

MINUTES

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

31st March 2021 14.00 – 15.55 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
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
Moira Bruin (MB)	Director of Operations, ECFRS
Colette Black (CB)	Asst. Chief Exec – People, Values & Culture, ECFRS
Leanne Little (LL)	Performance Analyst, ECFRS

1 Welcome and apologies

JG welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Roger Hirst, Moira Brun, Leanne Little and Colette Black

2 Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 RHy said that regarding item 10.12 should read "if it fails to respond another will be sent from another station".
- 2.2 Minutes from last Meeting agreed for accuracy subject to the amendment above.
- 2.3 There were no matters arising.

3 Action Log

Action log

- 82/20 Not due
- 90/20 They have been added to the March Performance Report. Propose Close.
- 92/20 LL has put a note of the Ministers interests in the quarterly report. Propose Close
- 93/20 MB to bring the Peer Review on the Protection Improvement Plan back to this Board, which is on the forward plan for April. Propose Close.
- 103/20 Remain open.

- 02/21 Regarding variances on the budget around property and was for NC to follow up with John Doherty. NC has confirmed that on Asset Improvement, the carried forward is for Shoebury and for training and that there is no carried forward for Asset Protection. Propose Close.
- 08/21 Additional EDI information on the Dovercourt Report. This has been done. Propose close. An additional action for JTh to send out a report template. (to be added as a new action).

Action 022/21

JTh to circulate a Report Template

- 9/21 Communicating to the public on how joint key stations work. RHy to discuss with Emily re comms. RHy suggested waiting until June where the Commissioner and Jane will sign off the Response Strategy. That will no doubt change the way we use joint key stations. Move due date to June. Remain Open
- 10/3/20 RHy regarding the Performance Report on on-call availability, it was due back in April and linked with the Response Strategy because that Strategy will be signing off the key stations and the strategic locations. RHy suggests changing the Performance Reporting once that Strategy has been approved. Report differently with all the updates at the first P&R following the June Strategic Board. JTh to move the due date to June. Remain Open.
- 10/21 A review of last year's plan is on the Forward Plan for April P&R Board. Propose close.
- 11/21 NC & KE regarding Medium Term Financial Plan is on the Forward Plan for the June Strategic Board. NC is to provide quarterly updates as a part of the finance pack. Propose close.
- 12/21 There is a paper to this meeting. Propose close.
- 13/21 NC has not spoken to JD due to annual leave. NC suggested property brings a paper to this meeting for an insight. JG would find this useful. KE there have been discussions with JD for the next financial year and setting up a Property Board which will ensure that all the business cases, property asset protections and updates will be properly dealt with. JD to do Terms of Reference for this Board in the new financial year. JP said that can this not be merged with the existing Asset Board. KE said that the Asset Board is split into Property, Fleet and ICT, each of those departments are to have their own board and taking the actual decisions to the Asset Board for the capital sign off. JP suggested calling the new proposed Boards something different as it is unclear who they are feeding into regarding hierarchy. KE agreed.
- 14/21 NC to arrange training for non-finance budget holders. Requested for this to be moved to June after year-end. NC added that this will be a topic on the Leadership Program, and the Service needs to define what that looks like. Agreed. Remain open.
- 15/21 LL to incorporate the RTC trends into the quarterly report. Which has been done. Propose close.
- 16/21 Setting Targets for Crews and conducting digital visits as opposed to visiting homes. Action for MB to make sure it is part of the Recovery Plan. MB currently on leave. KE said that the digital visits are set to continue, and as we move

into recovery, we will begin the face to face assessments and are currently looking at what it looks like and how to deliver it. Learning has been made from the digital visits and the efficiencies that brings. The plan is to continue working on both models in parallel with each other. MB to update at the next meeting. Remain open.

17/21 Duplicate around Peer Review which is already on Forward plan. Propose close.

18/21 Due Date to be changed to June. JG to be conscious that June already has a heavy Agenda, just in case Roger/Jane are not re-elected and there is a new PFCC/Deputy to move to July. RHy agreed and added that MP's are well briefed.

19/21 Employee Engagement Survey. There is a paper to this meeting that asks for agreement on how to do that. Propose close.

20/21 Attendance for the second appliance at Dovercourt as in December it was 29%. MB to take off-line to have discussions with Dovercourt. RHy said that MB can provide a fuller update for some reassurance, the drop down in December is indicative across the service due to leave in December. Performance is picking up and the improvement in Dovercourt is quite considerable. The plan is to still work with the Forward Plan and report to P&R and the Strategic Board with bringing people in and training them up. JTh said that we are seeing a monthly report to P&R. Propose close.

