officer/Co-ordinator being in situ. RHy agreed that the PFCC's office are right to be concerned as are the Service but they are aware and it's being addressed.

- 4.5 In regard to Rider Numbers, JG asked if the numbers are down, NC confirmed yes the Service are down on budgeted Rider Numbers, however, RHy confirmed that the Service are above Optimum Rider Level and additional shift working level is lower than last year.
- 4.6 JG stated that there's an £130,000 overspend on Consultancy Fees, which includes Property Services Consultancy commitments of £106,000, this needs further clarification. NC isn't sure what the exact commitment is, the department are using various consultants for some of their programmes, however, NC is challenging them as there is the Procurement team in place. RHy also stated that some of it is down to training upgrades which need specialised consultants. JG is happy that NC and team are aware and on top of it.
- 4.7 JG asked if the heating system was back on track now. KE confirmed that there are a number of interim solutions in place at the moment and will soon know if it's a fix or replace solution. Needs to be fixed before the summer.
- 4.8 JTh asked in regard to Training, YTD Actual is 632 vs YTD Budget of 608 so there's a predicted overspend, however Current Base Forecast is 547 which is predicting a significant underspend. NC explained that it's the Operational Training that will put the Service into an overspend position.
- 4.9 RHy wanted JG and RH to be sighted on the fact that as at the end of January the number of whole-time firefighters aged over 50 with more than 25 years' service was 87, of these 21 have more than 30 years' service. This means that if they choose to retire they would only have to give one months' notice, not a good place to be when the Service is already under establishment. RHy confirmed that they are working on the Work Force Succession Plan and looking at 3 scenarios. KE agreed that the Work Force Plan will come to P&R in April then will go to the Strategic Board.

5 Performance Report January 2020

- 5.1 RHy took the Board through the report and highlighted the following; Compared to the previous month, there has been a decrease in the total number of incidents in January 2020. This is the third consecutive year of a reduction in the numbers of incidents in the month of January. There was also a decrease in the number of fires, special services and false alarms when comparing figures from December 2019 to January 2020. This month's focus is chimney fires which has highlighted that there has been a gradual decrease in the total numbers of fires since January 2017. Attendance has also improved across both measures and total pumping appliance availability has increased from December 2019 to January 2020.
- 5.2 Attendance time has improved slightly from December 2019 but still not where the Service wants to be. On-call availability is down from December 2019 and slightly better than previous year and RHy stated that there's very little correlation between on-call availability and attendance times.

- 5.3 13 of the 16 whole-time pumping appliances increased their availability from December 2019 to January 2020. 3 appliances slightly decreased (less than 2%) their availability and these were Orsett, Rayleigh Weir and Harlow Central. RHy stated that the new performance measures would be looking at setting tolerances rather than targets.
- 5.4 31 of the 37 on-call pumping appliances increased their availability from December 2019 to January 2020. The Service has set a target of 80% availability and there are a large number of on-call pumps that sit in the 80% and some of these are 2nd pumps with those sitting under 80% for example Leaden Roding are sitting below target however their availability has increased 200% in the month and the crew and staff are working hard to keep the pump available. JG asked RHy to pass on the Boards thanks to Leaden Roding.
- 5.5 RHy stated that in regard to Information Governance the IRS system is still not fixed so having to input fire reports manually which is time consuming and requests for reports is taking time as the data isn't readily available.
- 5.6 In regard to Health and Safety, RHy stated that at the recent Strategic Health & Safety Committee meeting it was encouraging to have the FBU and FRSA both there for what was a very constructive meeting.
- 5.7 JG asked why there was a significant leap in near misses in January, RHy to look into and will let JG know why but RHy did state that in regard to the Accidents for January 6 occurred during training and another 2 incidents for the college were received earlier, so the Service will be looking into the training college to establish why and to implement improvement measures if necessary.
- 5.8 JG asked if there was a reason that the Fitech Test pass has dropped significantly in January. RHy stated that the Service were aware and have implemented a new policy where every member of operational staff will have to undertake the test on an annual basis, and if the Service believe firefighters are not at the level they should be by July then they will be taken off of the run.
- 5.9 RHy explained that there has been an increase in overall engagement in regard to Home Safety visits and an increase in the number of visits undertaken by stations since enabling all firefighters to conduct Home Safety visits. Visits have mainly been delivered in cities and towns and less around rural areas. The Service's focus will be getting more crews out delivering Home Safety visits and the challenge will be around on-call.
- 5.10 Safeguarding team has received 71 referrals during January 2020 and JG stated that the report still doesn't include requested information. JTh will speak to Donna Finch in regard to including the information the JG has previously requested. RHy confirmed that there is a new Independent Safeguarding Chair called Deborah Stewart-Angus and RHy has told her that the agencies need to acknowledge a safeguard referral more quickly.

