



## MINUTES

### POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE STRATEGIC BOARD

11 June 2020 1000pm to 1200pm, Teams Video Conference

**Present:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Jo Turton (JT)	Chief Fire Officer
Rick Hylton (RHyl)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Moira Bruin (MB)	Director of Operations, ECFRS
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Neil Cross (NC)	Chief Finance Officer, ECFRS
Dave Bill (DB)	Director of Prevention, Protection and Response, ECFRS
Darren Horsman (DH)	Strategic Head of Policy & Public Engagement, PFCC's Office
Jo Thornicroft (JTh)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny, PFCC's Office
Claire Putnam (CP)	Minutes, PFCC's Office

**Apologies:**

Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI) Chief Executive, PFCC's Office

#### 1 Welcome and apologies

JG welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies from PBI.

There was also a re-ordering of the Agenda due to RH needing to leave the meeting before it closes.

JT expressed for the minutes that SLT will have to declare an interest in Agenda Item 6 the Principle Officer and Lease Car Schemes which JG confirmed and accepted.

#### 2 Risk Management Strategy

- 2.1 DB took the Board through the Strategy and explained it was a re-working of the original document called the Risk Strategy and Policy Document. Academic statements have been removed from the original document as requested by the Audit which hopefully makes it a more practical version that can be circulated.
- 2.2 Main addition has been the elements of change (previously the assignment of responsibilities) which is an area of risk that needed more clarity around where responsibilities lay.
- 2.3 The levels of risk around the direction of operations and strategic risk have been set out and practicalities surrounding those have been attached rather than general statements.

- 2.4 Risk Treatment Guide terminology has changed around high risk to give more context and where there are control measures in place the risk is being managed in a far better way.
- 2.5 In regard to escalation, any new risk considered to be almost certain or likely or major or critical will be escalated to the Police Fire and Crime Commissioners office at the next Performance and Resources Board meeting and any red risk to be escalated to the PFCC immediately to ensure RH, JG and PBI are sighted.
- 2.6 Work has been completed around risk appetite, and there have been some changes around the risk element. The Service has gone to the Institute of Risk Management to see what's considered as good practice and the Risk Appetite Statement has been aligned to an example of this.
- 2.7 Feedback was received around the Impact Statement which has been re-worked so managers understand where they're meeting certain criteria and to ensure consistency around risk.
- 2.8 The last risk audit was around the culture of the Service which was rated as a partial assurance and so DB confirmed that Helen is ready and poised to start training with the middle managers to ensure they have a clear understanding of risk.
- 2.9 RH stated the Service has come a long way with the document and JG agreed and thanked DB.

**Action: 04/20**

**DB will organise a decision sheet for this and send over to RH, JG and PBI as soon as possible.**

3 IRMP

- 3.1 RH and JG stated that this is the culmination of a huge amount of work by the Service and has worked in collaboration with the PFCC's office and also the Representative Bodies have agreed it's an excellent piece of work and have been engaged in influencing the final document. RH confirmed that both the FRSA and the FOE aren't concerned with anything in the document and Unison and the FBU were both very complimentary about how the process had been handled and said it had been constructive and collaborative, they felt properly consulted and that their views had been well heard and had nothing further to add. RH expressed his thanks to the Service for working collaboratively with the Unions which JG agreed with.
- 3.2 JT thanked everyone for an excellent piece of work and echoed RH & JG's comments and stated it's a good example of the Services culture and joint working. JG also wanted it noted for the minutes Jim Palmer's hard work in getting the IRMP to where it is now.

**Action: 05/20**

**The final design of the IRMP will be attached to a Decision Sheet and DB will send it to RH for recommendation to support it being published**

4 Protection Improvement Plan inc Protection Strategy with Risk Based Inspection Programme

- 4.1 MB apologised for the late substitutions of versions and thanked JTh and CP for their help in organising this.
- 4.2 MB confirmed that this is the last part of the Protection Improvement Plan that the Service has achieved ahead of the inspectorate re-visiting in August 2020.

