

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

29 June 2021, 1400 to 1700, via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Julia Berry (JB)	Head of Finance and S151, PFCC's office
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Mark Gilmartin (MG)	Director of Support Services
Dr Vicki Harrington (VH)	Director of Strategic Change and Performance, Essex Police
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny (Policing), PFCC's office
Richard Jones (RJ)	Head of Business Partnering and Management Accounting, Essex Police
Shaun Kane (SK)	Supt, LPSU and CIP, Essex Police
Rachel Nolan (RN)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Andy Prophet (AP)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Camilla Brandal	Minutes, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Pippa Mills (PM)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Annette Chan (AC)	Chief Accountant, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police

1 Introduction and welcome

RH welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from PM, DM and AC.

2.i Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

VH would send through her suggested amendments to the minutes as they had not been captured in the papers for the meeting. These amendments would be incorporated and adopted into the draft minutes. The minutes were agreed subject to these amendments. There were no matters arising.

2.ii Action Log

- 27/21 Forward Plan
Updates had been made to the Forward Plan. Close.
- 28/21 Treasury Management Report Outturn
Revised paper for publication received. Close.

29/21 Balanced Scorecard
Revised version for publication received. Close.

2.iii Forward Plan

2.iii.1 SH confirmed that there were three items that needed attention, namely;

Moving the Balanced Scorecard paper from August to July as the data will be available earlier due to the rescheduling of the Force Performance and Leadership Forum dates. This was agreed;

The Annual Insurance update to be added to the P&R Forward Plan following on from an action from the Strategic Board. SH suggested August, but RJ would check with DM and Matt Tokley and then come back to SH; and

The POA to be added as a quarterly item to the Forward Plan. After a brief discussion around the reporting months and quarters, it was agreed to include the POA as part of the monitoring reporting for September (month 5), and October (quarter 2) and then quarterly thereafter.

3 Firearms Licensing (Annual report)

3.1 AP presented the annual update on the performance of the Firearms, Shotguns and Explosives Licensing ('FSEL') Department, along with an update on the temporary actions taken in response to Covid19 and longer term service delivery considerations.

3.2 The Board were asked to note that; all low risk renewals have been dealt with during the pandemic as virtual visits and this has now been adopted as a business as usual operating process; the 1 year Temporary Permit permission that had been in place during the pandemic has now ceased and all applications since 1 March 2021 require a medical screening report; the Home Office have indicated their support for the FELWG recommendations that applicants are responsible for obtaining a medical screening report; and that the ability for applications for new licences via the Single Online Home portal has now been reinstated (having been temporarily switched off due to the pandemic).

3.3 Other items to note were; the FSEL restructure which had clarified roles and responsibilities within the FSEL team; relocation of the FSEL team to Chelmsford Police Station; early renewal applications and work to be done in 2022; and the data table on Page 8 of the report which shows Essex (and Hampshire) as a slight outlier regarding the number of suicides through misuse of licensed shotguns. AP confirmed that work is being undertaken seeking to address the risk of suicides through misuse of licensed shotguns by means of medical reporting being carried out by GPs.

3.4 JG commented that now she had taken over the chair of the SET Suicide Prevention Board, she was well placed to offer any support or help that AP needed relating to the work being done around reducing the risk of suicides.

3.5 A brief discussion took place around people who held legal firearms but for one reason or another were also holding illegal firearms, for example, handguns that had belonged to family members who had since died, and what the best way to address this problem was? AP would take this back to the Force to look at, as he was of the opinion that this could be supported with a proactive communication plan from the FSEL team.

- 3.6 RH asked about the restructure and whether any resource had been taken away from the Team (especially in light of the forecast increase in applications), and the number of letters that had gone out to the licensed holders (600 out of 3,000). AP confirmed that the FSEL Team consultation had not resulted in a reduction of the number of personnel, it was more of a re-grading and re-prioritisation of workloads. AP also confirmed that the license holders were being written to in sequence and as part of a rolling project.
- 3.7 RH asked about the medical review status as the new statutory guidance had not been issued but whether AP knew if a doctor's note is now not needed and it can instead be obtained from the surgery staff. AP commented that his understanding was that the Force's request had been that the medical review status can be issued by GP surgery staff but this would be confirmed either way in the guidance when it is issued.

