



## MINUTES

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

28 July 2022, 1000 - 1130 via Microsoft Teams

#### **Present:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire Crime Commissioner
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer PFCC
Moira Bruin (MB)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Chris Parker (CP)	Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Operations, ECFRS
Jo Thornicroft (JT)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC
Jac Thorold	Assistant Director, Human Resources ECFRS
Amanda De Margary	Finance, ECFRS
Sarah Smith	Procurement Manager, ECFRS
Christine Butler	Minutes, PFCC's office

#### **Apologies:**

Lucy Clayton (LC)	Performance, Business Planning and Policy Manager, ECFRS
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance & Resources, PFCC
Collette Black (CB)	Director of People Services, ECFRS

#### 1 Welcome and apologies

RH welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from those above.

#### 2 Minutes of the last meeting

RH asked if there were any comments for accuracy.

- 2.1 JT noted that 10.2 states an update for the employment survey taking place next month when in fact is only an update and not a survey.
- 2.2 MB asked for consistency with ECFRS staff to put this after names
- 2.3 MB noted at item 2.1 and 5.1 that the NE should read NC
- 2.4 MB noted at item 11 line 2, states the modernisation of wholetime fire stations, and to omit wholetime to prevent exclusivity and at 11.2 to remove the reference to wholetime.

The minutes were agreed subject to those changes listed above.

#### 3 Action Log

- 21/22 School Vulnerability and Booking System – This had been moved to July, but it is still in development and planned to go live by September and it will be picked up then. Open.
- 35/22 Trend Increase of Secondary Fires – This is still outstanding. Open
- 36/22 National Target Trendline for HSVs – The work on this is ongoing as it is currently not possible to create a cumulated graph, only by individual months. This may need to be done outside of this document, it would have been useful if it was automated. Open
- 44/22 Capital Spend – This is on the Forward Plan for the September Strategic Board. Close.
- 45/22 Finance Report Income – A explanation email was sent to the Board on 18.07 to explain what the money was to be used for. Propose Close
- 46/22 Procurement Dashboard Publishing – The papers can now be published going forward from this meeting. Propose Close.
- 47/22 Quarterly Risk Review Report – This has now been done. Propose Close.

#### 4 Forward Plan

- 4.1 JTh went through the standing items and substantive items scheduled for August's meeting.
- Finance Report (NC)
  - Procurement Monthly Dashboard (NC)
  - Performance Report (LC)
  - Information Governance Audit (KE) P&R 06/22
  - Prevention Strategy Update (CP)
  - Quarterly Grenfell Phase I High Level Action Plan Update (CP)
  - Quarterly Ops Assurance Report (MB)
  - Quarterly H&S Report (MB)
  - On-call Conversion Project – Station Update (CP)
- 4.2 CP stated that a paper is being put together as an information update for the recent hot spell to include costing and demand and would like to bring this to the August Meeting. This will be very useful for RH to be able to feedback to others. RH stated that is has been an extraordinary time and to thank the teams as well as Senior Leadership Team for all of their work involved which must have been very challenging and exhausting, as well as helping neighbouring services.

#### **Action 48/22**

**JTh to place the Hot Spell information update onto the August Forward Plan.**

#### 5 Finance Report

- 5.1 AMD presented the Finance Report, with items to note of a surplus of £1.2m against Budget, key movements, underspend on employment costs. Non-pay continues to show an underspend. Operational income is still showing a positive variance. The March variances in the balance sheet still do not reflect the year-end adjustments. The year-end will be run this month and will be reflected in the July results. Short term debtors have increased due to a movement in pension funds which has impacted on the cash equivalents of £2.5m. Capital expenditure shows year to date spend of £137k with further commitments of £5m against the overall spend for the year.
- 5.2 RH asked if the scale of response over the last few weeks will have changed the position of the underspend. AMD replied that there have been some payments in overtime which will not be picked up until the August pay. There is a cost centre to

catch these costs so they can be ringfenced and placed in one area where overspends on budget can be identified. This will be able to be identified once the pay run has been done and there should be early indicative figures to add to CP's paper next month.

