

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

30 September 2021, 1045 to 1300, via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Julia Berry (JB)	Head of Finance and S151, PFCC's office
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Annette Chan (AC)	Chief Accountant, Essex Police
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
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Rachel Nolan (RN)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Glen Pavelin (GP)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Andy Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Tom Richards (TR)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Camilla Brandal	Minutes, PFCC's office

Apologies:

BJ Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
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1 Introduction and welcome

RH welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from BJH.

2.i Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

There were no amendments to the minutes of 26 August 2021 and they were therefore approved. There were no matters arising.

2.ii Action Log

19/21 Finance
Summary capital position included in September monthly monitoring report.
Close.

- 21/21 Finance
Commentary included in monitoring report to explain the position on internal v external borrowing. Close
- 30/21 CIPFA Report on FMCR
Workshop to be set up – JP and JB to set up with DM and AC. To remain open.
- 35/21 Balanced Scorecard
JG spoken to RH. Close.

Action 41/21:

JP to speak to VH and Mark Johnson about the Balanced Scorecard value for money/ efficiency and effectiveness.

- 37/21 PFCC Victims Commissioning Programme
KS report has been circulated. Any queries, please raise with KS. Close.
- 39/21 Monthly Performance Report
MJ spoken to ECFRS to explore alignment of KSI reporting periods. Close.

Action 42/21:

SH and Jo Thornicroft to discuss further in order to align ECFRS and EP figures/ reporting periods. SH to share info with VH.

- 40/21 Deep Dive – ASB
Information about the categorisation of ASB sent through to SH. Close.

2.iii Forward Plan

- 2.iii.1 SH confirmed that October's Board will include a proposed schedule to build the scrutiny of the new Police and Crime Plan into P&RS Board. VH confirmed that the new measures are ready to be reported following the closure of the previous measures. JP, SH and VH to speak outside the meeting.
- 2.iii.2 SH also confirmed that the Insurance update paper has been requested to be deferred to November. It was agreed that Matt Tokley will bring this paper to November's Board.

RH joined the meeting at 1052

RN joined the meeting at 1053

3 Finance

3.i Finance Report – Monthly update

- 3.i.1 DM presented the Month 5 position for the Force and it was noted that there were two virements/ appropriations requiring approval, namely; Local Council Tax Support Grant and Pension Remedy Grant. Agreement to approve the adjustments to the Capital Variance Plan was also sought.
- 3.i.2 From the Executive Summary, it was noted that the revenue forecast underspend is at £1.399m against the 2021/22 revenue budget of £330.3m. The capital position reflects a forecast underspend position of £196k compared with the original approved budget of £19.1m. The Police Officer strength forecast at the end of August 2021 is 3,494 FTE and is forecast to be 3,553 FTE at year end. The overspend on Police Officer Pay

and Allowances is £0.8m. The Police staff strength end of August is 2,160 FTE. Vacancies at end July were 15 FTEs above vacancy factor of 152 FTEs. The underspend on Police Staff Pay and Allowances is currently £0.5m.

- 3.i.3 DM confirmed that a Section 31 grant had been received for Local Council Tax Support (£2,022k) and a Pension Remedy Grant following McCloud vs Sergeant (£86k). It was proposed that these funds are put into earmarked reserves. RH confirmed that he understood that the Pension Remedy Grant was a particular grant for a particular purpose. Other underspends on income reflect Mutual Aid income for G7 Summit and COP26. DM confirmed that the main forecast movements are set out in Table 3.3 of the report.
- 3.i.4 JP asked DM what the forecast underspend would be if the appropriations were not agreed? DM confirmed that the underspend figure would increase by £2.1m. JG asked whether the appropriations should be taken out of the figures until the PFCC has approved them to give a true picture of the underspend? DM commented that they had been included in the forecast but no budget changes (virements) had been actioned in the year to date position, as these were subject to approval. It was agreed that in future reports appropriations would not be actioned in the forecast until they had been approved by the PFCC.
- 3.i.5 RH asked about the Local Council Tax Support Grant and stated that it was general funding for a lack of Council Tax income resulting from the economic consequences of Covid19, and why it was being treated differently from any other local Council Tax Grants which are treated as funding not income. Why was the Grant being treated as income? DM confirmed that the Grants have definitions attached to them which means that they have to be treated as income. A discussion took place around this issue and it was agreed that the headline subjective headings would be broken down further in a separate appendix going forward, this would include grants being separately identified within income. A further discussion took place around the variance lines and it was agreed that AP would follow up with DM and Finance Team, JP, JB and PBI to work on the commentary in Table 3.2 and also look at the narrative on Table 3.1.
- 3.i.6 A discussion took place around the variance in police officer numbers and the current year to date underspend of £6.5m [net expenditure against an even profile]. It was agreed that AP would include more narrative around how the £6.5m will be spent in the rest of the year. A discussion took place around the concern that RH had around the MTFs base budget for next year when we appear to be heading towards a double digit underspend in the current financial year.

