

## MINUTES

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

25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 10.00 – 12.45 Video Conference

#### **Present:**

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer PFCC's Office
Rick Hylton (RHy)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Moira Bruin (MB)	Director of Operations, ECFRS
Colette Black (CB)	Asst. Chief Exec – People, Values & Culture, ECFRS
Leanne Little (LL)	Performance Analyst, ECFRS
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance & Resources, PFCC's Office
Jo Thornicroft (JTh)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC's Office
Christine Butler (CHB)	PA to Roger Hirst (Minutes)

#### **Apologies:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire Crime Commissioner
Dave Bill (DB)	Director of Innovation, Risk and Future Development, ECFRS

### **1 Welcome and apologies**

JG welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Roger Hirst who joined the meeting for the Dovercourt paper at 11.20).

### **2 Minutes of the last meeting**

- 2.1 Item 6.11 amendment – MB stated, “The harm model is not yet finalised”, please change to “the harm model is being developed as part of the prevention strategy and will be able to...”
- 2.2 Item 8.2 amendment – “We will continue to ensure we discharge our statutory function and noted that this is high profile and sensitive topic”. Remove “as this is high profile and sensitive area” RHy added “MB replied that the service would continue to discharge their statutory function”

### **3 Action Log**

- 74/20 JTh, NC & Austin had meeting last week which has resulted in a draft timetable. JTh will run the timetable passed JP for review when it comes in. Propose close.
- 82/20 JG meeting Building Risk Review team. RHy feels that there would be a benefit in JG having a physical meeting rather than a virtual one and move this to April. JG agreed.
- 90/20 MB re Notice of Deficiency items, Mark has been working with the Data Team and that should be incorporated into the commentary of the next Performance Report. MB to check to ensure that the update will be incorporated into the Performance Report for March P& R meeting.
- 91/20 LL to provide more comparatives in the Quarterly Performance Report. This has been done. Propose close.

- 92/20 LL Incorporating more information around the Minister's interests. LL has confirmed that this will be in the next quarterly report. The next report is due in March and JTh will change the due date to March on the Action Log. Remain open.
- 93/20 MB to provide feedback on the Peer Review. This is incomplete and not due until February's P&R. Remain open.
- 97/20 CB to have a conversation with NC re the upfront costs of £1.43m for the development strategy as JP had queried whether this was a revenue cost. NC will follow up as he has not had conversation with CB yet. Remain open.
- 99/20 JTh to reference where items have originated from on the Forward Plan. This has now been actioned for both the P&R and Strategic Board Forward Plans. Propose close.
- 100/20 Decision Sheet for virement action. NC said that this is currently in progress, apologies to PBI for it not being included in the Statutory Officers Meeting. Remain open.
- 101/20 The Fire Protection posts have been advertised and closing date for applications was last week. Over 100 applications have been received. The training has been factored into the activity. MB confirmed that this action was based more around training than recruitment and had been resolved on that basis. MB to clarify wording to JTh. Propose close
- 102/20 An action for KE to bring a paper to P& R in February updating on the Fire Protection recruitment. Remain open.
- 103/20 LL to change Performance Report to show how the on-call availability was shown. Due April. Remain open.
- 104/20 Paper due in March re Impact of Covid on Fire Protection Community Safety Visits. This is on the Forward Plan. Propose Close.
- 105/20 MB to add more detail to Building Risk Review Report in issues/further action column and incorporate a summary of the questions. There is a summary in the January report and in the February report there will be a breakdown of building types. MB agreed, the structure and rating system is set by the Protection Board, although this cannot be changed, more detail can be added. Remain open.
- 106/20 JTh confirmed that JP and Tracey King had a conversation about understanding the Complaint's process and any further action will be taken forward outside of this meeting. MB said that this conversation was around fire safety complaints rather than complaints about the Service. Propose close.
- 107/20 JTh to place an update of the Equality Framework on the Forward Plan for June and December which has been completed. Propose close.

#### **4. Forward Plan**

- 4.1 JG suggested structuring the Agenda and Forward Plan so that the substantive items that require a discussion to be more focused and spend less time on the information updates, as the items on the Agendas are increasing. RHy agreed and happy to liaise with both JG and JTh to look how we do that.
- 4.2 RHy suggested that nothing goes onto the Forward Plan without discussion P&R in the first instance and any adjustments to the Forward Plan are also to be made at this meeting.

#### **Action 001/21**

JTh to have a meeting with RHy to go through the Forward Plan now that JTh has reformatted. JTh to set up

#### **5. Finance Report**

NC presented the latest financial report key variances.

- 5.1 ECFRS have a net expenditure of £1.2m which is just below budget. This is consistent with prior months as previously reported.

