

**MINUTES**  
**POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX**  
**and**  
**ESSEX POLICE**  
**PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD**

29 December 2020, 14:00 to 17:00, via Microsoft Teams

**Present:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Dr Vicki Harrington (VH)	Director of Strategic Change and Performance, Essex Police
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny, PFCC's office
Elizabeth Helm (EH)	PFCC Interim Head of Finance
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
DCC Pippa Mills (PM)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
ACC Rachel Nolan (RN)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources
ACC Andy Prophet (AP)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Kirsty Smith	Commissioning Officer, PFCC's Office (minutes)

**Apologies:**

Annette Chan (AC)	Chief Accountant, Essex Police
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office

1 Introduction and welcome

RH welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from RJ and AC and PBI

2.i Minutes of last meeting

- 2.i.1 VH asked that page 5, 6.2 read '*our* people being graded as Good' and to remove 'crime conversion rates' as the criminal justice file quality was the area of concern.
- 2.i.2 VH also highlighted amendments to page 6: 8.1 referring to the new bids for dashcams, should read 'which is tabled for discussion at December's Strategic Board' (not P&RS Board); 8.6 which should read 'but this figure should be in the 2021/22 column which will alter the OTR balance for carry forward for 201/22 from £241k to £440k'; and the final sentence to be corrected' to 'VH confirmed that this was correct and would be reflected in future reporting of the Operational Transformation Reserve'.
- 2.i.3 PM requested that page 6, 10.1 clarified that the Homicide Quarterly Scrutiny item was a request from the Chief Constable. This should also be reflected on the Forward Plan.
- 2.i.4 There were no other amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2020 and they were therefore agreed. There were no matters arising from the November minutes.

## 2.ii Action Log

- 46/20 Six Month Treasury Management Outturn 2020/21.  
Meeting has taken place and agreed to close.
- 48/20 JP to share JAC minutes and meet with Matt Tokley.  
JAC minutes have been shared, which confirm that JAC action 15/20 is: '*JP to join the monthly finance monitoring meeting and include cash flow reporting as part of the meeting*'; this action has been closed on the JAC action log.  
JP has met with Matt Tokley.  
JP requested this action to remain open as Matt Tokley is looking to improve the presentation of the cash flow statement. The original action is complete but a revised action now reads: JP and MT/DM to work together to further develop cash flow reporting.
- 49/20 Forward plan updates to be made.  
All complete action to close.
- 50/20 Forward plan - Debbie Martin to share month 12 reporting.  
No update required as the action is not due until April.
- 51/20 Monthly finance report.  
Richard Jones provided an update to advise that virements by subcategory that require approval will be noted within future reports. Agreed to close.
- 52/20 Monthly finance report – decision sheet for moving the PEQFD reserve.  
Richard Jones submitted the decision sheet on 16/12/2020. Reference number 143-20, agreed to close.

## 2.iii Forward Plan

- 2.iii.1 SH advised that a revised Forward Plan had been shared prior to the meeting. Changes to the Forward Plan were highlighted by red font and detailed in an accompanying paper.
- 2.iii.2 PM thanked SH for her swift response in reviewing the Forward Plan. PM requested that SH and Claire Heath have a conversation outside the meeting to discuss items that have been combined to ensure the content of the future reports meets the PFCC expectations
- 2.iii.3 SH agreed and will also be clarifying with Claire Heath the dates in which some quarterly reports need to be presented to ensure the timing is accurate and achievable. SH advised that this may mean some slight changes to a few items.

### **Action 51/20**

**SH to liaise with Claire Heath regarding future agenda items that have been merged and the timing of quarterly and half-yearly reports.**

- 2.iii.4 There were no further amendments to the forward plan and changes were agreed.

## 3 Finance

### 3.i Efficiency & Savings Plan

- 3.i.1 VH presented the Efficiency Savings Programme report. VH clarified that there has been no change to 2020/21 figures, but there are some to 2021/22. The previous

report had a forecast for 2021/22 of £4.22m (£3.62m recurring); the current forecast is £4.64m (£3.722m recurring) which is an increase of £0.42m (£0.102m recurring). VH referenced table 1.4 which provides further detail.