Action 43/21:

It was agreed that AP would follow up with DM and Finance Team, JP, JB and PBI to work on the basis of variances, commentary in Table 3.2 and also look at the narrative on Table 3.1. It was further agreed that this work should consider additional detail on how the £6.5m (year to date underspend) would be spent in-year.

- 3.i.7 It was agreed that the Pension Remedy Grant appropriation was agreed but that the Local Council Tax Support Grant would be listed as a contribution to the general reserve as part of the Q2 reporting.
- 3.i.8 DM presented the figures for the Workforce Analysis, and the modelling of financial impact from changes to Officers leaver and joiner profiles. RH asked AP for the current exact number of officers? [AP subsequently confirming that it is 3,474].
- 3.i.9 DM confirmed that there were no changes to the detailed reserves month on month, and the earmarked reserves were set out in Table 6. The capital position showed

movement and slippage (which was acknowledged by RH) but the capital position will not be changed but will be worked off against the final column in Table 7 which is the forecast budget variance.

- 3.i.9 DM confirmed that the new Capital Accountant starts work on Monday 4 October which will assist with some of the capital monitoring reporting.

Item 9 was taken at this point in the meeting to facilitate DM and JB needing to leave early

9 Police Objective Analysis

- 9.1 DM confirmed that the commentary contained in the POA explains the variances to date and reflects the establishment position.
- 9.2 RJ confirmed that Appendix 2 contained the Level 2 data but that this was possibly being looked at as part of the Q2 refresh of data. The Table provided the Outturn figures for 2020/21 and the Forecast Variance between 2020/21 and 2021/22 Outturns (£15.5m). After a discussion around the figures, the system used to calculate the POA which is not an efficient use of time, RH commented that it was the most informative version of the POA that has been presented to date and really helps to explain where large amounts of the budget are being spent. A brief discussion took place around the proposal for a new system to address the issues encountered in producing the POA.
- 9.3 RH asked AP whether the Force was content that the £4m year over year uplift in Public Protection is where we want to be spending money given the agreed priorities? RH asked MG whether the £9.2m in support functions is a true reflection? MG confirmed that this was discussed at COG the other week and the core support services remained relatively low but this figure did include a lot of the revenue consequences of capital spend, i.e. IT investments. RH asked about the revenue consequences being central costs and RJ confirmed that these are actually separated out over the policing headings included in support services rather than central costs. AP commented that he thought the £4m uplift relating to Crime and Public Protection was aligned to the DAIT but he would clarify this and report back. JP asked to follow up with RJ to work on the POA once the outliers have been received from the Home Office and agree the final POA position before its submission, and this was agreed.

Action 44/21:

JP and RJ to work on the POA once the outliers have been received from the Home Office and agree the final POA position before its submission

Action 45/21:

AP to share correlation analysis that had been undertaken with RH.

DM and JB left the meeting at 1158

3.ii Efficiency Savings Programme

- 3.ii.1 VH presented the monthly progress and updates against the current and future efficiency and savings plans as set out in the budget and the Force's MTFS. Two key areas of movement since the last report were an additional in year savings for SCD of £19k and an increase in the non-cashable savings attributed to O365 of £612k. The in year savings requirement has reduced to £0.69m against the full year position of £0.053m surplus.
- 3.ii.2 VH confirmed that the review of savings cases and budget pressures will be taking place on 8 October.

4 Monthly Performance Report

- 4.1 VH presented the Monthly Performance Report for August 2021 where 4 of the 7 PFCC priorities are graded as 'Good', 3 of the 7 priorities (Tackling Gangs, Protecting Children and Breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse) have been graded at 'Requires Improvement'. All Crime fell by 3.4% for the 12 months to August 2021 which has primarily been influenced by the Government's restrictions on gathering and movement in relation to Covid19. There was a 0.9% decrease in All Crime in August 2021 compared to August 2019 however, the Force recorded 3,401 more offences in August 2021 than in April 2020 (first lockdown). The Force recorded 457 more Violence with Injury offences in August 2021 compared with April 2020 but there were 43.7% fewer Anti-Social Behaviour incidents in August 2021 compared with August 2020 and is also lower than pre-Covid levels. There had been no change to the confidence figure from the independent SMSR survey but the rolling 12 month figure stands at 80%. Modern Slavery referrals had increased by 25.5% in the 12 months to August 2021, and Essex Police were awarded two Gold Awards in the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise Public Sector Transformation Awards.
- 4.2 RH commented that the reporting was now reflecting the picture that was expected and it was encouraging to see that confidence was still high. RH asked about the outcomes for Domestic Abuse and Protecting Vulnerable People where the figures have decreased with the number of issued DVPOs increasing slowly.