- 5.3 RH asked when the full year forecasting was due to start. AMD said that the updated forecast will be published with the July results for discussion at the next Board and will be reviewing the first quarters activities and will be re-forecasting on that basis. The longer-term budget process has already started and has gone out to the budget holders to gather information for the budget setting paper. There will also be an updated MTFs as part of the forecasting review which will include pay offers etc. Some sensitivity analysis has been flagged up at SLT level and NC will update as we will have a clearer picture.
- 5.4 There was a discussion re pay impacts. The Green Book final offer if accepted would have an unfunded impact of approx. £550K and that % range depends on level of pay. If this trend follows through to Grey Book, this would be approx. £2.3m impact for similar type of settlement. The pay rises take place at different times during the year. Any settlement over the budgeted 2% would be unfunded.
- 5.5 RH asked, regarding the capital side, if there is no known slippage for the year yet. AMD said that the obvious impact could come from building supplies and increasing costs on contracts etc. The Quarterly Forecasting Review will pick up any further slippage, but it looks as though cost are going up marginally with no projects being currently negatively impacted.

## 6 Procurement Dashboard

- 6.1 Sarah Smith presented the new Procurement Dashboard, and updated on items which included:
- New Category Manager starts on 12<sup>th</sup> September
  - Working with the Governance Team to improve the team's knowledge on Data Protection Regulation.
  - Property data is sparse this month but will improve going forward with the new Category Manager who will also be involved in the Hot Fire Project at Weathersfield which will be a significant piece of work, and which may require additional resource.
  - The purchase order to Valentine for Workwear has been delayed due to the previous supplier framework being suspended as they could not fulfil the Contract, and the appointment of a new provider.
  - The contract for Safe Command is due to the legal team finalising a minor point within the contract which is delaying signature but there will not be a disruption in the service
  - No STAs for June
  - All procurement audit actions are complete.
- 6.2 RH asked what the timeline was the new uniform and protective clothing. The legal process for Valentine comes to an end in August and new samples will be available, this will then enable a new timeframe and framework to be set up in respect of the new supplier. Costs have been incurred due to replacement uniform and protective clothing whilst a new supplier is on board, but these are not significant and are not of concern. This is a topic of conversation at the stations and having new replacement items is essential due to timescales. The financial implications are less as the contract had not started so early and as a result there has not been wasted uniform written off.

- 6.3 JG feels that this issue validates the new model of procurement that we are working in, as we would not have had a detailed conversation around workwear for example, it allows us to have a more sophisticated conversation.

#### **Action 49/22**

**SS/NC to bring back to the Board in September an update and costs position for uniform along with the Framework changes and costs for the new provider.**

### 7. Performance Report

- 7.1 CP presented the monthly report dashboards which covered the following key points:
- Availability in June has shown a dip and that is mainly due to the availability of On Call appliances. This figure has been brought down due to availability at Braintree Station. An update will be brought to the next Board,
  - Attendance and average response times have increased this month. Some analysis has been done to look at why it is higher and 8 of the attendances took longer than 25 minutes to respond for a number of reasons i.e., address issues, vehicle breakdown etc. If those 8 calls are removed from the dataset, ECFRS response times are being met.
  - Protection Targets have been updated on the Risk based Inspection Program with a focus on High-Risk Premises with a new target of 110 which will enable ECFRS to reach all premises within a 12-month period.
  - Prevention and Protection have outstanding visits being held at the stations, there is a slight data lag in relation to visits not being recorded correctly.
  - A fatality on 21<sup>st</sup> July resulted in an increase in home safety visits, referrals and alarms being fitted but this data is not in the report and needs to be captured. There is a focus at the Whole Time Stations to do more and achieve the national average by the end of the year. A more accurate picture should be able shown to the Board as from next month.
- 7.2 As from next month, CP is hoping to be able to show some detailed analysis into solving some of the problems. If there is an issue, we have specialist analysts and therefore we can present back to the Board what the problems are and what is being done to resolve them and how it will be evidenced.
- 7.3 Sickness levels have been on the increase mainly due to covid absence. JT added there is a more comprehensive dashboard within HR which was developed with the help of LC's team that shows absence types in more detail. The effort in this space is to not only to support managers but to also support those returning to work with additional support from Occupational Health. Regarding injuries, it is reportable but not in this dashboard, this data can be produced if required.
- 7.4 RH reflected that he was not aware of the issues at Braintree, they are normally outstanding. CP replied that there is currently an issue with cover, and he will bring an update back to the Board in August to bring this availability level up. There is a very similar issue in Frinton. A new Resource Management Unit is being set up to create the mechanism to provide cover for appliances which will provide us with flexibility and a cost-effective solution rather than moving a fire appliance. An interim solution is being explored by Steve Wintrip who leads the On-Call team.
- 7.5 RH noted that the Protection Inspections are in the green category this month and wondered if this could be sustained. CP is confident that this could be continued as a lot of work has been done in the Risk Based Inspection Program and the focus is on high risk. By December, staff will be level 4 trained and divert everything into the

