



MINUTES

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

29 September 2022, 10.00 – 11.30 via Microsoft Teams

Present:

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
Chris Parker (CP)	Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Operations, ECFRS
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance & Resources, PFCC
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Ian Adams (IA)	Assistant Director, Prevention and Protection, ECFRS
Lucy Clayton	Performance, Business Planning and Policy Manager, ECFRS
Jo Thornicroft (JT)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC
Christine Butler (CHB)	Minutes, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire Crime Commissioner
Rick Hylton (RHyl)	Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services, ECFRS
Sarah Smith (SS)	Procurement Manager, ECFRS

1 Welcome and apologies

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

2 Minutes of the last meeting

2.1 Item 9.6 MB is working on this should be Area Manager Jim Palmer.

The minutes were agreed subject to those changes listed above.

3 Action Log

- 21/22 School Vulnerability & Booking System - System did not meet the scope and the Service are now looking at purchasing a new system and there is nervousness regarding the data contained. Work being undertaken to obtain redacted access. CP the school's matrix will become a project and will to confirm new date for the Forward Plan once known. Open
- 48/22 Forward Plan – A paper on Hot Spell information presented at this meeting. Close
- 49/22 Procurement Plan Uniform - there is a monthly update on the procurement dashboard. Close
- 59/22 On Call Conversion Transitional arrangements – timescales & costings have been reflected in the forward plan. Close
- 60/22 Finance Report Outturn Position – The inaccuracy has been amended and the report recirculated. Close

- 61/22 Protection Visit Inspections – JTh has had a conversation with Ian Adams (IA) and there is a paper to this Board. Close
- 62/22 Casualties/Fatalities - There will be an explanation at this meeting in the Performance Report. Close
- 63/22 Performance Review Pre-Covid Comparator – This is to be reviewed at the Monthly Attendance Management Conference. There is a question on how ECFRS would like the information fed back. CB to provide a response. Open
- 64/22 Data missing from PDF – An update has been circulated to the Board. Close
- 65/22 Internal Audit Quarterly – JTh has placed quarterly updates on the Forward Place. Close
- 66/22 Joint Comms – assurance process for the quarterly Grenfell Phase 1 Actions – this work is ongoing. Open
- 67/22 The Armed Forces Covenant. The work is ongoing. CB suggested that an update to be added to the March 2023 Equality Report that will be coming to the Strategic Board. This has been added to the Forward Plan. Close

4 Forward Plan

- 4.1 LC would like to add a Special Services Report to the P&R Board in October. There are no further additions or changes to the Forward Plan.
- 4.2 JTh circulated the draft for the 2023 Forward Plan, if there are inaccuracies or additions, please contact JTh
- 4.3 MB asked to change the title of the On-Call Conversion Project, CP will think of an appropriate name and confirm to JTh and MB.

5 Finance Report – to End August

Year to Date

- 5.1 NC talked through the current position of £900,000 against a budgeted surplus of £700,000. The surplus YTD is due to the timing of the Council Tax Precept. There is a collection over 10 months which causes a dip in costs towards the later part of the year.
- 5.2 Employments costs are in line with budget but there are differences in the categories, much of the underspend is due to pension costs. There is a variance in support costs but is an underspend on secondary contracts in terms of fixed term contracts. There is an overspend on on-Call firefighters and the impact needs to be quantified.
- 5.3 Non-pay YTD has an overspend of £170,000 in support costs due to training and redundancy costs. There is also an overspend on premises equipment which is due to costs of fuel purchase.
- 5.4 The net expenditure is £43,000 and the net position is in line and the funding at £722,000 is driven by Council Tax collections and are a surplus from last year
- 5.5 YTD there is £34m of costs and there is £200,000 difference in budget which is due to unplanned one off funding from the surplus and are tight on a budget overall.

Forecast

- 5.6 £100,000 in on-call cost which are costs which are trending through at the moment of £964,000 which includes the unplanned Green Book pay award. This has still not been formally accepted by all rep bodies.

Action 68/22

The maintenance for the ECFRS finance system expires in 2023 NC to discuss next steps with Essex Police (Debbie Martin) and JP.

- 5.7 The Pension Scheme submission was submitted in August which looks at funding for the pension fund. NC asked if a paper should be brought in future re the pension forecast especially as this involves a significant amount of money and for some more

governance and visibility on this. PBI said this would be very helpful and happy to be part of that conversation if needed.

Action 69/22

PBI & NC to speak off-line re future pension fund forecast papers what we report and to where.