21/21 A Dovercourt regular item to go onto the Forward Plan. Propose close

4. Forward Plan – March 2021

Standing items

- Finance Report
- Performance Report
- HMICFRS Improvement Plans
- Building Risk Review Update

Substantive items

- Q3 Performance Report (Inc Qtly HR Report)
- Use of Surge Funding (P&R 94/20)
- Fire Protection and Community Safety Visits by Station, Impact since March 2020 (P&R 104/20)
- NFCC Maturity Models
- Annual Accounts Timetable

Substantive items for update

- Quarterly HR Report
- Quarterly Change Program Update
- Quarterly On-Call Conversion Update
- Quarterly Grenfell Phase 1 High Level Action Plan Update
- Quarterly Risk Review
- Dovercourt Risk Paper
- Dovercourt Action Plan

JTh informed the Board that there have been some proposed amendments items in April and May 2021 to the Forward Plan.

April 2021

LEAP progress from the Workforce Plan. There has been a request to push back to the May Meeting due to changes in the HR Department. JG agreed and to see the Report when it is ready. KE is confident that the report will be ready for the May meeting.

In the HMICFRS Improvement Plan, there is a note that there will be a Protection Improvement Plan Closure Report coming to the April P&R and this will be added to the Forward Plan.

May 2021

NC requested to add the Treasury Management Report and an Account Outturn Review. NC added that the Treasury Management Report is more of a Strategy and should probably go through Strat Board. JG agreed. PBI said that this should go to Strat Board with the Decision Report to get it signed off at the same time. NC requested that this be moved to the June Strategic Board. JP added that any reporting during the year will come back to P&R.

5. Finance Report

NC took the Board through the Report

- 5.1 The net position for the month is at £1.45m below the budget which is consistent with where the budget was at the end of January.
- 5.2 Regarding the line item "Specific Government Grants Income, there was £200,000 that related to ERF funding that had been recognised incorrectly. There has been a reversed entry to remove that funding. The impact of this, is to reduce net expenditure to under £1m, from £1.2m.
- 5.3 In the Funding section regarding "Contribution to earmarked reserves" there is £201,000 which relates to some legal PI claims which were mentioned in the recently completed Reserves Strategy. The costs of these are to be funded from Earmarked Reserves and this has been adjusted in the period. This was also documented by Decision Sheet.
- 5.4 There has been an overspend on the pay budgets, especially as the headcount is currently above the establishment but there areas i.e. operational training where individuals who are budgeted and the cost should be allocated to earmarked reserves but this has been absorbed in the year budget underspends. Covid has impacted wholetime costs but these have been funded by the Covid Grant.
- 5.5 Regarding Covid Grant, the latest projection shows that £1.3m has been spent from £1.6m received. A projection has been done from March through August 2021 which shows that in that period of time there will be £190,000 left. Within that projection the key areas of costs that have been included are for PPE and sanitation costs and the increased cost regarding additional cleaning as required under Covid.
- 5.6 Some additional items are being looked at regarding spend of the Covid Grant i.e. Weathersfield Classroom Areas and a return to the workplace. We have also been awarded a further £233,000 Covid Grant, which will get paid in the new financial year. The service is currently working through the plan for the spend.

- 5.7 Regarding Day Crewed Housing, up to the February report, £300,000 had been received from the sale of a property. The sale of a further 3 properties has been completed which has resulted in the sale of £1.0m Day Crewed Properties in this financial year. There will be further sales in the next financial year.
- 5.8 There has been quite a lot of work in developing this pack over the last 12 months. NC wanted to share that for the finance team in the coming months is to prioritize develop the reporting further and to automate the financial pack but also the reporting that will be done. Currently the month end process takes approximately 13-14 day to complete, there are plans to take this back considerably and the delays are in the reporting piece and how the information is collated. NC would be looking for a financial resource to in the coming 3-6 months to drive this project through. This will streamline the reporting as well as provide improved reporting and visibility to the organisation. It will also assist where the service needs to be spending their time at the business partner level and down to station level which is not being delivered at present.
- 5.9 As this process is being looked at, any requests for information that the Board would like to see within the pack to provide feedback to NC

Action 023/21

As part of looking at a new financial reporting system, the board are requested that any requests for information that the Board would like to see within the pack to provide feedback to NC. JP to liaise with NC regarding information that can be obtained with the new finance reports using Power BI and to engage with RH as to the information that he would like to see in the report.

Questions

- 5.10 PBI said that she supports the proposal to use Power BI, this may be an option for looking at the Performance Reports in due course. In terms of scrutiny having used Power BI in previous authorities, it allows to drill down in real time as to what is driving the figures and will therefore cut down on people having to take away actions and reporting back
- 5.11 JG asked if the PFCC would also have to have the Power BI software to view? PBI said it would but it should not be hard to organise as this would be a case of additional licences. KE agreed.
- 5.12 JP said that NC and JO would have their own P&R pre-meets for each month to pick up any finance issues before the P&R Meeting itself. If the PFCC have any feedback on the reports to go back to JP JG agreed that this would keep the meeting flowing especially in finance. JG suggested to JP that she engage RH in this to ensure that he has everything that he needs in the report.
- 5.13 NC said that on the back on the report is a piece on the virement which notes the savings that had gone through in the last financial year and this was missed in a Decision Sheet. This was Decision Sheet that was put through to SLT and showed the work that was undertaken to show the savings that came through as a virement in this year's budget but this was also built into next year's budget as that process was gone through too.
- 5.14 JTh asked that last month's report said that the O/C costs were going to be reviewed because it was unclear on what the variance was NC said that it was activity levels and wondered what the outcome was of that. NC replied that this review has not been finished yet.