very high-risk area. The team want to be able to demonstrate to HMI that they on the right track.

- 7.6 RH said that regarding the PFC Panel meeting last week that they were struggling to understand the report and is pleased to hear that going forward, there will be additional commentary, more analysis, remedies to issues etc which would really assist the panel. Some work may be needed with the output of what the new dashboard is going to look like for the public to understand the figures and what does the Board/SLT need to view that relate to the Fire and Rescue Plan. Possibly a workshop is needed to take this forward. RH also suggested that it would be helpful to have a separate on-line conversation on this rather than at P&R.

#### **Action 50/22**

**JT to organise a workshop regarding the output of the new dashboards for the public and the panel, and what SLT and the PFCC need to look at in relation to the Fire and Rescue plan.**

#### **8. Deliberate Fires**

- 8.1 There has been a more in-depth Data analysis Report of deliberate fires which have been increasing across Essex. CP talked though some highlights of the paper to include: -
- There has been a decrease in deliberate fires over the last 12 months, trend has moved to Summer to springtime with most fires happening between 5pm-10pm and are mainly loose refuse and car fires.
  - Thurrock has experienced the highest number of deliberate fires, with 19% of deliberate fires happening in Thurrock between 2018 and 2022 and a high volume of deliberate fires in Chelmsford, Castlepoint and Harlow.
  - Primary fires are highest in Chelmsford with a high proportion of deliberate fires at Chelmsford Prison.
  - More understanding of Data is being sought from EP regarding arsonists.
  - According to police data, ECFRS are only attending 25% of deliberate fires
  - This report has gone out to Command and Prevention Teams and a formal programme of prevention activities is being put together which will be able to be more targeted with the police data. This information will be fed into the wider piece to try and track and evaluate how successful our activities are.
  - ECFRS now have specialists in place and these types of reports will become more commonplace and the value will be able to be seen.
- 8.2 ADM added that this is an excellent opportunity that the Service have to target their approach to reducing the number of deliberate fires. There are a lot of additional costs, especially where on-call fire stations are involved. Deliberate fires pull the Service away from the work in prevention and protection that they could be doing. As a value for money exercise as part of the new savings and efficiencies this should enable the Service to paint a better picture, and if a reduction is seen, then a correlation by reduction should be seen by the other services that are being delivered.
- 8.3 PBI did not see anything in the report regarding working with CSPs on this as they should have a role in this too. Is any assistance required by Safer Essex? CP replied that the Report has been sent to James Taylor who is linked in with CSPs to share with them. PBI suggested sending the Report to Caroline Ellis at ECC for distribution and if CP would like to add this as a substantive item or paper to the agenda then this can be organised.

#### **Action 51/22**

**CP to speak to James Taylor regarding assistance from Safer Essex to ensure that this is distributed to partners. Also send to Caroline Ellis at ECC for distribution to the Safer Essex group.**

**Action 52/22**

**CP to speak to Will Newman who attends the Safer Essex meetings with regards to putting something on the agenda.**

- 8.4 JG asked regarding the Chelmsford situation and the Prison and wondered if there was more that can be done with the Prison management/Governor to put in place some more interventions. CP replied that the Firebreak team have put in some excellent links with the Prison Management Team to support them where possible.

