

MINUTES

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

30 November 2021, 1400 to 16.03 via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer PFCC's Office
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services
Jo Thornicroft (JTh)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC's Office
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance & Resources, PFCC's Office
Chris Parker (Rep for MB)	
Lucy Clayton	
Christine Butler	Minutes, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Rick Hylton (RHyl)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Moira Bruin (MB)	Director of Operations, ECFRS

1 Welcome and apologies

JG welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies from RH, RHyl and MB and joining the meeting is LC due to Leanne Little moving roles.

NC to leave at 15.00 due to another meeting.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 There were no further amendments to the Minutes of October's meeting, and the Minutes were approved.
- 2.2 There were no matters arising.

3 Action Log

- 24/21 A conversation was due and there is a date in the diary for next week with NC and JP. Open
- 73/21 KE confirmed that the animation will be ready for next the Board meeting. This will also be covered in today's report. JTh to place on the forward plan for December. Open

- 74/21 This item has been superseded by 86/21 as a workshop is being held to look at this on 12.01.22 regarding countywide availability. Close. 86/21 to remain open until After the meeting.
- 75/21 This the Prevention Deep Dive has been moved to 22.11. Propose close
- 76/21 There is a paper to this meeting to discuss. Close
- 78/21 A copy of the Grenfell High level Action Plan has been sent to JTh but there is not any status on the plan for any of the actions. Agreed that an updated paper will come to P&R in December. Open
- 79/21 Before and after figures on availability are now shown on the reports. Propose close
- 80/21 The latest forecast is now added to the finance pack. Propose close.
- 81/21 KE is still waiting for other services to feedback on comparable services with attraction and retention trends from the regional group. Open
- 82/21 Amendments to the performance report before publishing have been completed. Propose close
- 83/21 Revised narrative on safeguarding referrals has been received and JP confirmed that this is clearer now. Propose close
- 84/21 The amendments for the protection Improvement paper have now been made. Propose close
- 85/21 The current paper has been corrected. Propose close
- 86/21 To remain open until after the workshop meeting on 12.01. Open.
- 87/21 Comms plan for the Code of Ethics paper which has been received. Propose close
- 88/21 Decision sheet for the Code of Ethics which has been received. Propose close
- 89/21 Some activities that had not started but were due in the Quarterly People Strategy. CB confirmed that there was a plan to ensure that the late activities would be addressed in Q3 and Q4 and delivery will be on time. Propose close
- 90/21 JTh has been invited to the O/C Development Board. Propose close
- 91/21 JTh to move the Deep Dive for Prevention to November 22. Propose close.

4 Forward Plan

- 4.1 JTh listed the usual standing items and substantive items. The items for update are the Quarterly Annual Plan Update including Fire Standards Tracker, Quarterly Grenfell Phase 1 High level Action Plan Update, Quarterly Change Programme Update, Quarterly on-call conversion Update, Quarterly Risk Review and Dovercourt Action Plan.
- 4.2 There is a Control Room Upgrade regarding Risk paper for the Strategic Board but has come in at short notice a paper. JG asked JT to Let RH, PBI and JG know via email. PBI confirmed this course of action.

Action JTh to inform RH, JG and PBI of the Control Room Upgrade paper that has come in at short notice for the Strategic Board in December.

- 4.3 CB said that the Equality Framework Update is on the December Forward plan when it was agreed that these would take place in March 2022 so that there would be a full year of data.
- 4.4 JTh confirmed that the Forward Plan has been supplied for January onwards which is paper 4a. There have not been any recent changes. JG asked members of the meeting to check in at the next meetings to ensure that items have been added/ revised to the Forward Plan with ideally two months' notice in alignment with EP.

5 Finance Report

- 5.1 The pack covers the financials until the end of October.
- 5.2 YTD has a surplus of £1.1M.

