

## MINUTES

### OFFICE OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PFCC) FOR ESSEX

#### ESSEX POLICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD

22 October 2020, 10.00am to 1.00pm, via Microsoft Teams

#### Present:

Supt Michelle Davies (MD)	LPA North Command Team, Essex Police (observing)
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex - Chair
Dr Vicki Harrington (VH)	Director of Strategic Change and Performance, Essex Police
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Policing), PFCC's office
Elizabeth Helm (EH)	Interim Head of Finance and s151 officer, PFCC's office
Richard Jones (RJ)	Head of Business Partnering and Management Accountant, Essex Police
Richard Leicester (RL)	Director of HR
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
DCC Pippa Mills (PM)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Kirsty Smith (KS)	Commissioning Officer, PFCC's office
Matt Tokley (MT)	Corporate Accounting Manager, Essex Police
Camilla Brandal (CB)	Minutes, PFCC's office

#### Apologies:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	CEO and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office

#### 1 Introduction and welcome

JG welcomed all to the meeting, especially Supt Michelle Davies who was present as an observer. Apologies were received from RH and PBI.

#### 2.i Minutes of last meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020 and they were therefore agreed. There were no matters arising from the September minutes.

#### 2.ii Action Log

22/20 Efficiency & Investments Plan  
To remain open until meeting has taken place on 25 November.

- 30/20 Action Log  
HR report presented on this Agenda but leave open until revised report meeting taken place.
- 31/20 Forward Plan  
Template agreed for Deep Dive reports. Close.
- 37/20 Force Growth Programme 2019/20 Closure  
PIR updates will be issued as part of the regular papers. Close.
- 39/20 Monthly Finance Report  
JG to speak to RH to confirm that he had spoken to the Chief Constable about additional recruitment and expected funding position.
- 40/20 Monthly Finance Report  
Meeting took place on 8 October. Close.
- 41/20 Monthly Finance Report  
Briefing message sent to RH. Close.
- 42/20 Public Perception Survey  
JP invited to Public Engagement Star Chamber. Close.

### 2.iii Forward Plan

- 2.iii.1 There were no changes to the content.
- 2.iii.2 A discussion took place around the dates agreed for meetings and paper deadlines to the end of 2021. It was agreed that the December 2020 meeting should be moved to either Christmas Eve or the week between Christmas and New Year.
- 2.iii.3 PM requested that the Operational Transformation Reserve item be moved to December and the holders taken out for the PCP priority update papers that are now scheduled into the Forward Plan.

## 3 Finance

- 3.i Efficiency & Investments Plan (Transformation Savings)
  - 3.i.1 VH presented the report which outlined the progress against current and future efficiency and savings plans as set out in the budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. From the Executive Summary, items to note were that the two savings business cases that had been paused due to Covid19 had been resumed and were due to be delivered in Quarter 4 of 2020/21 and that there was no change to the previous September update for the favourable variance forecast outcome for 2020/21.
  - 3.i.2 VH went through the expected Efficiency and Savings targets for 2021/22 which had been reviewed at the Efficiency and Savings Board in September where it had been confirmed that the revised position is indicating an improvement. The Efficiency and Savings plan will continue to evolve until January 2021 when the budget will be approved by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. VH went through the notable changes in the 2021/22 position which included savings from non-pay, reduction in income generation and Support Services Directorate amongst others.

- 3.i.3 VH went through the cashable and non-cashable savings for 2020/21 and the 2021/22 Savings and Efficiency Plan. A brief discussion took place around the vacancy factor in the savings plan. JP asked whether it was a standard percentage across all departments or whether it was individually allocated. PM confirmed that each budget holder had individually agreed their budget vacancy factor.