Action 70/22

JP asked for clarity on the narrative on the Revenue position regarding the overspend in the period. NC to check this off-line and amend the paper before publishing.

- 5.8 JP noted that there is not anything in the forecast for the Grey book pay award, NC confirmed that it assumes a 2% award but any additional award over 2% will create a pressure this year and there will be a deficit, it will roll over and be built into the budget for next year. There may be some savings to be had from other areas.

6 Procurement Dashboard

- 6.1 NC talked through the key points of the Dashboard to include: the Procurement Strategy has been approved, the Prior Information Notice (PIN) on the finance system demos to go ahead, workwear update, engagement with PFCC re collaborative procurement spend.
- 6.2 Property & FM Categories – ECFRS are looking to join the provision of building cleaning and ancillary services and preparation needs to be done for this.
- 6.3 Work is still ongoing regarding the tender documents and specifications to ensure consistency as well as tackling historic issues.
- 6.4 JG asked to pass on the PFCC thanks to the team and especially SS who could not be at the meeting today.

7. Performance Report

- 7.1 LC presented the Dashboard on the screen and talked through highlights to include: blank activity, reportable issues, increase in fires over 5 year average, heat wave report, ADS, incidents, slower attendance, daily incident reports reviewed by Jim Palmer, late attendances which may have been impacted by protracted call handling time, casualties, fatalities, and suicides, increase of protection numbers.
- 7.2 JG asked if the protracted times were due to new call handlers? LC will have a conversation with Jim Palmer to investigate this further.

Action 71/22

LC to liaise offline with Jim Palmer investigate the details of the protracted call handling times.

Action 72/22

JG would like to understand the suicide rates more which would be useful for another role that JG undertakes for the PFCC office. NC to liaise with JG on this.

- 7.3 JTh noted that the figures for deliberate fires look high and asked for clarification of the difference between deliberate fires and arson. LC replied that deliberate fires are set with the intent to cause damage or harm, arson also includes negligence. In the instances where the cause is not known then there is an option “undetermined or accidental and deliberate possibilities”, unless there is the evidence to say a fire is deliberate it is assumed that it is accidental. There is now a link in with Essex Police and there is a previous police performance analyst on the team to assist picking up previously unrecorded data.

8. Q1 Performance Report

- 8.1 LC informed the Board that the paper will look different at the final published version.
- 8.2 LC talked through the highlights of the Q1 Performance Report to include: higher incidents, increase in average response times, fire coverage, fires in non-residential properties i.e., hotels, offices, completed audits, KSIs on our roads, ADF's and deliberate fires, HR & Long Term Sickness Dashboard and primary fire casualties and fatalities.
- 8.3 JG said that the Panel would be interested in the HR and Long term Sickness Dashboard, LC may be able to do some screenshots and anonymise it as it is sensitive data, as the Dashboard may be useful to see. There are ongoing quality assurance checks on the data and to ensure that the data is accurately displayed. PBI agrees with this approach, nothing drives data quality better than the information being put into the system being used to make decisions and allocate resources.

9. Q1 Annual Plan Update to include 21/22 Closure Report

- 9.1 MB said that there are four papers, one of which is the Closure Report for the Annual Plan 21/22. If this is accepted a decision sheet is ready for approval at appendix 9B.
- 9.2 MB highlighted some items from The Annual Plan which been updated for 22/23:
 - Overview by Status – areas for concern are activities that have not yet started
 - The paused activity is regarding building the capacity for employee relations work and this post is being currently recruited for.
 - The changed activity is regarding uniform which is going out to procurement
 - 17 new activities have resulted from the HMI Report.
- 9.3 JG asked for clarification that that the Fit for the Future Objective Review was due by 30 August is in hand due to the extended time frame. MB agreed.
- 9.4 PBI asked if there is a need to bring anything back regarding HMICFRS and progress in commencing the recommendations as the document needs further scrutiny on the style and level of detail before progressing to the panel in December, does it need to come back to P&R or will RH deal with direct with RHy. LC added that for future Annual Plan updates, the HMI actions would have their own separate pages to see the snapshot updates and see the progress, LC happy to join the meeting to assist in setting up a dashboard to support this information and to give assurance of the governance is in place.

Action 73/22

MB to set up a meeting with PBI and LC to discuss the route to bring back further scrutiny on the style and level of detail on the Annual Plan Closure Report before progressing to the panel in December.

- 9.5 There are some areas where information such as leads, and dates are missing in the report. LC confirmed that progress has been made and this will be actioned.