- 5.3 The baseline budget is £900k surplus than originally planned for the year.
- 5.4 Total pay costs against budget are £1.2m overbudget but against the spend of the BAU activity it is £770k over budget. The difference in total costs is due to spending money on specific projects that relate to earmarked reserve spend such as ONCLOs LGS pension costs which were not in the budget.
- 5.5 Looking at BAU costs, 50% sits at W/T and part of that pay increase is due to the unplanned Grey Book pay award, also high shift work costs during July to September which were not budgeted for. Jim Palmer and MB are bringing a paper to the Board regarding on Additional Shift Work.
- 5.6 O/C costs are over budget and a large proportion are costs on the Day Crew conversion stations where there have been additional costs to recruit and train O/C firefighters up to the point of transition which was not included in the budget plan.
- 5.7 As part of the budget process, there are a couple projects where the costs have been allocated to the reserves but included within the baseline numbers. This will be worked thought over the coming weeks to ensure that the figures are aligned.
- 5.8 Regarding non-pay costs, the total other costs are £300k lower than budget. The baseline figure is £800k in surplus if covid costs and earmarked reserves are excluded.
- 5.9 There is an underspend in premises and equipment and property maintenance and in the financing, items relating to the capital finance charge approx. £300k.
- 5.10 JG asked regarding property maintenance underspends if the costs were relating to covid or works not being programmed. KE said that there has been a struggle during covid to get contractors to undertake the work needed and the maintenance programme is now backlogged. Some of the works will be placed into next year's budget and what is achievable. Earmarked reserves may be used for additional support for the strategic properties programme of works out of the property team in order that these areas can be focused on all items regarding asset protection and backlog maintenance. Early planning is needed to move forward the activity as of 1st April as previously this has waited until the budget is finalised before moving things forward.
- 5.11 NC added that the above also applies to the Capital Programme not just maintenance for the Asset Protection works.
- 5.12 Specific government grants have a surplus of £452K due to a one off grant received of £752K for the year recognising £450K in the YTD.
- 5.13 Additional funding has been received due to the prior year's council tax pool.
- 5.14 There has not been too much movement on the Balance Sheet in the month apart from a reduction in grants received in advance of £1.2m. This was due to the funding of the pension scheme.
- 5.15 At month end there was a cash balance of £28.5m of which £17m was invested in a the variety of investments. The cashflow shows a cash flow trend in the coming months payment in excess of income, which is not unexpected. NC is looking to split out the cash flow projection in order that the pension funding and business as usual activities are also split.
- 5.16 As the new financial year is approaching and the Service continued to use the earmarked reserved and there are quite significant capital projects that will be covered by capital receipts reserve, a close eye is needed to be kept on cash flow.

- 5.17 In terms of Forecast, this was a light touch Forecast, a deficit has previously been included and now stands at £400k in this paper. The key differences being a catch up of non-pay costs and an improvement in operational income.
- 5.18 Included in the Forecast is a waterfall graph, most of the movements relate to earmarked reserves of £2.6m which is overestimated by approx. £1m. This will be realigned.
- 5.19 Employment costs have not changed since the last projection. In the coming weeks there will be further sense checks on the projection.
- 5.20 JP noted that the light touch Forecast has deteriorated, and the YTD would have been pretty good. What is it that makes the decision where to go. NC replied that YTD precept income is based on when it is received, in period 12 for example shows quite a drop as some districts pay at different times during the year. This is an issue being looked at by the finance team for next year. This currently is being done as the cash comes in which is reflected in the drops.
- 5.21 JP asked if the initial overspend has any impact on next year's budget. NC has embedded it into next year's budget. Concerns moving into next year are areas such as additional shift work which is not budgeted for.
- 5.22 Two budget workshops have been completed for the panel as well as meetings with the Commissioner and the final Strategic Board paper is in the process of being finalised.
- 5.23 At the last Board meeting the Assurance letters were still outstanding for the Year End Accounts. They have now gone to the auditors who have signed off the accounts and they are published on the website.
- 5.24 JP asked if there were any changes or impact on the account. NC confirmed that there were no changes to the accounts or the Decision Sheet.

6 Performance Report

- 6.1 LC went through the Performance Reports key items which included, Incident attendance time, W/T pump appliance availability, the focus this month is the Christmas NFCC Campaign, Data breaches, HR data in future performance reports, audits, H&S, L&D, Protection, and risk assessments, increase in visits for the home safety teams and station visits. Decrease in fire incidents this month, increase in false alarms, casualties and fatalities, special services, information governance and safeguarding.
- 6.2 There was an issue with the report compiler yesterday which compiles the data for the report and so some of the figures differ in the report to the board and the report which LC has. LC will circulate an up to date version of the report.

Action 93/21

LC to circulate an up to date version of the Performance Report.

