



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

15 June 2021 10.00 – 12.20 pm - Teams Video Conference

Present:

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Jo Turton (JT)	Chief Fire Officer
Rick Hylton (RHyl)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Moira Bruin (MB)	Director of Operations, ECFRS
Dave Bill (DB)	Director of Prevention of Innovation, Risk & Future Development
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources
Neil Cross (NC)	Chief Finance Officer, ECFRS
Jo Thornicroft (JTh)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny, PFCC's Office
Christine Butler (CHB)	Minutes, PFCC PA
Lee Walker	(Observer)

Apologies

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

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 Apologies were noted from Pippa Brent-Isherwood.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

2.1 The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed for accuracy.

2.2 There were not any issues arising out of those Minutes which are not either captured on the Forward Plan, Action Log or Agenda for this meeting.

3. Action Log

1/21 The MTFP update is at the meeting. Propose close.

2/21 Amended Decision Sheet to come forward to the Annual Plan. This was approved on 18.03 – Propose close.

3/21 The Annual Plan and Change Control process. A paper is on the P&R for June to explain how that works. Propose close.

4/21 &

5/21 The Strategy was amended and approved on 18.03. Propose close.

4. Forward Plan

Addition to the Forward Plan for the September meeting:

- The Annual Health and Safety Statement
- The Estate Strategy
- The Disciplinary Policy – this was highlighted previously although the Service are working on the previous Disciplinary Policy at present as they are in negotiations with the Rep Bodies. RHy said that the paper is intended to be brought to the next Strategic Board, if there are any issues RHy will liaise with JTh. JT agreed.

JP asked that the Budget be added to the September Forward Plan, although this is on the Forward Plan for December, an early draft will be needed. JT asked if this linked in with the timetable in AOB for the budget process and said that the Service were anticipating to bring something to the September meeting but RH may want to have a consideration of the and the Forward Plan could be amended as JP suggests once the paper has been considered in full.

5. MTFS Update

NC talked the Board through the update.

- 5.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the medium term financial strategy for the period 2021/22 - 2024/25.
- 5.2 The previous MTFS covered a 4 year period and commenced on 2021 and was published in February 2020.
- 5.3 Page 3 of the report shows the latest MTFS. The 21/22 position is based on the final approved budget in February 2021. The Service are aligning the MTFS updates going forward to the budget process which will be covered in AOB.
- 5.4 The latest position for the MTFS shows a cumulative £4m deficit. The assumptions around precept increases, pay awards are consistent with the previous MTFS and the key difference to the assumptions is the removal of the reduction in the local government finance settlements specifically the 5% reduction at £1.2m reduction in the Revenue Support Grant per annum.
- 5.5 Additional training resources from 22/23 at a cost of £400,000 per annum have also been included.
- 5.6 The conclusion that has been reached on this that there is £1m per annum of savings that are needed, and the precept increase covers the annual pay award budget of 2% and those training roles.
- 5.7 The MTFS has several key risks. There has been a pay offer made to Grey Book Staff of 1.5% which equates to slightly under £700,000. This is currently in consultation and is not included in these numbers which are based on the budget position for last year and did not include any pay rise in line with government announcements.
- 5.8 Green Book Staff were offered a 1.5% pay award which is in the region of £250,000, which has currently been rejected.

- 5.9 The MTFFS also has several other risks i.e. there has been a 1 year finance settlement agreement, this year it is expected to be a 3 year agreement issued later in the year. There is continued uncertainty regarding the pension outcomes and there are some additional Section 31 Grants that are renewed on an annual basis and the assumptions for this Strategy are that those continue.
- 5.10 Regarding Capital, the Strategy keeps the CFR at a continual rate of £32m over the medium term financial plan period and that is summarised in page 7. This takes account of the key capital projects laid out not only in the budget but also the funding of those which was included in the Reserves Strategy which was published in March 2021.
- 5.11 The minimum provision is consistent at slightly under £5m per annum throughout the MTFFS and there has been an MRP charge which has been slightly lower over the last couple of years.
- 5.12 Regarding reserves, the general fund balance will be slightly under £250,000 by 2024 and that relates to the deficit that is being shown in the MTFFS and the earmarked reserves are also reducing from £10.4m to just over £5m which is in line with the published Reserves Strategy.
- 5.13 In terms of the savings that are required, the Service are currently working on looking at those savings plans and looking to set up a Savings and Efficiency Board and will have an office plan for this within the next 6 weeks. There have been several financial sessions set up with the SLT team which will assist going forward.

