

MINUTES
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX
and
ESSEX POLICE
PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD

26 October 2022, 10:00 to 12:15 via Microsoft Teams and GF03

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Annette Chan (AC)	Chief Accountant, Essex Police
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (for part)
Ben Julian Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Dr Vicki Harrington (VH)	Director of Strategic Change and Performance, Essex Police
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny (Policing), PFCC's office
Richard Leicester (RL)	Director of HR, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Rachel Nolan (RN)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Glen Pavelin (GP)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Camilla Brandal (CB)	Minutes produced by Helen McGrath, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Andrew Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Richard Jones (RJ)	Finance, Essex Police

1 Introduction and welcome

RH welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from those above.

JG joined the meeting at 10:05.

AC attended the meeting to cover for DM, who had expected to be attending the meeting late, however DM was present therefore AC left the meeting at 10:06.

2.i Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

- 2.i.1 VH confirmed that her comments had already been incorporated into the latest draft of the minutes.

There were no further amendments to the minutes of 28 September 2022, and they were therefore approved. There were no matters arising.

2.ii Action Log

18/22 Quarterly Performance Report
Some progress has been made, with SH meeting with Mark Johnson, and now awaiting feedback to be formalised by Mark before next steps/ action can be closed. Remain open.

21/22 Finance: Treasury Management Report
Due in December 2022, to remain open.

33/22 Use of Force/Stop and Search
SH confirmed meeting to discuss Taser Data had now taken place. Close.

36/22 Forward Plan
SH confirmed that Insurance Annual Report has now been moved to November on Forward Plan. Close.

37/22 Monthly Finance Report
SH confirmed one page Year to Date underspend document completed by DM and RJ and circulated by SH with the papers.

JP clarified that this paper covers Police Officers and Police staff and therefore more information is required to provide an accurate forecast for month 7. DM concurred with JP that this action should be closed as it relates to month 5. Close

Action 40/22

Revised version of one page Year to Date underspend paper to be provided for month 7.

38/22 FMCR Working Group, due in February 2023, to remain open.

39/22 Public Contact
SH confirmed that updated version of the Appendix has been circulated.

RH found data provided in document interesting, showing trend in Control Room 101 declining quite substantially from 65% to under 50%. With substantial wait times on the Resolution Centre as well, RH requested further justification for the data. BJH highlighted a number of factors that relate to this downward trend and explained the measures now in place to resolve:

- Change Programme
- Peer Review
- 999 Performance Data
- Change to Standards
- Recruitment challenges

Further response due from BJH in December, when impact of the above measures should be realised. RL concurred and added that the labour market has been an issue however several steps have been taken to close the gap between recruiting, training and operational benefit with a projection of 24 candidates over the establishment by March 2023.

RH confirmed that this appendix should be included with future papers as the contents are useful.

Action 41/22

A briefing on the changes in structure to be provided to RH and colleagues by end January 2023 (outside of Board meetings)

Action 42/22

A report in the realigning of the Force Growth Programme to be presented to the Strategic Board in March (to be added to Forward Plan)

Action 43/22

A report providing an update on Performance to be presented to the Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board (including public contact and response) in April / May (SH/CH to determine exact timing)

2.iii Forward Plan

SH advised of no significant items for discussion. Only amendment has been addition of dates for 2023 and draft schedule for deep dives in 2023. Referring to paper circulated '2ii Deep Dive Schedule', SH explained the document places the 2022 deep dives, which are the thematic 12 deep dives on the themes in the Police and Crime Plan, for 2023, including the requested deep dive on Rape and Serious Sexual Offences. Subsequent discussion, since circulation of this paper, suggests some thematic deep dives (including dog theft, supporting officers and staff, and collaboration), could be replaced with Priority Assessment documents to provide updates on position with the Police and Crime priorities. This would allow the opportunity for deep dives into other areas such as response and attendance (item 10 on agenda). The timing of deep dives suggested for January and February to be reviewed.

BJH suggested Control Room and Attendance be grouped together, given the interaction and impact between these two areas. Agreed.

Further to SH's point about January and February 2023 deep dives, VH proposed that the January deep dive 'Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse' and February deep dive 'Reducing drug driven violence' be directly switched. Agreed.