- 6.3 The MD Dashboard has also been sent to LC which will be covered in this report.
- 6.4 JP questioned the Safeguarding referrals which appear to be from NHS Service Personnel and wondered in what respect this was safeguarding. LC clarified that these may be referrals that have come in from NHS personnel who have visited someone in their property and noticed that it is a fire related incident then they would refer to ECFRS to the safeguarding team and allocate a person to go out to that person. i.e if

the person was bedbound or specific safeguarding request. JP said that the wording infers that the NHS were referring via staff. LC would amend the wording.

Action 92/21

LC to amend the working regarding Safeguarding Referrals to be clear that the NHS are the main referrer to the Service and not Service personnel

- 6.5 KE said that there are still Firefighters that are driving ambulances and they are going into vulnerable people's homes and referrals are coming through this route. CP added that there is a breakdown of what agencies are referring each month and the NHS Ambulance Service are submitting most of those referrals.
- 6.6 JTh queried the amount of people injured or killed in RTC's previously with LL as the figure seemed quite low. The Department for Transport had a problem with software and whilst Essex Police were putting in the data, they were not able to retrieve it, therefore there is any confidence in the figure reported. LC will consider adding a caveat to the report outlining this issue, as there is currently an issue with the figures.
- 6.7 JG asked if we understood why response times were increasing. LC replied that there is some data in the report and the quarterly report that has been broken down in terms of turnout, travel and call handling times. This is one of the areas that will be looked at more closely by the team. KE added that there are instances of one long job may reflect in the average time figures which gives a distortion.
- 6.8 JP asked LC to clarify the term "due to apparatus". LC confirmed that it was automated fire alarms in commercial premises or supported houses. These calls are not automatically attended, and contact is often made with the keyholder to ascertain if there is a call to attend or if there is a sleep/life risk that needs to be attended.
- 6.9 There are Dashboards that are rolled out to the stations and they are interactive and updated twice a day and this shows the turnout times and also shows the incident that took longest over the last 30 days. This information is given to station managers to deal with at a local level. The service would welcome further discussions on how to get the information across in an understandable way. JG agreed and would welcome the detailed understanding and targeting activity.
- 6.10 JTh has had a discussion with LC regarding attendance and availability and how the information is displayed as currently we have to challenge that every month, it is not showing in the report and this needs to be looked at in more depth so that there is a better understanding of what is going on. LC said that there are a lot of data and dashboard details and seeing some of those will give an insight as to what goes into the report and inform the discussion.
- 6.11 LC outlined the key stations core coverage at the strategic locations, which looks at fire cover as opposed to availability. Availability looks at the individual appliances and do we have enough crew to put this appliance on the run, out duties, standdowns etc reflect in the figures. The fire cover looks at the station ground that this is covered by the Appliance and if it is available, which does not matter if it is home or an away pump as long as the ground is covered.
- 6.12 The Service is ensuring that the key stations fire ground identified for cover by Process Evolution are being covered in invested in to provide that cover within attendance targets.
- 6.13 JTh prefers the visual aspects of the report, could there be rag rating on the station ground areas as there are a couple that would not have met the target.

Action 93/21

LC to provide a rag rating on the station ground areas in the Performance Report and highlighting the station grounds coloured in.

- 6.14 JP said that looking at the targets and availability, JP would like an understanding of why the targets are so high, do these need to be looked. LC replied that a target assessment paper for March/April P&R board where the targets are agreed for the next year. The meeting in January 2022 will be a multi-purpose meeting primarily for the targets. If the organisation is looking to report more on the coverage reporting as it may be hitting the attendance times, the targets at pump levels is a separate discussion.
- 6.16 JP any information providing on vehicles that do not go out. KE the Service will be looking at utilisation rates and what is that vehicle and crew doing and how are they being utilised within their window or productivity. LC added that this is covered in the IRMP.
- 6.17 KE said that there were a couple of key stations on the Performance Report that are bank key stations which need to be included and want to focus on this being the most important aspect as the IRMP focuses on this. In a conversation with Jim Palmer earlier this month, it was not the number of people, but the skill set that there is and the training up to competency levels due to a skill set deficiency was discussed.
- 6.18 JP asked regarding the NFCC Christmas Campaign, does the service follow their campaigns or do something of their own/add on. LC confirmed that the Service do both. If the Service, follow the NFCC campaigns then there is not a need to double report for the comms team. Comms also do local campaigns on local items of focus.
- 6.19 JTh noted that the rolling turnover has been increasing for some time, particularly in O/C, it was a watching brief and is something happening or is the Service not at this point. CB said that this is an upward trend, a deeper dive into the figures would be helpful in January once there is a years' worth of data available. The trend is not dissimilar to the national trend. JG added that would like to see stabilisation or increase with the introduction of OCLOs. CB said that at the point of the correlation of the work that is happening, and we can see correlation between the recruitment and the OCLOs and have trained more than 100 O/C firefighters in the last 12 months which is an increase on previous years which is helpful to tie into to turnover. CB will provide more information for the next P&R in January.