Action 024/21

NC to update the JTh as to the O/C variance costs were due to be reviewed and whether this was due to activity. JTh to them circulate the information to the board.

- 5.15 JP asked to clarify some items discussed at the pre-meet. 1. How we get from the YTD Position to the final end of your forecast and to understand the variances. Jo spoke to NC and this was due to the capital financing charge goes in at the year end. NC added that there are entries that are inputted at the end of the year. NC can look to change this and start looking at an estimate of that entry throughout the year.
- 5.16 When it comes to year end, there is a period 13 which is the final adjustments i.e. the final overtime for March that has not paid until April, There is a budget against that which will be explained in the out turn results session in May. JP added that we still also be a month 12 report. NC agreed that the month 12 report is done and then the month 13 Final Out Turn. JP added that this is good to receive as it is supplied by Essex Police

6. Monthly Performance Report

RHy took the Board through the Report in LL's absence. RHy ran through the highlights of the report.

- 6.1 In February 2021 attendance times were met – this is also with a slight reduction in O/C availability which shows that it is not about availability but about having the right resources in the right place at the right time.
- 6.2 Fires, special services and false alarms are all down on the same period last year.
- 6.3 Regarding harm to the public, the majority of harm was a result of three accidental dwelling fires resulting in three casualties. Two were males who were injured when they attempted to tackle the fire resulting in minor burns. The third person was female in student accommodation where the fire was started deliberately.
- 6.4 Sickness is up to 11.8% and this is Covid related.
- 6.5 Under H&S there was 1 RIDDOR reportable incident for 7 days, this was a Firefighter who slipped on a step and jarred their back, they took 7 days absence but are now back at work.
- 6.6 Regarding Dovercourt in February made 87% availability. This is first pump being 100% and the second pump over 50% which was being aimed for.

Questions

- 6.7 JTh said that under the HR section, the FITECH pass rate appears to be dropping and going down since October. JTh asked if this was due to the impact of Covid on training and monitoring? KE said that as there was an increase in Covid funding, there is some additional temporary support being looked at for occupational health and some additional support in the fitness team. This will enable to Service to ramp up efforts as the Service comes out of the recovery period and getting the FITECH's back up and running. It has just been difficult during the Covid period getting people booked in whilst maintaining social distancing etc and so this is one of the areas of the Covid spend that the Service is hoping to utilise to make improvements.

- 6.8 JTH asked regarding the Tri-Service Officer, where in the Performance Report are their Home Safety visits recorded? They do not appear to be separate, and it would be interesting to understand how the time is split out and for reviewing that post. JG added that if this is a pilot post and the intention is to move this out more broadly. The board need to understand how this is monitored to make those informed decisions. RHy replied that it is being monitored and he is happy to take that away although it is not covered in this report. It does go to the Collaboration Board, but it can be broken down into this report going forward. JG agreed that this should continue with the report going to the Collaboration Board as it is the right place for it to be

7. HMICFRS Improvement Plans Update

KE took the board through the plan.

- 7.1 This is regarding the two outstanding areas from the Inspection where it focused on the improvement areas particular Protection and Culture and this report is to provide an update on activities that have been carried out since that has taken place and both areas formulate their own action plans.

Appendix 1 Protection Improvement Plan

- 7.2 Under Protection, the items that have been focused on and delivered. More recently has been the delivery of the Enforcement Plan Policy and the Quality Assurance has been taken out by the team themselves. They have successfully recruited to 7.6 new inspecting Officers.
- 7.3 Recruitment is underway for a new Head of Protection as the current Head of Protection is retiring and those interviews are taking place after Easter. There are currently 5 candidates.
- 7.4 KE said this is slightly different in that the expansion is with the Peer Review which was undertaken by three other services. The Service have taken their learning and feedback points, which pointed out some good levels of detail, good response rates, good data. The Peer Review also fed back that the Service had a Response Training led plan only and that the plan needed to broaden its horizons as it was felt that it could be a little more representative across all staff groups. The Peer Review also fed back into the IRMP linking into the Equality and Diversity Planning too. This was a useful Peer Review and feedback.
- 7.5 The Service are engaging with the NFCC Interactive Platform and had the Peer Review. All this activity under the banner of Protection is going to help to deliver against the up and coming plan. HMICFRS will be able to see where the actions have taken place when they come in for their Inspection. The Closure Report for the Protection Plan will be at the April P&R to see the full breakdown.

