



MINUTES

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

27 October 2022, 10.00 – 12.00 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
Moirra Bruin (MB)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance & Resources, PFCC
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Sarah Smith	Procurement Manager, ECFRS
Jim Palmer	Head of Response, ECFRS
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services, ECFRS
Jo Thornicroft (JT)	Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC
Emily Bishop (EC)	Policy Officer PFCC (observation only)
Christine Butler (CHB)	Minutes, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Chris Parker (CP)	Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Operations, ECFRS
Lucy Clayton	Performance, Business Planning and Policy Manager, ECFRS

1 Welcome and apologies

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

2 Minutes of the last meeting

Comments for Accuracy:

- 2.1 It was noted that Rick Hylton was not at the last meeting.
CB's name spelt incorrectly
IA referred to as IP

Any matter arising that are not covered in these minutes which are not covered on this agenda, in the action log or captured in the forward plan:

The minutes were agreed subject to those changes listed above.

3 Action Log

- 14/21 Finance training for non-finance experts - NC said that the PowerBI training has been completed and NFCC Strategic Masterclass details have been circulated. Nothing further has been arranged regarding CIPFA budget training - to be moved to January on the Forward Plan. Open
- 21/22 School Vulnerability & Booking System - there has not been an update yet. Open

- 35/22 Trend of increased secondary fires - This has been superseded. Close
- 36/22 Service Trends – This is now a chart which is included in the monthly performance report. Close
- 63/22 Performance Review Pre-Covid Comparator – CB referred to the papers that had been circulated before the meeting and presented some slides showing the sickness and absence position. The absence is higher than 3 years ago and is between 5.9% or 7.2%, there is currently an issue on the alignment of the reporting figures which is being investigated and the board need to understand. CB added that the increase in the sickness levels was largely due to musculoskeletal issues and the NHS waiting lists were impacting on longer term sickness. CB to bring it as part of the HR report at the next meeting. Open
- 66/22 Joint Comms – The article has been written. JTh to speak to Darren Horsman for clarification to whether this has been published. Open
- 68/22 New Fire Finance System (NC/JP/EP) JP said that the meeting went ahead. EP finance system includes the HR system. NC noted that ECFRS do need to change their payroll and HR system, but an ERP is going to add an additional cost pressure. This will go to SLT and Strategic Board in due course with options to consider. Close
- 69/22 Future Pension Fund Forecast Papers – this action is still outstanding. Open
- 70/22 Error in Narrative – NC stated that a revised report had been submitted. Close
- 71/22 Protracted call handling times – JPa this has happened, and more information is in the Response Strategy Update. Closed
- 72/22 Suicide Rates – The conversation between LC and JG took place. Close.
- 73/22 Scrutiny on the Annual Plan Closure Report - PBI some confusion as the action was to look at the HMICFRS Action Plan report to the Panel which has been completed. MB confirmed and a report will be put together for PFCC/CFO 1:1 to see the level of scrutiny involved ready for the panel. Close.
- 74/22 Quarterly Risk Review Risk Register- A further meeting is needed on how to reconcile the two different perceptions of the risk from ECFRS and PFCC once the mitigations are lined up. RH confirmed that this is action is closed and needs to be dealt with off-line. Close

4 Forward Plan

- 4.1 The Forward Plan is as circulated.
- 4.2 MB noted that in April 2023 there is the Converted Stations Action Plan which has NP against it and should be CP. A new title is due from CP on that Action.

5 Finance Report – to End August

Year to Date

- 5.1 This report shows the first six-month results for the Authority and the core position with a £400k surplus against a surplus of £600,000 budget.
- 5.2 Whole time costs are under budget by £400k but are under in respect of FTE numbers but these have been offset by overtime and additional shift work costs particularly around the heatwave
- 5.3 There has been an underspend around pensions as the lower pension scheme that came into effect in April which has a lower contribution rate which shows as £300k below budget year to date.
- 5.4 Support staff costs are underbudget which is base costs of employees at £100k underbudget and the variance comes in the secondary contracts' element and prevention contracts of which some have elements that will flow through in the latter part of the year.
- 5.5 Non-pay costs are overspent by £385k to date due to support costs and variances regarding training and unbudgeted items such as redundancy costs and premises equipment.
- 5.6 There has not been an overspend in utilities as yet but is expected as our contractual supplier will come to fruition in the 2nd part of the year.