Action 94/21

CB to provide more information on the rolling turnover in O/C staff in January to tie in with turnover.

- 6.20 JTh noted a spike in Performance cases and asked if there was a theme or they were disparate cases. CB replied that this is due to being linked to the mid-year review.
- 6.21 JTh asked if Safe, Well and Secure were included in the report, are they still being done or are they picked up through collaboration. KE clarified that these are the same as the Safe and Well visits.
- 6.22 JTh asked regarding the report that came in September around fatalities and noted various vulnerabilities, is there a plan to change this table and how this is looked at. CP said that prevention and protection are being looked at how they are reported, and data is being looked at from the Essex Statistical Centre.
- 6.23 JP asked who the safe and well officers are, and if they are a specific job role within the service. CP confirmed that it is a mixture of Essex staff, community safety officers and community builders who are more enhanced and deal with more safeguarding

issues. There is one person that works on behalf of Fire, Police and Ambulance on a pilot scheme at present.

6.24 JP asked if the number of referrals are checked and is there a total number in the report? LC said that there has been some ongoing work around home safety visit targets to get ECFRS in line with national average and the Service is currently slightly below the national average.

6.25 JG thanked LC for a full and comprehensive report and a worthwhile discussion in setting how it is dealt with going forward.

Action 95/21

LC to circulate a copy of the updated Performance Report with latest figures to members of the Board.

7 Protection Improvement Plan Peer Review Update

7.1 CP gave the highlights and concentrated on the orange items. ECFRS are on track to complete by the end of the year.

7.2 The first item in relation to business engagement related to the recruitment of the Business Relation Manager who started last month, and this will be one of his first jobs is to pull this together and this is underway.

7.3 The second one is regarding commentary within the Strategy around succession planning. As soon as the Strategy is reviewed before the end of year, there will be a paragraph that ECFRS will succession plan in Protection which is not currently included.

7.4 The third item is around the structure of fire protection. A new structure was launched yesterday and that is now completed (Green).

7.5 This should be finished by the time of the next meeting.

8 Building Risk Review Update

8.1 CP said that this will also be finished by the next Board meeting. Over 330 premises were inspected since 2020 and are down now to the last 10 buildings and on schedule to complete by the end of year and the NFCC deadline.

8.2 There are 5 enforcements that will carry over passed the 31 December. The BRR Report work be finished. How would the board like to see this report going forward i.e., enforcement reports. JTh & JG agreed. JTh a quarterly update has been included in the forward plan for 2022 on an enforcement and remediation update on clad building. CP it may be useful to see information on the ongoing live enforcements, but you may have questions from others on this subject. JG agreed that updated should be brought to the Board. JTh and CP to talk off-line regarding frequency.

Action 96/21

JTh and CP to discuss frequency of Enforcement and Remediation Update and feed back to the Board.

8.3 JG thanked CP for all his hard work and to pass on to the team, they have worked incredibly hard to get this work done as are the people of Essex, good work.

9 Sustainability on Funding for Protection

- 9.1 JTh has advised that this paper has been withdrawn and was a pre-cursor to the paper that is coming to Strategic Board and it was agreed that it would be a single paper.

10 Proportionate Enforcement

- 10.1 CP said that this was to provide reassurance that ECFRS were being proportionate in the approach to enforcement across the County. This was initially due to the interest from MPs in Essex. This is in the ECFRS policy and will work with businesses. ECFRS will enforce if there is no other option or solution. JG commented that it will be interesting to see what the Court rule on Morello on the 14th. CP agreed and are sending MPs out a pack for their own constituencies with the enforcements.