10. Hot Weather Debrief

- 10.1 CP much of the debrief has been discussed in previously meetings, a testament to LC's team to enable us to get the information from the system which will help the Service build an intelligence picture to prepare for next year.
- 10.2 The full Debrief on the Hot Spell is due next week and will incorporate July and August with information from the operational crews. The Strategic managers have held a debrief for their commands and look at improvements to run as an executive group during these incidents to build in more resilience. This will include looking at the purchase of any additional equipment needed.

- 10.3 Some work being undertaken with the London Fire Brigade as they do not have a large amount of experience with rural fire fighting and they have reached out to ECFRS to help them understand the tactics of firefighting in more rural areas.
- 10.4 The introduction of a new workforce management system, central resource management unit and a review of our flexi-system are all going to feed in to making the system more efficient and a lot of the focus will be on this going into next year.
- 10.5 JG asked if the Service need to pay for mutual aid and if so, is anything factored into the budget. NC confirmed that Mutual aid is paid for and if ECFRS were to provide support to other authorities, this is provided for in the budget. The Service needs to understand what the cost has been of the heatwave and ensure that all the charges made cross border are up to date.

11. Protection Strategy Update

- 11.1 IA gave clarity on some of the highlights in the paper: -
Through the Building Safety Regulator, the BRS Regional Project, 1 Fire Safety Inspecting Officer and 1 Fire engineer will be seconded which will be a two year rolling program and will save £965,000 for the posts as the BSR Team will take over.
- 11.2 Workforce planning the posts are currently out for consultation and they will then be advertised, the Protectional Strategy will be finished. Training for a level 4 Diploma Fire Safety Course will be funded from the uplift grant, this will provide assurance to HMI that we have enough people coming into the organisation that will be qualified to meet the demand of the Risk Based Inspection.
- 11.3 The other highlighted items; brought the attention of the Board were the RBIP Data refresh figures, enforcement activities, Fire Investigation ISO 17020 accreditation, reduction of Unwanted Fire Signals, the Business Engagement Team (BET), Training team activities planned for on-call and wholetime stations,
- 11.4 For assurance there is a program of work for a Peer Review which JTh is assisting with and Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service, this is to use the learning from the Peer Review to give assurance to the Board that ECFRS have met all the areas that were cause of concern and be able to evidence them and show the progress. PBI feels that this would be good in the report to the panel in December if we can describe that process.
- 11.5 JG thanked IA for all his hard work for a very informative report.

12 Quarterly Risk Review

- 12.1 MB said that there is one red risk for the training and no change to risk scores but a change to one risk to reflect the cost of living. In the next quarter will reflect changes with regard to the possible industrial action and the on-call conversion which has now taken place.
- 12.2 Some work is being done on SLT Risk Appetite and set an escalation route for risks that are on risk registers and how that escalates up to the Strategic Risk Register.
- 12.3 PBI asked regarding the information in terms of increasing risk of industrial action, how public is the Services view that it is an increasing risk? MB said that there is a lot of public visibility on the increased risk on the FBU website and the Service are comfortable with this being a topic of conversation.
- 12.4 JP noted that although PFCC have the Strategic Risk Register the two Registers are not aligned and JP would like to understand when there are differences.

Action 74/22

JP and MB to discuss further the alignment of the two Risk Registers and understand what the differences are.

13. Estates Strategy Update

- 13.1 MB referred to the presentation that was attached to the report and highlighted some of the items to include: the Training Centre relocating to KP, fleet workshops, modernisation of stations, Old Harlow Station issues, Property Departmental Review (Bailey Garner – Net Carbon Zero Program).
- 13.2 Moveworks – there will be some changes to the building, and this will be reflected in the some of the project documentation. JG said that KE had not provided an update in this report although the information is useful. MB added that it may be due to not having any update at this current time.

14. On Call Conversion Project – Closure Report

- 14.1 MB informed the Board of the Monthly Station Update, Draft Closure Report, Lessons Learned Log, the Financial Tracker, and the Converted Stations Transitional Group proposals.
- 14.2 The Converted Stations Transitional Group proposal is the most significant project as it will manage the planned removal of additional support arrangements over the next 12 months, so that we are not in the same position in 12 months' time. CP will be picking this up going forward and looking at changing the name of this for the Forward Plan.
- 14.3 The Closure Report has been updated with cost so far and the status of the housing disposal, a copy of which has been added to the Teams Chat, and a copy of this will be circulated after this meeting.
- 14.4 JG commented on the Lesson Learned which is about taking the learning and moving it forward and was there HR Representative sitting on the Board as they will be key in moving this forward. CP confirmed that there is.

15. AOB

JG thanked everyone for a good meeting with good informative reports.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.32am