Questions

- 5.14 RH thanked NC for a well presented report. There is good clarity in the report which sets out the position, shows where we have pressures and risks. RH also noted the statement made regarding the Savings and Efficiency Programme and the item on P4 re collateral savings being needed and also noting the work that has been undertaken which has resulted in a substantial improvement in this position despite the pressures that the Service are feeling. The work of the finance team and indeed the work across the Service in terms of making sure that we are getting resources to the front line and delivering to the public and being as lean and streamlined as possible. It is very important that we have got transparency over the medium term in regard as to where threats are coming from and what their scale are.
- 5.15 JP thanked NC for the work that was done for putting the 2021 position in and the changes asked for in the paper and the paper was turned around very quickly and smoothly.
- 5.16 RH said that there have been discussions with NC and KE regarding the MRP and whether here is a structural change that can be made. The Balance Sheet is very solid, but the Revenue Account is under pressure. Work will obviously be continued on this and hopefully be able to come back in September to be able to take a view on that going forward. NC agreed and said that regarding the MRP it has been under for a couple of years. Although it is early into the financial year, NC can see that there will be some impacts this financial year too. NC can relook at the phasing and need to know that the Service is comfortable that there is a CFR that will be consistently around the £32m mark and the balance will not be reduced. NC asked for a further conversation around this and what that looks like but can certainly bring that to the September meeting. RH agreed and asked for a discussion on this before the meeting in September.

Action 6/21

Regarding the MRP whether there is a structural change that can be made, NC asked for a further conversation around this and what that looks like but can bring that to the September meeting. RH agreed and asked for a discussion on this before the meeting in September.

6. Treasury Management Strategy

- 6.1 NC asked for approval of the Strategy and for its publication. NC has engaged with Arlingclose in preparation of this report which is consistent with that of Essex Police and to note that Essex Police will be going through a new procurement for Treasury Management Services next year and that will include Essex Fire. This will ensure a consistent approach.
- 6.2 NC focused on some key points of the TMS. Page 3 reflects the current level of investments that ECFRS have. By 2024/25 the Service will reduce the level of investments down to slightly under £1m, which is a result of the cash flow impacts from the MTFs which impacts the deficits around the general fund and the use of Earmarked Reserves and Capital Receipts reserved within that Strategy which is aligned to our Reserves Strategy. Those items are causing a reduction in cash balance.
- 6.3 ECFRS are not expected to borrow within that 4 year period. If the MTFs position is tackled the NC would expect that the Service will perform a little better than that reduction to just under £1m.
- 6.4 The Strategy also refers to the loans that are outstanding of £25.5m against the limit of £40m. There have not been any new loans for several years. The loans are with the Public Works Loans Board and NC has engaged with Arlingclose to see if there is anything that can be done to pay the loans early or for any advantages or efficiencies to tackle these. The loans can be paid early but there will be penalties and interest charges and so there are no real savings to be made. The loan rates are under 5% which was a favourable rate when the loans were taken out at that time.
- 6.5 The TMS also covers the Investment Strategy. The key points are that as the Service are looking to use the cash and reduce the level of investments, the recommendation that the Service invest in High Credit Quality Investments that are liquid. ECFRS have an average portfolio rating of Grade A and NC confirmed that the Service fully adhere to that and the investments are all in a portfolio that has a better rating than A.
- 6.6 NC said that a note had been added into the policy which is consistent with Essex Police regarding Money Market Funds. The Service have funds of £10m invested in the CCLA which is a public sector deposit fund which is classed as a Money Market Fund. Work is needed to reduce this down and there is some paperwork that will be required. NC added that it is a low risk UK Domiciled Account. NC said that this could be reduced and asked RH if he had an opinion on the CCLA.
- 6.7 RH asked for clarity on the section asking to reduce the CCLA fund. NC referred RH to page 9, there is a section specifically around the Money Market Funds. RH said that a 50% sector limit has been maintained so you would hold no more than .5% of a token fund. NC asked for clarification on point 4, as the exposure is taken as 50% of the total investments in Money Market Funds and at the current investments of £12m, £10m of that is with the CCLA and so the 50% is exceeded. RH presumes that "Green" is also exceeded, which is that the Service are earning approximately 10% of the total investment in any one fund. NC agreed. RH asked if this has the backing of Arlingclose. NC said that Arlingclose did have these recommendations, but they did remove them from this year's report, but NC has included them in the report to align with Essex Police. RH knew that there were constraints on a

