



MINUTES

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

31 August 2022, 14:00 – 16:00 via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire Crime Commissioner
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Chris Parker (CP)	Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Operations, ECFRS
Rick Hylton (RHyl)	Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Collette Black (CB)	Director of People Services, ECFRS
Jo Thornicroft (JT)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC
Sarah Smith (SS)	Procurement Manager, ECFRS
Christine Butler (CHB)	Minutes, PFCC's office
Emilija Juseviciute	Observers Chair, PFCC Office

Apologies:

Moira Bruin (MB)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer PFCC
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance & Resources, PFCC

1 Welcome and apologies

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

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed subject to those changes listed above.

Sarah Smith has confirmed that regarding Action 46/22 Publishing the Procurement Dashboard, that if there are Audit Actions, that part of the Dashboard will not be published. JTh to liaise with CHB to revise the wording in the previous minutes

CHB advised that both NC & MB had reviewed their sections and there should not be any further amendments on those.

RHy joined the meeting at 14:08

3 Action Log

- 35/22 Trend of Increased fires – the paper is not yet ready to come to the Board. Open
- 36/22 LC & JTh to look at where the Service are trending towards national targets for home fire safety visits. JTh circulated a paper but is still not part of the monthly performance report, JTh to liaise with LC when she returns from leave. Open
- 48/22 Hot Spell Report – CP has requested the move of the report to September for a more complete picture. JTh has updated this on the Forward Plan

- 50/22 Output of New Dashboard - JTh to organise a workshop re the output of new dashboards for the public and the Panel. There is a Deep Dive for Performance Measurements and Targets that has been rescheduled for 28 September which will be used for this workshop. Close
- 51/22 Deliberate Fires – James Taylor has attended the Essex Community Safety Network and has shared the document with all the CSP Managers and Caroline Ellis. There has been an offer to attend the meeting to discuss any localised issues and mitigations. Close
- 52/22 Deliberate Fires – Will Newman to take the paper to the Safer Essex meeting, this was done in August. Close. JG asked what the outcome of the paper was that went to Safer Essex. CP to speak to Will Newman and Feedback to JG.
- 53/22 Deliberate Fires – CP to see if there was any further action to prevent the deliberate fires in Chelmsford Prison. This is an ongoing action. Close
- 55/22 H&S Report - MB & ADM re costs against internal accidents and injury data. This has been done based on data in the H&S Report 21/22 and using pay for a Firefighter. The cost is approximately one year's salary and will they look at how best to reflect that in the H&S Report going forward. Close
- 56/22 H&S Report – MB has written a Decision Sheet to agree the publication of the report and has been signed. Close
- 57/22 Employee Engagement Survey - JTh to speak to speak to Jac Thorold for dates on Forward Plan for the Employee Engagement Survey. This has taken place and is now correctly reflected in the Forward Plan. Close
- 58/22 Quarterly Future Portfolio of change Update JTh to send MB a copy of the Cover Sheet that Essex Police use for the Transformation Report to use for a similar style for the Portfolio of Change. Close
- 59/22 On-Call Conversion for MB and CP to discuss transitional arrangements CP has advised that he is setting up a Transitional Board which he will Chair following project closure and the final costings will form part of the Closure Report to P&R. It was agreed to have monthly reports until Christmas and then to review the frequency. JTh to reflect in the Forward Plan.

4 Forward Plan

- Finance Report (NC)
- Procurement Monthly Dashboard (NC)
- Performance Report (LC)
- Q1 Performance Report (LC)
- Q1 Annual Plan Update and updated closure report, incl. Fire Standards (MB)
- Protection Strategy Update (CP)
- Quarterly Risk Review (MB)
- On-call Conversion Project – Station Update (CP)
- Estates Strategy Update (KE)

5 Finance Report

Year to Date

- 5.1 NC talked through the YTD position which shows a surplus of £1.3m and a core budget position surplus of £.9m. There is a £400,000 surplus that the original budget set for this period.
- 5.2 NC talked around variances in core budget v core actuals. Employment costs are currently £160,000 below budget. The budget does not include the pay award of 2%.
- 5.3 There is a variance in the YTD categories i.e., the Whole-Time costs are £260,000 below budget, the core salaries are £140,000 which are below budget but above budget in areas such as overtime which counterbalances that figure.