**Action 53/22**

**CP to take back to the team to see if any further action can be taken to prevent deliberate fires in Chelmsford prison**

- 8.5 RH raised a concern that the new Prison at Weathersfield would be an additional demand and impact for the Service and a conversation needed to be had with HMPPS regarding what contribution is required from the Service. MB responded that Danny Bruin had been working on emerging risks in the community which also ties in with a piece of work that John Wilson is looking at in the collaboration space across all the services. There is a paper for the Strategic Collaboration Board on this point. RH agreed that this is collaboration opportunity with policing

**Action 54/22**

**CP to bring a follow up paper to the Board in 6 months to demonstrate what happened next and what the Service's plans are and what needs to happen. JTh to place on the Forward Plan.**

9. Health and Safety Annual Report

- 9.1 MB talked through the headlines of the paper: -
- There has been an overall reduction in accidents.
  - Covid has not shown a true reflection on comparison figures over the last few years There has now been a 10-year analysis done for a better comparison i.e., accidents which are RIDDOR reportable.
  - Attacks on Fire Service personnel has remained steady over the last 5 years, it would have been encouraging to see the figure come down due to changes in legislation – this has mainly involved verbal abuse attacks.
  - There is a regional comparison which is not an analysis because of the different ways that Services in the region collate injury H&S data.
  - Key work and achievements of the department are outlined with case studies on Covid and seatbelts.
  - There is a combination of objectives that the department have been working to this year and are looking forward at objectives for the coming year.
- 9.2 RH commented that we have the data, and it should be able to be understood where the discrepancies are. It appears that we have less injuries from attending road traffic injuries than other FRAs, although there are more injuries attending fires and in operational training, this also needs to be understood. MB said ECFRS have more detail in the report including near misses that other Services do not include. This is an indicator of a very healthy, strong, and positive H&S Culture.
- 9.3 ADM said that the Service will be looking at this in a more focussed way and may try to put more structure in place in regards of benchmarking where the Service is at,

identifying the costs of some of the injuries, as well as track and see how those change over a period of time. The Service will be able to identify and put a percentage against training injuries which would give more context.

**Action 55/22**

**MB & ADM to have a further conversation at ELT regarding the Service looking at the data and putting it into more detail to provide more context on injuries and cost to the Service.**

**Action 56/22**

**MB to provide a Decision sheet for publication of the H&S Annual Report that states “this Decision Report is to agree to publication of the report as attached which was discussed at P&R on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022. This does not need to go through Strategic Board.**

10. Employee Engagement Survey update

- 10.1 JT confirmed that the Engagement Survey will be launched on 31 October 2022. There is still work to be implemented before the launch in terms of engagement. There will also be questions that require responses regarding ethics which will be refined over the next few weeks.
- 10.2 Katherine Hill is to lead the Survey this year and engage with people and employee forums to see any questions that are on people’s minds which would be interesting for us and could be used to take action.
- 10.3 There will be more details plan over the next few weeks with the pre-launch and making sure managers and colleagues are supported during the time of the Survey. There will be a focus to get information back promptly and produce a detailed plan of how the survey will go out with a structured purpose in order to capture the understanding of the root causes. This would involve a cohort of people to facilitate conversations and feedback to help the Service understand and think about the things that can make a difference. One of the key items raised on the Inspection, was regarding addressing issues and confirm it in a timely and appropriate way. Once the information has been received from the Survey, there will then be a commitment to understand causes and the things that can move the Service forward to show that it listens and is responding.
- 10.4 JG asked that regarding the launch, would it be helpful if RH recorded a video which could be used to send out to a wider audience so say how important this is. Another suggestion is a small amount of funding aside for the smaller things that can be dealt with quickly. JT said that pre-launch comms has a number of key people to promote the Survey and sees that as being essential to the engagement piece. Different channels and voices are currently being explored and will provide more detail in due course.
- 10.5 It is important to RH that the Survey provides good longitudinal data. Quite a lot of the activities in the Service are for long term change and that relates particularly to the way we manage, treat and reward our people. Are we asking the same questions as before as it is important to track that continuity? JT agreed that they provide this consistency for comparison.
- 10.6 An update will come to the Board in January to provide the initial analysis and March time once some action has been taken as well as an update.