Action: 13/20

JTh to liaise with Donna Finch in regard to the risk that the Service are holding in regard to Safeguarding and to include it in this report going forward. JTh will also speak to Jim Palmer as he is currently reviewing Community Safety.

6. HMICFRS

- 6.1 RHy updated the Board and stated that progress is being made and Protection is moving relatively quickly with the new Protection Strategy coming to the Strategic

Board Meeting in March for RH's sign off. Re-inspection will likely be in August/September

- 6.2 The Risk Based Inspection Programme is progressing and the first draft is being created, the Service has recruited the additional Fire Safety Officers that were needed. Training is also being delivered to crews
- 6.3 RHy confirmed that in regard to the CRM system, the current solution will be extended for 1 year with a new solution being selected from a procurement framework and will be implemented by June 2020.
- 6.4 In regard to Culture Change, the Service has come a long way already and progression is continuing. Amendments are being made to the action plans to incorporate feedback received from HMICFRS.
- 6.5 JTh asked, in the HMICFRS report there was a call for concern around the Managers challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, is this in the action plan? RHy stated that the Service hadn't started on that yet, however, it would sit under Strong Effective Leadership & Development. RHy also confirmed that a conference is being held in March for all Manager's on the back of the Everyone Matters feedback and one of the focuses will be on ownership and roles.

7 Change Board Update

- 7.1 RHy briefly took the Board through the updated versions of programme alignments and confirmed that the Terms of Reference had changed for the Strategic Change Board.
- 7.2 RHy confirmed that there are 3 portfolios (Future Fire, ICT, Data & Information Management) that sit with the Programme Manager who is responsible for all portfolios. There are also Senior Responsible Owners who head up parts of the portfolio and they are members of the SLT.
- 7.3 JTh stated that in the paper it mentions Change of Board memberships, however this isn't reflected in the actual Board memberships. RHy will look into.
- 7.4 JG stated that it would be good to add a note in regard to substitutes, if PBI can't attend then JTh should be invited so there is consistent representation.

8. Single Tender Actions

- 8.1 NC briefly took the Board through the paper and explained that there would still be a need for occasional Single Tender Actions and the Service will ensure due diligence is in place. NC stated that a good example of this is the Audit process is that the Service has to have all locations re-valued by year end which doesn't give enough time for a tender process, however it will go out to tender in future years.
- 8.2 JTh mentioned aggregated spend and use of previous employees. NC confirmed that there is specific legislation called IR35 which is used to deal with that and from April 2020 this regulation will be tightened up. NC stated that Finance will be going through their existing supplier base to identify any companies that could fall under that regulation.

9. Grenfell Phase 1 High Level Action Plan

- 9.1 RHy took the Board through the paper and re-confirmed that even though there are a number of recommendations from the Grenfell Phase 1 Inquiry not all of them are for ECFRS to follow.

- 9.2 RHy confirmed that MB has brought all the recommendations together and has looked at which ones are for ECFRS to take immediate action on.
- 9.3 The Gap Analysis shows the progress made against the Action Plan.
- 9.4 The paper was reviewed at a recent SLT meeting and a number of areas that the Service were unhappy with have been highlighted and actioned. JG has asked for the updated report to be shared with the Board.

Action: 14/20

Updated report to be shared with JG, RH and JTh.

10. On Call Development Programme Update

- 10.1 RHy took the Board through the paper explaining there was £400,000 earmarked to improve on-call recruitment retention. The following Projects are in Delivery Phase; Day Duty Officers Riding, On-Call Liaison Pilot, On-Call Availability Project, On-Call Terms & Conditions Project, Business/Employer Engagement and Green Book/On-Call Policy Review.
- 10.2 In regard to the On-Call Terms & Conditions Project KE explained that the Service have designed some alternative contracts for lower hours but will mean the Service ends up recruiting and training twice as many people. Other Services who have offered lower hours have found it's achieving what they wanted it to, so ECFRS need to ensure they're ready. Potential issue is firefighters on existing contracts might want to change to a different one, so need to make sure it doesn't have an adverse reaction on the Service. KE confirmed they will trial it first before a Service wide rollout.
- 10.3 In regard to the On-Call Availability Project KE explained that there's an app called iFire whereby you click on it on your phone and you can see and log your availability in advance, you can see particular stations and choose whether you're a driver etc, you can also log when you're unavailable. Just need the app to talk to control so all information is logged. This concept is being included within the Operational Availability Management (OAM) programme of work which will have a very similar concept to that of the iFire App.
- 10.4 JG asked what the Programme Governance Assurance and Audit was and was there anything they needed to be aware of. RHy stated that this audit was a way of keeping on top of how much the projects were going to cost, expected delivery date and were they on track.
- 10.5 JG asked whether the On-Call Liaison Pilot review was being submitted to this board. RHy confirmed it was going to the Change Board, however very happy to also bring it to the P&R Board. JTh will add to the forward plan for April.