- 5.4 Pension costs are currently below budget and the new Pension Scheme that the Service transitioned to on 1st April, had a slightly lower contribution rate and this has driven part of the variance.
- 5.5 The On-Call Budget is over by £400,000 due to activity this year and some additional training costs.
- 5.6 Support costs have an underspend of £330,000 but the base support staff pay is within budget. The £40,000 variance is due to underpayment in secondary contracts in prevention, which is a timing issue and should correct within the course of the year.
- 5.7 Non-pay costs are on target with some variances due to overspends in training costs, mileage and some redundancy settlement costs.
- 5.8 The funding position for the year is slightly ahead of budget at £131,000 due to the council tax collection account receiving additional monies of £250,000 and being slightly under on Government Service Grants.

Forecast

- 5.9 There is a balanced budget, and the latest projection is showing as a deficit of £800,000.
- 5.10 There has been a Green Book pay award offer of £1,925 per scale point which is beyond the budget of 2% which has created an additional pressure of £500,000. The 2% on the Grey Book award was rejected in July with no current counteroffer. The projection in the Forecast, is based on the original 2% and a paper will be submitted to the Strategic Board with scenarios for discussion.
- 5.11 In the Projection there are some pressures on utilities and fuel, additional resource into the control room for the next 12 months, the Council Tax collection surplus from the prior year is recognised in the YTD and there some underspends in the MRP charge and operational income.
- 5.12 Regarding the Balance Sheet and Treasury, the Pension Top-Up Grant of £14m was paid in July which shows as a significant increase in the Cash Balance. There has also been the sale of Day Crew houses amounting to £700,000.

Action 60/22

There is an updated Outturn position in the finance pack attached, this was not the final position and NC will amend the Outturn for March 22 and reissue the Finance Pack

- 5.15 RH asked what the position was with the £557,000 staff costs. NC confirmed that it is an overspend driven largely by the levels of activity that has been seen so far this year by the YTD and is assuming that £400,000 is for the first 4 months plus another £167,000 in the remaining 8 months. The control staff costs are slightly different as some additional resource is required for a 12 month period, whilst the team looks at potential further restructures in the control room, which is an additional investment for this financial year. This decision was made, due to the surplus coming through on the Council Tax surplus which was before the pressures of the pay awards.
- 5.16 RH asked if we would come in with a real overspend due to the pay issue? NC said that there has been historically an underspend at this time of year, but we are in a very different position compared to the prior years, this year being at £400,000. £249,000 was the unbudgeted Council Tax Surplus and forecasts a real overspend this year.
- 5.17 RH noted some appliances have been purchased, NC confirmed that the appliances are being paid via staged payments, the orders are committed, and we are awaiting delivery. KE added that these are in the process of being built with four more appliances being delivered to the Service by October 22 and the additional one to be confirmed for February/March next year. Specifications and requirements are currently being worked through regarding the arial ladder platforms as they are due to be renewed in two years' time and this is part of the IRMP. The debrief from the Hot Spell during this summer highlighted potential requirements for future appliances.