- 4.3 There have been final changes made to the Protection Strategy in light of feedback received from this forum, for example, not making the distinction between green book and grey book staff which has been removed from the Strategy. There are also better explanations now about what constitutes a high risk for the Service when it's being decided what to target under the RBIP. MB confirmed there has been a re-balancing around making sure the risk constituted by cladded high risk buildings is adequately addressed and the link is clear as to why the Service is aggressively targeting that risk in the community.
- 4.4 RH asked for an update on the organogram as previously discussed with Unison in regard to the green book grey book split and the potential for a collective grievance which RH had thought had been addressed and has directed them to MB for assurance. RH explained that their concerns are around the Service looking at current staff or establishment as they think it shows 8 Crew Managers but the document states 11 and there also seems to be vacant posts. Unison also fed back that the manager in the area had told them that you do need operational experience and must be grey book to be a manager. MB confirmed that this isn't the view of the Service and she will speak to Sue Askew who is the Unison Rep to give assurance.

**Action: 06/20**

**MB to speak to Sue Askew from Unison to give assurance that the view of the Service is that you do not need operational experience to become a manager.**

- 4.5 JG and RH thanked MB for including all areas previously discussed and confirmed that the next steps are that the Board will ensure the Decision Sheet is signed by RH and agreed then published. RHy gave thanks to MB for a thorough report and also to RH and JG for the investment made in resource for the Protection Officers which has meant the Service can now balance resource to risk and will bring a further paper back to the Board highlighting the £317,000 surge funding for the Protection Board to ensure the clad buildings are targeted.

**5 Day Crewed Houses – Surplus Assets (OS)**

- 5.1 NC stated that the Board will be aware of numerous conversations in regard to day crewed housing and the budget documents discussed and the day crewed conversion project there were going to be some sales of these houses. There has been a review of these properties and there is a valuation based on the 2019 review of around £7.5million. There is a surplus of assets to the region of £2.2million and NC confirmed that the most recent valuation (which will go into the Draft Financial Statement) has showed that the 2019 figures are realistic.
- 5.2 The one key risk is around the uncertainty of the housing market due to Covid-19 however the Service do plan on marketing the properties but just need to be conscious of timeframes.
- 5.3 RH confirmed it is a difficult time with the housing market and there's uncertainty around the economy but he agrees with the Service's plan to start marketing the properties.
- 5.4 NC stated that the funds from the sale of these properties will be used to fund future projects.

**Action: 07/20**

**NC to put together a Decision Sheet for RH to sign**

## 6 Principle Officer & Lease Car Schemes

- 6.1 JG reiterated that JT had declared an interest from every member of SLT and asked if this impacted NC as well. NC confirmed that he does qualify for the lease car scheme but from the Principal Officer scheme there is no impact.
- 6.2 RH wanted it noted for the minutes that SLT have declared their interest and that this is not a policy that applies to any individuals of SLT, they are policies that apply to the entire Fire and Rescue Service and external advice has been sought from PS Tax and RH has sought advice from the Monitoring Officer and has taken that advice. The investigations have been rigorous around comparing this scheme with other schemes externally and hasn't been done in isolation or solely on the recommendations of the people affected by it. RH confirmed they have also taken advice from the Interim Head of HR.
- 6.3 JG stated that after receiving independent advice the Board are happy for this to be brought forward through a Decision Sheet for RH to decide on before publishing. It was noted for the minutes that RH is not affected by any changes to the scheme