4 Finance

4.i Monthly Finance Report

- 4.i.1 RJ presented the monthly finance report, which identified the 2021/22 Month 2 financial position for police officer, police staff and PCSO pay and allowances.
- 4.i.2 From the Executive Summary, the police officer forecast outturn was shown as an £83k overspend compared with the original budget, the police officer opening strength at 1 April 2021 was 44 FTE higher than at budget setting, with a 3,569 FTEs forecast for 31 March 2022. The police staff forecast outturn was a £399k underspend with police staff vacancies at 30 April 2021 24 FTE above the vacancy factor of 152 FTEs. The PCSO forecast outturn was a £264k underspend compared to the original budget with 93 FTEs forecast for 31 March 2022.
- 4.i.3 RJ confirmed that this report only included pay rather than the complete financial position which would be reported on for quarter 1. A discussion took place around why only pay was reported this month, JP noted that this meant the first time a complete financial report for 2021/22 would be available, would be the end of July, four months after the start of the financial year. RJ confirmed that due to the Provisional Outturn report being developed and presented in May, the first opportunity to supply an in-year monitoring position would be month 2, by the end of June. There was then a further discussion about virements and JP expressed concern that virements were being carried out before approval by the PFCC, and she considered that the position should be reported prior to virements, with a formal request for virements as appropriate. RJ agreed he would discuss reporting timings, presentation and virements with DM, which equally will be considered at a meeting between the OPFCC, Corporate Finance and CIPFA in July. RH and JP both confirmed that they were grateful for the progress made, but would appreciate 'whole' reporting for Months 1 and 2. RJ confirmed that he would follow up with DM to see what could be achieved in relation to supplying a full month 2 monitoring position next year, but that month 1 would prove impractical due to the statutory timetable for the closure of accounts process.
- 4.i.4 A brief discussion took place around the Home Office uplift programme and the ROCU officer pay funding. AP confirmed that an options paper is being drawn up for ERSOU funding and locations for discussion between RH and the Chief Constable.

4.ii Efficiency Savings Programme

- 4.ii.1 VH presented the monthly progress and updates against current and future efficiency and savings plans. The Savings Plan identified 2021/22 total planned cashable

savings of £4.466m and non-cashable savings of £0.416m. Following the June Efficiency and Savings Board, there had been some movement with a revised position of an in-year shortfall of £72k but an improved full year position of a £63k surplus.

- 4.ii.2 VH confirmed that the Drones review 2 case will be revisited and has moved to a position of amber from a previous state of non-deliverable, and the 2020/21 savings plan overachieved by £25k, with this surplus being applied and reflected in the full year total for 2021/22 report.
- 4.ii.3 VH confirmed that the Efficiency and Savings Board had received suggested ideas for 2022/23 savings and these suggestions were being worked through for the 2022/23 Plan.
- 4.ii.4 RH thanked VH for the level of detail and clarity in the report which makes it extremely easy to understand. RH commented that he would like to share the methodology and ethos with other Forces as it has been a real benefit to us in generating the internal efficiencies in order to reinvest in front-line policing.
- 4.ii.5 RH asked when the P&R Board would be sighted on the ideas for the 2022/23 Plan and it was confirmed that they would be presented at the September P&R Board.
- 4.ii.6 JG asked whether it would be possible for a representative from the PFCC's office to have a seat on the Efficiency and Savings Board. VH would ask PM if this was possible.