6 Procurement Dashboard

- 6.1 SS took the Board through the key areas of the Procurement Dashboard to include: the Procurement Strategy and Category Management Policy being submitted to SLT on 9th August for sign off, New Category Manager for Property and FM started on 4th July with the final Category Manager starting on the 12th July, the Procurement templates, databases and procedures are being reviewed and are an ongoing project.
- 6.2 The Grounds Maintenance Contract is under review to join the new 7F agreement, there will be a Decision Sheet being put forward for this contract where the value is over the Decision Sheet threshold and on the initial contract term there is an estimated value of £268,000. Assumptions have been made regarding inflationary rises of 13% and an estimated number of visits for gritting etc., the overall contract term is 3 years with a 3 year extension option and therefore it has been estimated at £568,000.
- 6.3 The Workwear Agreement was discussed at the last meeting. The National Procurement Hub have confirmed that the Workwear framework that was originally signed up for with Ballyclare is no longer available for existing or new participants. A decision has been made by the Service to move away from the new framework following some correspondence from Kent. The Service are looking at new suppliers under the same requirements as before and comms will go out to the Service shortly. KE added that some stock items have been purchased until a new supply of workplace is in place.
- 6.4 JH thanked SS for the informative Dashboard regarding procurement which is very helpful and the structure around category management is very informative This is a very positive way forward for the Service and to pass on the Boards thanks to the team.
- 6.5 RH asked for further information on how the 7F commercial relationship functions in respect of procurement. SS replied that she has had informal introductions to 7F and there are further meetings in the diary. Once the teams are place, there will be arrangements put in place for ECFRS Category Managers and 7F's Category Managers to meet and start to share pipelines and look at options to collaborate. NC added there has been some confusion over the approval process and there is a meeting with Esther Beaumont to discuss this further. JG said that to keep PBI in the loop in this regard as she has experience with 7F. KE added that there is quite a lot of connectivity with 7F and some positive stuff going on already.

7. Performance Report

- 7.1 CP talked through the Protection, Prevention and Response section and ran through the highlights to include: hot spell effecting measures and targets, coverage in stations, availability, increase in response times, Incidents and mobilisations,
- 7.2 July has been very busy for incidents and pumps were allocated to all incidents due to the great work of CIT in managing those resources. A debrief from the Summer is to be held to take on any lessons learned for the new year.
- 7.3 The Prevention figures have also been hit by the July heatwave as operational resources have been at incidents and are below target, 438 visits need to be in place by the end of the year to ensure the Service meet the national average. Two weekly Boards have now been put in place with weekly 121's with Station Commanders and that progress is being monitored.
- 7.3 The Prevention team has been working hard to secure additional work for the Ops Crews, with a 300% increase in referrals from the Service and with partner agencies.
- 7.4 The Risk Based Inspection Program created for the Ops Crews was sent to the NFCC to be used as Best Practice. The risk profile has been reviewed to include fire reports, visits post covid, access to partnership data and Local Authority Cost of Living work. This has generated an additional 13,000 visits of the most vulnerable people who will have Home Fire Safety Visits.

- 7.5 JG visited Control whilst RH was away and was impressed with the work that CIT can achieve and the training that the controllers undertake as well as with the way the crews were working with the rural community building firebreaks etc. JG and RH can assist in terms of making connections with the rural community i.e., the Rural Crime Forum.
- 7.6 JTh noted on the report that the figure for Protection Visit Inspections completed has changed as the target was 203 and now it is 110. JTh said that this was raised at the Protection & Prevention Governance Board and understand that there is a capacity issue, but the issue of risk was raised that the very high risk category such as care homes are highly regulated and there are concerns that the high risk properties are not being inspected. CP suggested taking this offline and there has been a lot of work done in resetting the focus and all the rationale has been updated and to bring back with the Protection Strategy update at September's P&R to update the board. RH asked if there be some words verbally given in the next Strategic Board meeting how the action plan to deal with the HMICFRS Recommendations dovetails with that substantial reduction in Protection visits.

Action 61/22

CP to take the issue of the Protection Visit Inspections offline with JTh and to bring back with the Protection Strategy update at September's P&R to update the board

- 7.7 RH noted that regarding in the period of July 2022 where casualties were located, it has some interesting figures and says that we had 13 fatalities in the period and the three year monthly average for fatalities is 10 a month and 1 RTC for the month of July.