particular fund but was not aware that in Essex Police there are constraints of 10% of any of the cash holdings in any one fund. CCLA are very well known and one of the most conservative and cautious and reputable fund managers in the City, RH feels that there are no worries over the company, but it is the overall rate.

- 6.8 JP said that the recommendation came from her on the back of the Essex Police paper in order that ECFRS aligned the 10% was already there but will check.

Action 7/21

NC to check the 10% constraints of the cash holdings position in any one fund in the Treasury Management Strategy.

- 6.9 RH asked NC that the policy was approved as is, that £10m would have to be moved. NC confirmed that in Condition 3 it applies for £10m to be held at any time in one Money market Fund and so £8m would have to be moved of the CCLA which is a large chunk of it. RH asked if they were more attractive in yield compared to most others. NC said that it was at the moment, as the remaining investments, bank investments or unsecured, there is a limit of £1m. The rate of interest from banks is extremely low and it is a better return, but it would mean that we would then want investment into several different bank accounts to have £1m unsecured investment. RH it would have been helpful to have had this sorted before the meeting from RH perspective approving it without that being tidied up seems awkward. JT agreed with Roger as this feels significant for ECFRS. JT is also not clear what the consequence would be of not approving the TMS today.
- 6.10 NC said that the TMS needs to be in place for the audit regulations as it is a matter of providing clarity on this one point that if it could be verbally approved and then followed up as there is a Decision Sheet to sign off to agree the Strategy and this can be done in due course. RH agreed that it would be a way forward and asked JP to talk to Arlingclose and to check their advice whether Constraints 3 and 4 are necessary. RH feels that Constraint 3 is necessary i.e where it talks regarding a particular share of the terms of the Money Market Funds.
- 6.11 NC & JP to go and check with Arlingclose and come back via RHy and JT. If they are in favour of it then to please include in the Decision and RH will sign.

Action 8/21

NC & JP to check with Arlingclose on their advice as to whether Constraints 3 and 4 are necessary and come back via RHy and JT. If they are in favour of it, to please include in the Decision Sheet and RH will sign.

7. Annual Plan 2021

- 7.1 RHy said that this came to P&R Board at the meeting, in the Annual Plan for 2021 and it was agreed at that meeting that it would be brought to Strategic Board with a Decision Sheet for the formal sign off of last year's Annual Plan.
- 7.2 As was discussed in P&R, some 70% of the activity was identified in last year's annual plan, and this is the first time there has been an annual plan which brought together the Improvement activity into one place, this was a good achievement by the organisation.
- 7.3 RHy and JTh are working together regarding the deep dive process and quality assuring those activities that have been closed off and a paper that came to P&R picked up those activities that were rolled over, which was discussed in some detail at P&R. The service was not smart enough with its objectives but is something that has been improved for this year's plan.

- 7.4 JG thanked RHy for making the necessary amendments that were discussed. This significantly moves us forward to the next plan.
- 7.5 RH agreed to sign off the decision sheet which was brought to the Strategic board regarding the Annual Plan Closure Report.