RL raised a question relating to the Supporting our Officers and staff deep dive, requesting that it be realigned with other reports that cover the same areas. SH agreed, hence the suggestion to replace this deep dive with a Priority Assessment document, which allows greater flexibility over scheduling to complement other reports and remove any duplication. RH concurred. Amendment agreed.

Action 44/22:

SH and RL to discuss suitable position for reporting on Supporting our Officers and Staff by way of a Priority Assessment update.

3. Finance

3.i Monthly Finance Report

Month 6 Financial Monitoring Report circulated with papers and key points highlighted by DM:

- Overspend figures, which incorporates expenditure relating to Op Hazel
- Reflects National Insurance reduction, from November
- Council Tax Sharing Agreement – recent information suggests this cost is likely to be reduced for next year
- Workforce Analysis – on target to meet year end figure of £3,755
- Reserves – approaches that may need to be considered in relation to Op Hazel
- Capital – no significant movement but highlighted section 6.2 of report, which states the changes in terms of projections for the Estates strategy, so forecasts remain the same but spend has been reduced. Appendices 1 and 2 show the approved budget changes and forecast outturn variances with a view to continued accuracy with the 2023/24 budgets.

RH thanked DM for the concise report and understands the staff overspend in the four-year projections largely relates to pay changes and the increased grant for pay increases is accounted for in the income line as opposed to the funding line. DM confirmed the increased pay grant is incorporated into the income line. Council Tax and the Police Grant are included in the funding line. RH clarified that the £5.5m overspend projection predominately relates to Op Hazel 1, 2 and 3 – DM agreed.

RH reported that the forces' submission, for a £5.1m overspend, had been signed off by the former Policing Minister however, with recent Home Secretary changes in Central Government, previous processes and delegations no longer exist and so further discussions will need to be held between RH and the Home Secretary via the Police and Crime Commissioner based in Hampshire. RH continued that submission approval is likely but suggested it would be advantageous for a further submission nearer to year end that incorporates the projected spend for Op Hazel 2 and 3. DM concurred with RH following recent feedback from the Home Office which alluded to submission being approved but with the 1%. DM reassured the meeting that she meets with her team to monitor/discuss Op Hazel One, Two and Three and London Bridge on a weekly basis. RH empowered DM to inform audit inspectors that as PFCC, he would continue to lobby for a full reimbursement as it relates to a national issue as opposed to a local Essex matter.

BJH highlighted the risk of this overspend submission being delayed or approved minus the 1% and the impact this would have on future planning. The force have therefore listed this as a strategic risk as it would have a significant impact on the 2023/24 reserves budget.

BJH also confirmed that, regardless of this overspend being reimbursed, discussions are in place to gain better control of spending to avoid future overspends.

Capital budget discussed and DM confirmed that deferral largely relates to Estates (£3.8m) and this has been incorporated into the Capital Programme. RH asked whether this deferral would have any impact on our Invest to Save ability as part of the Investments programme. DM clarified that capital affecting Invest to Save would mainly relate to IT and therefore, largely, remains unaffected. Harwich Dovercourt Police Station project discussed.

Action 45/22

BJH to investigate slippage in Harwich Dovercourt Police Station project with DCC Andy Prophet and report back.

Given the current situation, JP enquired whether external borrowing was now unlikely. DM responded that a decision on this remains pending as dependant on a number of factors that are not yet confirmed.

3.ii Budget setting update

Meeting held on Monday and update on track in a challenging environment to make effective plans.

4 Performance Reports

4.i Monthly Performance Report

Report circulated with papers and summarised by VH with some points highlighted below.

Slide 2

- No change to grades; 4 on Good, 4 on Adequate and 3 on Requires Improvement.
- Levels of confidence still up to June 2022
- Crime Reduction – small reduction as a result of fewer offences being recorded during covid restrictions.
- Weekly audits continue to take place to ensure some offences, such as Stalking and Harassment, are not over recorded.

Slide 3

- Repeat Victimization – although this figure has increased, it is now starting to slow. VH referred to graph on Slide 11, which shows monthly figures for offences with a repeat victim and a steady decline since March 2022. This suggests a link between the stalking and harassment audits and repeat victimisation data but more information needs to be gathered before this can be confirmed.
- Violence Against the Person – stalking and harassment is also affecting this offence category. VH referred to slide 24, which shows the data to support the findings.
- Sexual Offences Committed Against Females – 31 fewer offences.
- Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) – increased but has slowed in recent months.
- Proportion of Ethnic Minority employees – slight decrease.