**Action: 08/20  
Decision Sheet to be put together for RH to sign**

## 7 Learning & Development Strategy

- 7.1 JG confirmed there had been a lot of detailed discussions with the Service to get to this point and thanked everyone involved.
- 7.2 KE confirmed that the first extended Leadership Meeting has taken place, which was positive and there was engagement with other senior managers within the Service.
- 7.3 Leadership Meetings will be tracked and monitored to ensure the benefits of investment into the Leadership Development Programme are measurable. The Service has held off on sending out another staff survey as development and progression is moving forward and by October should be able to see outcomes of what's already been implemented so the survey will go out then.
- 7.4 KE confirmed that SLT recognise that this is a key area for the Service to focus on and that the PFCC has supported that progression regarding moving the Culture Programme forward.
- 7.5 RH confirmed that a lot of collaborative work has happened, and the papers show a very useful and detailed Strategy with clearly defined benefits and commended everyone involved. There is still work to be done to get the Service where they want to be and the Rep Bodies are aware of that. RH stated that it's wise to use these papers going forward and to ensure it's implemented in the right way and to also think about how the Service will monitor and control any changes. RH confirmed that as the Authority he will want to monitor how well this is being implemented over the next quarter so will need to schedule it into the P&R Forward Plan. Also, any changes should be approved through SLT and then reported to the Authority. A Change Control Notice on this Strategy needs to go to P&R, so RH and the Board are sighted.
- 7.6 KE noted RH's comments and stated the Service will look to bring regular updates on the Strategy to P&R bi-monthly or quarterly basis to give assurance. RH agreed that it will be brought to the July P&R to discuss how it's monitored and tracked.

**Action: 09/10**

**JTh to update the Forward Plan for July to include a discussion around the Learning & Development Strategy and how it's monitored and tracked and also KE to bring a process for changes to the programme.**

7.7 RHy stated another way to monitor would be a Deep Dive further down the line to look into the detail of what's working etc. KE confirmed that this will be an integral part of the People Strategy Board to monitor as expected.

7.8 JT stated that the Service is already ahead in regard to implementation.

NB: DH is deputising for PBI as Monitoring Officer and had received some late points in relation to Item 6 The Principle Officer and Lease Car Scheme. JG noted for the minutes that SLT's interest in this was declared again.

DH stated that PS Tax has assisted in updating the scheme and in previous conversations it was discussed that HMICFRS had been written to seek confirmation that the policy was still compliant and as yet a response from HMICFRS hasn't been received. NC confirmed that the basis of the previous scheme had already been agreed with PS Tax and HMICFRS and with the change in rules and regulations HMICFRS have been involved in the re-draft. HMICFRS have acknowledged receipt of the letter and confirmed that they are reviewing the policy and will respond in due course.

DH stated that the car scheme currently described on page 4 of the Decision Sheet reads differently to the scheme as described on page 2 and requested clarity. NC confirmed that the scheme on page 4 is referring to the provided car scheme specifically and the regulations behind them are similar and the key difference between the policies is the Principle Officers specifically highlights that those individuals are on Gold Command Responsibilities which means they're on 24/7 call which is an extension of the regulations within the provided car scheme. The base rules are the same and the government exemption which is Section 248A applies to both schemes and the Principle Officer scheme has information around car rates for Principle Officers which is different to the provided car scheme.

DH asked regarding the new proposed Principle Officer scheme and the associated Decision Sheets, Gold Command duties which requires the Officers to be on continuous duties, PBI had previously asked for assurance that this is already in the terms of contract for those Principle Officers. NC confirmed that the Service has worked with the HR Director the Gold Command status has been mentioned in the contract so there is an element of consultation which has been discussed with Principle Officers. DH asked for confirmation that it is already in the Principle Officers contract and if it isn't and it's going to be added to their contract need reassurance that prior to RH signing the Decision Sheet the informal staff consultation has specifically referred to these elements. NC will ensure that that is communicated clearly in the staff implications section on the Decision Sheet.

RH stated that they are process points raised to ensure the Monitoring Officer is satisfied before she signs the Decision Sheet and they have been documented.