8. Response Strategy

- 8.1 MB said that this was for the sign off of the Response Strategy 2021-2024. This is high level Strategy and it is about how ECFRS manage the response to emergencies for the people of Essex and it is key to delivering the Key Statutory Functions.
- 8.2 It outlines why we respond, what drives us, what assets ECFRS have to respond with and how they will be used more intelligently to ensure that we meet our response standards. It also ensures that the Service has the right people at the right time, in the right training and equipment when the Service are needed.
- 8.3 The Strategy does pull out the links to the Strategic Assessment of Risk and sets out how the Service will deliver against its IRMP in support of the Strategic priorities set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan.
- 8.4 It does compliment the Prevention, Protection and People Strategies, where the Service look to reduce the occurrence and severity of incidents but will always have to respond which must always be maintained.
- 8.5 The Strategy does include some more flexible ways of working and resourcing which would include mixed crewing between duty systems, O/C to O/C out duties and deploying other people already in the service such as Day Duty Officers who ride on fire appliances, making best use of all of our assets.
- 8.6 The Strategy also focuses on ensuring that the Service has assets available at core stations, which the Service feel is the best way to meet or better its response standards.
- 8.7 Systems and Data are a strong focus which is crucial to support the Response, Prevention and Protection Strategies which is key and it looks how best to deploy staff and also how this is reported on, monitored and evaluated.
- 8.8 There are some dependences on the Workforce Management Project, which focuses on this and there is every confidence that this will deliver.
- 8.9 At the meeting the Strategy needs to be agreed and the Decision Sheet is included in the pack. This will enable some actions plans to be put in place and delivered.

Questions

- 8.10 RH thanked MB for her work on this as it has been a very intuitive process and is a building block of our approach overall and a very important job in the Service and is a very good document.
- 8.11 JTh wanted to thank MB as a lot of time was spent with JG, JTh and Neil Fenwick to go through this, we were quite comfortable with this and made tweaks along the way but that was a really good piece of engagement to bring the Strategy forward. MB will take the thanks back to the PFCC office as the nudges, engagement and steer was key to get this to where it was and a great example of working together.

- 8.12 RH there have been some very clear objectives and understand that there will be a year-end report in line with this Strategy going forward. KE confirmed that they are going through P&R as a quarterly update against the Strategy.
- 8.13 JG said that regarding managing performance, the work that the Service have done on the Data set especially the work that Leanne Little and Lucy have done on this has been very significant. This is a very dynamic document and along with the work that Leanne is currently doing on data performance, we will get a very good feel very early on as to what is working well and what the Service needs to tweak going forward if necessary to ensure this Strategy stays in line.
- 8.14 RHy said that this is final piece of the puzzle in terms of Strategies that we did not have in place. JG is right to raise that point that we need to monitor the performance of it. Implementing this is not without its challenges. We are moving to core stations, looking for more flexible use of our staff, mixed crewing etc. Culturally this is significant to us, we are in the right place to do this, but we need to keep a close eye on it to ensure it works effectively.
- 8.15 JP asked that regarding the difference in attendance times, should this not be highlighted in the Strategy. RH this is one to take offline with Leanne Little and to see how this is best presented and looking at the 3 dimensional approach rather than just the average and the outliers.

Action 9/21

JP to liaise with RHy and Jim Palmer rework the Harm model which reflects the difference aspects in attendance times, to see how this is best presented and looking at the 3 dimensional approach rather than just the average and the outliers.

- 8.16 RH approved sign off for the Response Strategy Decision Sheet.

9. Annual Review of SAoR and IRMP

- 9.1 RH thanked the team for its work in producing a clearer and more accessible document.
- 9.2 DB said that this was a decision paper which was previously agreed at September 2020 Strategic Board meeting. Once a year the Service bring forward the Strategic Assessment of Risk which is kept as a “live” document and reviewed and improved as circumstances change. It has brought today for approval along with a review of any impacts it might have on our IRMP which is currently in place until 2024.
- 9.3 The recommendation in the paper is that we continue with the current plan as far as the IRMP is concerned. The Strategic Assessment of Risk has reduced in size by approximately one third. Two significant points have been Covid and EU exit and the progression on those and the format has been changed to include a substantial section on the people factor to reflect how we structured the IRMP. It also looks to provide a summary point which links to the Strategy Document and so as the Strategy changes, this will reflect on the control measures that are in place for those risks that are highlighted.
- 9.4 A lot of work has been completed on referencing which are being built on. Feedback is welcomed on the Strategic Assessment of Risk and the Service strive to continually improve on this, particular as there is more involvement with partners and understanding the risk more generally to the Essex Communities.

