

## MINUTES

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

28 April 2022, 10.00 – 11.31 via Microsoft Teams

#### **Present:**

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Moira Bruin (MB)	Director of Operations, ECFRS
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services
Jo Thornicroft (JTh)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance & Resources, PFCC
Lucy Clayton (LC)	Data Analysts, ECFRS
Jim Palmer (JPa)	Assistant Director, Head of Response, ECFRS
Christine Butler	Minutes, PFCC
Rick Hylton (for info only)	Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS

#### **Apologies:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer PFCC
Chris Parker (CP)	Director of Operations

### **1 Welcome and apologies**

JG welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from RH, PBI and CP. JG also asked those attending the meeting to assume that the papers have been thoroughly read and to pull out the items that the Board need to know and those that need to be highlighted and then to Q&A.

MB requested feedback in light of the shorter meetings that ECFRS have the right level of brevity. JG agreed

### **2 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were agreed subject to the amendments below.  
There were no matters arising that are not on the agenda.

- 2.1 MB said that item.2.1 in the Minutes of the last meeting, state that RHy did not attend the last meeting. To confirm that RHy is no longer a member of this meeting, JG suggested that RHy still have the papers for info only.
- 2.2 Item 13.7 (lines 1 and 2) states that “JG felt that SWF would be a harder conversion” please change to “JG noted that SWF was the final conversion which was going very well”.
- 2.3 CB highlighted 6.10 and referenced a physical injury at Dovercourt which identifies an individual and should be removed.

### **3 Action Log**

JTh went through the Actions that are currently due:

- 105/21 Deep Dive Session – Annual Plan. This is now in the diary for 06.06.22. Leave open until meeting.
- 8/22 LC has received an update from Kieron Moir, the Live Safe Manager. The fall over Christmas is possibly due to nervousness of having additional people in homes, but the visits have increased and continue to be rising. Close
- 17/22 The meeting for the new style accounts is scheduled for 10 May with RH. Open
- 22/22 MB said that contact has been made with Mark Hodges from the NFCC Central Programme Office and there is not a date as yet for the extra return to the Home Office, but it is expected over the next three months. When this is received MB will let JTh have sight of the return that is prepared. JG said for this action to be updated and closed as it is an ongoing piece. Close
- 25/22 LC has contacted Darren Horsman with regards to presenting at the conference. Close
- 26/22 The Annual account meeting is still due to be set up. JP would like to be included in the meeting. Open
- 27/22 CB feels that there may be a recording query, and this is still being explored. Open
- 28/22 In response to JP's query, CB has reported that the calculation is total number of leavers over the period divided by the average total number employed over the period as a percentage. JP clarified her question that she wanted to know how the Service equated a permanent member of staff with an O/C member of staff i.e if someone leaves are they seen to be equal to a permanent member of staff leaving. CB confirmed that this included in the headcount calculation and JP asked if this could be made clear that it is a headcount rolling turnover on the report. Close
- 29/22 Text has been provided by IA. JTh is awaiting the updated document. Open
- 30/22 KE has provided the update paper. Close
- 31/22 MB said that ECFRS are liaising with the PFCC office to arrange the station visits with the PFCC and also with the Panel. Close
- 32/22 The Safeguarding meeting is in the diary for 12<sup>th</sup> May. Open

#### **Action 33/22**

**MB highlighted an article in the Fire Magazine which has been written around Donna and the Service's national work. MB to send a link to RH**

### **4 Forward Plan**

- 4.1 JTh said that the Forward Plan has three changes from that which was circulated.
- The Review of the Final Budget Outturn will be part of the Finance Pack.
  - The Performance and Resources Terms of Reference is a new item which needs to be refreshed and agreed.
  - A Deep Dive update, which is a new update for the Board.
- MB requested further additions for the next P&R in June: -
- The Closure of last year's Annual Plan for information
  - Target Setting for information
- 4.2 JP asked if the Terms of Reference were part of the Constitution. JG said that is why it is coming back to the Board to have that conversation before the Constitution is finalised. JTh added that the full Constitution is coming to the June Strategic Board but as it includes the Terms of Reference of the Performance and Resources Board, this section will be discussed at the next P&R prior to the full agreement of the updated Constitution.