Appendix 2 Cultural Improvement Plan

- 7.6 The activity surrounding Culture involved the Ignite 2020 Staff Engagement Survey. Focus groups were set up with teams locally and work around some taking some of the actions from the Staff Engagement Survey. The four cohorts of the Leadership Development Program are filled now. Reverse mentoring has been implemented recently of which KE; MB & CB are a part.
- 7.7 There is a neurodiversity programme with Webinars which have a good attendance. A lot of actions taking place from the Culture Improvement plan and KE feels that the Service is on a good position for when HMICFRS come in for their Inspection.

8. Building Risk Review Update

- 8.1 RHy said to the Board that this was a standard monthly report and as the Board have already had sight of the Report, he is happy to take questions.
- 8.2 This return is slightly behind, and the Service did not quite make the target that is set on a monthly basis to complete. This was largely due to leave periods with staff as well as the work with enforcement action around Southend. RHy has no concerns and will catch up as more resources become available.
- 8.3 There is a summary at the end of the Report which shows all the buildings that have concerns and those high rise buildings that have been identified as having flammable cladding and have not taken the necessary steps. The service has been issuing enforcement action and have also amended the pre-determined attendance, which allows for more fire engines as well as a turntable ladder or ALP to all those incidents. This manages quite well the balance between protection and response. Crews are also busy in those sites to ensure they have a site specific risk assessment. This is for crews to have a plan and know what to do in event of a fire at this location and recognise that the building may behave in a way that they would not normally expect.

Questions

- 8.4 JTh has concerns that it is one thing auditing these but what do you do when you find a problem? The build-up of work clearly is going on in the background. It is not just the return to the NFCC but also the work regarding responsible persons. RHy clarified that he is not uncomfortable by the fact that we have not met the target this month. RHy does have concerns about not understanding the inherent risk that there is in Essex for buildings that have been built to a poor standard and do not comply with building regs due to having been built with flammable materials on them. RHy does not know yet what resources will be required to play a part in the remediation of these. It is not for ECFRS to remediate the risk, that is for the responsible person, but as the enforcing agency the service will take enforcement and that will take time and resources. MB has been advised that the additional resources will be sufficient to take this forward. The Service may need to think about what they need to stop doing in order to focus on the most at risk but RHy is concerned about the risk currently being carried but just not concerned about having not met the target this month.

9. Q3 Performance Report

- 9.1 RHy said that this report covers October to December 2020.
- 9.2 This report covers the time that the Service saw a rise in Covid cases across Essex and it also covers the Christmas Leave period.
- 9.3 Incidents are down by 150 from the same period last year and compared to the same period in 2017/18, they are down by approximately 400, and is a downward trend.
- 9.4 The response times for October and November have been slightly outside of 10 minutes (20 seconds) but the exception was December when the response time was over 1 minute. This was over large periods of time when additional business continuity measures had to be put in place and there were large numbers of staff off and coincided with the Christmas leave period.
- 9.5 There has been a reduction of harm in respect of accidental dwelling fires on the previous year. There is some helpful benchmarking on the back. When accidental fires in Essex are compared to similar services, they are relatively low, but they have plateaued off. ECFRS can do better in that area. There is a focus in the prevention work to see if that can be driven down even further.

- 9.6 No fire deaths in the period. 17 casualties arising from fire and 8 of those were from accidental dwelling fires. Around 50% of the accidental dwelling fires are caused by cooking and most injuries are to members of the public who try to tackle the fire before calling ECFRS. There is some messaging that needs to be continued with educating the public not to try to tackle fires.
- 9.7 There continues to be very low numbers of deliberate fires which is pleasing for a County of this size.
- 9.8 Fire in non-domestic premises continue to reduce. The biggest areas are sheds and garages which are not covered by the Fire Safety Order and tend not to present any life risk.
- 9.9 Regarding killed and seriously injured, there were less collisions during this time and less killed or seriously injured compared to the previous year, which could be due to the lockdown and reduction in traffic.
- 9.10 In terms of activities, home safety checks are down due to reduction in referrals from partners. The largest number of referrals that are received are from operational crews. It is good to note that crews are identifying vulnerability and reporting it.
- 9.11 In the Protection Audit, all of the alleged fire risks which are responded to quickly were completed within the necessary time frame and as were the building regulations and consultations.
- 9.12 Particularly encouraging is that 55% of the audits that have been undertaken, have identified that they were unsatisfactory. This time last year approx. 90% of the audits undertaken were satisfactory that suggested we were not inspecting the right areas. This has shifted around, and this corresponds to approx. 115 deficiency notice and is a step change in dealing with buildings that are not compliant. Landlords that are not compliant have stepped up and 84% of the activity is against the revised Risk Based Inspection Programme, which was another area of concern from HMICFRS.
- 9.13 In terms of transparency, all requests for information have been within 90% target.