5 CIPFA Report on Financial Management Capability Review (FMCR)

- 5.1 MG presented the update and the latest position from the Working Group which is monitoring the Force and PFCC action plan addressing the recommendations from CIPFA's FMCR.
- 5.2 RH commented that he did not recall seeing the full CIPFA report before and would welcome a copy so that he could see the papers in their entirety. RH commented that he welcomed the report against the actions to be taken against the recommendations but wanted to know whether the Force's and the PFCC's responses are as ambitious as they should be in response to the recommendations? RH also asked what process had been undertaken to get to the current position as he did not recall seeing anything.
- 5.3 *MG commented that he was unsure of when the report was presented in its entirety to the PFCC's office (and RH) as he was not involved. RJ confirmed that the report had been presented at COG in December but was not sure whether the PFCC's office had been sighted on it between then and when the working group was formed, recognising that there was a change of PFCC s151 during that time (Elizabeth Helm/Julia Berry) who may have been consulted on the report. **POST MEETING NOTE: Confirmation received that Elizabeth Helm was consulted and that a briefing paper was supplied to the OPFCC SMT dated 20th January 2021, which was subsequently shared with Corporate Finance on the 1st March 2021 (copy attached).** After a discussion, it was agreed that a workshop would be set up between RH, JP, JB and chosen members of the Essex Police Finance Team to look at the recommendations and actions, and to address the transformational change and shaping the financial strategy.*

Action: 30/21

A workshop would be set up between RH, JP, JB and chosen members of the Finance Team to look at the recommendations and actions of the CIPFA report.

6 Monthly Performance Report

- 6.1 VH presented the Monthly Performance Report where items to note were; 5 of the 7 PFCC priorities have been graded as Good and 2 have been graded as Requires Improvement (4 Tackling Gangs and Serious Violence, and 6 Protecting children and vulnerable people). All crime fell by 5.5% for the 12 months to May 2021, Offences have returned to pre-Covid levels compared with May 2019 with 3,864 more offences in May 2021 than in April 2020. The number of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents was 33.7% lower in May 2021 compared with May 2020 where the number of ASB incidents reported generally decreased when restrictions eased and increased when further restrictions were implemented. Confidence from the independent survey is at 79.3%, 9 Fixed Penalty Notices issues were issued in May 2021, and there was a decrease of 11.6% Modern Slavery referrals in the 12 months to May 2021.
- 6.2 VH went through the report and other items to note were Emergency Response figures were at 81% for May 2021, DA incidents were down, and there was a decrease in drink and drug driving offences, Exceptions reported a statistically significant increase for Violence without Injury, Rape, Other Sexual Offences and Hate Crime HO Definition for May 2021. The slide on page 17 set out the Performance Indicators since 2016.
- 6.3 RH thanked VH for the report which contains extremely useful data. RH is still uncomfortable with the grading of DA as 'good' and organised crime as 'good'. He recognised the progress that has been made by the Force but if the whole picture around DA is looked at across the whole country, it does not paint a good picture and the key is how best to reflect that in our assessment. Describing the DA grading as good moves the grading in the right direction, but more needs to be done to really 'good'. RH commented that perhaps the new Police and Crime Plan will provide an opportunity to set what 'good' looks like for the public against DA. VH commented that the Police and Crime Plan measures are being looked at to include qualitative indicators rather than just absolute measures.
- 6.4 A brief discussion took place around the drug driving offences and the availability and use of drug wipes, along with the national capacity for the forensic science service.
- 6.5 A discussion took place around getting back to dealing with the trends that were decreasing in 2019 and the planned use of the surge funding over the summer.

Meeting paused at 1537
Meeting reconvened at 1546

RN and SK joined the meeting at 1546

7 Independent SMSR Survey

- 7.1 VH presented the report for Quarter 4 2020/21 and confirmed that the Survey had now recorded one year of high confidence and satisfaction results with 79% of those polled believing Essex Police do a good or excellent job. Confidence has remained high in Essex during the 12 months to March 2021 despite the challenges posed by the global pandemic. There has been reported continued support over how Essex Police have handled the pandemic along with high levels of confidence in the police. The gap between White and Other than White responses have narrowed so they are now statistically the same in five areas and whilst victims results are improving at the same rate as the overall sample generally, the rate of change is not closing the gap across a number of key areas.

- 7.2 VH confirmed that the pattern has changed in the Ethnic minority respondents and with the use of BAME not being the favoured approach (the Race Disparity Unit's advice on gov.uk is that the use of BAME emphasises certain ethnic groups and does not pay due regard to others, for example, it excludes minority groups such as others, mixed other, white ethnic minority groups. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic as a term is now not preferred although a new term has not been decided). VH confirmed that currently BAME groups are being described as 'White and Other than White or Ethnic Minorities excluding White Ethnic Minorities'. VH confirmed that Richard Leicester is looking at this along with government guidance but some of the reporting tables will need to change.
- 7.3 Following a discussion on the rest of the paper and the findings, RH asked whether the survey question had changed on self-identity for ethnicity and VH confirmed that the survey question had not changed.
- 7.4 VH commented that work is being done around improving the levels of victim satisfaction and levels of confidence with lots of suggestion arising from the Force Performance and Leadership Forum that will be looked at in order to address how to improve the levels.
- 7.5 RH asked that JB or JP work with Essex Police to ensure we are clear regarding what is happening on the ethnic minority status.