- 5.7 There is a better funding position off £285k than originally budgeted due to a surplus on the Council Tax Collection Account which was not budgeted.

Forecast

- 5.8 There is currently a projected deficit of £2.7m which has increased since the last P&R meeting due to including the unbudgeted Grey Book offer which was made at the start of the October period and is not being supported with any additional Government funding. Unison have accepted the Green book offer with the other two unions out to ballot with the ballot results being finalised on 1st November. The Grey Book award ballot will end on 14th November, and it has been recommended that this is rejected.
- 5.9 There are some items that will reduce the deficit are the Services Grant of £200k which is un-ringfenced and the MRP charge £200k which are due to come through.
- 5.10 There is an update to covid grant in the appendix to this pack, some spend has been committed to a couple of roles for a CRMP role and a lead for Protection and Prevention change work.
- 5.11 The first cut of the full budget has been completed with initial discussions from SLT and there are diary dates for additional engagements with the PFCC. NC confirmed that ECFRS are on track to make the Statutory deadline for the sign-off of the Accounts.
- 5.12 NC clarified that the £1m increase in On-Call costs were due to the heatwave costs, training elements and riders on appliances. The anticipated training is in the year-to-date costs, and this is not expected to increase.
- 5.13 RH noted that there were many moving parts and wanted to understand to what extent does the full year forecast, and the cascade fully consider the underspend year to date. NC said that the forecast does consider some positions of underspend and there are areas which are under budget as at year to date. The current information received from budget holders is that the money will be spent in the second part of the year, and this has been included in that spend. NC confirmed that all the spends on the line items are monitored on a monthly basis, and the projection is based upon the spend or further information received. JP clarified that there is a piece of work getting together the building blocks of how you get from the year to date to the forecast which was not ready in time for this meeting but will be pulled together for next month's position and what can be done to improve this.

Action 75/22

NC to explain the process to JP regarding the cascade and overspend to give RH the assurance on how that forecast is achieved.

- 5.19 MB clarified that slippage has no impact on the Service provision, but this was an area that would be monitored carefully and said that there has been some discussion around the impact on ageing appliances but has been assured that there will be no impact on front line services and Shoeburyness is scheduled to be delivered on time.

6 Procurement Dashboard

- 6.1 SS gave an update in the workwear. Procurement is working with the Technical Services Team and looking at other frameworks available and are running another competition under the YPO Framework which is used by other FRS'. This project is being started from the beginning with the involvement of other stakeholders, union reps and other forums for their input. Stock has been ordered to cover uniform requests in the meantime which is being managed.
- 6.2 Category Manager for P&FM is working well with the teams and provided training to the team on procurement rules and regulations.
- 6.3 ICT projects – Most work is continuing, and awards have been made for the replacement switches and UPS for all stations and the individual mobilisation and alert service.

- 6.4 Procurement and working with finance on the new finance system and a prior information notice has been published to inform the market that we are looking to replace the finance system and are looking for demonstrations and what is on offer. Selection has been made by a Randomiser App which ensured a good selection off different systems and the demonstrations began last month.
- 6.5 The top 10 contracts that are expiring within the next 6 months, are listed in the report. The Service Medical Advisor Contract is not signed and has not been able to have a Decision Sheet presented yet due to a contractual issue around Data protection questions.
- 6.6 No single tender actions for September.

7. Performance Report

- 7.1 MB talked through the highlights of the Performance Report to Include: Appliance availability, attendance at life threatening incidents, summer heatwave, coverage, attendance times, ADF injuries, deliberate fires, 4 fatalities, protection Inspections exceeding targets, prevention, protection, home safety visits and sickness.