- 9.5 DB asked RH for his decision for sign off for the year for the Strategic Assessment of Risk, the continued integration of the IRMP. There is information in the paper regarding national work that is being undertaken now around the Community at Risk Programme. There has been engagement with JT regarding a consultation that has gone out on the standard the Service are expecting, there is a lot of national work going out regarding the IRMP.
- 9.6 By way of reassurance, the engagement so far has been positive and any gaps in recommendations will be reviewed. The Service are in a good place with this, there has been engagement from the start and involved in the consultation but there is an element of risk in that the Service reflect on good practices, they have not gone off to develop their own definitions as the Service have kept with the industry standard. The Service are not expecting any surprises or anything that may lead to rethink the way that the Risk is managed.
- 9.7 Together with the sign off of the Response Strategy, this will be updated in the document to take this into account.

Questions

- 9.8 RH thanked DB for the enormous amount of work that has done into this Strategic Assessment of Risk and compared it to the document that he had seen when he first became PFCC. This piece of work has looked in depth at work across the County and makes sure that where the risks are is understood. RH thanked DB for his involvement and also acknowledged the big difference that DB has made to the residents of Essex. RH thanked DB on behalf of the residents of Essex on for his work and his pending his retirement and this being his last Strategic Board meeting, DB has made a huge difference with fantastic work over a long period of years.
- 9.9 RH approved the Decision Sheet for sign off for the year for the Strategic Assessment of Risk, the continued integration of the IRMP.
- 9.10 JTh asked how some of the risks identified feeds upwards. JTh noted on P36 it refers to the lower Thames Crossing and there is a comment regarding that currently no fire suppression system is planned which is a concern. For example, if some of the PFCC's networks are required to move some of these risks forward, how does that work. DB replied that under where there are key risks coming up or key future programs that could have some significant operational risks to the service, this is held centrally for Emergency Planning Partners where the Service looks to engage with programmes with those partners to ensure there is a shared understanding of the risk and work with those companies directly. Where the Service feels there is some benefit to escalate those risk then it would be flagged up within the Strategic Risk Register but would not hope to get to that point by engagement locally and within highlighting those risks. This is a benefit of the Strategic Assessment of Risk being a "live" document. Although this document is brought to the Commissioner once a year, if there was a significant risk at any point this would be flagged directly to the Commissioner and the Office.
- 9.11 JP asked how you do keep a record of the risks; do they go into a Management Risk Register? DB said that going forward there will be owners allocated to certain aspects of the document i.e. the Thames Crossing risk would be referred directly to the area commander in that area via MB and the team to ask for input on that part of the Strategic Assessment of Risk. This ensures that those engagements locally will be able to hold onto it and there is oversight centrally on those key risks that are coming through.
- 9.12 RH regarding Lower Thames Crossing, to give reassurance in terms of the working process, there is now planned suppression going into the Lower Thames Crossing thanks to the work

of the Command and the Risk Managers in that area working with all partners around that. Initially crossed passageways of 200m were investigated and there was no planned fire suppression. Thanks to the engagement of fire as part of the multi-agency group this has changed. Suppression will now be put in and the Service are waiting to see what type of suppression and therefore where the cross passageways need to be. This is a good example of something that has been flagged for the Strategic Assessment of Risk locally and has been actioned with partners and the Service have seen an improvement in consultation changes because of that engagement. RH thanked RHy and everyone involved.