### 3.ii Quarterly Finance Report

- 3.ii.1 DM presented the Month 6 Quarter 2 position for the Force. The Executive Summary showed the latest forecast revenue underspend at £1.582m which includes Home Office funding for Op Melrose, Op Talla, SCD overtime and PPE. The police officer strength is still forecast at 3,369 FTE, the Capital Reserve is forecast as a £7.6m deficit with forecast capital expenditure at £18.6m, and forecast capital income from property disposals is £7.9m.
- 3.ii.2 DM went through the revenue report and noted that the pensions forecast has now been adjusted to an underspend, that insurance premiums have increased and there was also an underspend from the revenue consequences of capital expenditure due to the slippage on the capital programme.
- 3.ii.3 A discussion took place about the funds claimed for Covid19. DM confirmed that the loss of income due to Covid19 has been reflected in the Month 6 reporting, but that the funding that will be claimed back is not included. EH confirmed that there is an outstanding query on the Stansted income which might have an effect on the loss of income that is claimed figure (small reduction).
- 3.ii.4 A discussion took place around overtime figures, recruiting at risk and over-recruitment. PM confirmed that the Force will not be over-recruiting at risk unless the funding arrangement for the uplift programme were adjusted to bring forward the 2021/22 uplift funding.
- 3.ii.5 DM confirmed that approval was sought to move the Op Melrose funding relating to 19/20 expenditure to General Reserves. A discussion took place around whether to move more funds (income loss claim) now or just Op Melrose and it was agreed that just the Op Melrose funds would be moved to the General Reserves. DM would prepare a decision sheet for this agreement.

#### **Action: 43/20**

**DM to prepare a decision sheet to seek approval to move the Op Melrose funding relating to 19/20 Expenditure to General Reserves.**

- 3.ii.6 DM went through the capital report and confirmed that she would be speaking to all the budget holders about the capital programme projects to ensure that the forecasts are accurate. JP asked about the position regarding the £3.7m planned revenue transfer to fund capital. It was confirmed that the meeting discussed at the Strategic Board needs to take place.
- 3.ii.7 A discussion took place around the Op Melrose special grant application, the recent inspection by HMICFRS and the outcome report. Special thanks were given to the Finance team who demonstrated that through the processes already in place enabled the Force to apply for the special grant funding and be successful.

## 4 Quarterly Performance Report and MSG Aspirations

- 4.1 VH asked if anyone had any questions on the Quarterly Performance Report which set out the work being done under each of the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020.
- 4.2 SH asked about the slide on Page 5 and the increase in 999 calls, and whether the increase over the quarter is something for concern. VH confirmed that it is part of the general trend (for the summer quarter) as the discrete figures for September are showing that the pattern is actually reversed. SH asked about the slide on Page 3 around the recruitment of the Community Specials and the work being done with councils. PM confirmed that this is a being dealt with as a long-term piece of ongoing work which will be explained in the Specials paper at the next P&R Board.
- 4.3 JP asked about the Domestic Abuse grading which had moved from 'requires improvement' to 'good' and wanted to know what had happened to enable this grading to have been altered. VH confirmed that the decrease in repeat incidents has been sustained and there has been an increase in arrests (17%) and then an over 51.4% increase in DVPNs and DVPOs (which is an upward trend). There is also an increase in the number of solved DA outcomes mainly due to the standard risk being solved. VH also confirmed that there is a lot happening which has resulted in this positive picture. VH confirmed that the slide on Page 8 of the report sets out the initiatives and work being done under Priority 3 and wanted to thank JG for agreeing to sponsor the ECDA project which will be identifying the patterns and risk factors in terms of perpetrators.

### **RJ left the meeting at 10.54am**

- 4.4 VH went through the quarterly update on the Force Plan and the Aspirational Most Similar Group (MSG) position. From the Executive Summary, the Force are meeting their aspirations in four areas (All crime – solved rate, violence with injury – offences, trafficking of drugs – solved rate, and percentage of sick – police officers). VH confirmed that the Force's MSG position has improved since the last quarter particularly around police officer sickness. The Force are not meeting their aspirations in six areas; Public confidence, All crime – offences, Violence with injury – solved rate, trafficking of drugs – offences, Homicide – solved rate, Percentage sick – police staff. The table on page 4 of the report sets out the detail of the priority areas against performance. VH commented that with regard to police officer sickness, the Force's ranking has improved to 6<sup>th</sup> in the MSG; it was noted that this is the only MSG position where the rankings are reversed; i.e. 1 is bad and 8 is good.
- 4.5 RL commented that the Force's ranking nationally relating to police officer sickness is now at 17<sup>th</sup> whereas it had previously been 38<sup>th</sup>. A brief discussion took place around the figures behind the police officer sickness and police staff sickness where RL confirmed that the Force are now one of the best performing Forces for attendance on daily, weekly and monthly rates since April 2020.

## 5 Monthly Performance Report

- 5.1 VH went through the Executive Summary on the Monthly Performance Report where items to note were that four of the seven priorities are at good and three had been graded at 'requires improvement' (More local, visible and accessible police, Crack down on anti-social behaviour and Tackling gangs and serious violence). All crime fell by 5.5% for the 12 months to September 2020, the number of ASB incidents was higher in September 2020 compared with September 2019 but has been reducing

steadily since May 2020, and Essex Police's internal survey puts Confidence at 69.7%.