RH left the meeting at 1206

AP commented that the next Force Performance Leadership Forum on 13 October will be addressing solving high harm crime as the key performance priority for the Force.

- 4.3 VH highlighted that 13 indicators were improving, 12 indicators were deteriorating and 1 remained at stable. The two changes were the DA priority where repeat incidents have gone from improved to deteriorating and the number of DVPOs/ DVPNs had gone from improved to deteriorating which is reflected in the table.
- 4.4 SH commented that the trend in the rise of Child Abuse offences under Priority 6 is something that needs to be monitored.

RH joined the meeting at 1218

- 4.5 A discussion took place around the three areas that required improvement, homicide figures, population density, crime trends, reductions in solved rates, knife enabled crime showing a reduced increase which is positive, and it was agreed that AP would take the 3 areas offline with VH and look at how to capture the areas of work being done into the report.

Action 46/21:

AP to speak to VH around the 3 areas requiring improvement and how best to express the aspiration level the in the report.

Meeting paused at 1225

Meeting reconvened at 1230

5 Recruitment of Specials (quarterly)

- 5.1 RN presented the quarterly report on Specials, which included items on recruitment, media opportunities, Employer Supported Policing, Community Special Constables, Performance and Covid19 response. RN wanted to note that the Special Constabulary were successful winners of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.
- 5.2 RH thanked RN for the report and congratulated the Special Constabulary for the QAVS Award.
- 5.3 RH asked about vetting and whether this was producing the increase in leavers and RN confirmed that this is not a concern. SH asked about the numbers of leavers increasing and whether it was linked to the Special Constabulary to Police Constable project. RN confirmed that the project is about to go live (there are possibly 11 specials who may wish to take part), but RN was of the opinion of this would have a minimal impact.

6 Crime Prevention Strategy

- 6.1 RN commented that she was aware that the report will have been read and for expediency would take questions.
- 6.2 RH asked whether there had been any feedback from the knife crime violence model trial? Does RN think that the increase of numbers of people in custody and much higher sentences is considered a success, and does the Force have any insight into why there has been such a big increase in rape and sexual violence in the Night-Time Economy?
 - 6.2.1 RN confirmed that feedback from the knife crime violence model trial had not been received as yet. AP commented that he had just received some information which he would update on. [AP subsequently confirming that positive engagement had taken place (18 individuals), no identified correlation yet between activity and reduced serious violence, the first bit of research from the pilot is anticipated to be produced at the end of the autumn with a statistically relevant performance review].
 - 6.2.2 RN confirmed that the longer sentences is as a result of the joined up approach with the Crown Prosecution Service and embedded investigators, so classed as a success.
 - 6.2.3 RN confirmed that structured work is underway with partners to address the unwanted behaviour. The Force had anticipated a rise but the NTE had taken a while to catch up with reopening plans dealing with Covid etc. JG asked whether the Community Safety Partnerships are addressing this as there is a significant problem in Colchester at the moment. RN commented that she would take this as an action and report back on Colchester.

Action 47/21:

RN to explore NTE crime figures in Colchester and report back on findings

- 6.3 SH asked if the next report could match with the new Crime Prevention Strategy, and it was confirmed that SH would make contact with Nikki Metson who is leading on this to discuss the format of the reporting on the new Strategy.

Action 48/21:

SH to make contact with Nikki Metson to discuss the format of the reporting on the new Crime Prevention Strategy

- 6.4 JG thanked the Force for the information as it was much appreciated. RH confirmed that the Policing Minister had commented on Essex's Crime Prevention Strategy saying 'Essex is at the forefront as usual'.