- 3.i.2 For 2020/21 custody review is now green although this is not reflected in the report due to timing; the Local Policing Areas (LPAs) review is expected to be green by January. VH advised that the Office 365 non cashable savings for 2020/21 figures are currently being confirmed through the Office 365 board.
- 3.i.3 VH highlighted a change for 2021/22 since the report had been published. The restructure of CRU (Crime and Public Protection) has been removed from the savings plan, equating to £114k in year and £228k full year. This will result in decreasing the cashable savings from £4.640m to £4.526m and full year £3.722m to £3.494m.
- 3.i.4 PM is expecting a significant non-cashable saving in regard to Office 365. The next Office 365 board is at the end of January and PM expects clarification at this meeting.
- 3.i.5 RH thanked VH for the report and highlighted that this is a very rigorous programme led by the Chief Officer Group.

#### 3.ii Quarterly Finance Report (including a verbal budget update)

- 3.ii.1 DM advised there has been an increase in the forecast underspend since the previous month's report. The current forecast is now a £1.8m underspend (£137k increase).
- 3.ii.2 Following a question from RH, DM clarified that the special police services for Thurrock and Basildon are categorised as non-established roles that are funded, and are included in strength numbers.
- 3.ii.3 RH queried if the £1.8m underspend was likely to increase. DM stated it is likely to increase. This could exceed £2m, before deduction for the Op Talla payment which is pending confirmation from Chief Officers.

#### 4 Monthly Performance Report

- 4.1 VH referred the Board to the executive summary of the report. Highlights from the report included:
  - The position is the same as the previous report, four of the seven priorities are graded as good and three as requires improvement.
  - All crime fell by 7% which is an increase against October, which saw a 6% reduction. The crime reduction is increasing for the rolling 12 months. Changes to COVID rules are affecting the level of crime shown on slide 13.
  - ASB and trafficking of drugs experienced a statistical exceptional increase. The change in ASB is due to COVID and the change in trafficking of drugs is due to proactivity policing and an increase in drug arrests.
- 4.2 RH observed that the analysis on ASB showed that adjustments for known COVID related data would result in an underlying trend showing ASB consistently decreasing over the last 3 years. RH recognised this achievement.
- 4.3 RH asked for clarity on the impact of increasing proactive interventions on drug related crime (slide nine). VH clarified that slide nine shows that drug arrests are up and as a result 25% more trafficking of drugs offences have been recorded. Trafficking of drugs offences increased by 25% from 2019 to 2020. The solved rate

for the year has increased by 7.4%points. Overall the solved rate for drug offences is 91.2%, which is an increase of 4.4%points against 2019.

4.4 RH observed that a proactive approach is working – we arrest, and we bring people to justice.

4.5 VH highlighted the following:

- Slide 16 – 18: indicators are improving; some specific examples were highlighted: a reduction of domestic abuse incidents and the number of homicides.
- Confidence in local police has remained stable.
- Number of ASB incidents is deteriorating which had been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Knife enabled crime is deteriorating. The reasons for this are understood to relate to better recording and better-quality data.
- Modern Slavery referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) are decreasing (deteriorating); referrals reduced from 85 to 71. There was a change in recording method which makes it difficult to compare to historical data.
- Driving under the influence shows an increase. An increase demonstrates that Essex Police are identifying these crimes.

VH summarised that where an area is identified as deteriorating the Force has a clear understanding of the reasons.

4.6 Following a question from RH, VH clarified that drug and drink driving are split on slide 11. The main table combines the two, as previously agreed.

4.7 RH sought clarity on the Modern Slavery metric; the number of referrals has reduced which typically is not a bad thing. PM clarified that the NRM method of submission has changed, therefore a reduced number of referrals were made. We would expect to see more. This is still an emerging team and crime recording rules have changed.

**Action 54/20**

**January Monthly Performance report to provide a narrative with further details on Modern Slavery, providing a more accurate picture of Modern Slavery referrals since recording changed.**

*RN joined the meeting 14:56*

**5 Recruitment of Specials**

5.1 RN presented the Specials Recruitment quarterly report. RN highlighted that the number of officers dropped below 500 (shown on page 2).

5.2 RN highlighted successes within the report including that operational hours and total hours have significantly increased, and recruitment of BAME and female individuals have increased compared to last year.

5.3 RN reflected that it had been an exceptional year for Specials leaving. This is due to attrition to regular officers' recruitment and changes in family circumstances. It has also been identified that vetting has been slowed during COVID restrictions, due to companies utilising furlough being unable to respond to enquiries. Supt Michelle Davies has successfully held regular calls with business partners to overcome this blocker. She has also negotiated with the Police college to increase the number of intakes and double the volume of specials that can be trained on each course. The Force is confident that the headcount of Specials will not reduce further.