- 5.2 The non-pay costs are still the main driver of variances and have been discussed previously. Those numbers continue to be consistent with prior months.
- 5.3 Looking at the Summary of Income and Expenditure, the pay costs show that ECFRS have an £650k overspend. Once the Covid impact has been removed, the figure shows a £420k overspend.
- 5.4 There is also an overspend in each of the payroll category. In terms of wholetime, some of the key drivers of overspend are in areas such as the day crewed stations i.e. Dovercourt where the conversion was budgeted for at the beginning of the year, and we are incurring costs on additional support which was not budgeted for. Day Crew Protection Payments have also not been previously budgeted for.
- 5.5 There are some operational training costs which were agreed to be funded from earmarked reserves. These costs are currently being absorbed against underspends in the current year budget. NC will review if any transfer to Reserves is required in the next couple of months.
- 5.4 The variance in Control is driven due to additional unbudgeted resource.
- 5.6 Support staff costs are £67k over, mainly driven by an additional 0.75% of the pay award from the NJC, (the Service had budgeted 2%) 2.75%.
- 5.7 Various restructuring of departments during the year has brought redundancy payments of £100k, which have been absorbed within the support staff line.
- 5.8 The latest Forecast has not been changed and continues to show a balanced position. The Forecast is to be updated in the next 2 weeks and should be consistent with the overall number, but NC feels that there will be realignment over some of the categories. Some potential savings may be seen further in non-pay and on-call may need to be adjusted which has increased against the original projection.
- 5.9 The Covid costs which have been incurred to date are approx. £1m. Included within the Covid Schedule is £300k for projected costs either coming up during the next few months. The costs are for such items as cleaning commitments on stations, costs for purchasing of lateral flow tests, additional IT costs.
- 5.10 The Fire Minister has announced a further tranche of funding available to apply for and this is due by 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021. NC and the team have been working through the projected spend and other areas. It is not envisaged that the Service will need to access that spend for this Financial Year, but we may need to use the funds in 5 months' time when we have utilised the Covid spend funds. NC will formalise the summary and response in due course. JG asked for clarification that this was in response to the bid. NC agreed and added that there will not be a bid for the funding at this stage for this application but will review in a couple of months. NC will finalise the Projection of Costs as there are a couple of items that will need to be covered and then will formally respond as to whether an application needs to be submitted for the bid.
- 5.11 Capital continues to show as £4m spend. The report shows the Service are currently at £1.4m. The Service are not going to spent £4m by the end of the financial year. The key variances are in Property. The feedback is that asset protection budget costs will be £1.6m. There are works proposed towards the end of the year, but NC does not feel that we will get to that number. NC to follow up with the Estate Manager.

Action 002/21

NC to follow up the key variances in property with the Estate manager.

- 5.12 The Fleet budget is approx. £7k under on current spend. There are several vehicles on order, but delivery dates have now moved into the next financial year. Some of the Capital will need to be transferred into next year and the numbers will be finalised in due course.
- 5.13 The final budget panel workshop has now taken place and the final budget panel paper has been completed. There will be a final review at SMT today. There are a couple of tweaks to the paper and NC is to wait until after SMT in case there are any further changes. JG thanked NC for all his work on the Budget Paper.
- 5.14 There is a second tranche of Day Crewed Housing that will be listed shortly, a Decision Sheet has been provided for this. NC is hoping that the funds for houses for sale in the first tranche will start to come through. NC will report on those sales as they occur.

### **Questions**

- 5.15 JTh noticed that there are a lot of agency staff in ICT over December and that they must have been impacted by Covid and the change to working from home. Was this the reason or for sickness? KE responded that additional staff needed to be drafted in due to 1. Move from Windows 7 and additional support was required and 2. When Covid hit again and staff began to work from home, additional staffing was needed on the helpdesk to support remote workers. KE added that when the opportunity arises to reduce this number, the Service will do so.
- 5.16 JG asked NC for an update on audit recommendations. NC there are several recommendations that have now fallen outside of timescales. There are several procurement recommendations and KE has paper to address these in this meeting. NC is in the process of chasing up some of the overdue items. NC stated that Austin is being much more proactive in chasing the actions up and will bring an update in due course. JG stated that this will not sit well with the audit committee if they are overdue.

### **6. Monthly Performance Report**

LL talked through the key elements of the Monthly performance report.

- 6.1 ECFRS attended less incidents in December 2020 than the previous month and in December 2019, which is probably due to people being asked to stay at home during lockdown and Christmas.
- 6.2 There was a decrease in attendance at fires and false alarms but an increase in attendances to special service incidents in December when compared to the previous month.
- 6.3 The average response time to potentially life-threatening incidents in November was 11 minutes 5 seconds which is over the target but is not uncommon during the festive period.
- 6.4 There was a decrease in total on-call and wholetime & day crew pump appliance availability this month compared to the previous month. This is also common due to the festive period.
- 6.5 There was no personal data breaches in December. There was also a decrease in the total number of statutory requests received.
- 6.6 Human Resources have been working on the ongoing COF support and collaboration with finance on 2021/22 headcount management.
- 6.7 Learning and development continue to embed the four L&D pillars of learning.