**MB left the meeting at 10.50am**

JG brought the meeting back to the Agenda

8 Annual Plan and Change Programme

- 8.1 RH asked how the Annual Plan and Change Programme are reconciled as there are sections of the Change Plan within the Annual Plan and the Annual Plan gives a list of things the Service are going to do but without timeframes or project owners. Need to understand what the priorities are and the interplay between the two.
- 8.2 RH confirmed that in the Annual Plan there are a series of actions that dictate a breakdown of higher level tasks in more detail and in addition there's a tracker which enables the Service to hold itself to account for the actions within the Annual Plan. RH also confirmed that the priorities are the things that are in the Annual Plan and as they get delivered the Service will make the decision as to whether it brings items from the Change Programme into the Annual Plan however, if it's not in the Annual Plan already then there are no plans to deliver it this year. RH asked if that can be stated in the Change Programme which RH and DB agreed to do.
- 8.3 DB confirmed that what's contained within the Change Programme is what the Change Team have stated they are delivering. DB also confirmed that the process is being tidied up to ensure it's aligned with the Annual Plan and the Service are pushing back to say if it's not in the Annual Plan then it won't be delivered. DH explained that it's very reflective of how the Service is evolving in the Change process and more structured in the approach.
- 8.4 RH stated that was useful clarification and he now needs to see the next iteration of the Change Programme prioritisation in light of the Annual Plan. RH confirmed he would leave the discussions around timescales to JG as he had another meeting to attend he also stated the amount of work getting the Service to this point has been tremendous and thanked everyone involved.

#### **RH left the meeting at 10.59am**

- 8.5 RH confirmed that the Service now has clarity around the plans in place that stretch over a 4 year period and that the Annual Plan is what the Service will be delivering this year. This will hopefully build credibility and confidence in the Service and gives the Board sight of the priorities and the opportunity to hold the Service to account for delivery of those priorities. RH will arrange time with RH, JG and Lucy Clayton to go through how everything is being monitored. The next stage once the Board are comfortable with the plan is to use this as a road map in discussions with the Rep Bodies.

#### **Action: 10/20**

**RHy will arrange time with RH, JG and Lucy Clayton to go through how everything in the Annual Plan is being monitored and will share the Tracker with JG**

- 8.6 JG asked when the next iteration of the Change Programme would be ready to bring back to the P&R Board. DB will be reporting into SLT monthly however it was agreed the quarterly updates would suffice. This will give DB time to clear up governance arrangements for some of the projects and gain clear realistic timescales.

#### **Action: 11/20**

**JTh to put quarterly Change Programme updates onto the Forward Plan for P&R and will align them to the Strategic Change Board.**

- 8.7 RH confirmed for clarity that in regard to the Change Board, there are things that will be delivered now that are in the Annual Plan so JG and RH will get sight of those and the tracking of them through reports brought to Continued Improvement Board, P&R Board and Strategic Board. A different report will be around the Future Change Programme around the IRMP and MTFP, which will look at future resource requirement etc. JG asked for clarity, the Annual Plan will be coming to P&R on a quarterly basis which RH agreed.

**Action: 12/20**

**JTh to put quarterly Annual Plan updates onto the Forward Plan for P&R and JTh to also put onto the Forward Plan for the Strategic Board in September an update from DB on Future Change Programme**

**Action: 13/20**

**RHy to put together a Decision Sheet for the Annual Plan and send to RH for sign off**

9 Minutes

Minutes of the Strategic Board Meeting held on 17 March 2020 were approved.

10 Action Log

06/19 The Prevention paper was withdrawn from the previous meeting. Update 11.06.20: Although the Action Log stated DB it has now moved to MB so Action Log will be updated and Action to remain open as scheduled for September.

10/19 Workshop around the Shared Estate is now on hold until December so JTh will move to the Forward Plan and Action can close.

28/19 Grievance Policy Decision Sheet. PBI has signed and passed through to RH. JTh confirmed its completed so Action can close.