Questions

- 9.14 JTh asked about the Community Wheels Vehicle. It states in the Report that it will be decommissioned this Summer and currently there are not any funds for a replacement and wondered what the impact of that would be? RHy replied that the vehicle is not used. RHy believed it was purchased for an educational purpose and we have moved on with the way of thinking and working and is not required any longer. If there is a business case for this, then it will go through the Asset Board for it to be considered. This will be done before the vehicle is decommissioned. The vehicle is also not fit for purpose.
- 9.15 JG accepting that it has not been used much, is this due to Covid? what is the reason for that, and also in SERP terms is this part of a broader prevention piece, where will be conversation be had with RH and others? Is this something that we do want to continue to invest from the prevention point of view? PBI recently reviewed the SERP MOU which starts tomorrow for a 5 year period and makes specific reference to the Community Wheels Vehicle. It does acknowledge that as and when that vehicle, and others that are referenced in the MOU, come to the end of their serviceable life, the Service will need to make decisions about their future, but as the vehicle is specifically referenced in the MOU this needs be taken into account in the business case considerations. RHy asked if the vehicle is a partnership with SERP and ECFRS. PBI said that this was not clear and would need clarification. The way that the MOU is worded, there are certain additional roles and responsibilities for ECFRS for which they

can claim reimbursement from the partnership but there is also reference to the fact that the partnership is reliant on ECFRS, police and ECC by indirectly contributing to the work of the partnership through its core functions and therefore what is considered to be the core functions of those core services are not recoverable from the partnership and it is not explicit in the MOU which of those two categories that particular category falls into. This would need to be clarified. RHy and PBI to pick this up offline. RHy said that it sounds that if the SERP Board wish to continue with the Community Wheels Vehicle, the current one we have is to be decommissioned as it is not fit for the road and therefore the funding would need to be found for a new one.

Action 025/21

PBI to forward RHy a copy of the SERP MOU. PBI and RHy will pick up the issue offline.

9.17 JP said that as part of this, the disestablished post for Community Speed watch Co-ordinator should be picked up too as this was discussed at Essex Police Strategic Board. JG said that this has gone out for recruitment. JG said that this had been taken out as there was confusion about the Police Review of Community Speed watch which was around back office but there was not that clarity to ECFRS and there was a suggestion that the Community Speed watch post would sit within Essex Police rather than ECFRS. It was a confused picture which was discussed at the last SERP board. MB and JG picked it up off-line with Andrea and this has now gone out to advert. JG had a helpful conversation with Andrea. RHy said that there were four candidates for interview on the 12/13 April.

10. NFCC Maturity Model

10.1 KE said that this covers some of the activity around the Peer Review, but the actual Maturity Model is something that HMICFRS recommended to us in the last inspection and is about providing fire and rescue services with a self-assessment tool to self-assess their delivery and success against the People Pillar of the HIMCFRS Inspection. The Maturity Model that they released is still in consultation with FRS' and that consultation ends at the end of April.

10.2 Once the consultation period has ended it is ECFRS' intention to adopt one of those models and trial it within our own Service which is referred to in Appendix 2. The self-assessment tool is a good practice outcome model and the outcomes will then feed back into the people Strategy and the People Strategy Board for oversight.

10.3 In summary this is what the Maturity Models cover off and the NFCC have been instrumental in communicating that across all FRS' of which CB has been heavily involved in.

Questions

10.4 JTh asked if there is any feeling on the wider take up of the NFCC Maturity Models, as part of its use is benchmarking and sharing that information. KE said that one of the Boards that CB chairs on a national level is the People Board and her feedback is that most Services will embed and take on one of the maturity Models. There are a number of different models for different assessments and different ways of looking at things but each of the FRS' is going to take on a minimum of one of the Models and the NFCC are pushing these recommendations. Once the national information comes across that will provide the benchmarking information.

10.5 JTh said that this paper talks about changing the People Strategy Action Plan and JTh wondered how the changes would be fed back to staff, as in the Survey it states that staff did not think anything had changed based on the previous Survey which is clearly

wrong. There seems to be something lost in communication. KE replied that one of the things that have been done to cover this is that each department head has discussed with their department and run through the specific areas relative to their part of the staff feedback and Staff Engagement Survey and focussed on those areas where improvement can be made. Different aspects vary across the service. The Action Plan through the People Strategy Board will identify which areas by department level are being focused on and what has been taken forward. The Service will then be able to report on the progress of that. Some of the feedback from those focus groups have been a positive step forward compared to previous years, in respect of feedback given to staff after the survey was completed.

- 10.6 Staff can see that that the Service are taking the survey seriously and wants to learn from the feedback received and implement the actions that come out of that Survey.
- 10.7 JG wanted to ask about the process. The Report says that it is Decision Report, and this is P&R. If a decision is required, then it needs to go to the Strategy Board. The only way that the Commissioner can make a decision is that the Board recommends that a decision is made via Decision Sheet. PBI confirmed that a decision is made through a Decision Report and if a decision is required then we need to follow up with a Decision Report, if a decision is not required then it is noted in the Minutes that the paper was for noting and the board noted it. KE will double check with CB, but his interpretation is that it probably does not need a formal decision other than what we would do internally with SLT signing it off as the Service's model of progression in terms of the People Strategy and taking that forward. From an NFCC perspective it is the decision about adopting part of the NFCC leadership framework.
- 10.8 RHy said that he supported what KE has said. This is an SLT paper not a P&R. The decision is for SLT to note the work being done and agreed that, from a commissioner's perspective the People Strategy has been signed off and agreed by the Commissioner. This is ongoing work to deliver that Strategy and this is for P&R to note the continued work that is being done but not for decision by the Commissioner.
- 10.9 JG asked for that part of the report to be changed to reflect that to be clear in the published papers why there was not a Decision Report to support this. PBI said that it also ties in with the action at the beginning of the meeting regarding clarifying templates. It is confusing at times when SLT papers come forward to P&R and the Strategic Board. PBI asked if ECFRS colleagues could use the template that JTh will reissue and say "please see attached SLT Report" just to make it clear what the Commissioner is being asked or not asked to do. JG agreed that it would be helpful and thanked CB for her help on a national level on this.