Action 76/22

MB to circulate the new section of the Performance Report “September on a Page”

Action 77/22

MB to provide more detail and information on the special services deaths to RH

- 7.2 RH noted that prevention visits are under half of what they needs to be and it needs to be put right. JPa the target for operational crews to achieve is the national average of just over 430. We achieved 250 for September. It is not at the target but is trending in the right direction and is 80% up on the previous month due to the changes we have made in distributing home fire safety checks across operational crews and stations. The trend is expected to continue, and we will be at the target by December in terms of delivering 430. JPa does not feel that the work that is being accurately recorded and JPa needs to investigate this further.

Action 78/22

JPa to investigate the issue of the data on prevention rates not being accurately recorded and to respond back to the board on this issue.

- 7.3 PBI referred to the lack of confidence in the quality of recording of activity which gives rise to some general concerns of quality of data that is being used. MB this is being looked at very closely and is commissioning a piece of work to assure the quality of the data and to bring something back to P&R in the future.
- 7.4 RH noted the average attendance time is still over the target and average, can this be brought back to the 10minutes 10 second that it used to be. A conversation then followed regarding Strategic Stations and the attendance times which should begin to decrease. There has already been an 18 second decrease on this week’s dashboard figures and JPa is attending a meeting with Performance and Data who have a mapping tool that will enable this to be understood further. RH we need to look how effective this really is and the outcome and is looking forward to hearing more on this.
- 7.5 Compliance with FOI Targets which is low, MB will look further at this and come back to the Board

Action 79/22

MB to investigate the low level of FOI Compliance and feed back to the Board.

- 7.6 JTh noted regarding the dashboard that it was picked up as part of a random test on accessibility and it needs to have alt tags put on for those with sight impairments. LC has confirmed that it will affect all of the dashboards that are published, but particularly the July dashboard will need to be amended and corrected by 1st December or we are in breach of our Statutory obligations in respect of accessibility.

Action 80/22

MB, JTh & LC to have a discussion regarding accessibility of the performance report. July report to have alt tags added by 1st December

- 7.6 RH picked up on the sickness issue in the action plan and asked if there is any benchmarking data that we can view. CB has this information, and we are not in alignment with other FRAs national

Action 81/22

CB to circulate sickness benchmarking data to the Board.

8. Special Services Data Analysis

- 8.1 JPa said that the report was commissioned and carried out in Q1 this year.
- 8.2 Special Services incidents were at a 5% increase compared to 21/22 and an 18% increase when compared to the 5-year average. This is due to incident types, assisting other agencies and effecting entry and exit, which show an increase on incidents and has an impact on our people.
- 8.3 Work is being done with EEAST to put a measure in place to control the number of incidents that assist other agencies and there is a process in place where we can report incidents that do not require our attendance. Some of the information received from crews is that ECFRS are called to incidents that they did not need to attend.
- 8.4 More depth of analysis needs to be done to understand what agencies require ECFRS services which are not clear on the incident log. This information will be fed back to EEAST which also contributes to their ongoing learning. RH feels that it is good to assist but it needs to be appropriate.

Action 82/22

Jpa and RH to have an off-line conversation to explore driven questions in Special Services Data and which may impact the update information given to the board in the future.

Action 83/22

JTh to set up A Deep Dive to focus on Special Services for Q1 2023

Action 84/22

JTh to add an update on the Special Services Data Analysis to be put on the Forward plan to bring a retrospective look at the previous year's Special Services and any learning points going forward.

9. On Call Development – Post Programme Closure

- 9.1 JPa talked through the highlights of this papers to include: real commitment to the future of on-call, on-call operating model, focus on retention of firefighters, workforce management project, firefighter availability, resource management unit, on-call support and development teams, review of group management roles, support around management and on-call liaison officer teams, recruitment and response activity and opportunities, focus on on-call involvement in the business and the crewing model.
- 9.2 RH commented that we struggle to retain firefighters as there is not enough call outs due to not having complete crews or a driver.