- 6.8 During December the Health & Safety Department carried out several reviews of the Covid safe risk assessment at multiple key locations in association with the FBU to check control measures were in place and being followed. There is an update to the pack where there is a single point to find everything needed
- 6.9 The Protection team responded to all the planning, building regulations and licensing consultations within the statutory time limit and conducted 150 desktop and 59 full audits as well as 39 notification of deficiencies in that month.
- 6.10 There has been an increase in the number of home safety visits in December compared to November, despite the festive period. This is due to the Home Safety Information Team conducting a sprint project to reduce the Backlog in the number of bronze visits
- 6.11 On the 21<sup>st</sup> December the Home Safety Command and Control Group moved Home Safety and Safeguarding to Gold Crisis, further limiting the number of referrals that required a face-to-face engagement in properties until Essex moves from National Lockdown back into Tier 3
- 6.12 In Community Development and Safeguarding, there were 54 safeguarding referrals to ECFRS in December 2020. 40% of these were received by Service personnel. There are no outstanding referrals.
- 6.13 JTh asked if we are still where we were in March in terms of delivering activities or are we in a better/worse position. KE we have a regular Covid call and the actions are picked up there and what is different this time is that we did our Covid assessments for the workplace and Covid risk assessments, we are able continue most of the activity that we were able to do previously. Some of the risk assessments have had to be revisited to ensure they were fit for purpose i.e. for safety officers meeting the most vulnerable but with the right PPE, lateral flow testing in place etc.
- 6.14 RHy highlighted the availability on the attendance time, we have seen a drop. The factors for that are around leave due to an increased number of Covid cases across Essex in December where many staff were isolating, and this coincided with lateral flow testing and the PCR testing for schools.

## **7. HMICFRS Improvement Plans Update**

### **Protection Improvement Plan**

MB talked the Board through the plan

- 7.1 This is now 85% complete and is on track.
- 7.2 The Service is currently waiting for the Head of Protection at Hertfordshire to respond on his findings. A reminder was sent on 22<sup>nd</sup> January.
- 7.3 The recruitment piece has gone well, with over 130 shortlisted and aiming for 20-30 credible candidates ready for interview in late January/early February with a start date of April.
- 7.4 The Service are looking at a long term restructure of the departments, but this is not anticipated until next year.
- 7.5 There is difficulty in getting crews to visit premises in the way we would like them to. Some different approaches are being considered around telephone audits, Teams or Dashcams, to explore other ways in which to keep crews maintaining and using the training they have had.

## Questions

- 7.6 JG thanked MB and it will be interesting to test alternatives rather than people doing actual visits and seeing how that works out. MB added that the telephone calls does seem to be very robust way of doing these calls but by having a Duty Officer on the call, then the responsible person cannot lie to an inspecting officer.
- 7.7 JG said that the Board will look forward when MB comes back with Plans for restructure and on how this will be. MB said that this will not be controversial, but it will be about building more capacity into the system.

## Culture Improvement Plan

CB joined the call at 10.52 and talked the Board through the Plan.

- 7.8 The HMCIFRS update report is with the Board. There are two things to bring to the board's attention 1. Training and the steps and 2. The ongoing engagement with maturity modules mentioned before.
- 7.9 Today is the "Go Live" of the four-year Leadership Development approach with Momentum. It is Day 1 for Cohort 1 today and CB is keeping a close eye on how that progresses. Cohort 2 starts next Monday and then 1 Cohort per month after that.
- 7.10 The Core Learning Pathway went live in December. In January, each of the quarters in that core learning pathway are almost fully booked. The next two ILM courses go live in February for level three and level five for management for those colleague's that prefer courses that attract accreditation.
- 7.11 Further remote learning is being put in place for a range of operational and non-operational skills which starts on 1<sup>st</sup> February and included in that element will be a neurodiversity element, to cover neurodiversity, dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism.
- 7.12 The NFCC have created some maturity models which were based on Deloitte & Touche research and are looking for trailblazers. ECFRS have put there selves forward to explore that. A series of workshops begins next week on those models with KE's team. The maturity models help us to see good practice looks like. The elements of the maturity model together with the People Strategy Action Plan, assist to drive our ambition in years 3 and 4.
- 7.14 CB has been in touch with three other FRS's that were assessed as excellent, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire and Lancashire to ask them to give some critical feedback on the work that we have been doing so far. This provides great peer support.
- 7.15 The People Insights feedback has been received and that will be presented formally at the February P & R but that reaffirms that the Service is on the right path and moving forward.
- 7.16 JTh confirmed that CB will bring a paper on the NFCC Maturity Model to the March P&R Board.

## 8. Building Risk Review Update

MB updated the Board

- 8.1 MB explained that this monthly report shows progress against the National Fire Chief's Building Risk Review which runs from August 2020 to December 2021. The program identified 182 high risk buildings in Essex and asked the Service to set a Plan on how the buildings would be inspected all within the time frame, which they have.