Action 62/22

CP to speak to Lucy's team on the Performance Dashboard information regarding Casualties/Fatalities/RTC figures and feed back to the Strategic Board Meeting in September.

- 7.8 JTh asked about the increase in Deliberate Fires and is fire setting covered as part of the normal school's programme as opposed to junior fire setting and why this has significantly increased. CP confirmed that it was part of the school's program and in relation to the deliberate fires for July, the teams are looking at trends and CP is happy to feedback that analysis.
- 7.9 CB said that sickness absence is high and there is a more detailed dashboard that sits behind the Performance Report. There are currently 8 absences which are leading to conclusion as they are in excess of 300 days absence. Once resolved there should be a sharp decrease in this percentage of absences. RH asked if we did a comparison pre-covid would this figure be higher or lower, as this is the comparator that we need to have. CB will look into this and report back

Action 63/22

CB to look at a pre-covid comparator with regard to the increase or decrease of absences.

- 7.11 There are two careers' dates in October for schools' groups to come into Kelvedon to understand about the opportunities that exist within ECFRS, In November ECFRS are hosting a National Positive Action Day with AFSA the Asian Fire Service Association as well Essex based partners and other FRAs and will share details once this has been firmed up. The day will be about innovations and share what practice exists across the piece.
- 7.12 ECFRS have a partnership with the Leonard Cheshire Foundation who offer internships to those living with disability, the Service have had their second intern who has just completed her 12-week internship with great feedback.

- 7.13 Work experience for young people in Essex who are carers, which are part of the levelling up agenda, needs to have more traction with ECC, CB will keep the Board updated. RH offered assistance to move this along with the ECC if required.
- 7.14 RH noted that some of the data in the pack has been cut off on the PDF. CB will resolve this for the next meeting.

Action 64/22

CB to look at the Performance Pack as some of the data has been cut off in the PDF in time for the next report and will send screen shots for this meetings information.

8. Information Governance Audit

- 8.1 KE has taken on responsibility of the SIRO and taken on the Data Services Team and Information Governance and amalgamated both teams.
- 8.2 An audit has been undertaken in respect of all the information in Information Governance and in line through the Audit Committee. RSM have said that they would not be able to provide an opinion on information Governance whereas an independent audit through a different source i.e IGS could be obtained. The audit by IGS has highlighted some significant actions and the Service has recognised what needs to be done to put the Service into a level of Good Assurance i.e compliance of procurement processes, surveillance and reporting of data breaches. Once the actions have been achieved, legal compliance needs to be maintained. A quarterly update could be brought back to P&R.
- 8.2 JG noted on the action plan there is no task owner or date on some of them. KE that this issue has been picked up and this will be included going forward in the Summary report.
- 8.3 JTH said that there was a reasonable risk of data breach in respect of being fined by the ICO, does this flag up on the Risk Register so that we are aware of this? KE confirmed that it is captured on the JCAD Risk Register. The Service can demonstrate back to the ICO that there is a plan in place and that actions and steps are being taken to improve things.
- 8.4 RH noted that although this internal audit has been done, to what extent was the audit committee involved and are they sighted as it outside of the usual internal audit process? KE confirm that it was taken to the last Audit Committee for the members awareness. The Audit Committee were happy to have the audit which covered off the area of Information Governance which can be progressed forward. KE to keep them updated on a quarterly basis.

Action 65/22

KE and JTh to place the quarterly updates on the internal audit on the Forward Plan.

9. Quarterly Ops Assurance Report

CP covered this item for MB and talked through the highlights of this report:

- 9.1 The Debrief App has now been launched which is a tool for operational crews and make debriefing easier for crews.
- 9.2 Operation Willowbeck has been adopted from National Operational Guidance. If there is a large volume of calls coming into the Control Room, they are directed to other calls centres to reduce the burden on the Control Staff. In July and August, it was tested throughout the region, and many other Services used Op Willowbeck from a national and regional piece. There is a need to ensure that everyone understands what it is and the capability it gives ECFRS.
- 9.3 Regarding Ops Assurance, the Service have started reviewing the current risk information and how this is processed.