## **5 Finance Report**

- 5.1 NC said that this Finance Pack is up to the end of March and as much as possible of the final year end position is within this pack, which is why the pack was issued a little later than normal
- 5.2 For the month (on page 4) there is a deficit of £1.4m against a planned deficit of £1m. To remind the Board, this is due to a drop in Council Tax Precept as they are paid, predominantly, over a 10/11-month period and this is budgeted in line with payment plans for the districts.
- 5.3 During the month, two additional grants were received of £250k. These were last minute grants that the Service were not aware of, relating to a pension administration grant and a covid grant for productivity and efficiency. The Service has recognised the grants in the line item "Government Grants", but they have been transferred into earmarked reserves, and therefore they do not show in the general reserve position. A Decision Sheet will be forthcoming.
- 5.4 Pay costs have been over budget during the course of the month but there have been the back-dated costs of the Green Book award.
- 5.5 Non-Pay costs are almost in line with the core budget apart from an overspend in Premises and Equipment as there has been a provision for slow moving stock items. Other costs and Services have been under where an estimate has been built up with the Service's cross boarder work and collaboration charges which have come out lower than expected.
- 5.6 At the Beginning of the year there was a budget deficit of £1m and ECFRS. The Service have had both pay awards at just under £1m and the core budget has seen an overspend in pay costs of £1.6m. A significant part of this is related to the pay awards but there have been some additional costs in respect of unbudgeted item such as additional shift work and day crew protection payment.
- 5.7 Non-pay costs are £1m below budget with the Financing Items being under £750k which relates to the Capital Finance Charge where it is £700k below budget. Most of the other non-pay items are coming in under budget. Support costs are over, due to unbudgeted redundancy costs of £150k. Training continues to be over budget as although training costs have been committed to, they have not been used and the earmarked reserve funding to offset those costs.
- 5.9 Regarding Operational Income, there is a surplus due to recharging of secondments, collaboration, and shared services income. Secondments have not been budgeted well in the past, these areas have been tightened up in the 2022/23 budget.
- 5.10 Funding comes in at £1.3m which is higher than funding level originally expected. A significant part of that funding is regarding Government Grants for £752k local tax supplement received at the start of the year and ECFRS have done better with Council Tax and Business Rate collections than expected. A small surplus is expected by the end of the year of £103k.
- 5.11 Earmarked reserve spend is approx. £1.6m. £1.8m was budgeted but there has been a significant shift in the types of reserves used. In the budget there was a productivity improvement which was the unbudgeted pay award. The pay award was absorbed against the in-year budgets. Various other reserve projects have gone through the correct Governance and Decision Sheet channels although the Strategies were not aligned to the budget and planning process, now the Service has gone through the process these are now in a better position
- 5.12 Regarding the concreteness of the outturn position, NC would like to check the Capital Finance Charge as now the final preparations have been done that figure could possibly be better than the estimate put into the financials. This was purely a timing issue as it is a large exercise to produce those calculations. This is not material to the accounts although NC would like to process the adjustment correctly so that it would create an additional £200k in the reserves. The Capital Finance Charge was mentioned in last year's audit report and for accuracy NC would like to also tie this up.

