

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

26 October 2021, 1400 to 1700, via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Julia Berry (JB)	Head of Finance and S151, PFCC's office
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
Richard Leicester (RL)	Director of Human Resources, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Andy Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Camilla Brandal	Minutes, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
BJ Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police

1 Introduction and welcome

JG welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from RH, PBI and BJH. RH was not able to be at the meeting due to his attendance at a serving firefighter's funeral.

2.i Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

- 2.i.1 DM asked that on Page 3, paragraph 6.16, if a clarifying sentence against the underspend figure of £6.51m could be inserted which read '(net expenditure against an even profile)'. This would be inserted in square brackets to the amended minutes as a subsequent addition.
- 2.i.2 SH confirmed that Action 45/21 should have been placed under Item 9 and this will be moved.
- 2.i.3 SH noted that AP's comments had not been included in the version of the draft minutes issued with the papers and these would be included before approval. AP would send the wording through again to SH. *[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.]

- 2.i.4 There were no further amendments to the minutes of 30 September 2021 and they were therefore approved. There were no matters arising.

2.ii Action Log

- 30/21 CIPFA Report on FMCR
Workshop date 17 November. To remain open.
- 41/21 Action Log
Due date to be changed to December 2021.
- 42/21 Action Log
Provisional discussion taken place – information to be shared with EP.
- 43/21 Finance Report – Monthly Update
Wording agreed in paragraph 2.i.1 above to be included in minutes. Meeting taking place on 15 November.
- 44/21 POA
Outlier information still awaited from Home Office. RJ confirmed that there will be a fuller update by the November P&R as we will have received the information by then. JP to arrange a meeting with RJ prior to November P&R to discuss (if information has been received).
- Action 51:
JP to arrange a meeting with RJ prior to November P&R to discuss (if information has been received).**
- 45/21 Monthly Performance Report
£4m spending figure confirmed as connected to DAPST. Close.
- 46/21 Monthly Performance Report
Information included in report for this meeting. Close.
- 47/21 Crime Prevention Strategy
Information received from ACC Nolan. Close.
- 48/21 Crime Prevention Strategy
Ongoing. Update due December 2021.
- 49/21 OPC annual report
Waiting for further quotes (only one received).
- 50/21 Public Contact
Information provided. Close.

2.iii Forward Plan

- 2.iii.1 After a discussion around the proposed Forward Plan items, it was agreed:

- Deep Dives – to be reformatted into key operational essence documents rather than a lengthy Deep Dive document. SH to look at the template with Claire Heath.

Action 52:

SH to work with Claire Heath to review Deep Dive template

- Month 12 and 1 data – AP will take the action for the request from the PFCC that Month 12 and Month 1 data is provided, as well as full data for Month 2 (rather than just pay for Month 2, as it currently).

Action 53:

AP to consider what information can be provided for Month 12 and Month 1 reporting on Finance, and how full data can be provided for Month 2

- POA April – agreed to move to May's meeting.
- POA January report – timetable agreed as for quarterly reports on budget and outturn is July, October, January and May – with a request from the PFCC that he sees the POA budget figures before they are submitted to the Home Office in July.
- October/November Budget Setting updates – short written papers are to be submitted ahead of the Board meeting so that RH is sighted on figures if he is unable to attend the actual Board meeting. It was agreed that the 'engagement meetings' for the budget setting could be included as an item in the October/November P&R meetings (with a possible move of dates in 2022 to accommodate this). JP and JB to discuss with EP Finance team on the best way to facilitate this request.

Action 54:

JP and JB to discuss with EP Finance team on best way to facilitate budget setting meetings into P&R and/or provision of short written papers to sight RH on figures should he be unable to attend meetings.

- Professional Standards paper with focus on VAWG to be tabled for December's meeting.
- Insurance Paper tabled for November's meeting – date for annual report to be decided after November.
- Specified Information Order information required on a quarterly basis. Initial Specified Information Order information tabled for Strategic Board, and updates to P&R subsequently, with dates to be agreed.

3 Finance

3.i Finance Report – Monthly update

- 3.i.1 DM presented the Month 6 position for the Force and it was noted that the board were asked to endorse and approve the appropriation to Earmarked Reserves.
- 3.i.2 From the Executive Summary, it was noted that the revenue forecast underspend at Month 6 is at £4.625m against the 2021/22 revenue budget of £330.3m (which included an increase of £2.022m for the Local Council Tax Support Grant and £1.204m from other non-pay forecast changes). The capital position for Month 6 reflects a

forecast underspend position of £0.539m compared with the original approved budget of £19.1m. The Police Officer strength forecast at the end of September 2021 is 3,475 FTE and is forecast to be 3,553 FTE at year end. The overspend on Police Officer Pay and Allowances is £0.6m. The Police staff strength end of August is 2,162 FTE. Vacancies at end August were 5 FTEs above vacancy factor of 152 FTEs. The underspend on Police Staff Pay and Allowances is currently £0.3m.