10. Estates Strategy

- 10.1 KE has brought a paper to the Board that outlines a request from the Strategic Board members regarding supporting the principals and the functions in the framework outlined in the document which will help ECFRS to build on their Property Strategy.
- 10.2 The current Strategy does not currently directly align to the Fire and Rescue Plan. KE said that the Service are not looking to reduce the size of their assets and would like to invest more in the current estate to ensure that it is both fit for purpose and meets the ever growing need of agile working and improve the Service's operational effectiveness and efficiencies. Also ensuring that it meets the staff wellbeing needs of the workforce and being aligned to the Fleet and Environmental Strategies and maintaining an estate that is sustainable for the future. The Service also wants to ensure that the Estate Strategy aligns to the Essex Police Estate Strategy and most importantly meets the needs of our communities.
- 10.3 Those are the principals around how the Service would like to build the Property Strategy going forward and the intention is that once the Service have put together the Strategy, if members are happy then the Property Strategy will be brought back to the September Strategic Board with the plan outlined for the delivery and also aligned to the Capital Programme.
- 10.4 KE said that this was an overview of the support measures that the Service would like to build that Strategy upon. A decision is not needed today, but more support of the principals that would allow this to come back in September and have some further workshops with the PFCCs office in between now and the Strategic board meeting in September to ensure that there is alignment in thinking.
- 10.5 RH said that the principals outlined what the Service should be doing. RH asked that in the Strategy as currently drafted the objectives and principals and RH wondered if the last of the principles which is incorporating reduction technologies etc, whether that should be an objective rather than a principle. KE agreed that this needs to be an objective and will take this to note when pulling that Strategy together.
- 10.6 RH very happy to endorse the direction of travel and any plans that KE has.
- 10.7 JT said that she also happy with this and this now gives the Service the ability to go ahead and start to consult with stakeholders on this which will be crucial to make sure that this Strategy is where the Service wants it to be. JT is happy to convert the principal into an objective given the focus as a Service on the Environmental and equality health and safety issues.
- 10.8 JG is very happy with the direction of travel and would like to be noted that this is a significant step forward and look forward to it being translated into the detail and anything that the PFCC office can do to get alongside to assist please let them know. KE thanked KE.

- 10.9 RH was asked to approve the objectives and agreeing to the beginning of the consultation and agreeing to the final Strategy coming back in September. Subject to the tweak in the objectives and principles the RH and the Board agreed to the recommendation.

11. Control Procurement

- 11.1 KE said that this was a paper that outlines the process taken during the whole of the procurement structured to procure a new immobilising system.
- 11.2 The first point that KE would like to acknowledge is that this has involved hard work from a substantial amount of staff within the organisation. This has been predominantly led by Sarah Smith in the procurement team and several others who have supported through the pandemic which has added to some of the complexities of pushing certain aspects through and replies from suppliers and the evaluation process etc.
- 11.3 The Service have followed a very robust process; we have maintained full compliance throughout and adhered to timelines. The services have also managed through the specifications, the evaluations, and the legal aspects. There has been a lot of supplier engagement with those who have put forward tenders, qualifying bid etc.
- 11.4 There were 6 companies that responded and put forward to the Contract Notice. All the bidders were assessed through pass and fail questions. Those top 5 scoring responses were then taken through to the next stages and invited to submit their tenders. Scenario tests and technical evaluations were then conducted.
- 11.5 We have followed a rigorous process and are ready to award the Contract. This is a key enabler for Essex Fire and in terms of building more resilience in one of our more critical systems and an area of delivery in parallel which is a fully agnostic system, this paved the way for future collaboration opportunities.
- 11.6 KE said that the current system has featured highly on the Strategic Risk Register for some time and the Service is keen to progress forward onto the new system for all those benefits which we know are available for the future.
- 11.7 The Service is now at the stage that they can award and there will be a standstill period and are looking at an implementation time of approximately 12-15 months. By September 2022 the Service should be on the new immobilising system which will be a key and significant step forward.
- 11.8 This paper was looking to take members of the board through the paper and give the assurance that the Service has followed the rigorous process and would like to now go out and award the Contract.
- 11.9 RH said that this has been a very in depth and difficult process in many ways and we approved going forward on this a year ago. RH clarified that the Board is being asked to note that what the Service has done is what the Board asked the Service to do before it is all completed just in case there were any issues.
- 11.10 RH noted KE's recommendation that the Service would go forward with this process and complete and no further sign off required was needed from either side, but to action the award, formally making the award and accepting the formal liability KE said that a decision sheet would need to be signed but not formally on the papers today due to the commercial sensitivities until the award can be made.

- 11.11 JP said that one of the dates is 07.07 and did this happen? KE replied that it had not as the Service were working towards a very rigorous timeline, it was hoped that the award would have been made by that date. The Service have let the potential suppliers know that there has been a delay in announcing who it has gone to. Hopefully this will be moved forward imminently.
- 11.12 JG said that she wanted to thank Sarah Smith for a job very well done in responding to what the Commissioner asked to be done. The report is robust and the process that has been gone through to get to this position is really robust and the right thing to do due to the importance to you as a Service as getting it right. JG asked KE to pass on our thanks and that Sarah be commended for the work done on this. RH agreed.
- 11.13 RHy added that to be clear the reason the contract has not been awarded yet is that a decision sheet is with RH for sign off before the Service can award. JTh confirmed that the decision sheet is with the PFCC's office and is in progress. JG confirmed that this will be chased up and put forward for signature.