- 5.4 RH asked why the number of hours contributed by Specials for Roads Policing has reduced; and how many Parish/Town Councils have shown interest in Community Specials but have not been able to find a suitable candidate to appoint.
- 5.5 RN undertook an action to provide an update regarding roads policing. 44 Councils have signed up to the community safety scheme, but a significant number (more than half) have still without a Community Special Constable in post. Eight Parishes have a Community Special in action and two more are in the pipeline. RH offered his support to discuss with Parish and Town councils to further identify volunteers. RN confirmed this would be welcome, balanced with a need to manage expectations regarding timeframes for vetting and training.

**Action 55/20**

**RN will provide an update for the decrease in road policing specials**

- 5.6 JG recognised the work of Supt Michelle Davies; it was hoped she would bring new ideas to this work.

*The agenda was reordered to accommodate RN items. Item 7 Crime Prevention Strategy moved ahead of item 6 Collaboration*

15:32 Meeting paused for comfort break and resumed at 15:37

6 Collaboration

- 6.1 VH recognised that some aspects of the paper had been discussed under other items and at the recent Strategic Board. There has been no change in RAG rating for serious crime directorate, but it was noted that in October and November the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) assessed progress against the ISO standards and recommended that these functions be accredited. This was acknowledged as very good news.
- 6.2 VH highlighted the 7-force strategic collaboration programme. A business case for Forensics was approved in October and a preferred supplier selected in November. PEQF contracts were completed in June and the project was due to go live in January 2022.
- 6.3 RH queried the legitimacy of the RAG rating of the 7-force programme and asked if more challenge is required on the assessment of the RAG.
- 6.4 JG concurred with RH that RAG ratings may be representing an optimistic view whilst recognising improvement since the additional governance of the Deputies meeting. PM suggested that these concerns be raised at the oversight group. RH will liaise with PBI to feed into the oversight group.
- 6.5 VH highlighted that a longer-term solution for Single Online Home has been found and will start to be rolled out in 2021.
- 6.6 VH reminded the meeting that the Collaboration paper will be moving to annual reporting in line with the new forward plan. RH observed that a number of the RAG statuses in the report were green and sought reassurance that this is an accurate reflection of the current position. VH confirmed that the full highlight report (seen at Strategic Board) shows some projects with elements of red RAG status but reassured that these are typically due to impacts from national delays.

## 7 Crime Prevention Strategy

- 7.1 RN advised that there will not be an update at the next meeting as the Force intends to launch the new Crime Prevention Strategy in March. RN drew attention to the table on page 2 of the report which summarised activity against the various strands of delivery. The paper recognises the challenges in delivering the strategy including COVID restrictions and other operational priorities.
- 7.2 RN identified the following key highlights:
- Positive progress against domestic abuse; Andy Mariner has created a strong governance board that is driving activity;
  - Essex is nationally recognised for its use of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPOs);
  - The Serious Violence Unit has delivered 127 arrests and 64 warrants;
  - CSA teams show strong partnership working with a significant increase in referrals – 60 referrals from NCA against just two in Q1 2020/21;
  - Extremism and radicalisation - the number of SPOCs across the force has increased;
  - Significant increase in hate crime offences and a similar decrease in hate crime incidents; this is not a concern due to a change in recording, and is viewed as positive that the public are continuing to report;
  - House burglary and street robbery – Simon Anslow is looking at this area and preparing for post-pandemic.
- 7.3 RH identified Op Henderson (23<sup>rd</sup> November - 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020) which was mentioned in the report and asked for an update on activity and success.

### **Action 56/20**

**RN to provide an update on Operation Henderson (23<sup>rd</sup> November - 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020)**

- 7.4 RH thanked RN for a comprehensive update and the good prevention activity. RH observed that the reports refer to the number of organised crime groups rather than the relative impact. RN responded that profiling is an important factor and might offer some perspective. RH requested a report on organised crime profiling and impacts.
- 7.5 PM advised that this is a developing piece of work and offered to arrange a briefing for the Commissioner on the MORILE score and the wider work including future funding applications.