29/19 RH to write a spec for the contract so Action remains open

35/19 The Service to work out the best way forward in regard to including unions on Steering Groups on Operational Training. CB has shared minutes and email correspondence with JTh confirming that the Unions have engaged in some Steering Groups. CB also confirmed that it's a standing Agenda item that the Unions are engaged so Action can close.

39/19 DB to speak to SLT in regard to papers coming across to all meetings by the deadlines and to ensure they're correct. Update 11.06.20: JG and JTh are attending a SLT meeting in July and will discuss this there. As this is ongoing Action to remain open.

01/20 Decision Sheet for the People Strategy has been signed off so Action can close.

02/20 MB to make changes to the organogram/structure chart to reflect where the Service wants to be in regard to grey book green book split. Update 11.06.20: Organogram is still not where it needs to be so Action to remain open.

03/20 The Service to provide PBI with a Decision Sheet in regard to the Protection Strategy. Update 11.06.20: DH stated that PBI had received a Decision Sheet previously and wanted to ensure this was still the current Decision Sheet. JTh confirmed it is still with RH for signing so Action will remain open.

11 Forward Plan

11.1 JTh confirmed that the following papers are scheduled for September's Strategic Board; the Strategic Assessment of Risk, On-Call Liaison Project the final evaluation report, Annual Report and Fire Risk Statement, Accounts and Audit, Operational Training Strategy Update, Collaboration Update including Fleet, the Work Force Plan, Prevention Strategy and a paper on Special Service Charges which includes a cost breakdown. Also based on this meeting the quarterly update on the Annual Plan will be added.

11.2 DH stated that PBI raised the MTFP that's on the Forward Plan for December, RH had indicated that this needs to go to the Panel meeting in October for Budget setting so will need to be aligned. JT asked to discuss this offline as timescales aren't as expected.

**Action: 14/20**

**JG, JT, RH, PBI and NC to discuss timescales around the MTFP, Precept and Budget Setting**

- 11.3 NC stated that there's an Audit down for September's meeting, however it was NC's understanding that Draft Accounts will go through P&R and Audit Committee and if there weren't any material changes to the final sign off then they wouldn't need to come to the Strategic Board. JG stated DH will check just in case it needs to be audited through the Strategic Board.

**Action: 15/20**

**DH to check with PBI the process for the Draft Accounts and whether it needs to come to Strategic Board and will update NC**

12 Annual Workforce Report

- 12.1 This covers FTE changes across all 4 main categories, gender and age distribution. The Service recognise that there needs to be focus on increasing diversity and being more representative of the communities they serve.
- 12.2 Discussions on positive action within recruitment have taken place. The next wholetime recruitment will be in 20/21 and there is an aim to increase the ability to attract a diverse range of applicants but also be able to take those through to employment.
- 12.3 Processes of assessment are under review and are being compared to other Fire and Rescue Services. Work is starting with colleges as part of the public sector programme to encourage young applicants. There is an issue over declaration and work is ongoing to understand why current staff and new recruits do not want to declare ethnicity, sex etc. KE stated that recruitment is taking too long for on-call and the Service want to look and learn from other Fire and Rescue Services.
- 12.4 There is a change being made to exit interviews to engage earlier in the process rather than a questionnaire once the individual has left.
- 12.5 KE confirmed that casework for grievances and disciplinary is reducing and there is an upward trend in performance and absence. KE stated that Absence formed part of a recent Deep Dive and that there are specific actions from this to take that forward.

13 TU Facility Time Report

- 13.1 Legislative paper clarifying facilities time and the Service must be open and transparent about the time and cost but there's no great difference from previous years.
- 13.2 This is a very important area and is allowing the Service to work well in partnership and recent events evidence that they are working well with the rep bodies.

14 Any Other Business

- 14.1 JG and JT both thanked colleagues for all their hard work and felt that this meeting represented a watershed in the positive collaborative work together

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.00pm.