



## MINUTES

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

2 February 2022 14.00 – 16.00 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
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance & Resources, PFCC
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services, ECFRS
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Lucy Clayton (LC)	Performance, Business Planning and Policy Manager, ECFRS
Sarah Smith (SS)	Procurement Manager, ECFRS
Jim Palmer (JPa)	Head of Response, ECFRS
Joanna Thornicroft	Head of Performance and Scrutiny (fire), PFCC
Chris Parker (CP)	Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Operations, ECFRS
Kathryn Rout	Operational Support Team Manager, Essex Police - Observer
Christine Butler (CHB)	Minutes, PFCC's office

#### **Apologies:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire Crime Commissioner
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#### 1 Welcome and apologies

JG welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from those above. Kathryn Rout introduced herself to the Board.

CP will join the meeting later.

LC & PBI need to leave the meeting early.

JG suggested to the Board to bring forward the Performance Report to the first item on the agenda, due to LC having to leave early. This was agreed

#### 2 Minutes of the last meeting

Comments for Accuracy:

MB LC's job title is incorrect on the agenda.

There were not any matters arising that were not covered in the minutes, not covered on this agenda, in the action log or captured in the forward plan:

The minutes were agreed subject to the change listed above.

#### 3 Action Log

JTh talked through the 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 - this is to be moved to January on the Forward Plan. This can now be taken offline with JP. Close
- 69/22 Future Pension Fund Forecast Papers – PBI/NC discussion this action is still outstanding. Due date to be changed to end January 2023. NC some further information to come to a future Board on the future of the pension fund. NC to liaise with JP. Open
- 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. MB said that JPa believes the data of prevention rates has been recorded incorrectly and is looking into this – info due for end January 2023. LC the data has been validated. Close
- 80/22 MB, JTh & LC to have a discussion regarding accessibility of the performance report and published documents. July report to have alt tags added by 1<sup>st</sup> December. JTh working with SS to correct issues. SS this is being progressed and will be done before the deadline at the end of the year. SS has sent this to JTh and will also send to JP. LC said that changes have not been made to the performance report as yet due the focus being on redesign and the amount of detail re description of data and are awaiting feedback. JTh confirmed that training will be available for the PFCC, ECFRS and EP on this to better understand. PBI confirmed that the training action was on her management team action log. Close
- 82/22 JPa and RHy 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. Due date to end Jan. JTh to check if this has happened. Open
- 83/22 JTh to set up A Deep Dive to focus on Special Services for Q1 2023. Due date February 2023. Deep dive reports to be scheduled on Forward Plan. JTh has organised for 22.02 and the report is on the February P&R Board. Close
- 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. LC asked for the report be the basis of the Deep Dive and placed in one action. This to be taken off the substantive agenda as this would be the Deep Dive. Open
- 92/22 Response times 20 minutes+ - LC to liaise with JPa to investigate the reason for the long attendance time and respond to JTh. LC there is a dashboard with the data, but this needs a final conversation with JTh on showing her through the process in January. JP to add to Forward Plan. Open
- 93/22 Conversations to be held regarding the submission of incident data to SERP of RTA from EP and ECFRS and the discrepancies with SERP data. LC/MB to liaise with Andrea McAllister and the Service's representative on SERP, JG will speak to Roger and Andy Prophet. LC said that SERP pulls in data from different resources and will always differ from EP and ECFRS data. LC suggested a footnote by way of explanation. This caveat will be in the next Performance Report in January. LC said that the team are working to join the datasets together, but some exploratory analysis needs to be done first. This could be a larger project and LC will provide updates quarterly. Close
- 95/22 NC to clarify with Auditors the possible surplus of the rejected pay offer being set up in a new inflationary reserve pot. NC had an initial conversation with the auditors, and these will continue until more information is available Close

### CP joined the meeting at 14.22

- 102/22 LC to speak to her team to discuss the best way to provide the analysis of incident data to see how the trends spread going forward. Open
- 103/22 JPa to clarify that the increase in attendance times did not increase harm and to explore the serious injury figures alongside this to provide a response to RH. LC - this is part of the Performance Report, at item 7.8. Open