11 Ops Assurance Quarterly

- 11.1 CP said the main areas were around station audits where station is inspected and doing what they should be. There have been 10 audits over the last quarter. All the audits have found items but one of them is the dashboard which is quite manual and a PowerBI dashboard is in development at the moment.
- 11.2 Where appliances have been immobilised i.e. failure to respond and for some reason have been unable to turn out, this would have an impact on response times as well as shortage of riders which has happened on majority of cases in the last quarter. This is being looked at and investigated.
- 11.3 Monitoring officers are sent out to monitor the officers in role at larger incidents.
- 11.4 A new format looking to be developed for debriefs, there has not been a huge amount of activity. A large MTA exercise undertaken in the County with a huge amount of learning to come out of that.
- 11.5 A full strategic brief on the M25 crash, a number of people lost their lives and had to wait until the trauma incident management issues were in place for staff before ECFRS began. This should be available in the next quarter.
- 11.6 JTh noted that Station Audits has quite a spread of scores which pick up various issues, JTh presumes that support is given to the stations that have not scored well in order to improve. CP said that they would get an action plan via the Group Manager and work with the Station Commander to address all of the issues.
- 11.7 JTh picked up “failure to respond” sounds as if no body arrived at the incident. As the papers are published for the public to view, perhaps an explanation is needed. KE added that ECFRS were going to rename it “delayed response” or similar. CP confirmed that failure to respond is where say 5 people will get alerted to the incident and two could not turn up and so the appliance could not respond to the station hence failure to come out. KE said that the new software coming out next year will make a great difference especially where firefighters can book on and off the system and will be more consistent.
- 11.8 CP confirmed that availability means the amount of times that the appliance is in a position to respond to an incident. KE as long as you have the skill mixes ie. the driver, officer in charge and firefighters.

12 H&S Quarterly Update

- 12.1 The majority of this quarter has been spend preparing the staff for return to the workplace. A large amount of work has gone into making the workplace covid secure for staff, HQ and stations.

- 12.2 There is some work going into the digital system for recorded H&S and looking for a new supplier.
- 12.3 CP talked through the statistical data in the report, including, incidents, near misses, hazards, attacks on firefighters and vehicle accidents. KE added that most of the current accidents are down to reversing of fire appliances.

13 Dovercourt Action Plan

- 13.1 CP updated the board and said that Dovercourt are still struggling with their second appliance which is down to 18% but due to skill sets of staff i.e.. not enough drivers or crew managers. Recruitment is going ahead but this along with training does take time.
- 13.2 JG agreed that this has been going on for quite some time and understands the reasons, but it seems to be dropping again, thought need to be given to this to look at what else can be done. KE suggested building in a in Improvement Timeline which may help to give assurance of when things are likely to be in place. JG agreed that this would be helpful.
- 13.3 JTh noted what was of concern on the paper was the comments regarding the deterioration of culture and morale. CP replied that the availability fn O/C will always impact on moral and if other fire appliances are going out in a stations own area, that has a large impact on staff. Two of the crew manager/drivers have been sick for over 79 days which was not helped in this situation. CP suggested that an Improvement Timeline include a caveat for sickness which would impact on the figures vehicle attendance and will add context to the figures.

14 Deep Dive Update

- 14.1 JTh said that the Deep Dive Program was agreed back in June, some of which were postponed due to HMICFRS inspection. JTh agreed to bring back an update after a Deep Dive had taken place and run an action log.
- 14.2 Flexible Benefits & wellbeing – a positive meeting with a lot of detail and actions which JTh will follow up and chase. One of the actions is about promotion of the benefits and wellbeing as it supports the Employer of Choice and the other action was regarding look at collaboration opportunities with Essex Police and seeing how the offer can be aligned on that.
- 14.3 The paper confirms the move of the Prevention Deep Dive to November and replacement for the O/C and training. These will be closed off.
- 14.4 The Deep Dive pack is available to any member of the board if they would like one.

AOB

KE said that SLT have recently met around the new covid variant and there is a meeting with PHE on 30.11.21 to confirm that EFRS are taking the right measures. The Long Service Awards have been postponed at present which is disappointing but sensible decision to make. JG agreed that this is the right decision to make.

The Firefighter Pass out parade on 10.12 has been changed to a hybrid meeting. RH will still attend in person.

Unison is voting for strike action which goes live on 01.12.21. Failure to Agree goes to NJC on 01.12.21 and CB will be able to update afterwards.

JG thanked everyone on the call for their hard work it was a good well focused meeting with good discussions. JG thanked CP for covering in MB's absence.

Publishing of Papers

There are no sensitive papers at this meeting

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 16.03