Action: 31/21

RH asked that JB or JP work with Essex Police to ensure we are clear regarding what is happening on the ethnic minority status.

- 7.6 A brief discussion took place around revisiting the figures from 2019 again and how to extract the pre-Covid19 trends from the data.

8 Recruitment of Specials

- 8.1 RN introduced SK to the meeting as he will be deputising for RN in her absence.
- 8.2 RN presented the quarterly update on recruitment under the Special Constabulary Development Programme, with items to note being the Special Constabulary were awarded a certificate of achievement of the IESE Awards and have been nominated for the Queens Summer Awards 2021 [subsequently won].
- 8.2 RN went through the current Special Constabulary establishment, engagement and duties, recruitment, training and retention, joiners and leavers, media attraction, employer supported policing (8 businesses had signed up in the last quarter) and Community Special Constables (22 CSC's in the pipeline), Cyber Specials Cyber Volunteers, and performance across all strands.
- 8.3 RN confirmed that the application for recruitment for CSC's was now open again for parishes and councils.
- 8.4 RH thanked RN for the report and commented that it was good to see the success and the level of support from local communities. JG also thanked RN for the report and the work done, especially the recruitment of the RET specials. JG suggested that the Essex Association of Local Councils would be useful in promoting the Community Specials recruitment from parishes and councils.

9 Crime Prevention Strategy

- 9.1 RN presented the Crime Prevention Strategy report which covered each of the nine thematic strands of the Strategy, and the work currently being done, namely; the Dashboard, Work Strands at risk, Insights, Delivery achieved in the previous quarter, Delivery schedule for the current quarter.
- 9.2 JG wanted to commend Supt Andy Mariner for his work around the Domestic Abuse strands, and RN confirmed that she would pass this on to Supt Mariner.
- 9.3 RN updated on the other strands under Knife Crime, Gangs, Drug and Alcohol work, Awareness campaigns and initiatives, Night-time Economy, Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, Extremism and Radicalisation, Hate Crime, Digital Crime and Fraud, Dwelling Burglary and Street Robbery, and Serious and Organised Crime.
- 9.4 JP asked if each of the 379 separate strands had a prevention activity against it as only one strand is showing as being at risk? RN confirmed that each strand has a 4P plan (prevent, protect, prepare and pursue) which sets the activity. Each thematic strand has a dedicated lead who owns the 4P plan for the strand, which gets reviewed regularly. The particular risk relates to the Plan not being delivered.
- 9.5 RH thanked RN for the level of details in the report which has answered a lot of the questions that might have arisen otherwise. RN commented that she and SK would be looking at how best to deliver this paper in the future, as she is conscious that the strands will be increasing.

RN and SK left the meeting at 1643

10 PFCC Victims Commissioning Programme

SH confirmed that the quarterly update paper had been planned to be seen by the Essex Police Victims Board prior to P&R but due to the timing of the meetings this was not possible and it had been suggested that the quarterly update be presented at July's P&R. SH would amend the Forward Plan.

Action: 32/21

SH to amend the Forward Plan to include the PFCC Victims Commissioning Programme update in July.

11 Terms of Reference

- 11.1 SH confirmed that the paper circulated set out the Terms of Reference for P&R and the key dates so that the Terms of Reference can be agreed at the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in October, as part of the Constitution.
- 11.2 AP confirmed on behalf of PM that the timeline suggested was agreed.

12 Approval for publishing of documents

It was confirmed that the papers for publication would be 3, 4i, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (checking), and 11.

AP would check the Crime Prevention Strategy and confirm publication status to SH.

JP commented that any Official Sensitive items should be produced as Part B minutes. PBI and RH agreed that this was correct.

13 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1650.