### **Action 57/20**

**PM to arrange a briefing for RH on organised crime group profiling, MORILE score and associated wider plans.**

- 7.6 JG expressed her thanks to RN for robustly engaging with the Safer Essex Partnership. The performance data shows how important prevention work is and this is being seen strongly within domestic abuse. JG wished her thanks to be passed to Andy Mariner for his hard work.

RN left the meeting

## 8 Public Perception Survey

- 8.1 VH summarised the Q2 public perception survey results. These are really good results despite some slight decreases compared to the previous quarter. Some areas saw the highest results for Q2 than have been seen before, including those who feel

informed about what Essex Police are doing. Perception of fairness and legitimacy are at the highest level ever seen, which is a real achievement. There is still a gap showing disparity between certain groups, including between victims and non-victims and BAME compared to white ethnicity. BAME responses show that the gap is closing except for three measures, which include fairness and community. The drivers of confidence have been reviewed and are the same. These groups are less concerned about uniform presence and police activity. Factor analysis has been completed focusing on these areas to identify the questions that have the greatest impact on confidence. Uniformed presence has little or no effect in driving confidence of BAME respondents.

- 8.2 RH observed that Maldon was not experiencing the same positive changes as other districts (reference to pages 15,17 and 19) and expressed concerns about this trend.
- 8.3 VH clarified that Maldon was an area under review by the Engagement Star Chamber, overseen by the DCC. PM noted that Chelmsford and Maldon are under one district commander and that there has recently been an increased focus on Maldon. Perception within Maldon has historically been challenging, and there is a strong, vocal community. In the Engagement Star Chamber, focus has been to understand the issue better and police are continuing to do what is known to have worked whilst also seeking new ideas. RH offered his support through the effort of his team if required.
- 8.4 VH shared the COVID results (slide 10). Since the independent survey began at the onset of the pandemic about 4,000 respondents have participated. Results as of 8<sup>th</sup> October (prior to the additional tier restrictions) show that confidence was still high. Levels were slowly declining, but this could be a result of the COVID threat reducing. It will be interesting to see the impact of increased restrictions.
- 8.5 An increased number of people think that Essex Police should be taking a tougher stance, but the need to strike the right balance between enforcement and engagement was noted, and it was recognised that most of the public think the balance is right. Two thirds think communication is suitable.
- 8.6 RH observed that more recently perception is not as good as it was, which tallies with sentiment in the media. Overall the survey results are positive, and RH expressed his appreciation of the good feedback.

9 PFCC Victims Commissioning Quarter 2 update  
(This item was rescheduled mid-meeting and presented as the last item of the meeting)

- 9.1 KS advised that the Victims Commissioning report had already been seen by Essex Police at the Victim and Witness group, and also by the PFCC. Due to time limitations the report was not summarised verbally and attendees were invited to pose questions.
- 9.2 VH asked for clarification of the origination of the Sexual Offences crime figure. KS confirmed it was taken from the Crime Tree Data. (NB *Post meeting this was further clarified as item 5 from October 2020 Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board meeting Crime Tree Data: All sexual offences 3m, Sept 20*).
- 9.3 VH queried the reason behind the significant increase in COMPASS calls in domestic abuse. KS clarified that the service provider had issues with data recording, which had been identified in Q1. This had been rectified but concern remained about accuracy of previous volumes recorded. There is confidence that the Q2 data is

accurate, however the anecdotal feedback suggest that the number of DA calls has not doubled, as implied. RH requested this be clearly identified on report before publication.

**Action 58/20**

**KS to update Victims Commissioning report with data reporting accuracy concern**

- 9.4 SH asked if there will be consideration to change in contracts or specification of services due to the increased volumes of cases support services are managing at any one time as a result of the pandemic. KS clarified that this is not an issue at the moment. The increase and change in demand mainly impact sexual abuse and the current service specification allows for flexibility within the service to manage demand. KS confirmed that current contracts are not due for renewal for a few years.