- 8.2 The attached monthly return was submitted 7<sup>th</sup> January and it covers all the activity carried out in December. 16 Buildings were inspected in December, out of 182 buildings, 54 have been completed in total.
- 8.3 As requested there have been some changes to the report but there is further information to be inserted into the report regarding premises types. Currently out of the 182 buildings, 60 of the buildings are high rise residential buildings and out of those, 54 high rise residential buildings have been completed which are high risk. Once the 60 high rise residential buildings have been completed, different building types will be shown in the report.
- 8.4 At the last meeting, MB was requested for additional commentary to clarify why buildings were green/amber or red i.e. is it awaiting further action or is there a mediation plan in place which satisfies the need on a short term basis
- 8.5 JTh said that many of the items are rated Amber, which suggests that there is more work to be done, was this expected or causing an issue? MB this is not causing a problem yet, but the amount of work here could build up very quickly, especially if the Service need to go down the Prosecution route to get issues resolved. Now this is fine but in the longer term resources will be increased in the department to manage this.
- 8.6 JTh asked if it would be possible to add a table to track how many are still in the system i.e. not "green" MB to pick up with JTh offline to understand and get more clarity.

#### **Action 003/21**

JTh and MB to follow up offline on agenda item 8.6 regarding JTh request to add a table in the report to track how many items are still in the system for MB to understand from JTh what is required.

#### **9. Q2 Quarterly Performance Update**

LL talked the Board through the key items of Q2 report.

- 9.1 The Q2 report covers from July to August of 2020 which although was during the pandemic there was an easing of lockdown restrictions at this time and so there was a lot more activity on the roads. The shielding program was paused, education was resumed, and people were encouraged to go back to the workplace. This activity impacted on the attendances.
- 9.2 Home Safety – the visits to the most vulnerable continue in their homes, dropping off smoke alarms especially in rural areas.
- 9.3 Safeguarding – There was a decrease in referrals mostly due to partner agencies not being able to enter premises.
- 9.4 Smoke Alarms - A focus on an English Housing Survey which showed the national figures on smoke alarm ownership and provides an insight into the presence of alarms in fires and reasons if the alarm was not raised,
- 9.5 Education Team activity – The team have gone online during the pandemic and they have been collecting a lot more activity data on the number of people that have visited their site. This resource is now available for people to use if they work providing home schooling. Talks going forward re metrics around monitoring of activity which will help the team in the next financial year in working with schools.
- 9.6 PBI stated the national report on national smoke alarms was useful, however it did not give a flavour of how local figures compare to the national figures. LL replied that the way the survey is done, it is a 10 year survey where there are a certain number of

households are added every year, but they do not provide that data in the result. LL is looking into the data source to see if that information can be provided for Essex.

- 9.7 PBI also asked if we could do something locally using the same questions that the National Survey shows so that we could do some local benchmarking perhaps when we next do the Police Fire and Crime Plan. RHy replied and said that the Service currently captures information when we attend a residential fire. One of the questions is if there was a smoke alarm and did it work. Our figures seem to be comparable with figures nationally as a quarter of the fires that ECFRS attending there is not a working smoke alarm. There was a consultation on the fitting of smoke alarms to social housing as mandatory and ECFRS have just responded on behalf of NFCC to ask the Government to mirror what happens in Scotland where it is mandatory to have a smoke alarm in every domestic dwelling.
- 9.11 There were 1782 protection cases that were completed as well as all the planning, building regulations and licensing cases within the statutory time limit.
- 9.12 4,050 incidents were attended which is slightly less than in the same quarter last year across all incident types.
- 9.13 There were less people killed or seriously injured on the roads in Q2 than in the same quarter in the previous year due to reduction of traffic flows.
- 9.14 A new member of the data team joined in November and has been trained by LL. He has just completed a piece analysis on the likely reasons or factors on why we have improved our attendance times in Q1. We are looking at different internal and external factors, which also talks about the external traffic flows as well. LL is hoping to bring an informative paper to the Board.
- 9.15 A slight improvement in the declared personal characteristics and work continued to improve this position which is captured on the recruitment system.
- 9.15 Sickness Absence – Trends have improved with closer case management however Covid related absence has increased overall numbers.
- 9.16 89% of freedom of information, subject access requests, environmental information regulation requests as well as complaints were closed on time.
- 9.17 4 Data Protection Impact Assessments were completed in this quarter and 70% of the data in the Asset Register has been reviewed and recorded.
- 9.18 84% of the mandatory e-learning online training had been completed at the close of Q2.
- 9.19 JTh thanked LL for adding the minister's measures. LL is working to automate the processing of collection of data when it comes to benchmarking and hopefully the additional data program inside of the NFCC will provide us with a lot more insight to how we compare with other FRS.

## **10. Annual Plan Progress Update Report**

RHy talked the Board through the Update

- 10.1 In November SLT came together to review where the Service is against the Annual Plan. This the first year that there has been an Annual Plan with the goal being that we can have a single Plan where all our improvement activity comes together. It has been challenging year for the Annual Plan, as the pandemic was not foreseen. There were 46 activities put into the Annual Plan and 13 of those are already complete with



a further 20 projecting to be completed by the end of March which will mean that this year 71% of this year's Annual Plan will be completed.