3.i.3 The appropriation related to the Dashcams project (which has slipped) and it was agreed that the £114k could be moved to the Earmarked Reserves.

3.i.4 DM went through the Revenue Summary which set out the forecast underspend of £4.625m (which included items on Police Staff Pay, Pensions (Ill health/medical), Expenses, Premises, Supplies and Services, Third Party Payments, Income and Capital adjustments. Following a discussion on the potential use of 'in year' underspends, it was agreed that the PFCC's office would send ideas to AP which would be incorporated into an options paper to COG on 1st December.

Action 55:

JP/JP to send ideas and suggestions for using/allocating the underspend to AP

3.i.5 DM went through the Reserves Analysis, the Capital programme (including slippages), Revenue Analysis, and a discussion took place around the changes in the mid-year budget figures. It was agreed that JB and DM would pick up codes and mapping issues at their monthly meetings.

Action 56:

JB and DM to pick up codes and mapping issues at their monthly meetings.

3.ii Police Objective Analysis

3.ii.1 RJ confirmed that following the confirmed changes to the POA guidance provided by CIPFA, this has resulted in some of the prior year POA classifications being recognised differently which has had an impact on the variance commentary for year-on-year outturn comparisons. DM confirmed that the commentary contained in the POA explains the variances to date and reflects the establishment position.

3.ii.2 RJ confirmed that the additional work as requested by RH has been set out on Page 3 of the Analysis, which now provides an outturn variance analysis between this year and last, and the reasons for the movements year on year, along with the additional information on officer and staff movements.

3.iii Treasury Management Report (Q2)

3.iii.1 DM presented the Report and went through the tables which set out the activity undertaken during the first half of 2021/22 and the onward plan for the remainder of the year (Capital financing, Treasury Management, Investments, Cashflow, Total Balances and Cashflow for the remainder of the year, Trends, Compliance, External Borrowing Limits and the monthly Cashflow Forecast). A brief discussion took place around the pension payments and the estimated number of retirees, and Table 11 on Investment Compliance. It was agreed that an extra column would be inserted into Table 11 titled 'Have you complied within the quarter' where the answers will now be yes, instead of no and commentary.

Action 57:

DM to include an extra column into Table 11 titled 'Have you complied within the quarter' where the answers will now be yes, instead of no and commentary.

3.iv Efficiency Savings Programme

- 3.iv.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. The report also included an update on the current Operational Transformation Reserve.
- 3.iv.2 VH confirmed that there had been no change in the movement on the 2021/22 or 2022/23 position with the combined cashable and non-cashable forecast overachieving by £0.543m against the 2021/22 savings plan, and a review being carried out currently on possible areas for savings and efficiencies requested for 2022/23 and submitted from each command.
- 3.iv.3 VH presented the Tables for the Operational Transformation Reserves and the projects that are open and the monies that have been allocated and forecast so far. VH went through the updates for each of the projects (FCR Digital Hubs, Op Meteor, Essex Centre for Data Analytics, IT R&D, Body Worn Video storage and Dashcams).

4 Monthly Performance Report

- 4.1 VH presented the Monthly Performance Report for September 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' – no change since last month. All Crime fell by 3.3% for the 12 months to September 2021 compared with the 12 months to September 2020. There was 1.4% increase in All Crime in September 2021 compared with September 2019 and a 32.6% more offences in September 2021 compared to April 2020 when lockdown first began. The Force recorded 570 more Violence with Injury offences in September 2021 compared with April 2020, and there were 31.7% fewer Anti-Social Behaviour incidents in September 2021 compared with September 2020. Confidence from the independent SMSR survey is at 79.8% and compared with year ending June 2020, confidence in the local police increased by 10.1% points. Modern Slavery referrals had increased by 36% in the 12 months to September 2021.
- 4.2 VH went through the updates on each of the Priorities and aspirations for each, along with the increase in reporting Hate Crime for September 2021 and the Crime Severity Scores.
- 4.3 JG asked about the general increase of crimes following the lessening of Covid and whether the reporting baseline is still correct, as she was concerned to note the decrease in the numbers of DVPOs and DVPNs being issued, for example. AP commented that there had been a significant increase of 'things to do' due to the pandemic and the basics were being addressed at the Force Performance Board, where one of the topics was looking at solving high harm crimes. AP commented that the focus is still very much on crime prevention. JG commented that the part of the report that sets out what 'good' looks like is very helpful and provides insight in how the Force is addressing issues.
- 4.4 JP asked where fraud reporting is on the Crime Tree Data and VH confirmed that this is reported separately through another mechanism.
- 4.5 SH asked about the increase around Hate Crime reporting (27.9% increase) and does this need to be picked up at the next P&R meeting? VH confirmed that slide 19 of the pack gives a 12 month comparison and a month on month comparison, where the outliers are set out. SH asked whether there are any particular areas that have been identified for hate crime? AP commented that the numbers recorded under Op

Somerton is finding more hate crime being reported which is being looked at. There has been an increased number of campaigns/ communications etc around hate crime and how to report so that might have led to the increase as well through awareness.