12. Annual TU Facilities Report

- 12.1 CB said that this is a paper for information only and is self-explanatory.
- 12.2 The FBU officials referred to in the paper have changed with the retirement of Alan Chinn-Shaw, the new Brigade Secretary is Andy Knowles and the Service are working with Andy to establish a good relationship.
- 12.3 The Service have drafted Terms of Reference for a review of Trade Union Facilities time that we would undertake in partnership with each of the four representative bodies. Two of the Trade Unions have asked for that review and the Terms of Reference should accommodate all. CB will keep colleagues briefed as this progress.
- 12.4 Some feedback has been received from Trade Union Representatives regarding how they record their facilities time and the need to access our systems for management approval for the recording of the time. It is not working for all the reps and therefore we are looking at a different system that can be put in place.
- 12.5 RH noted the helpful piece regarding comparable costs across the Country and it looks as Essex costs are high at £135,000. CB agreed and said that the review of facilities time will help the Service to identify any efficiencies that can be made within that and a change of Brigade Secretary will cause a different figure to be reported for the next year i.e. from a full time position to a part time official, although some of the other reps may take on additional hours to deal with workload within FBU.
- 12.6 JG asked what is the source of that appendix? CB confirmed that the source came from the NFCC and the Service asked the forum for data to be shared.
- 12.7 CB will keep the Board abreast of developments on the review and see what recommendations come from this. This is a partnership approach and working with the "Working Well Together" principals.
- 12.8 CB confirmed that this paper is for noting and publishing. RH and the Board agreed to this.

13. Code of Ethics

- 13.1 RH said that he is very well sighted on this and very supportive of the fact that this has come forward. It is one of the things that came out of the HMICFRS first review of the State of Fire on the back of their first round of inspections and found a very disparate view across the Country as to how this should be handled and they recognised the need for cultural change and modernisation across the Fire and Rescue Service. Some practices need to be improved and one of those was the Code of Ethics. The NFCC has done a huge amount of work on this, the APCC and the LGA have been involved on this, the Fire Standards Board as well as the Home office have also had input. After a lot of work this has got to stage where everyone is happy to adopt it.
- 13.2 Those FRS who are part of a County Council, were reluctant to have a standard Code of Ethics which every Firefighter had to adopt which is different from the Code of Ethics from the County Council. This is a set of principles that can be adapted and adopted by those but from our perspective it fits very well with who the Service are and what it wants to do and RH feels it is a lot of hard work in a good direction.
- 13.3 CB feels that this is exciting that this has come to fruition and is a clear steer for ECFRS. It is also culturally significant and one of the first Fire Standards to be released by the Fire Standard Board and the joint branding with the APCC, LGA, NFCC, PCCs and PFCCs is also important.
- 13.4 CB said that the role for the Service is now how to adopt and roll out the code and has suggested 5 recommendations.
- 13.5 We adopt the code and will engage with stakeholders and representative bodies with a view to adopting the Core Code. This is pencilled into the fifth phase of “Working Well Together” with rep bodies. If this recommendation is approved now, CB can get back to representative bodies to say that consultation has commenced with them. This was agreed by the Board
- 13.6 Gap Analysis – The Service to undertake a GAP analysis with regard to the existing policies and what is suggested in the core code. We have just agreed our Code of Conduct with the representative bodies in full view of the Code of Ethics with a view to align. We have agreed to undertake this analysis.
- 13.7 The Service to create a plan for years 3 and 4 of the People Strategy actions and will include the plan to launch the Core Code and make sure that the principals are embedded in all that we do. The board agreed.
- 13.8 We will invite the stakeholders to launch the Core Code and the five principals within it.
A lead be designated, Colette Black as Director of People Services, to lead that piece of work. The Board agreed.
- 13.9 CB asked if the Board if all agreed that those five principals are progressed as proposed and then come back with more detail in the September and December Strategic Boards.
- 13.10 JTh asked to clarify if this should come back to the Strategic Board or the Performance and Resources Board. JT said that her preference as it is Code of Ethics that it come back to the Strategic Board as it is so fundamental. RH we are formally approving our adopting of the Code here and the launch is in December and considering the information from the GAP analysis.
- 13.11 RH confirmed that we are signing off the process to take the NFCC, LGA APCC code and make it into our own but at the next meeting we will be signing off our own Code in the light of it. It should come back to the Strategic Board.