11. Fire Protection and Community Safety Visits

- 11.1 RHy this is linked to a P&R action 104 from January. Instead of updating against the action, MB has provided a paper that went to SLT.
- 11.2 To confirm, regarding Prevention and Protection the Service did not stop throughout the Pandemic. Risk assessments and alignment of actions to the NFCC Strategic Intentions for Prevention and Protection as our Covid Report from HMICFRS shows, the Service was very aligned to those. From a Prevention point of view, where the risk of life from Fire was greater than the risk from Covid the Service crossed the threshold. The Service crossed the threshold if there was no way that the risk could be mitigated in any other way.
- 11.3 This is done through three routes. There is telephone triage, work through to see if a virtual visit will suffice or a physical visit is needed. If a physical visit is needed, the Service work through if a smoke alarm and some advice can be dealt with at the

doorstep without crossing the threshold. If threshold needed to be crossed, then crews and community safety officers were supplied with adequate PPE and the right control measures to do so.

- 11.4 The paper sets out how we have done so far. All the visits that have been undertaken where the Service needed to cross the threshold to mitigate risk we have done so.
- 11.5 The same approach has also been adopted for Fire Protection. Fire protection was slightly more problematic as many of the premises to inspect were not open. The Risk Based Inspection programme needed to be scaled back on that.
- 11.6 More audits were delivered during lockdown than the previous year, largely due to technology to enable desktop audits. The Home Office expects these to be recorded separately, and this will be continued as the Service looks at their own roadmap to open up the Service aligned to the government. ECFRS have a project that is going to look at how to embed new ways of working. The Virtual Home Safety Check is now a national product which is being piloted in Essex along with other FRS along with the Virtual Desktop Audits will become part of the new way of working.
- 11.7 There is no backlog and the Service has been able to deliver to those most at risk and learnt more along the way.

12. Use of Surge Funding

- 12.1 NC said that the Service was looking to employ some additional staff to utilise some of the spend. In MB's monthly update some of that work has already been going and we have not actually needed, and it has been difficult to recruit in some of those roles.
- 12.2 This funding was for £317,000 and they have put in a very specific plan to utilise the spend and gone through various areas in accordance with the Building Risk Review rules and Protection Uplift Rules.
- 12.3 This grant was for this financial year but a number of FRS are carrying some funding over so ECFRS have pushed to ensure there is an appropriate plan, although there has been difficulty in recruiting for specific roles and the original plan has changed slightly to get to a point today.
- 12.4 RHy said that it has taken time to see how we can most effectively use the funding but the investment in training and upskilling of staff will not only help to deliver against the Risk Based Inspection Programme today but will futureproof the Service going forward. It will be effective use of the spend.
- 12.5 JG said that this is an SLT Decision Paper and to change into the template so that we know the recommendations being made to the Commissioner.

13. Annual Accounts Timetable

- 13.1 NC said that the Service are currently putting into place the overview of the Annual Accounts timetable for clarity over what is needed and when. There are not exact dates for everything on this timetable and that is due to some of the dates being unknown i.e. audit fieldwork. This date will be moved as the auditors within the NHS audits are going to be pushed out. Firms dates are in place where possible and if not, there are months or parts of the month where expected.
- 13.2 A summary of the first few points. The Annual Governance statement went through audit committee. There are a few points that need to be adjusted before the publication of the accounts. Most of that work is now done. The Narrative Report is the next big one which we should have a draft of within the next two weeks. The Service is in a good place for the audit.

Questions

- 13.3 JP said that looking at the timetable for Essex Police, JP would like to work with NC to try and get them aligned a little better. The dates will not always be the same but will offer a smooth transition in terms of bringing it together. Also, to ensure that there are enough meetings between the formal meetings for catch ups in order that we do not have any surprises.

Action 026/21

JP and NC to look at the Annual Accounts timetable for Essex Police to look at being more aligned where possible and to ensure that there are enough catch up meetings in the diary.

- 13.4 PBI regarding the alignment of the timetable with Essex Police, where the statutory timetable was elongated last year as it has done this year, the fire accounts were finalised before Essex Police. RH was very pleased about that. If the ECFRS can be done and dusted ahead of EP, then we would probably still want to do that rather than the timetables being aligned. JP agreed and it was more about meetings not being on the same days etc.