- 5.13 On the year-to-date position regarding the prior year numbers, all the latest and prior numbers have been included but some of the period 13 adjustments will change as the actual numbers do. This will be aligned for the outturn position in the May report
- 5.14 There are a couple of movements on the Balance Sheet; the short-term debtors have increased by £4m due to the end of year pension debtor. Funds are due at the end of July for this, and it is normal to see a jump at this time.
- 5.15 The Cash position has dropped by £4m due to the drop in precept collections and the return payment of the Business Rate Collection Deficit of £2m for which a grant has already been received.
- 5.16 Regarding the Capital Receipts Reserve, a further two day-crewing properties have been sold in the month which have generated an additional income of approx. £650k.
- 5.17 JP highlighted page 7 which gives the story for the year and helps justify the position of the lack of precept payment, and it shows that we could manage without this payment. JP thanked NC for this very useful and positive paper.
- 5.18 JP asked if the £123k grant is due is to go into reserves or earmarked reserves. NC confirmed that this will go into earmarked reserves and the Decision Sheet will be produced to reflect that in that manner as opposed to showing a bigger surplus which would be the recommendation to the Commissioner.
- 5.19 In the new financial year there will be some additional council tax collection money as the precept letters are finalised. As part of the budget process, EP received approximately £2m and ECFRS have approx. £750k. This has not been allocated specifically at present, but the Service have committed to additional Control Room resourcing and funding of transformation projects, also to increase the mileage rates due to the pressure on fuel costs. JG asked that NC work with JP as to the best route for this to come to P&R/Strategic board. NC said that there is a MTFs update in the Strategic Board meeting, and this could be discussed at that meeting. JP added that the MTFs has changed this year as it will be for information only and not signed off until the budget point is reached.
- 5.20 NC confirmed that there was one single tender action which is a Government Agency to secure hazard/chemical information. This cannot be sourced elsewhere.
- 5.21 JG thanked NC for a good, informative paper.

## **6 Monthly Performance Report**

- 6.1 LC talked through the key statements of the Monthly Performance Report, which included Incidents, Attendance & Availability, Information Governance, HR, L&D, H&S, Protection, Home Safety, Community Development and Safeguarding.
- 6.2 There was a decrease in response times which gave a response time of 10 minutes which met the target.
- 6.3 JG asked why Ingatestone has had 0% availability? JPa advised that Ingatestone has had some personnel problems. The new Group Commander has been tasked with an action plan to deliver and improve availability at that Station. The Service are currently looking at working in different ways within the current policy to increase availability and a Station Manager at Ingatestone is also looking at alternative options using resources at different stations as well as including O/C availability. JPa gave the assurance that the Strategic Stations that have been identified across the service and the ability to dynamically move the appliances around does mitigate the risk to a certain extent in that area, so Ingatestone as a stand-alone station does not give cause for concern at the moment. JG suggested that RHy should brief Roger on this in their 1:1 meeting if this has not happened already. JG will speak to PBI and MB to speak to RHy in this regard to place on the 1:1 Agenda.

### **Action 34/22**

**JG will speak to PBI and MB to speak to RHy regarding 0% availability at Ingatestone Station to be place on the PFCC/CF01:1 Agenda.**

- 6.4 JTh asked regarding the 14% increase in fires and a lot of interest on social media, is there a trend as to the cause of fires? LC said that both primary and secondary fires have increased but mainly within secondary fires. Accidental dwelling fires have remained the same. LC has not dived into the data and look more into this with JPa. The secondary fire increase could be due to the warmer weather and people being outside more as it is similar to last year's trend.

**Action 35/22**

**LC and JPa to look into the trend of increased fires compared to this time last year.**

- 6.5 JTh noted that the home safety visits completed by Station have remained the same and asked if there should be targets for this so that this can be tracked. LC confirmed that there are targets which are worked out for individual Stations who are undertaking visits i.e., W/T Stations, it is not mandatory for O/C stations. The Home Safety team regularly meet to review visits undertaken by each station and it is being monitored on a local level. The number of visits undertaken by station are available in the new Performance Report Dashboard and the longer-term trend will be incorporated into that.
- 6.6 JG said that it appears to be a whole service target which focuses on the national average, the Service must be aiming towards a target month-on-month, and it would be good to know what that target is. LC said that the target will be seen in April's Performance Report as it will be in the Performance Framework.
- 6.7 JPa said regarding the Deep Dives, the aspiration and ambition of the Service is to be in a position by the end of this year, that it can effectively deliver against the National Target, JPa can pick this up with LC outside of this meeting to show how the Service is trending towards that trend line. JG agreed that it would be useful.