- 5.2 PM commented that although the Force had seen a long-term decreasing trend in ASB, the slide on Page 5 showed the clear increase during lockdown, however this is due to Covid19 breaches. A brief discussion took place around whether to separate the Covid19 ASB figures from all others but it was agreed not to do this.
- 5.3 VH went through the remainder of the report; PM clarified that under the slide on Page 9 relating to Organised Crime Disruptions and the backlog, the method by which these disruptions are counted will change again and it will prove challenging to accurately report progress from July 2020 onwards. JG asked if the new counting measures that will be put in place will allow the Force to record more accurately and PM confirmed that the counting measures will not solely focus on Organised Crime Groups but will also include threat risk and harm, registered sex offenders, public protection orders etc. VH confirmed that the figures for driving related mobile phone crime on the slide on Page 11 has been left intentionally blank due to new legislation being passed in 2021 (delayed due to Covid19) and the fact that the figures are not comparing like for like. PM commented that the amount of proactive testing that the Force carry out using drug wipes has resulted in an overspend and a backlog on sample testing. PM confirmed that ACC Prophet has been tasked with bringing this to SERP's attention for more partnership engagement regarding funding consequences.
- 5.4 JG thanked VH for the work done on this report and commented that, as VH had confirmed a couple of months ago, improvement is beginning to be seen in the Crime Tree data figures.

### 3.iii.a Verbal budget setting update

PM updated the meeting on the first COG workshop that had taken place, which had discussed the cost pressures, capital bids, MTFs, pay, vacancies, Force Growth programme and the budget setting dates that have been put into calendars.

## 6 HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance reports

- 6.1 RL presented the report which provided a narrative to accompany the HR strategic dashboard which set out the Force's attendance, establishment, strength full time equivalent (FTE), turnover and diversity profiles. A summary of overtime and vacancies is also contained within this report. RL confirmed that there has been a slight increase in staff vacancies, but there has also been a slight increase in the establishment as some of the growth posts have been added. RL went through the report which included items on PCSOs and Specials (including average hours, training, Covid19 impact). RL confirmed that the requested overtime exercise had taken place, to consider the top five officer and staff overtime areas; this had shown that there was no general correlation between overtime and vacancy cover and confirmed that the majority of overtime claims were resulting from operational demand/ pressures. RL commented that there had been an increase in overtime relating to the criminal justice system work that was partly due to covering staff vacancies and partly affected by the current challenging court system situation.
- 6.2 JP thanked RL for the work undertaken to include, overtime in the HR report. JP also asked about the costs highlighted by the Force relating to Video enabled hearings (VEH). It was confirmed that the Force would review and compare the costs of VEH with the figure submitted to the Home Office and that DM would provide the detail to

JP regarding the calculations of the significant costs highlighted at the meetings with the PFCC.

**Action: 44/20**

**DM would provide the detail to JP regarding the calculations of the significant VEH costs highlighted at the meetings with the PFCC.**

- 6.3 RL went through the remainder of the report and updated the meeting on the current recruitment, specials applications, recruitment around BAME and the We Value Difference campaign. JG commented that she had received a huge amount of feedback around the We Value Difference campaign and wanted to congratulate the Force on this campaign. A discussion took place around the number of female applicants joining the force in the current financial year. It was noted that this had been lower than the current percentage of females in the force. RL confirmed action would be taken to understand this and make interventions as required. It was agreed that RL would look at expanding the Equality and Diversity section of the report for future reporting.

**Action: 45/20**

**RL would look at expanding the Equality and Diversity section of the report for future reporting.**

- 6.4 SH referred to the attendance section of the report, noting that the primary reason for absence is psychological, and asked what is being done to encourage managers to spot signs at an early stage? RL confirmed that if someone is flagged as unwell due to psychological ill health, it is referred immediately to Occupational Health and a priority assessment is undertaken. A lot of the work done around recognition and wellbeing has been built into leadership development programmes as well as staff wellbeing and is also overseen by the Absence and Wellbeing Board. RL commented that he believes that the reason for the increase is because people feel more confident in reporting wellbeing issues.