14. Quarterly HR Update

- 14.1 KE said that the intention is to move the People Report both monthly and quarterly into one overall service performance report rather than having them separately. The style of this report will start to be incorporated in the new financial year in the style of the other Performance Reports as PowerBI models are being used to generate the data.
- 14.2 The first element is around the appraisal rates. This is for Q3 and we are currently at 67% and a more recent update we are in a significantly improved position. People have had appraisals and managers need to record them appropriately on the CIVICA system which is where the stats have been taken from for the number of appraisals completed.
- 14.3 When KE last checked this was at 85% and several appraisals still had to be uploaded, it is expected to be over 90% by the year end. Benchmark that against previous years, that is a significant increase in appraisal completion rates, and this is an upward trend. The new appraisal year is imminent. This year has been an important year for line managers to be having conversations with their teams.
- 14.4 Regarding establishment for Q3, the report shows the wholetime establishment being under 20, but there has been W/T recruitment in January courses and another in April which will catch up with itself. The Service will be over established in the next report by a fraction. In the Workforce Strategy regarding the retirements and attrition rates for the up and coming year, the Service did not want to be in a position where it needed to catch up, it wanted to have people coming out of training as people were retiring and that it is the bulk of turnover for wholetime over the next year. This will vary from month to month and KE is aiming to maintain a steady state. The Service needs to be cognisant that the people that are leaving are Phase 3 Competent, very experience Firefighters who are being replaced by those just embarking on the beginning of their journey.
- 14.5 In other areas surrounding on call, control and support, good progress is being made. The Service is currently at 63 under the budgeted numbers, however there has been an extremely successful recruitment around on call mainly driven by On Call Liaison Officers and the Comms Team who have done a fantastic job around social media and reached out to communities and got more applications in areas that the Service has previously struggled.

- 14.6 On call Firefighter courses are fully booked until April. As quick as they are coming in, Firefighters are being slotted onto courses.
- 14.7 There is a focus on O/C leavers. There have been 21 leavers in the last quarter and only 7 joiners. It is important for us to understand this imbalance. The new exit interview process will report in more detail in Q4 but the main reason for leavers is the number of hours and requirements which should be addressed in the New Hours Contract to give greater flexibility. The Service is conscious of people that are already giving a high number of hours dropping to the low number of hours and so double amount of people may need to be employed to get the same amount of availability.

Questions

- 14.8 PBI asked if the Fire and Rescue Service gets many transferees in from other FRS in the same way that Police Forces do, or is this an area that could be exploited due to our training and culture etc? KE replied that in previous years there have been in small numbers, but we are starting to see change where people are being attracted to Essex. The Service has recently gone out to advert and the assessment process for appointment of a new area of manager and the number of external applicants that came through, was one of the biggest that we have seen for many years. Much of the feedback received is very positive for Essex and demonstrates strides forward in culture and innovation.
- 14.9 Regarding inclusion and Diversity, KE said that that there have been some positive strides forward with attraction There have been better attrition rates across all minority groups. Regarding campaigns, the Service have put in place minority group focus sessions within Essex Fire Service for applicants to be open with their concerns and questions. When there is a large volume of applicants that are being converted to small number of appointments, when you are looking for a squad of 12 to put on a training course, out of 12 the Service recognise that 4-5 would come from minority groups.
- 14.10 In the last course there was 1 BAME and 3 female Firefighters, whilst this may sound low, it is out of 3,000 applicants. This is a good level of conversion. Even those of BAME that have not got through are reporting a positive experience and the Service is seeing more diversity in applications.
- 14.11 Self-classification of diversity is still something that is being actively pursued in understanding why the Service has high numbers of people in the undeclared percentage as it is important to us to understand why people do not want to declare. Is it a case that they did not know, or they are uncomfortable?
- 14.12 In the Learning and Development section of the report there is nothing particularly although on 1st April the Service begin the Competency Recording system and a lot of this data is task driven, particularly around the BA and ICV compliance and when the e-learning platforms are begun that is where the mandatory training will come into its own.
- 14.13 In this section there is another big change as there is a better quality and visibility of data as we get the new Competency Recording System in place.
- 14.14 We recognise in the last quarter of last year that we did see a rise in sickness due to Covid and we are looking and focussing on using the Covid spend to look to introduce someone into Occupation health as well as focus on the long Covid outcomes and around mental health.
- 14.15 Last week KE engaged with the Firefighters Charity and they are putting a proposal together that KE will take to SLT regarding how they are going to do some mental health awareness post Covid, working with the different watches across the service.

KE has spoken to a couple of other Services who have already started to pilot the Firefighters Charity work and are very positive.

- 14.16 There are plans for Recovery within the Service for specific resource to apply to long Covid in the mental health arena.
- 14.17 Part of the extra resourcing needed regarding occupational health is that the referrals have increased from 20/30 referrals to just under 90 since September which is Covid related and extra resource will assist on getting us back on track.
- 14.18 Casework remains low which is positive. Very little of the managers time is taken dealing with people related issues with regards to grievances and disciplinaries. More needs to be done to educate departments on how to better manage grievances and disciplinaries.