**Action 36/22**

**LC & JPa to look at how the Service are trending toward the National Target trendline and report back to the Board.**

- 6.8 JP noted that regarding the People Dashboard, there has been one retiree in the Control Room and sickness for Control is very high. LC said that the data issue is that it is a small group of people and so if 1 person out of 20 is sick, or 1 person in 800, the percentage is higher. LC showed the new style Performance Report Dashboard on the screen, this shows sickness/overtime and in control where there is a smaller group of people, this shows a scale of sickness and looks at people as being the same size group, when they take time off their percentage group figure would look much lower. This is still being data checked and should be much more comparable going forward and will not be so influenced by the employment group size which is how it is currently reported.
- 6.9 JPa said that there is currently 38 FTEs budgeted against Control budget and that includes front line staff, management, and Central Resource team. JP asked for clarification on the report of 1 person leaving is resulting in a 5% turnover. CB proposed that JP and CB liaise with Martin James together who works with LC and the Team to get this set of data and LC can obtain the data in "live time" and walk through the detail. JP would also like to understand the scaling.

**Action 37/22**

**CB to organise a meeting with CB and JP to meet with Martin James and LC to discuss the Control Room turnover data and scaling in the Performance Report for a better understanding and the future proposal.**

- 6.10 JG noted that there was a large increase in RTC's from the previous month and this was also apparent in the Essex Police P&R, there is something on how we utilise what SERP is doing, there is something more than just our Services, SERP has Vision Zero

targets for 2040/50 and something more needs to be done in this space as the trajectory appears to be going up.

## **7 Enforcement and Remediation on Clad Buildings**

- 7.1 MB said that this is an update report on the Building Risk Review which shows the latest position on any follow up outstanding items and enforcement.
- 7.2 There are two premises that still need to satisfy the needs of the audit because it has been identified that they have cladding and/or insulation and it needs to be understood what type of cladding and/or insulation the building has.
- 7.3 There is ongoing activity which is classified into the four command areas.
- 7.4 JTh observed that there are three more buildings in the report that need to have the cladding ascertained. There are clearly quite a few buildings on hold that are going through that process and there is still a lot of ongoing activity to be done. MB agreed that it does represent a fairly large workload for the team at a time where there is quite a lot of demand being placed on that area of the business.
- 7.5 JG thanked MB for this report, and it is good to have this update. Please thank the team for their continued efforts.

## **8 Response Strategy Update**

- 8.1 JPa said that this paper gives an update of the progress of the Response Strategy since it was launched and summarises the key highlights.
- 8.2 In terms of internal governance, the Response Directorate Meeting has been redefined to make it more focused on strategical and tactical updates against performance targets, but more importantly about understanding barriers within the response function which are affecting delivery either from response or other areas of the business and the Service are looking to overcome those at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.3 The activity carried out in the Response Directorate since the strategy was launched has started to report on coverage as well as availability. Coverage demonstrates how the Service is meeting its ambitions by more dynamically using its appliances to provide and meet Countywide response times.
- 8.4 Availability is still reported at an appliance level which is managed internally, if more appliances are available, the more dynamically they can be moved around the Service.
- 8.5 Local Group Manager Roles have been redefined, as well as response functions. They now take on key areas of business and tie in with other local managers.
- 8.6 Performance Discussions have been standardised across the response directorate i.e., the 1:1 with senior teams are mirrored down to Watch Manager level to provide a key focus on certain areas that are important to enable the Service to deliver against the Response Strategy.
- 8.7 Attendance has increased at Community Safety Partnerships and continues to be tracked. Local Managers are more prepared when they attend these meetings and that is due to production of packs so that partners can be fully briefed and understand what the Service can offer and more importantly where they can be signposted to.
- 8.8 Staffing levels in Control have increased with new staff joining at the beginning of next month and that will give four fixed term contract staff which will enable the restructure to take place. The draft document for the restructure will be with JPa by July 2022, which will then be taken through the Service's own internal Governance Boards with sign off later this year.
- 8.9 There has been a focus on Control Room training and putting pathways in place for development and ensuring that there is a competent workforce and the right processes in place for officers in charge of Watches. There is increased scrutiny and rigor to provide further assurance in these areas.
- 8.10 JG said that clearly there is a lot of work going on in this space and it is indicative of how the Service is moving forward in these areas. JG asked if the Service achieving the 10-minute response time is due to this work, and is the work being undertaken making a difference. JPa replied that the Service will be able to understand this better