- 9.4 RH noted that the failure to respond figure was higher than the previous quarter and did the Service have an explanation? CP replied that most of these were office immobilisations, through people not having phone signals or their pager not going off, this was probably due to the volume of calls which effects the signals in the office. If an on-call Firefighter or an appliance does not respond then another appliance is always sent, likewise with officers. This was also picked up with HMI in their report. RH suggested that the title "Failure to Respond" is probably not very helpful and it may help to rename that.
- 9.5 RH asked as we are becoming more electrical, is there more of a battery fire risk and as there is a joint learning operational report on lithium batteries, has this taken on board by the Service. CP has not been sighted on this yet although the Service are well linked with NFCC, and CP believes that this was for information only and was an update. KE added that regarding the Lithium battery information that has been circulated, the Service are doing their own internal research and development into this and testing the latest technology in this regard.
- 9.6 JTh commented on the SSRI's which appeared to be out of date, is there a program of work on this. CP confirmed that Area Manager Jim Palmer is working on this and there is a program of works to catch up on all outstanding SSRI's, this has been added to the weekly monitoring through Commands.

10. Quarterly H&S Report

- 10.1 CP raised some highlights on behalf of MB, The RSM audit action regarding inductions has been closed, the replacement for OSHENS is now underway and a progress report will be brought to P&R. There have been three attacks on Firefighters which involved three members of the public being arrested.

11. Quarterly Grenfell Phase 1 High Level Action Plan Update

- 11.1 CP said that this is now being robustly managed through the Project Board. All 34 of the actions are now progressing and twelve of the actions have been closed. There is a robust assurance process in place which has been adopted by the Home Office and fed to both the Home Office and the NFCC to be adopted nationally, as they were impressed with what the Service were doing in the Eastern Region on this.
- 11.2 RH commented that the APCC are very interested in good news stories and suggested that a joint note to them from PFCC comms and from other FRA's to say that this is what the Service are doing and that this has been picked up nationally to get into the APCC comms piece. JG added for CP to speak to Darren Horsman.

Action 66/22

CP to ask Mandy Johnson to get in touch with PFCC Comms (Darren Horsman) to produce a joint comms piece to the APCC with good news that the Grenfell Project's robust assurance process is being adopted by the Home Office and the NFCC.

12 On-Call Conversion Project – Station Update

- 12.1 CP gave an update on the following Stations to include phase levels of firefighters and on-call availability at Dovercourt, Waltham Abbey, Great Baddow and South Woodham Ferrers. South Woodham Ferrers Station was converted to On-Call on 31st July and was the last station to convert.
- 12.2 The closure report will come to the next P&R in September and will then handover from MB to CP in the Transitional Group where the stations will be continued to be overseen and monitored for the next 12 months for the staffing arrangements.
- 12.3 JG noted that the Service were going to review the contracts for On-Call staff. KE replied that the Workforce Management System for On-Call colleagues will provide a lot more visibility to individual working hours and as a collective of how it is

contributing up through the different layers which will enable us to see the problem and understand the visibility of the data. CP said that this will be picked up by the Transition Board when it is handed over from MB to CP and the contracts need to be amended service wide. Until we understand resourcing properly, we cannot understand if the need is there, solid evidence is needed

- 12.4 RH said that it is important to get the evidence and to move forward with this, at Waltham Abbey there is an appetite to new contracts being implemented to increase the availability in several On-Call situations.

RH gave congratulations all around for having completed the conversion project, which has not been easy, and it now needs to be fine tuned and make it work. JG agreed.

13. AOB

- 13.1 JTh commented Over the summer RH signed the Armed Forces Covenant and the Service need to see if there are any gaps to see if the Covenant can be fulfilled and if a paper will need to come to P&R in due course.

Action 67/22

CB to look into this and see if there are any Gaps to see where we are going with this and to bring it back to P&R

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