- 10.2 There are 13 activities that will be rolled over unless we can provide real traction behind them.
- 10.3 RHy expressed an observation that some of the activity was not smart enough, and when you look at a number of activities that are moving forward i.e. Fleet workshops, the ambition was to have done the full business case this year and not to move the fleet workshops. Learning curves have been made this this year about our objectives which need to be much smarter moving forward.
- 10.2 There are several recommendations from HMICFRS under operations and the service will undergo an Inspection this year. Those recommendations are happening, but we need to have assurance in place, which we have not got. This will happen in the first quarter of the roll over Plan.
- 10.3 The new Annual Plan will be at the Strategic Board in March to be signed off and those areas which have been rolled over will feature in that Plan.

**JP joined the meeting at 11.07**

- 10.4 PBI asked if all 13 of the items need to be rolled-over onto next year's Plan, or is it due to some things becoming more urgent or important that should take their place? RHy replied and said that most of them will need to roll over and need to be smartened up. The operational items will be closed out in the first quarter. The pandemic has caused some delay. If the Service can close off three quarters of the annual Plan, that will be a good reflection of the service.
- 10.5 PB said that regarding the pandemic, one of the things being implemented to the Plan in the PFCC's office is to build in formal review points once or twice a year during the year to give us the opportunity to review items that have not been foreseen and that timescales can be adjusted accordingly. RHy agreed.
- 10.6 JTh said that the Annual Plan is factored in the Forward Plan to be looked at quarterly. This will be opportunity to pick up those items as we did not do this last year.
- 10.7 JTh found it difficult to track across the update as when the original Annual Plan came to P&R there was a different number. JTh found it very difficult to cross reference all the actions. RHy suggested picking up a conversation with Lucy about how we would like that to be in the review Plan going forward.

**11. Quarterly OCLO Project Update**

MB updated the Board

- 11.1 MB explained that OCLOS's are On-Call Liaison Officers who were brought in under the On-Call Development Program. The OCLOs were put in place to work and support the on-call colleagues in the Stations, to increase communications, engagement with communities and to increase the availability of the appliances.
- 11.2 In the attached report are important facts and evidence on how OCLOs have made a difference in these areas. The OCLO project has been successful and as a result, there is a closure report showing the performance against objectives they were set. The pilot project will be closed, and the posts will be kept.
- 11.3 JG asked MB what those successes have been and where the value had been brought? MB replied that the success has been across the piece on-call provide us with constant feedback that they don't feel that we afford them as much attention and

engagement and support as we do with Wholetime Colleagues. It is difficult to maintain engagement and communications with on-call due to not being available via email and being spread across 35 different Stations therefore it is difficult to get direct contact. OCLO's specifically reach out and engage with on-call Firefighters and pull together best practice across the Stations and share it, which seems to be working well.

- 11.4 The Service have made increases in recruitment and retentions and OCLO's have helped us to do this. They have also helped to identify where our systems are not best serving the Service, such as for recruitment, as well as engaging with businesses and building communities, which are mapped across to the on-call Conversion Project
- 11.5 JG asked if this has improved our relationship with the Rep Bodies. MB feels that this is moving forward, the Service are encouraging everyone to take this seriously. The engagement and discussion is also improving with the Rep Bodies.
- 11.6 KE said the FRSA have an issue with conversion times and felt that Firefighters should be able to automatically transfer to a Wholetime Station. This year is the first year that Firefighters have not had to do the 15 week program. The duty systems are not the same and there needs to be transition between an On-call and Wholetime duty System. OCLO's have assisted in building trust and relationships with the Rep Bodies.
- 11.7 PBI asked if On-call colleagues are included in the staff survey that CB talked about, insofar as when we get the data back to P&R, that will demonstrate the improvements in how On-call staff are feeling? MB replied that the survey did include the On-call colleagues to confirm that and several key items were picked out. The engagement increased from 35% in 2008 to 56% across the organisation and MB is sure that a good increase will be seen across all duty systems.
- 11.8 JTh wanted to check for the Forward Plan, as this came to us in July, the Minutes state that it was going to roll on for another year and then be reassessed. JTh is due to see a final valuation report in June, but this is not needed as it has already become "business as usual". JTh will carry on with quarterly updates for the moment and put those through the year.
- 11.9 RHy said that quarterly updates could certainly be brought on OCLOs. Would it better to broaden that to around the priority which we have for On-call development and bring a quarterly report around the wider work rather than just OLOCs who are a part of that program of work. This would also give JG and RH a greater overview in the work of On-call. MB agreed. JG agreed that it would make more sense to the discussion.

#### **Action 004/21**

JTh to put quarterly update on the Forward Plan On-Call Development Project

#### **12. Contract and Pipeline Procurement Update**

- 12.1 KE said that the Board will recognise that procurement underwent an internal audit last July. The output of that report gave us a partial assurance rating which not ideal but that is the purpose of the internal audit as there were areas in the Service that needed to be identified and put into a structured Plan.
- 12.2 The areas that were chosen were identifying contract management and contract pipeline items. Although recognised as a service, the procurement function is not centralised. i.e. fleet, ICT, and property services will take care of their own procedures. Procurement was looking at the low level contracts and also some of the more bespoke items. These sit in different areas and when they are compared with other FRS, it is obvious that the ECFRS procurement structure is not set up centrally.