if the work across the strategic stations more dynamically being able to use the appliances is effective and if this trend continues. JPa believes that the Service are putting the framework in place to be able to achieve this, but the data will show in the months going forward and is a big indicator that the Strategic Stations are in the right locations. If the coverage targets are being met and the response times are trending downwards then that indicates that the right stations have been identified. If it moves the other direction the Strategic Stations will need to be reviewed but this will only be seen in further data to be able to demonstrate that.

- 8.11 JG thanked JPa for the Manager Packs as that will assist with attendance at CSP meetings. JTh said that Epping CSP have said how engaged they are with the Fire Service and would like to bring the Fire Service into one of their funding bids but is unable to evidence it fitting in. JPa to feedback to Epping and let them know that it has not gone unnoticed by our partners who are saying great things.

#### **Action 38/22**

**JPa to feedback to Epping CSP to recognise the good engagement with ECFRS.**

- 8.12 JG thanked JPa for all the work done on this informative paper which has a level of sophistication that gives assurance of the Service getting where it needs to be. MB also thanked JPa and LC for the work that has been done in this space.

### **9 On-Call Development Programme Update**

- 9.1 MB said that this was a holding paper in preparation for the next phase and the scoping for this will take place at the next board on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The information on this programme will be in the next Quarterly update.
- 9.2 JTh although there has not been any further activity since the previous activity was closed off, there are still the OCLOS moving this forward. Are there any implications of not having the programme for five months that the Board need to be aware of? MB replied that the work is continuing to realise the benefits that have been scoped out. The next phase is to work on what the Service are going to focus on next as it wants to be bolder in its approach. This will reflect in the change of SRO's which will now be Chris Parker in his position as Director of Operations.
- 9.3 JP pointed out in the finance implications, it states that there are no updates. MB replied that there is nothing of note to bring to the Board at this time and work was going forward within spend. JP asked that if there is no change to the financial position then this should be made clear in the report. NC added that although there are no new financial impacts at the time, there is some work being done i.e., making OCLOS substantive and business cases.

#### **Action 39/22**

**MB to amend the report to reflect that there is no change to the financial impact at this time and to be clear in any future reports going forward and resubmit to JTh.**

### **10 Converting Station Action Plans Update**

- 10.1 MB updated the Board and said that the Service are three quarters of the way through the O/C conversion project. Three Stations have been completed and they are on track to deliver SWF.
- 10.2 Pump 1 is consistently good at Dovercourt which is covered 100% of the time. Pump 2 is up from March to 42%, although this is still not where we would like it to be, the impact there has been the retiring of two W/T Firefighters who were assisting with availability, but recruitment is going forward. The majority of Firefighters who have been recruited in this area are still Phase 1. Due to the timescales of progression, this means that there is a struggle to obtain the Officer and Driver skillset at present.

- 10.3 There is a new Station Manager at Dovercourt, and he was previously a Training Officer specialising in O/C training, which will assist in getting the Station back on track.
- 10.4 The Training Department have prioritized candidates for driver training and OIC training from Dovercourt, as they realise the issue that the Service have. MB thanked CB for her assistance with this.
- 10.5 The availability was down to 60% in April for Waltham Abbey and that was largely due to leave. The Day Duty Officers currently riding is not currently working as well as expected but there is an OCLO who is carrying out DDO duties at Waltham Abbey whenever possible.
- 10.6 Great Baddow is doing well with 92% availability. They have a very high profile in the community mainly due to a Ukrainian drop off and the car wash activity. They are very embedded in the community. The Rec Room has been revamped with new facilities and it is looking more of a professional workspace which has improved the morale and professionalism of the Station.
- 10.7 There have been two leavers at SWF and there is now an establishment of 5 O/C. Advertising for embedded support positions is going ahead and are looking to recruit a new Station Manager. JPa confirmed that a new Station Manager will be recruited and will see the lifecycle of the conversion and then will continue when that Station is fully converted and running as business as usual. The Station Managers will conduct the exit interviews and if there is anything of significance this will be dealt with by internal governance and to feed back to JG/RH.