RN left the meeting at 1248

GP joined the meeting at 1248

8 Operational Policing Command (annual report)

- 8.1 GP presented the annual report on the OPC and how it delivers against the Force Plan and the Police and Crime Plan, current resourcing, finance, areas of responsibilities, performance and future plans. Updates in the paper included items on Operation Sunshade, the work done in the Dog Section, Operations Centre, Public Order Training, Resilience Department, Resource Management Unit, Force Support Unit and Firearms Training, Taser Governance, Stansted Airport, Operational Support Group, Drone Team, Marine Unit, Specialist Operations, Roads Policing and the Serious Violence Unit.
- 8.2 GP commented on the challenges that are being experienced especially around the Firearms Training but this continues to be a priority. A brief discussion took place around the training and the vacancy numbers as JG had a concern around the wellbeing of staff. JG asked about the Public Order Commanders, and GP confirmed that the risk has been reduced since the report had been written.
- 8.3 RH asked about the Roads Policing Team and whether the growth plans would be sufficient to meet the demand now that restrictions had been lifted. GP confirmed that the Roads Crime Team Sergeant had been recruited and the recruitment for the 6 new Police Constables was being finalised. GP also confirmed that Special Constables are continuing to be recruited into the Roads Policing Team to enhance the capability.

MG left the meeting at 1256

- 8.4 RH asked about the Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN) response team which is reported to be under establishment but needing more budget. GP confirmed that this related to the replacement and renewal of equipment and protection equipment for officers. The under establishment figure related mainly to there being only a few national training courses being available which has impacted on the number of personnel being available.
- 8.5 SH asked about the Marine Unit and the launch being due for refurbishment but the report did not reference the refurbishment amounts. GP confirmed that the RHIB had been refurbished but the launch costs are being dealt with by John Gorton. GP would report back once he had found out what the costs were.

Action 49/21:

GP to advise SH regarding the anticipated costs of the launch refurbishment

JG left the meeting at 1302

Item 11 was taken at this point in the meeting to enable GP to leave after this item

11 Public Contact (including 101, Call Handling, Single Online Home and Resolution Centre)

- 11.1 GP presented the report which provided an assessment of the Force's performance on public call handling of emergency and non-emergency contact routed through the Contact Management Command. The report included updates on items such as Emergency 999 Calls, Non-Emergency 101 Calls to the Force Control Room, Resolution Centre Non-Emergency Calls, Performance Headlines, current work, actions for improvement and future work.
- 11.2 RH thanked GP for the report and the work that the Force is doing which has such an impact on the public and which is an area of interest at public meetings. RH asked if it would be possible to have some statistics from 2016/ 2017 and a couple of quotes around how much better it is now than then, for example, the average wait time to resolution back then was over 29 minutes and the maximum wait time was 4 hours. Can this be legitimately compared with the figures in this report as 7 minutes? GP agreed to take this action away and provide the latest up to date figures to RH.

Action 50/21:

GP to provide the latest up to date figures on call handling and wait times to the PFCC's Comms Team.

- 11.3 RH commented that he does receive feedback about the online service; Live Chat is great but the Single Online Home questions are felt to be unnecessary (mainly around details to do with family, friends, employment, etc before they say what they are doing). RH commented that he had also had feedback from the public that there had been several occasions where they claim Single Online Home was down but that RH had not heard anything from the Force to report this. GP commented that he was not aware of this but would look into it and identify if this has been an issue.

GP left the meeting at 1314

9 Police Objective Analysis Report

This item had been taken earlier in the meeting

7 Independent SMSR Survey (quarterly)

- 7.1 VH presented the quarterly report where the key findings for Q1 have resulted in the highest result of confidence since the survey began (83% of respondents think EP are doing a good/ excellent job). 24% of the respondents are stating that the Force is doing an excellent job which is a stand out item in the findings. The perception gap between white and minority ethnic respondents has reduced significantly and there are no statistically significant differences in many areas being reported. The areas that do have statistical differences are mainly around fairness issues (stop and search). Perceptions from victims (comparing victims and non-victims) is showing a gap in the levels of confidence or positive perceptions are increasing in many areas, which is not to say that victims' perceptions are not improving but the gap between victims and non-victims is increasing. VH confirmed that a couple of focus groups were held around this issue, the findings from which will be addressed through better communications and better follow up processes. RH agreed with one of the key findings being providing better feedback to victims.
- 7.2 RH asked about the 12% drop in Epping around people understanding the issues that affect their community, and whether this was a significant drop and why? And residents feeling uninformed in Colchester, Castle Point and Thurrock – do we know why? VH

confirmed that the district level results are dealt with in the Engagement Star Chambers (which have a PFCC office representative) and look at the initiatives that are being put in place and delivery of them.

10 Annual Insurance update

It had been agreed that this paper will be tabled at the November P&R Board.

11 Public Contact (including 101, Call Handling, Single Online Home and Resolution Centre)

This item had been taken earlier in the meeting.

12 Approval for publishing of documents

The papers for publishing were agreed as 3i, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11.

13 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1322.