- 12.3 Regarding contract management, this is an area where the Service needs to take more control. There are several contracts within the service that have gone over their contract value, due to not having gone out to tender for services and the contract value has then rolled over.
- 12.4 KE has engaged a company called Barkers Consultancy who are procurement specialists operating over the 7F program. Barkers have helped 7F obtain tighter procurement functions and ensure that the legislation and contract management side is managed more effectively.
- 12.5 The audit with Barkers has commenced this week. Information and Data will be sent over to Bakers for review. In the paper are items that have been quickly identified as “contract bow wave”, which is when your service has multiple contracts and if they are not effectively planned across the year, all of the contracts will need renewing at the same time and organisations cannot cope with that volume of work involved.
- 12.6 Barkers are going to review our 10 highest priority contracts which are due for renewal i.e. grounds maintenance, building contract management etc and these will be the subject of focus and go out to Tender. Barkers will then move onto phase 2 and phase 3. This process should smooth out the bow wave issue
- 12.7 Barkers are also assisting the Service to identify a more structured process management approach. There is not a lot of reporting or visibility of data regarding procurement and issues are being highlighted at short notice due to the Service being unprepared.
- 12.8 Barkers will also look at the process management at ECFRS and system based management. They use and recommend systems that feature across most public sector procurement teams and businesses. The Service do not have access to these systems at present and our contract management is managed through spreadsheets.
- 12.9 Barkers are looking at redesign and restructure. Other FRS and public sectors have specialist and category buyers i.e. for fleet, ICT and property – the bigger spend functions. It will still sit centrally but the specialist and category buyers work closely with those teams.
- 12.10 The Barker’s review is expected to be completed in 4 weeks. Once the recommendations have been received, the next steps will be to implement some of those recommendations, and this will be brought to P&R. The output of the Barker’s report will assist in reporting back into the RSM in terms of when the follow up audit is undertaken and achieving the recommendations in the original June audit.
- 12.10 Specific details on individual contacts have not been included in the attached report, which are waiting for the Barker’s Review in order that KE can bring back a more structured Plan and recommendations.
- 12.11 The Review will also highlight to the Service the collaborative opportunities which are not being taken advantage of at present and will be looking to collaborate with other FRS and 7F in their procurement functions.

## Questions

- 12.12 JP has previously used Barkers. The initial cost of £15,000 for the review, but we already have recommendations from the audit and JP feels that the cost of the review may be conservative. How will this be different to the to the audit recommendations? KE replied that Barkers have had full sight of the internal audit outcomes and KE has expressed to Barker’s that he does not want the review to be another titled version of

the audit and has been assured that this is not the case. They will look at the RSM audit and give advice on how we can take them forward.

- 12.13 JTh asked when a paper will be available so this can be noted on the Forward Plan? KE will liaise with JTh outside of this meeting.

### **Action 005/21**

JTh asked when a paper regarding the Barker's Review will be available to P&R so this can be noted on the Forward Plan? KE will liaise with JTh outside of the meeting

- 12.14 RHy wanted to acknowledge the work that KE has done. This has been a long outstanding issue around procurement and welcomed the approach that KE is taking. JG agreed that the work being undertaken is encouraging.

### **13. Workforce Plan Progress Report**

- 13.1 Although the paper was provided to the Board KE shared the PowerPoint presentation on the screen and highlighted the key items.
- 13.2 Slide 1 – An Interim Report went to SLT which identified adoption of a new service around Wholetime Recruitment which moved to continuous recruitment. The achievement of the Plan is ensuring that the Service recruit the right people and keep them.
- 13.3 Slide 2 – The Action Plan is to ensure that we have the right leadership and succession plan in place to building our future leaders and governance overseeing this.
- 13.4 Slide 3 - Shows what the Leadership and Succession Plan looks like at the different stages. This week the Comms and Communication Plan will be launched which articulates the Plan throughout the Service. The LEAP program, Learn, Engage Achieve, Progress Program, will enable people to leap 2 stages ahead by recognising potential and ability earlier on and fastrack to a role.
- 13.5 Slide 4 – The Transfer and Regulations Board is run regularly and oversees internal movements which is also overseen by the Strategy Board,
- 13.6 Slide 5 – Career pathways shows that skills are transferable within areas with the focus being on skills and knowledge to gain a more holistic experience across the service.
- 13.7 Slide 6 – Recognises the need that people coming into the service from a whole range of areas, particularly in Wholetime recruitment which has been advertised in new areas particularly social media which is proving successful.
- 13.8 Slide 8 – Achieving agility is about refining processes and streamlining recruitment time. Achieving agility includes other areas i.e. job evaluation, exit surveys, improving payroll process, streamline and updating policies and decision processes.
- 13.9 Slide 9 – On-call time to hire shows the recruitment process as it currently stands and where the Service are going to. The recruitment processes have been shortened from 9 months to 3 months.
- 13.10 Slide 10 – The Exit Survey is now an electronic processes and questions have been reduced and is more efficient.
- 13.11 Slide 12 – A pictorial slide showing the 2020 highlights i.e. 2566 applications for wholetime firefighters, staff turnover down by 8%, 85 funded apprenticeships, increase in 17-24 year olds in Q2, Increase in female and BAME applicants
- 13.12 Slide 13 – the Near Term Activity includes the continued recruitment for Wholetime Firefighters in phase 2 and 3 and LEAP launched this week. An Apprenticeship