## **Action 57/22**

**JT to liaise with JTh regarding dates on the Forward Plan to bring back the Engagement Survey Updates to the Board.**

### 11. People Strategy Update

- 11.1 JT ran through the highlights of the update paper.
- Q4 shows some activities being worked on in that period
  - Q1 was working to bring the People Strategy into the governance model.
  - Business as usual with continuous improvement activities are still taking place along with change programs.
  - The department currently have a large “to do” list but are resource committed to that to keep the projects on track.

### 12 Enforcement and Remediation on Clad Buildings Update

- 12.1 CP talked through the update paper key points.
- Two pending prosecutions in Chelmsford and Brentwood have been resolved by ECFRS working together with the responsible persons to progress any issues and put mitigation in place.
  - There is a national shortage of assessors for cladding.
  - All Building Risk Reviews are on track
- 12.2 RH noted that there had been some changes in the regulations due to the Framework which no doubt means a different approach by some of the responsible persons. Has Michael Gove’s Statement in February seen much of a change for ECFRS? CP replied that it has made access to funding a little easier, it appears to be getting some traction.
- 12.3 JG commented that may be some positive comms could be shared to reinforce the work that is being done on enforcement and to show that the Service will enforce without detracting from the ECFRS brand which is not an enforcement brand. CP is currently in discussion with Media and Comms re publicising a recent case
- 12.4 RH said that re the change in legislation and access to funding, are the Service going to see reimbursement requests coming through? CP replied that he has not heard of anything yet.

### 13. Quarterly Future Portfolio of Change Update

- 13.1 MB brought to the attention of the Board the overview chart which shows all the projects under the four different programs.
- Initiation
  - Delivery
  - Collaboration – change and delivery
  - Size and complexity of the projects
- 13.2 There is one error in that the CP is marked for the On-Call Conversion Project that should be MB until September.
- 13.3 RH commented that this was a brilliant report, and he liked the increased transparency. It would however be useful to see the current status of the projects by way of cover sheet.



#### **Action 58/22**

**JTh to send MB a copy of the cover sheet supplied by EP by way of example to follow for a future cover sheet to show where the Service are on track with projects and to align the formats.**

#### 14. On Call Conversion Project Update

- 14.1 MB said that the Day-crew duty system will no longer exist in ECFRS as from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August, although the stations that did use this system will still require some transitional support whilst the skills, experience and qualifications are built up within the workforce at these locations.
- 14.2 Positive Comms & Media will go out in due course.
- 14.3 MB will get closure reports and benefit realisation done in August and as from September CP will be taking over the transitional side of the project.
- 14.4 MB asked what type of reporting and visibility the Board would like to see going forward once the stations have all converted onto On Call. RH replied that this is a good report, good layout, good transparency and would like to be keep this up and see how it develops.

#### **Action 59/22**

**MB & CP to take offline and discuss regarding the transitional arrangements, timescales and costings and bring that back to the Board.**

#### 15. Deep Dive Program Update

- 15.1 JTh directed the Board to the attached report on the recent Deep Dive that took place on Home Fire Safety Visits by Operational Crews. JTh liked to see the system approach, the background, work that was being done to prioritise the visits. An Action was taken away by JTh to gain partner data and there is a draft letter being finalise and this will be sent out which should assist the Service.
- 15.2 JG said that the room demonstrated how sophisticated ECFRS are getting about where our vulnerable people are and how they are targeting them in terms of getting station crews out and about doing visits. JG thanked the team for taking what we say about getting crews out there, it was very impressive. please pass on thanks to Will Newman and James Taylor.
- 15.2 PBI said that the information around data sharing across agencies was also raised at the other Deep Dive and there was an action to raise with the Chief Constable as he is one of the co-sponsors of the ECDA project across Essex. This has been done and the Chief Constable has said that he has a meeting with Dr. Vikki Harrington this morning.

#### AOB

AMD had updates to inform the board

- The financial dashboards are being rolled out; the pay element is being rolled out across the service and the financials have bene finalised and from August. The budgeting and monitoring team will be working through with the budget holders and phasing out the spreadsheets.
- The budget process has now started. Budget holders have received the templates and the budget setting paper should be coming to the Board shortly.

- The draft accounts have now been published.
- The audit is underway and there are no issues to date.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.48am