#### **Action 40/22**

**MB to feedback to JG/RH if there anything of significance in the exit interviews of the two leavers that they need to be aware of regarding SWF.**

- 10.8 JT asked what the Day Duty Officer Riding position involved? JPa explained that there are some Grey Book Staff that are Operational Firefighters that are currently working in day duty roles in various areas i.e., Protection, Training functions etc. and as they are operational firefighters the Service would like them to maintain their operation competence and like them to support the O/C availability across the service. The firefighters continue to do their day job but work from O/C Stations to keep the Stations on the run by going out on the appliances and then returning to normal duties once they return. There are no financial incentive or financial impact on the organisation, but it is utilising the staff the Service already have to more effectively keep appliances on the run.
- 10.9 JP noted that the financial section of the paper is missing. There needs to be something in the paper on this especially regarding impact and implications and does not feel that the paper should be published without this information, even if it is a notional summary and NC is happy with it. NC agreed that some information can be added on this.

#### **Action 41/22**

**NC to add a financial section to the Converting Stations Action Plan Update before the document is published and this to be added to future papers.**

#### **AOB and Publishing of Papers**

- 1. JTh confirmed that the papers can be published subject to the following amendment: - Item 7 contains confidential information which will be redacted before publication.
- 2. JG asked the meeting to reflect on how they felt the shortened style meeting went. JG is conscious that she does not want anyone to leave the meeting feeling that the PFCC are not interested in the detail, and that the meeting was too quick. JG said that the prep is done on these meetings via pre-meets and felt that the meeting went well and the items for information that the Board needed to know were pulled out from the



reports for questioning. JG felt that the pitch was absolutely right and liked NC's reasons that an area needed to have a longer focus and the reasoning behind it.

MB said that it worked very well, it was slick, and the meeting was kept on point, the questions were appropriate. MB is happy that the papers are of a decent standard and give the Board everything they need and if anything needs more scrutiny there is the time to do that.

LC said that regarding the questions on the Performance Report, she would be happy to receive any analytical questions arising out of the pre-meet before the full P&R in order for you to get the response in the meeting or build it into the team's full workload for the next meeting for LC to get ahead of the game.

JPa reiterated LCs point that if the Service could be advised of any questions in advance where possible then the responses can be brought to the meeting.

NC said that it has been useful with pre-meetings as clarity can be obtained in the areas needed before the meeting. This is progress over the last year, as there is a pre-prep plan from the pre-meet.

JTh agreed that she is able to send out questions after the pre-meet in advance of the full meeting and this will also help to reduce the action log. This meeting had a light Agenda, but the September Strategic Board has 15 items on it which will be more challenging and some more thought will need to be done as regarding where papers need to come to the Board and which Boards so that this can be maintained.

MB regarding pre-questions, what are the timescales for these being sent out? JTh replied that the questions arise at the pre-meet, and they would not be available until that meeting had taken place. The papers are received from ECFRS the week before the Board meeting and the pre-meet is in the middle of the two which is normally a few days before the Board meeting. JG added that the papers are scrutinised by JTh and if she sees anything of concern in the papers she usually comes back to the Service before the pre-meet.

JP said that there is no obligation to have the answers, the questions are going to come up anyway and if you can supply the answer, it will assist the Board. JG said that any questions will be fed back as soon as possible

MB felt that it would be helpful to get ahead of the game insofar as having questions in advance with the proviso that they will be answered if possible due to holidays, busy etc. It is fantastic that the Board are having this discussion and are looking forward to getting further ahead and preparing for the meetings. JG feels that it is great due to the fact that the Service are constantly talking to each other and understand that the Commission is not trying to catch them out but scrutinising and how to work out the improvements i.e., Finance is unrecognisable as well as the other areas and is in a different space altogether. Thank you to all.