- 4.6 A brief discussion took place around how to close off the current priorities and implementing the new Police and Crime Plan priorities and measures. SH would look at setting up a meeting to discuss the implementation.

Action 58:

SH would look at setting up a meeting to discuss the implementation of the new Police and Crime Plan priorities and measures.

Meeting paused at 1553

Meeting reconvened at 1600

5 Quarterly Performance Report

- 5.1 VH presented the quarterly report and the update on the Force's Plan and the PFCC's Priorities Aspiration document. Essex is meeting its aspiration in 1 area; there are 10 areas that are not meeting their aspirations; Essex's MSG position has improved in 1 area and deteriorated in 3 areas since the last update. VH commented that it must be remembered that the survey data that the Force collects is more reliable than that of the Crime Survey of England and Wales at force level.
- 5.2 VH went through the aspiration slides which set out the MSG positions (but it was to be noted that the comparative ranking position can improve but the actual performance can deteriorate. Any differences in rankings and movement in rankings is not necessarily reflective of performance improvement or deterioration that has occurred).
- 5.3 SH asked about domestic abuse and the West LPA pilot attending DA victims within 24 hours, and how this differs from the countywide 'DA Today' initiative reported in July? VH commented that she would look into this and let SH know.

Action 59:

VH to update SH regarding the difference between DA Today and the West LPA DA pilot

- 5.4 JP asked about the MSG rankings and whether the Forces were similar enough in their group. It was agreed that they were not and this was a known issue.

6 HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance Reports (quarterly)

- 6.1 RL presented the quarterly reports, with items to note for Police Officers, being; the attraction and recruitment of new officers, 96 new recruit joiners in August 2021 being the highest number of joiners in a single month since 2009/10, ethnic minority and female proportions have remained strong with September 2021 recording the highest ever proportion of ethnic minority officers in force, there has also been an increase in the female proportion of officers, the average days lost per person for April to September 2021 is lower than the same period each year from 2016/16 to date, and PCSO absence has increased but this relates to a small number of PCSOs.
- 6.2 RL went through the variations and Commands with the highest vacancy factors but he commented that the vacancy rate will reduce significantly and be reflected in next quarter's update. RL also commented on the number of leavers which will be monitored over the coming months but he did not have any concerns at present.

- 6.3 JP asked about the Wellbeing Hub and the chat board through Teams where possible personal information can be shared. RL confirmed that this is being looked at with the chat board possibly being anonymised and staff reminded that it is a public facing chat board.
- 6.4 RL updated on Police Staff and PCSOs with current strengths (157.40 FTE under establishment of 2297.83), vacancies, ethnicity and gender, turnover, absence, recuperative duties and the business case update. RL also updated on the Specials recruitment and ethnicity and gender. RL went through the rest of the report which updated on Diversity Data and actions for improvement.
- 6.5 A brief discussion took place about wait times for volunteers; reference was made to the case of a potential Special who had attended an interview and was waiting for a start date but had been asked to attend a further interview. JG would send through the details to RL.
- 6.6 A brief discussion took place around the attrition rate and specifically when someone leaves for personal reasons, and whether this is explored further? RL confirmed that the reasons are explored and the data is captured for this and where people can be retained, they will be.
- 6.7 RL confirmed that Page 11, sixth paragraph does not make sense and should be replaced with wording that RL will send over.
- 6.8 JG asked if the next report could include some data on police officer promotions by ethnicity.

Action 60:

It was agreed that the next report would include data on police officer promotions by ethnicity

7 Crime Data Accuracy (bi-annual)

- 7.1 VH presented the bi-annual update in relation to the progress of Crime Data Accuracy. The report updated on compliance rates for June, July and August 2021, work carried out by the Strategic Force Crime and Incident Registrar, the improvement plan regarding incidents that are closed under the ASB closing codes, a violence audit carried out by the CDA Audit Team and the new CDA training package. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that SH would be included in the new CDA training.

Action 61:

Invitation to be sent to SH for CDA training

- 7.2 JG thanked VH for the report and was grateful for the quality and content on all the reports today.

8 Approval for publishing of documents

The papers for publishing were agreed as 3i, 3ii, 3iii, 4, 5, 6 (revised) and 7.

13 Any Other Business

- 13.1 JP asked about the signing of the Accounts date and DM confirmed that it hinges on the ECC Pensions audit. DM would provide an update as soon as she had one.
- 13.2 A brief discussion took place around the increase in drink spiking (which is recorded under administering a noxious substance) and which is firmly on the Force's radar.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1700.