Slide 7

- Domestic Abuse (DA) Offences – rate is slowing, which is a continual pattern.

Slide 8

- Child Abuse Offences – increase in offences but also rate at which offences are resolved is increasing and that positive trend continues.

Slide 11

- Repeat Victim Offences – reiterates the implication of over recording of Stalking and Harassment offences. Continue to monitor.

Slides 21 and 22

- Both slides show the priority indicators and the stable position within each category, with an improving status for the number of dog thefts which has now reduced.

Slide 26

- Discussed in detail at the last meeting, this information provides a breakdown in the Crime Tree by gender.

RH noted the reclassification of Stalking and Harassment offences as a positive way forward. BJH concurred that this is a much more accurate and effective way to capture and record the relevant offences, which in turn improves the reporting and support experience for victims as well as positive outcomes.

In response to the information presented in slides 9 and 10, RH highlighted the increase in sexual offences against females and specifically the decrease in solved cases for this offence. BJH offered that this continues to be difficult territory due to other factors that may be apparent in each case, such as domestic abuse, rape etc. JG asked for further clarification on the small gains referred to by BJH on this matter and, if they are successful, whether they could be scaled up for an increase in positive outcomes. BJH responded that a number of factors can affect the progression of offences to a positive outcome such as: relationship with the Crown Prosecution Service, submission of early advice files, focus of investigation and interaction with the QUEST team.

On a positive note, RH noted the high number of volunteers recruited to the Dog Watch group (slide 19) compared with other volunteer groups. JG commented that the Police continue to work with Clive Stewart and neighbourhood watch groups. The Police continue to see positive engagement through regular meetings with members of the public and understands the total number of Neighbourhood Watch members to be around 120,000+ although some members are more active than others.

Action 46/22
RN to confirm figure of Neighbourhood Watch members.

4.ii Quarterly Performance Report

PB clarified that this quarterly report was due to go to the Panel in December however a discussion between the Commissioner and Chair of the Panel has indicated this item should be postponed allowing adequate discussion time on budget items at the December Panel meeting. A special meeting will be convened in March 2023 to go through the quarter two performance reports for EP and ECFRS.

5 Balanced Scorecard

5.i Report circulated with papers and summarised by VH.

How We Work – grade changed to Adequate from Requires Improvement.
Keeping People Safe - grade likely to move from Requires Improvement to either Adequate or Good based on the latest performance.

Changes since the last report:

- Changed the methodology to improve consistency
- New measures added
- Broadening the remit of Keeping People Safe to bring together local and national measures and timeframes to streamline the scrutiny process
- Cashable savings
- Local Policing Support Unit to be introduced to Scorecard
- Broadening the measures around the absence of Police staff due to sickness

With regards to the How We Work section, RH noted a significant decrease in the number of Domestic Violence Prevention Orders (DVPOs), 94 in 2021 yet 50 in 2022, which was previously a positive area for Essex Police. RN explained that the Police will always pursue a positive criminal justice outcome, which means a DVPO is not viable and that therefore explains the reduction in number. RN added that EP currently has 10x live DVPOs and 13x Stalking Prevention Orders.

RN continued that EP are still awaiting confirmation on the use of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders, following their pilot application. A decision was expected in

September but appears to have stalled following administrative changes in central government.

In relation to Community Focus, we state that our Victims Code of Practice compliance is 100% and although the victims section of our HMICRFS (Peel Report) was not graded, the narrative on this area clearly identified this as an area for improvement and RH therefore asked whether this section should be reviewed in light of the external scrutiny. BJH confirmed the areas highlighted in the Peel report were different to those reported in the Balance Scorecard and there was no inconsistency. The Peel report was referring, specifically, to impact statements and this area is being looked at.

6 Force Performance against National Crime and Policing Measures (formerly referred to in meetings as SIO)

Report circulated with papers and summarised by VH.

No change since last quarter.

In relation to slide 21, reduce neighbourhood crime: vehicle offences, RH noted that while offences levelled off during covid, it appears to be a rising trend since lockdown restrictions ended and this is reflected in public meetings attended by RH. RN concurred with VH that this is an emerging trend that will continue to be monitored by EP. Offences are positively and quickly being resolved through local taskforce measures, for which funding is available.