## 7 Crime Data Accuracy

- 7.1 VH went through the bi-annual update in relation to the progress of Crime Data Accuracy (CDA) for the Force. From the Executive Summary it was confirmed that the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar and his team continue to ensure that victims of crime sit at the forefront of everything the Force do. VH commented that the CDA team have continued to work very well throughout the lockdown with the crime recording compliance rates remaining at a consistent level.
- 7.2 VH confirmed that the next tranche of inspections by HMICFRS will focus on assessing victims' experiences of the service they receive, from the first point of contact through to the final outcome. In order to assist with this future inspection a joint audit process will be run to allow the Force to gauge how effective they are in ensuring that victims of crime are receiving the appropriate support and help.
- 7.3 VH explained the role of the CDA team in conducting audits. A recent audit had looked at all outcomes but focussed particularly on outcome 16. DASH risk assessments had also been reviewed and as a result of these two pieces of work detailed briefing notes had been distributed to ensure understanding and compliance. The dedicated CDA training team is currently developing a new training package, based on feedback. The CDA Board monitor performance and where additional support may be needed; they are looking at a proposal to establish the NSRT team, having recognised the important role they play.

- 7.4 KS asked about the Victims Service Assessment work that will be undertaken and whether officers will be referring any cases for external support and whether any extra awareness needs to be flagged to the Force that there are external support service providers on hand. VH commented that this is not something that had been included at the moment but if VH did become aware of the need to refer, VH would flag it with KS.
- 7.5 A brief discussion took place around Outcome 16 and the DASH risk assessment (question 19 in particular that is being missed) which are being addressed by the Force via examples and training.
- 7.6 SH noted the Crime Incident to Crime rate (60-70% range) and asked if the Force had identified a target rate. VH commented that the rate range has been arrived at from the basis of the initial HMICFRS inspection outcome at 'outstanding' and using those levels, predicting what 'good' would look like. VH commented that what would affect the 'good' rate would be the work affecting the crime to conversion rate where the types of violent crime has an impact. Ron Scott (FCIR) has been working with Contact Management to make sure that the NSR Team are looking at the right types of crime in order to improve on the 'good' rate.

## 8 Force Growth Programme

- 8.1 PM updated the meeting on the 2020/21 Force Growth Programme, and from the Executive Summary it was noted that the Force Growth Programme is co-ordinating the additional investment by recruiting 151 more frontline officers and 60.8 additional staff. There will be an increase in High Harm and Investigations posts, an increase in Learning and Development posts, an increase in Custody posts and an increase in Crime and Public Protection posts.
- 8.2 PM confirmed that three student officer intakes had been assisting throughout Covid19, in FCR, Custody and Crime and Public Protection. They had now all been released to their LPA postings, but this has led to the current timeline having to be amended by considering the priority of posts to be implemented due to the delayed release to operational roles.
- 8.3 PM went through the report and updated on the amendments to the timeline, the recruitment that has been successfully completed, the addition of 20 Community Safety and Engagement Officers, the additional growth in Crime and Public Protection, Criminal Investigation Departments and the Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams (which are the first to be created nationally into High Output Teams).
- 8.4 PM confirmed that the cancelled Sergeants examination in March will now take place in November, which has had a knock-on effect on the Sergeants selection process. 30 of the 67 posts have now been posted leaving a remainder of 37 to be selected, which has also affected the Force Growth Programme. PM commented that there had also been an issue with the inability to run the National Investigators Examination and associated training courses for the national detective training programme, both due to Covid19 issues. JG asked about the problem with the recent Inspectors' Exam and PM confirmed that this was caused by a technical issue which meant that some candidates took over 12 hours to complete a 3-hour exam. Any re-sits due to the technical issue will be undertaken shortly by the College of Policing.
- 8.5 SH asked about the challenge around vetting – the report outlines the risk but does not provide a mitigation; she also asked whether any delays with vetting are impacting on losing potential recruits. PM confirmed that there is an order of priority

for the vetting process for officers, specials, staff, the HMICFRS guidelines for re-vetting, but she was of the opinion that although there were challenges around vetting, there were no concerns around the length of time for the vetting process.