Action: 15/20

JTh to add the On-Call Liaison Pilot Review to the Forward Plan for April's P&R Board

11. CRM Project Initiation Document

- 11.1 KE took the Board through the report and explained that the Service will be pulling out of the existing programme as a decision had been made to not progress the Hitachi model any further, this means going out to tender again but on a G Cloud Framework which cuts out the long tender process. There are only a couple of systems offering what the Service needs and they're already on that Framework.

- 11.2 KE also explained that there is a wider piece of work happening around Data Management which is more complex. There are lots of systems, with lots of data and lots of reporting that need to be streamlined into one place and report from a Data Warehouse.
- 11.3 Potentially looking at end of June for the new system to be fully functioning and up and running.
- 11.4 JTh stated that some parts of the report are confusing so will pass comments to KE.

12. Quarterly Reports

- 12.1 KE took the Board through the report and highlighted the fact that some of the information is misleading, for example the Attendance under Employee Case Management states the oldest case is 538 days long, however when the data has been reviewed it's been captured incorrectly. Overall the main elements of the report are where the Service wants it to be, but data capture, and how it's reported, needs looking at.
- 12.2 KE explained that the data quality isn't where he wants it to be, especially around sickness and case management.
- 12.3 JTh stated that the Workforce Annual Turnover for support staff has significantly dropped which is really good to see. KE agreed it's a clear sign that staff feel invested in and valued.
- 12.4 In regard to Inclusion & Diversity KE stated that there is still ongoing work in looking at how the Service can improve, for example, the Service are very good at attracting female firefighters however a large amount are lost through the assessment process, so is the Service assessing in the right way.
- 12.5 KE stated that Resourcing and Talent Management is slowly improving and at a recent NFCC event around talent and Talent Pools, ECFRS was seen as one of the better Services around talent management. The Service is however still looking at ways to improve and one way is to work with the L&D team and to have a series of aspiring manager programmes to get succession planning in place.
- 12.6 JG asked if the average time to hire is a pretty standard picture across the country as it seems a long time. KE stated that the Service are looking into an application tracking system as everything at present is paper based. From the day someone applies the process should be seamless and there are instances where the Service are waiting for references and applicants are having to chase as they haven't received their offer letter. The process needs to be more user friendly and quicker. JG stated that need to keep applicants engaged through the process so they don't think they've been forgotten. RHyl stated that the Service can hire quickly as they hired 11 people into Technical Fire Safety in a short space of time, so it can be done.
- 12.7 KE confirmed that in regard to Learning & Development, the E-Learning modules are clunky and not very user friendly so CB is looking into different E-Learning platforms. JTh asked if there was a reason that expired On-Call BA Compliance was three times what was reported last month. KE confirmed they are aware and that CB and team are chasing up.
- 12.8 KE confirmed that HMICFRS will be focusing on absenteeism on their next visit, so the Service have 12 months to focus on innovative work around getting people back into the workplace. KE stated he's very keen to ensure that "date since last contact" is captured and recorded with sickness over 7 days.

- 12.9 JTh stated that in regard to Health & Wellbeing recording absence with “Cause known, but not specified” can the tick box for this be removed. KE confirmed it will be.

13. Forward Plan

- 13.1 JTh stated that the agendas for upcoming meetings are put together with items from the Forward Plan, so if you feel a report won't be ready and you need to push it back can you let her know as soon as possible.
- 13.2 Items for March's P&R are Gender Pay Gap and Securing Adequate Water Supply. RHy stated that it would be better for the latter item to be a Workshop after the meeting as it's more in-depth. JTH will remove Securing Adequate Water Supply from the Forward Plan.

Action: 16/20

JTH to remove Securing Adequate Water Supply from the Forward Plan.

- 13.3 KE stated that it would be good to bring the ICT Programme to a P&R Board to show progress made since sign off at the Strategic Board meeting, so he will liaise with JTh to get it on the Forward Plan.

14. Any Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.54am