7 Crime Data Accuracy half yearly

Report circulated with papers and summarised by VH.

Action 47/22

Following request from RH, VH to provide level of accuracy for different crime types, periodically.

With regards to the new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation, SH enquired whether the 308 crimes recorded for this offence were new crimes or might they have been recorded as something different prior to the introduction of this offence. RN explained that the offence is defined as any contact to the chest that potentially seeks to restrain a person, with variation of risk recorded and officers trained to manage such incidents. The new offence does not solely relate to a person's hands around another person's neck.

8 Police Objective Analysis (POA) Report

- 8.1 RH suggested this report be programmed earlier on in future agendas to form part of the Finance section. Agreed.

Action 48/22

SH to include POA Report in Finance section of future agendas.

DM confirmed that draft return has been submitted and await outlier report, which relates to the 2023/24 budget.

JP advised that she is now chairing the POA meeting and therefore offered her assistance to DM, as/when required.

9 HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance

Report circulated with papers and summarised by RL. Some points to note:

- Since the production of this report, the officer establishment figure continues to improve, and EP are now -71 (report states -153.15) of the establishment figure of 3755.
- Await census data to confirm ethnic figures for Essex.
- Increase in the recruitment of female officers.
- Anticipate December will be a high month for officer attrition due to closed window of transfers between December 2022 and January 2023.
- A number of initiatives in place focusing on improving recruitment and retention.
- Deep dives being undertaken on three absence areas of concern: contact management, crime and public protection and criminal justice.

RH noted that staff sickness is particularly high. RL agreed and while figures are slowly improving, many absences relate to respiratory issues which are either as a result of or impacted by covid. With absence relating to psychological issues, work is being undertaken through the Health and Wellbeing Board to understand the key drivers in psychological illnesses, gather evidence and then determine how best to support/reduce these absences.

GP joined the meeting at 11:45.

10 Report on Force's Attendance Policy (including performance and non-attendance at high harm crime incidents in relation to policy)

Report circulated with papers and online PowerPoint presentation shared by GP.

RH thanked GP for the presentation and helpful slides. GP confirmed that Homicide is included within the Violence with Injury category.

In relation to burglary, RH sought clarification with regards to compliance against standards in the priority category. BJH confirmed that every burglary is recorded and investigated proportionally but accepts there are a small number of burglaries that are not attended to within the prescribed timeframe as officers will instead be dealing with an offence which falls within the emergency response category.

Furthermore, the ability for residents to upload any video footage of the burglary is a matter for the investigation team, and the attendance of officers at the scene is a separate matter.

RN added that the investigation of burglaries and robberies is led by Superintendent Bonnie Moore, supported by DCI Nick Hampson, with bimonthly meetings. This group specifically monitors attendance figures and investigation.

Action 49/22

BJH to include data relating to burglary attendance in future reporting.

JG sought clarification on improvements proposed for contact management and the consistent application of THRIVE as there appears to be a gap between local capacity to respond and ensuring the contact management element is delivered correctly with the added issue to new, inexperienced officers. BJH reassured the meeting that while

capability and capacity challenges exist, it is not a significant problem – improvements have been identified and changes will be made. BJH added that some capacity issues exist as a result of officers being deployed to undertake duties that should be the responsibility of other public sector officers e.g. guarding of hospital patients, welfare related matters etc.

JG appreciated the candid response from BJH, which will assist in responding to members of the public.

SH raised some items that will require additional information before paper is submitted to the Panel:

- High Harm grade of service is an average of 82.7%, with a helpful breakdown, however the priority response is an average of 49.8%. Panel will want to see the breakdown for priority and routine response times.
- Reiterating RH's point with regards data relating to burglaries not attended or not attended to within the prescribed timescale.

BJH reemphasised the aim to link Control Room performance with response time performance in order to see the necessary improvements.

Action 50/22

GP to expand paper for Panel, to address the above points.

11 Police and Crime Plan 2016-20/21: closure report

Report circulated with papers. Some additional amendments to be made outside of meeting between VH, JP and PB for final Panel version by 8th November.

12 Approval for publishing of documents

It was agreed that there were no papers with an official sensitive marking and therefore all papers for publishing would be 3i, 3ii, 4i, 4ii, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. It was confirmed that for item 10 the original (draft) paper to be published with further amendments due before submission to Panel.

13 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12:58.