Program paper is due to be taken to SLT on how to work with and obtain the most from apprenticeship programs which will come back to P&R. KE to work with JTh when to update the Board with data information for the Forward Plan

#### **Action 006/20**

KE to work with JTh when to update the Board with LEAP data information for the Forward Plan

#### **RH joined the meeting at 11.20**

#### **Questions**

13.13 JP asked where we are with the Protection work and where we are with the recruitment. KE said that the 10 Protection posts have been advertised and The Service are currently going through the shortlisting and this will be feedback to P&R at a later date.

#### **14. Dovercourt**

14.1 MB said the paper today is around understanding the risk on the Dovercourt Station ground and understanding what we need in terms of operational availability to mitigate the risk. The information on On-call Conversion Next Steps show the Dovercourt Action Plan, and Key Station Policy by way of background information.

14.2 The paper gives an overview of the community and operational risk. The IRMP 20216-2020 identified that we should move away from the Day Crewing system at several Stations with Dovercourt being one of those. This was about the day crewing system being a danger to the service rather an aspiration to move to the On-call duty. It did identify that the IRMP at that time identified that an On-call resource there would be enough to meet the risk presented by that Station ground.

14.3 The risk on the Station ground shows the transport and industrial risks including our COMAH sites such as Harwich where there is a flood risk. The historic activity levels shows us that at Dovercourt, they are commensurate with other On-call Stations i.e. not busier than other On-call Stations.

14.4 To break down the activity over the last four years, 56% of that activity came from response to secondary fires. 32% for primary fires (approx. 30 each year) with the remainder for false alarms or special services (RTC, Flooding animal rescues etc).

14.5 To mitigate risk on Station grounds and historic demands, Dovercourt Station moved to On-call on April 2020 which was built into the IRMP.

14.6 The status of Dovercourt is an On-call Station albeit the Service are still in the process of building up capability and other availability of On-call Stations, so it currently has full time resources to assist with availability and is working to increase the on-call availability overseen by the On-call Conversation Project.

14.7 The target is the full-time equivalent of 24 Firefighters. We currently have 15 on-call firefighters which gives a fulltime equivalent of 11.25.

14.8 Although a large amount of risk is not presented, the travel times to a different fire Station could be quite lengthy which accounts for some of the risk at Dovercourt. To mitigate this Dovercourt is now a Key Station which means that we will always endeavour to keep that available where possible. Control will have the ability to move appliances around to ensure we always have an available asset or response on Dovercourt ground.

14.9 As we have declared Dovercourt to be a Key Station that gives us the option to work towards keeping availability on our key wholetime Stations due a variety of means, i.e.

additional shift working, out duties, overtime. These options can be used to support the availability of On-call Key Stations too. This is dependent on work with Rep Bodies and the Services current systems and processes,

- 14.10 The Station ground, historic demand and availability have been covered in the paper including mitigating the risks adequately with what we have in place at the moment, although the Service are working towards using the on-call conversion program as the governance to get the Service where it wants to be, which is outlined in the monthly Action Plan.

### **Questions**

- 14.11 RH said that the aim of the paper was to define the risk in Dovercourt and what we think should be sustained position to mitigate that risk. There is a section "Risk Implications and Risk Mitigation. In the verbal presentation MB has answered the question in what the Service intends to provide with the two on-call pumps, this is in the right shape, but this is not in the paper. The reason for this paper was to have the audit trail to say that we have assessed the risk in Dovercourt, and we think that this is the right shape of provision. It needs to be stated that the Service have done the work in the paper and we think that what we are doing is correct and therefore we need to have in place at Dovercourt, two on call pumps, one available 100% of the time, another available (no percentage) and provide back up from nearby areas, but this is not specified. The paper was to provide that transparency to the public as it will be published. RH feels that the paper provided does not reflect that, although it was in the verbal presentation.
- 14.12 JG agreed that the paper does not explain the position adequately. JG suggested to amend and publish a revised paper, given MB did articulate in her verbal update.

### **Action 007/21**

MB to revise the paper to reflect what was said in her verbal update to give those risk mitigations for Dovercourt

- 14.14 RHy agreed that some comments need to be reflected in the paper and will take away from this meeting and will reflect those comments before publishing. RHy will share the revised document with RH & JG and discuss with them, the correct governance route with them for the paper to come back outside this meeting, if required.
- 14.15 JP asked if the Equality and Diversity section, could have some further information .MB suggested "when conducting our attraction and recruitment engagement we will ensure we comply with all that we have identified as a service which is good practice in terms of equality and diversity. JP agreed

### **Action 008/21**

JP requested further generic information in this section. MB suggested "when conducting our attraction and recruitment engagement we will ensure we comply with all that we have identified as a service which is good practice in terms of equality and diversity. JP agreed.