Questions

- 14.19 JTh within Learning and Development regarding compliance what is ERD cover and does it matter that quite a few people do not appear to have a record? KE this is the Emergency Response Driving and the Service is compliant against it. It says no record as records are held locally and not centrally. KE has asked for more clarity on this issue and feedback

Action 027/21

KE to look at the ERD issue regarding records being kept locally and not recorded centrally and feedback to P&R.

15. Quarterly Change Programme Update

- 15.1 KE said that most of the programmes are “green” or “amber” most of them are ICT related. Everything is on track with ICT programmes. The “Red” item is due to when the 4i system was updated. REMSDAQ as our supplier have failed to delivery on their promise and the Service will be clear with them that as an organisation the Service cannot tolerate or accept this risk.
- 15.2 The Service had to put in their own workarounds as a control measure, which is not ideal. As this is a contract management issue KE has been engaging with Capsticks. The Service will write to them formally, depending on the outcome on the 8th, to register the dissatisfaction with the level of service that been received around this area. The other issues being experienced are around the performance of the system and the sooner the new system is being used the better, but this will some 12-18 months away.
- 15.3 JG said to KE that he has the Board’s support in holding them to account and if assistance is needed from the Commissioner please let them know. There needs to be very clear timelines against what we were promised.

Action 028/21

JP said that regarding the Quarterly Report she wanted to spend some time to discuss what is needed by the Service and what the Board needs. KE is happy to work through this with JP.

16. Quarterly Risk Review

- 16.1 JG said to note that this item was down as a quarterly update and has coincided with the Joint Audit Committee. Noted that had the conversation with JAC on Friday and this item has been reviewed in some detail.

17. Quarterly On-Call Conversion Update

- 17.1 RHy said that this an update paper and to emphasize that there is a large amount of work currently in this space and is one of the more difficult programmes of work that the Service are delivering upon. RHy is grateful to MB for her leadership on this in terms of moving this forward, which is now starting to build numbers. It is about getting people with the right skills to be able to transition over.
- 17.2 The Service will need some interim arrangement in place on all of the converting stations, which will come with financial challenges and this will be picked up after the election.
- 17.3 There are sufficient courses booked in, ensuring that people have got the skills with the main challenges facing drivers and officers in charge. The courses are in place, but the Service needs to encourage new additions to take on that confidence and challenge of sitting in front of the Fire Engine and the responsibilities that come with it. Some further conversations will probably be needed on what these interim arrangements look like and how the Service are going to fund them after the election.
- 17.4 JG thanked RHy and asked him to bring forward any challenges on funding to be considered.

18. Quarterly Grenfell Phase 1 High Level Action Plan

- 18.1 RHy said that this item is just to note and give reassurance that there group that MB chairs which is overseeing the Grenfell Plan
- 18.2 Many of the actions that came out of the Grenfell Enquiry Phase 1, are not necessarily for us to do, so they are an all-encompassing set of regulations that affect the whole building sector.
- 18.3 The items for us, predominantly around the Building Risk Review and our operational response are well in train. Smoke Hoods being a good example where the Service has procured them, and they are now on fire appliances and crews can do a better job evacuating people from smoke filled buildings.
- 18.4 Regarding the Building Risk Review there is some work to be done around the Stay Put Policies, Fire Survival Guidance for Control and there are some operational considerations for the Service to take but are all in train.
- 18.5 The Group that MB is leading is also working very closely with building control and local authorities around some of those parts as well as obtaining information that is required to ensure that crews are aware of the information they need.

Questions

JG asked JTh if we had received the GAP analysis. JTh confirmed that the GAP analysis had been received and it was circulated.

19. Dovercourt Risk Paper

- 19.1 RHy said that in MB's absence he felt that this was tidying up of an action. JTh confirmed that there were some changes that RH had asked to be made to the paper and they have been made and the paper has come back for noting

20. Dovercourt Action Plan

RHy took this item in MB's absence.

- 20.1 Board members have seen from the Plan before that this is the one that the Service are working through as well as being developed now for each of the converted stations.

This is managed by Simon Dedman who is the Group Commander covering Dovercourt and Harwich and feeds into the Group that MB chairs.

20.2 RHy is happy to take questions and will feedback to MB if he is unable to answer.

Questions

20.3 JTh said that there was a question raised in the pre-meet regarding the target availability for the 2nd pump and there were discussions around whether one had been set or not as the availability was very good last month. RHy we are aiming for the first pump to be 100% and 50% for the second. The Service want to make that target and then stretch it again. To set both appliances to 100% now will result in them always falling short. The rationale regarding that is that the Risk in Harwich comes from people in housefires and that risk goes up at night. Having 2 pumps in that area at night is more beneficial for the Service.

21. AOB

There are no items for AOB

Meeting ended at 15.55am.