10 Deep Dive – More Local, Visible and Accessible Policing

- 10.1 RN presented the deep dive report. RN advised that the report refers to the original Police and Crime Plan priorities as this exercise included previous activity. RN provided an overview of the report which included:
- Prevention focus has grown within the Town Teams. The feedback about Town Teams has been positive.
  - There has been some unprompted positive feedback about the Children and Young People (CYP) officers from Children's Safeguarding teams.
  - Facebook interactions have grown significantly, with 213k likes on the main Essex Police page.
  - Community Safety Engagement Officers have started to make a real difference. There are currently two in each Policing District.
  - The transition to Single Online Home has been successful.
  - Contact command is going from strength to strength. The Resolution Centre is now embedded, and this has made appositive difference.
  - Mobile First rollout has resulted in time savings.
  - The Rural Engagement Team (RET) have gone from strength to strength; there is a plan for ten special constables to be attached to the RET.
  - Business Crime Unit is showing success and has networked over 5,000 businesses.
- 10.2 RH reflected on the work of the Rural Engagement Team; he suggested that whilst the reduction by half in number of Unauthorised Encampments is positive this might not represent the full picture and the length of stay would be a useful statistic to see. RH also asked about engagement with cadets during the pandemic, and if this had impacted on membership or interest.
- 10.3 RN clarified that engagement had been maintained where possible, primarily using digital technology, although it was recognised that this was not easy or accessible for everyone. Some cadets have left but no more than usual; all cadet groups are being encouraged and supported to maintain engagement with their members and new cadets are being recruited.
- 10.4 JG acknowledged the fantastic job the cadets did supporting the Essex Police Christmas Present project.
- 10.5 PM summarised that the aim of the deep dive was to give a real sense of where the investment of the force has gone; the impact investment is having on accessible policing is demonstrable.



- 10.6 RH observed the 101 call response times have significantly reduced since 2016. It was 29 minutes and the reports are showing 3mins 18seconds (FCR 101) and 3mins 32seconds (resolution centre). RH requested clear comparable data to show the statistics for 2016 and latest data, which should demonstrate the improvement.

**Action 59/20**

**PM to provide comparable data showing improvement on 101 call times against 2016**

11 Deep Dive – Improving Safety on our Roads

- 11.1 AP provided an overview of the deep dive into roads policing report. The report includes Essex Police activity and Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) activity. Roads policing has been affected by COVID; there have been a significant reduction in cars on the road, but an increase in the levels of those significantly speeding. This has led to an increase in enforcement. The preventative activity that SERP usually provides has also been impacted and reduced due to COVID.
- 11.2 Highlights that AP identified from the report were:
- Invested 24 officers in road policing; they have only recently joined Roads Policing and AP is confident there are improvements and benefits yet to be seen;
  - Serious Investigation Unit conduct complex and specialist investigations; the investment has supported the emotional wellbeing of the team to ensure the team is more sustainable;
  - Road Crime Team – small investment but a disproportionately large impact to users on the road; they target higher end criminals e.g. upper end burglars and serious violence criminals; they have had a significant impact on serious violence;
  - Vehicle Recovery – Essex Police draw a small income on this activity; with the support from the DCC a future investment of an extra member of police staff will increase the team's efficiency;
  - Commercial Vehicle Unit – predominantly HGVs; a significant amount of the teams' work is focussed on prevention, raising awareness and spotting individuals at risk;
  - Road Policing Specials. Specials make a really important contribution to the roads policing work.
  - SERP partnership – Essex Police are committed to Vision Zero. Over the next two/three-months AP will review how Essex Police roads team can rationalise.
- 11.3 RH had been informed that the Minister was impressed with the way in which Essex Police were using roads policing to fight serious violence. RH asked if the review on community Speedwatch (section 5.3) is being coordinated with SERP?
- 11.4 Community Speedwatch has been challenged this year because of COVID. There is no intention of withdrawing Community Speedwatch, but a need to be consistent with it; for example, there have been discussions and pilots about Community Speedwatch groups having enforcement powers. AP does not believe there is a justified need, but Essex Police need to have a consistent approach with the support of SERP.
- 11.5 RH concurred with this. Additional enforcement powers were trialled in Harwich and the feedback suggested that it was not a strong success, with the additional benefits of road safety being nominal; however, another pilot in Maldon, with Council enforcement officers supporting Community Speedwatch, had gone well.

11.6 JG commended the Vehicle recovery team. JG went on a ride-along which demonstrated they were a small but very effective team. JG also commented on drug driving; through the health and justice provision we offer support to those that present at custody with drug issues, and JG wondered if this is an area where more could be done. AP agreed to consider this in the future.

12 Approval for publishing of documents

12.1 It was noted that the paper for item 3.i was marked as official sensitive and agreed that all other papers can be published.

13 AOB & Close

No further business. Meeting closed at 17:16.