- 14.15 JTh brought to the Board's attention that there is a paper under AOB on the On-call Conversion. JG asked on further information on the paper.
- 14.16 MB mentioned at the introduction of the Dovercourt paper that one of those background papers was on the On-call Conversion Update which the Board had previously seen and added to Agenda for transparency. JG suggested that the On-call Conversion Update could be an Appendix to the Dovercourt paper.

## **15. Key Stations Policy Update**

- 15.1 MB said that this paper has been provided by Dave Bill. It is a Key Station update on Policies which have been previously agreed but has now been reviewed.
- 15.2 The Key Stations update was approved By SLT in December 2020. The Key Station Policy ensures availability at the Key Stations in order that the Service can maintain a strategic framework of emergency response cover across Essex
- 15.3 ECFRS attendance time is an average of 10 minutes from the time of call and the first attendance to incidents an average of 15 minutes 90% of the time which is the response standard that we need to meet.
- 15.4 If a Key Station does not have a response asset available, control are empowered to use their judgement to make cover moves on a dynamic 24/7 basis to ensure that a Key Station is covered.
- 14.5 A review was prompted by the Local Optimisation Report from Process Evolution, that was commissioned to ensure that our Key Stations are the correct ones. The review concluded that we should continue with our current Key Stations with the addition of Witham which has been added. Appendix 1 lists the Key Stations

### **Questions**

- 14.6 JTh asked regarding the Process Evolution Report that they had a wide remit and it states that ECFRS could cover the whole area with 12 Wholetime Stations if they were optimally placed and talks about degradation lists. Is this something that will be used for wider review of the estate or is this something that was commissioned to determine that the Key Stations are correct? MB replied that it was commissioned around what Key Stations were in place, but it is not just about attendance times but also risk mitigation as it suggests providing the assets where needed.
- 14.7 RHy added, this will not affect the Estate Strategy insofar of sale of sites but will identify those Stations that are to be Key Stations. If the Service are to ensure a more flexible response model, further additional rest facilities in some of the On-call Stations that do not currently have them will need to be supplied and which will require additional investment.
- 14.8 RHy confirmed that the reason this review was undertaken is because the Stations are currently not meeting response times and clarity was needed on whether the Key Stations were the correct ones. The report has come back and stated that they are, but additional Key Stations were needed. Map 1 provided in the paper shows the coverage that is currently provided and Map 2, shows the coverage we will have with additional Key Stations. This will enable us to meet the best historic response time.
- 14.9 RHy said that the next piece of work which will feed through into the Response Strategy, is about where do we need to place the Key Stations in order to meet the 10 minute attendance time across Essex and that will see additional appliances being added.
- 14.10 RHy estimated that out of 50 Stations, an additional 25 appliances would be needed to be available across Essex to ensure that optimal response model for all data not just historic. Some of this will come through the Response Strategy. MB and the team may set up a workshop to understand how all the bits come together and how we are going to make use of the resources.
- 14.11 RH looking at the maps on page 7, we could cover a larger area/cover more people and the gap was evident in the Dengie. RHy agreed, it would be addition of Witham, Canvey Island, Burnham and Tillingham as joint Key Stations.

- 14.12 RHy said that the report highlighted a question over the Epping area. At present both Loughton and Waltham Abbey are Key Stations but Epping is a better location for the Key Station however Epping is currently an On-call Station, RHy feels that some investment will need to be made in Epping to ensure it is fit for purpose as a Key Station moving forward.
- 14.13 RH questioned why Epping was not on the map. RHy said that this was due to Epping being unable to be made a Key Station at present, as some investment is needed to provide rest facilities which will be factored in the Estate Strategy. RHy confirmed that Loughton covers more of London as opposed to Essex.
- 14.14 RH would like to understand how joint key Stations work. MB replied that if one Station is not available then the other will be. RHy added that if a Station i.e. Burnham is at 3 people and Tillingham is at 1, we could bring together to create 1 crew in that area and so would use dynamic On-call out duties more flexibly, which is a longer term Plan. RH suggested that time is spent with Emily on how we communicate this to the public with a standard response on "How Key Stations Work". RHy will speak to Emily Cheyne.

#### **Action 009/21**

RH suggested that time is spent with Emily on how we communicate Key Stations to the public with a standard response on "How Key Stations Work". RHy will speak to Emily Cheyne

- 14.15 RH asked if this was an amendment to the IRMP and it feels that SLT is recommending to RH for a decision, but it is not in that shape yet. RHy replied that he was not sure that it was an IRMP change and will pick it up outside this meeting and if so, the most appropriate place for that decision would be the Strategic Board. RH agreed.
- 14.16 PBI checked that the designation of Key Stations is a matter reserved for the Commissioner in the Constitution. It is not straight forward insofar as what is not delegated is the "function of reducing or varying on a permanent basis the number of fire appliances and the method used to crew the appliances" PBI said if this was interpreted to being the method used to crew the appliances then it is a reserved matter. RH asked for this to come to Strategic Board. If RHy and Jo Turton make the decision that is an operational decision, then we will take it offline to discuss.

#### **AOB**

There was not any AOB

Meeting finished (11.45)