- 9.3 JTh noted that when it was the On-Call Development Project there were regular updates at this Board and would like updates to still be brought to P&R.

Action 85/22

JPa and JTh to set up a meeting to discuss how the On-Call Development Project Update can be presented in the best way to demonstrate the impacts to bring back and to align with the frequency determined by the Board.

10. Portfolio of Change

- 10.1 The Digital Data programme is the only one that is currently showing “Amber” due to the three milestones in the program. There have been delays in circuit installation down to H&S processes with contractors which have been escalated to be resolved. There have been issues with user acceptance testing. KE is to bring a Change Request with proposal to the Programme Management Board to extend the programme slightly and will reprofile it so the delivery of the high-profile items in a reasonable time frame.

Action 86/22

MB to give an update to the board on the Digital and Data operational benefits.

11. Enforcement & Cladding Remediation, BRR Premises.

- 11.1 MB provided an update on progress against the National Fire Chiefs Council Building Risk Review Project as the initial scope and project was completed by ECFRS in December.
- 11.2 MB ran through the updates in the report for the four areas. There are several business as usual audits planned with no issues anticipated, and one building going through enforcement in Chelmsford. It is not anticipated that there will be any enforcement in the Morello quarter.
- 11.3 JG noted that most of the properties were owned by Weston Homes and are other FRA’s experiencing the same issues with the same developer. RH suggested this should be flagged to central government as there may be addition interventions needed

Action 87/22

MB to look at flagging recurrent themes i.e., Weston Home and if there is any action that can be taken around that with the intention to expedite this

- 11.4 RH noted that the report does not state when the outstanding 16 buildings are expected to be completed and that it would be healthy to see a best estimated of when it would be concluded.

Action 88/22

MB to include the timeframes on the next Building Risk Review report that comes to the Board, any items that need assistance to be raised before that time.

Action 89/22

MB & JTh to set up a meeting to discuss redaction in the Building Risk Review Report as some items are “Confidential” before it is published.

12 Response Strategy Update

- 12.1 JPa went through the activities since the last update to include: coverage, internal availability being a performance metric in command areas, Control room have a weekly activity to review the Response Dashboard, increased Home Fire Safety visits, supporting CSPs with other partners in alignment with policing and local authority model, additional fixed term contracts in control room, reviewed control training, crewing policing in JNCC phase.
- 12.2 JPa funding for the fixed term contracts was agreed until April the start of the next financial year and the work in the control room is able to identify to what difference that is making in terms of resilience, overtime time costs etc prior to resubmitting a paper to SLT to get approval for those posts to be permanent in the organisation.
- 12.3 JTh asked regarding an update on Rep Body Negotiations on various policies and could these please be reinstated. CB commented that SLT have a quarterly update which can be provided to the Board for P&R.

Action 90/22

JTh and CB to discuss bringing the Rep Body Negotiations report to P&R and its frequency noted on the forward plan.

- 12.4 Basildon Council currently have a £40m budget for improvements, which is mainly being done through CSP's and this would be a good opportunity for the local teams to be involved so that the Service can feed into risks, spending of the funds and responding to particular properties with prevention and protection activities,

Action 91/22

JPa to go back to the team and feedback on Basildon and the £40m budget for improvements and make them and the local team aware of the opportunities.

13. Converted Stations Transitional Report

- 13.1 The second pump availability is below where it needs to be and the remediation plan in place is not working. Any proposals on how to move this forward would be welcome.
- 13.2 JPa the issue with drivers and numbers regarding Dovercourt is largely due to the recruitment issue at that station.
- 13.3 Good news for Great Baddow and South Woodham – despite crewing issue the Group Manager in that area is looking at utilising crew from both areas to ensure that the workforce is being used flexibility across both stations.

15. AOB

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.05