Action 10/21

JTH to put the ECFRS Code of Ethics paper update for September and for the ECFRS Code of Ethics Launch for December on the Forward Plan

13.12 The Board supported CB and the Code of Ethics on all five principals.

14. AOB(a)

Budget Timetable

- 14.1 NC said there is a draft of the budget timetable for next year. This has been based on the process that had been done through for last year and within the timetable there has been included dates for the panel workshops and panel meetings. The dates need to be firmed up and can work with JP on these to finalise the timetable.
- 14.2 There are a few key items in green which are the PFCC engagements. This starts with the Strategic Board in September. This will include an update on MTFS along with some information regarding the pay pressures and initial budget bids to give an insight of that early process.
- 14.3 Moving towards the December were the budget and precept proposals will be submitted on 13th December along with the MTFS update. The Service are aligning the budget with the MTFS.
- 14.4 The templates for the budget process will be issued in August and hope to have a draft budget at the end of September when the Service will go through a process with SLT where directorate reviews will be undertaken and begin to review those submissions.
- 14.5 In November, engagement begins with the PFCC. There will be three meetings in the during November to go through various stages of the budget build. NC feels that now we have gone through that process the Service will be in a good position and have the information that is needed. When the PFC panel workshops NC & JP understand what is required for each of those meetings and once the dates are known then the informal meeting dates can be added in between.
- 14.6 Once the dates are confirmed, NC to bring back to the next P&R.
- 14.7 RH recognised the fact that this was very short notice and is very appreciative of the effort to bring this to the Strategic Board, as by the time the Board had its next meeting in September it would already be underway and it is good to have the overview.

Questions

- 14.8 RH said that on the last line 3rd February PFC Panel final approval of budget, RH feels that this would be a little tight as if it is refused there is a period of time for them to write a report stating why they have refused and RH then has to reflect upon this decision and then respond and then another meeting which all has to be done by 8th February 2022 or the law will be broken.
- 14.9 JT agreed with RH, in terms of normal practice, February is normally the backstop date, if budget cannot be approved by 24th January. RH suggested bringing the last part forward.
- 14.10 RH asked that JTh bring this up with PBI and check those panel dates from a legal aspect. We have historically had a good relationship with the Panel and our process of having the sub-group means that we can take them through our thinking and manage to iron out any dispute or lack of clarity before then. The panel has just changed dramatically with a new chair and

new members and we do not know if they will share our vision and views of what we are trying to achieve or whether they want to take a different view, in which case we have a different view around Council Tax Precept as well. RH said that the statutory buffer times as laid out in the Statute need to be adhered to.

Action 11/21

Regarding the budget timetable JTh to liaise with PBI and check panel dates from a legal aspect.

14.11 NC thanked RH and said that was very useful and he would take it away and look to amend the timetable.

14.12 JP added that both her and NC had already spoken about meetings that they needed to have but they will add those along the way with the detail. JP thanked NC for turning the timetable round so quickly.

14.13 JP said that this should be noted in the Forward Plan for this time next year.

Action 12/21

JTh to note the Budget timetable on the Forward Plan for June 2022. JP said that regarding the budget timetable, to ensure that it did go into the September Forward Plan.

AOB(b)

14.14 JG said that this meeting and the previous P&R have gone really well as it is all in the preparation and wanted to thank colleagues from the PFCC office and the Service for all the work along with the ongoing dialog and feels that we are getting the conversations right. RH agreed.

14.15 JT also reflected on some of the earlier Strategic Board meetings and how they felt very different recent Boards and Governance meetings, those earlier conversations and preparation allow us to work together to get the best out of all of our worlds.

14.16 RH in the prep meetings with the representative bodies, it was clear that the preparation work had been done with them, they knew exactly what was going on, which is a good reflection of the work that is going on. RH thanked everyone for the enormous amount of hard work that has been done.

Meeting ended at 15.56.