## MT joined the meeting at 12.15pm

### 9 Six Month Treasury Management Outturn 2020/21

- 9.1 MT presented the half year Treasury Review/Outturn report for 2020/21 which contained an update on the investments and borrowings with both UK and non-UK financial institutions. All PCC/PFCCs are obligated to produce a Treasury Outturn report in line with the Local Government Act and Treasury Code.
- 9.2 MT confirmed that over the last six months there has been a significant impact on investments and borrowings due to the Covid19 pandemic and the economic instability this has caused. Section 5 of the report sets out the local context and the revised forecast for the remainder of the financial year. An area of potential concern focuses on returns where the previous average rate of return was 0.64% but it is now at 0.06%, which means that the amount of investment income has decreased from around £175k to £20k.
- 9.3 MT confirmed that the number of approved financial institutions that were previously available to invest in has reduced and a restriction of a maximum of 35 days of investment with any one counter-party has been imposed whereas previously the limit was two years. MT commented that the UK Government's lending function (DMADF) is about to set a negative rate which will mean that there will be a requirement to pay to invest.
- 9.4 MT confirmed that there had been no external borrowings in the year to date and there is no requirement to borrow for this financial year. The borrowing requirement for the investment Outturn figures is different from the borrowing under the capital spend and does not relate to the external cash borrowing requirement.
- 9.5 MT went through the rest of the report which updated on risk management, current work and challenges, non-Treasury investments, compliance, authorised limits and operational boundary limits (dealing with the maximum amount of debt to bring in but this will be flagged for 2021/22 when there may be a need to borrow externally), Treasury Management indicators, security, liquidity and principal sums. MT confirmed that work will be starting shortly to set out the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 which will be brought to this Board in February 2021.
- 9.6 JP asked if the cash reconciliation matter which came to light at the year end had now been resolved. MT confirmed that the issue with the reconciliation concerned historic items and the work to resolve these is in hand. EH asked about reducing the interest receivable budget as part of the work done on the 2021/22 Strategy and whether this work would include interest payable as well? MT confirmed that the Strategy would deal with reducing both the interest receivable and interest payable.
- 9.7 The recommendations in the report were agreed, namely; to note the half-year treasury review for 2020/21 and to maintain the treasury investment limits as shown in Appendix B of the report.

#### **Action: 46/20**

**MT to complete the work to resolve the cash reconciliation matter and provide an update to JP.**



## MT left the meeting at 12.35pm

### 10 Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and Delivery

- 10.1 RL presented the report on the update of the Force's revised Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2025. The revised Strategy meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and is now aligned to the National Police Chiefs Council's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion strategy. The report outlined the key strategic objectives of the Strategy, the key priorities and staff networks. RL confirmed that the first EDICT group meeting had been convened, where Stop and Search was the key topic, and it was anticipated that future meetings will deal with topics such as training.
- 10.2 RL confirmed that the Strategy will be launched on 30 November 2020.

### 11 PFCC Commissioning Programme

- 11.1 KS presented the PFCC's Victims Commissioning Programme update report for Quarter 1. KS confirmed that she will be bringing the Quarter 2 update to either November or December's Board.
- 11.2 KS updated the meeting on the work that has been carried out by support services for victims of crime throughout the Covid19 lockdown period. Overall referrals had reduced by 6% compared with last year's Quarter 1 figures. KS confirmed that Victim Support services had moved to remote working, but this has not had a negative impact on the ability for victims to cope and recover from the impact of crime. The domestic abuse helpline has seen an increase in calls, but this is not reflected in this report due to technical data collection and reporting issues from moving to remote working.
- 11.3 KS went through the report and updated on the reduction of referrals, the number of victims who had chosen to defer support during lockdown and the possible resourcing implications this may have when lockdown is eased, the reduction of rape cases reported to Essex Police, and the data collection around call volumes not being recorded, and the number of male victims that have come forward during lockdown. The risks identified during lockdown are being proactively mitigated to minimise impact, but a further risk has been raised due to the backlog of cases in the criminal justice system which has put added pressure on ISVA and IDVA services who provide support to victims from the time of offence to the time of trial.
- 11.4 PM asked that the PFCC Victims Commissioning reports be sent to the Force prior to the Performance & Resource Board meetings; it was agreed that KS would speak to Claire Heath about this and also about attending the Victims Satisfaction and Public Confidence Board's sub-group.

#### **Action: 47/20**

**KS to speak to CH about the timing of providing the Force with quarterly Commissioning Reports and about attending the Victims Satisfaction and Public Confidence Board's sub group.**

### 12 Approval for publishing of documents

SH advised that under the Terms of Reference for the PFCC's Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board, the classification of papers presented at each meeting are to be confirmed in the meeting for publishing purposes. The classifications were

confirmed and it was agreed that the paper under item 3i will not be published as it is correctly marked as Official Sensitive.

13 Any Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.58pm.