- 104/22 CB to provide a copy of the SLT paper report on “Safer Together” to the next meeting and there would also be an update to feedback and then three months after that date for a further update on the mapping and case review. This on the February P&R Board Meeting. Close
- 105/22 LC to bring an updated report in January of HMICFRS Areas for Improvement which will show where areas have been completed or not. The due dates have been populated and this has now been completed but to note that The Partner and Perception Survey work deadline has been extended due to consultations etc and this report will be circulated. JG this information will be useful to form a new Fire and Rescue Plan. Close
- 106/22 MB to look at the potential review of the Risk Management Policy which is flagged as being overdue and report back to the Board at the next meeting. This will need to go the Strategic Board, JTH to put through for the Strategic meeting in March. Close
- 107/22 JTh to look at changes to the Forward Plan for 2022 and reschedule due dates if needed in order that the PFCC is sighted on pertinent documents before the Audit Committee Meetings. These are now aligned. Close
- 108/22 JP a to dynamically show the availability of the appliance and the coverage in the areas in the next Converted Stations Transitional Group station update. Close
- 109/22 JP a to add to the report that the items where the attendance was only 86% of the time, was a measure in isolation which is there to allow us to measure how well we are getting towards the staffing of that station but needs to be taken in conjunction with the availability. JPA will pick up the narrative with the local teams in their area. Information has been supplied for this meeting. Close
- 110/22 The Converted Stations Transitional Group Station Update to revert to a monthly report with the next report coming to the next meeting. JTh to update the Forward Plan as a monthly item. This has been actioned. Close. JG clarified that this would be monthly and not quarterly whilst there is still some concern on pump availability issue.

#### 4 Forward Plan

- 4.1 The forward plan is as circulated with the addition of The Converted Stations Transitional Group Station Update for March and a Deep Dive Programme Update for February.

#### 7 Monthly Performance Report

- 7.1. LC shared the presentation on screen and talked through the key highlights of the report as of 17 January to include: - core station coverage, attendances, incidents, home fire safety checks, risk based inspection audits, deliberate fires, accidental dwelling fires, control calls, non-domestic fires, deliberate fires, FOI, RTCs, sickness rates.
- 7.2 Total incidents are up on the five year average and there was a reduction of fires in that time, although Special services have increased. Deep dives and reporting are supporting this going forward.
- 7.3 There has been an increase in unwanted fire signals, analysis is being undertaken on this to understand the impact of attending these.
- 7.4 Global availability has decreased as well as core station coverage both of these are being investigated prior to target setting for next year. Station Managers have set targets for availability with action plans with realistic targets being set for those stations outside of their target parameters.
- 7.5 Statistical confidence is being explored in this data in respect of outliers affecting the average and testing is being undertaken in Control looking at average call handling targets by operative, to see if this useful.
- 7.6 The sickness rate has decreased although the national target rate has not been achieved and this is currently being looked at in more detail with achievable targets.
- 7.7 KE highlighted the increase in the volume of FOI requests, cultural reviews and media outputs propagates external media requests which come through the FOI route. LC

confirmed that going forward there will be a breakdown on the theme of the FOI requests in the report.

- 7.8 CB clarified on the absence, there had been some positive signs in October and November that efforts were making a difference and the numbers were beginning to decline only to spike in December. This increase was due to a time of the year increase in covid numbers and respiratory cold/flu sickness.
- 7.9 LC said that there was an annual plan item in action log update but indicated that in the February CIB there will be an Annual Plan Focus CIB which will pick up HMIC actions etc and LC expects to be informed whether this should be due to complete by the end of the year or will roll over. There will be an indicative report in March to this Board in respect of the End of Year Annual Plan with the final Closure Report due at the end of May.

## 5 Finance Report

NC covered some of the highlights from the Finance Pack to end of December 2022.

- 5.1 The Green Book pay award has been processed. There is a deficit for the period of December of £700k against a budget of £222k which has caused an adverse variance in the period which was driven by the pay award.
- 5.2 There is small surplus YTD of £220k. there are some anticipated key movements coming through in the final months of the financial year. A provision for the Grey Book pay award has been made and also for the drop in council tax precept towards year end.
- 5.3 Regarding the financial projection, the deficit remains at £1.2m which will be continued to be monitored closely.
- 5.4 The Balance Sheet highlighted a reduction in the cash balance by £3m and NC would anticipate it being £1.5m but this was due to timing as there has been two lots of pension payments.
- 5.5 The Capital Receipts Reserve has increased by £752k, in this period two day crew houses have been sold. ECFRS have realised capital receipts of £6.6m from the sale of Day Crew houses and this is being built back into the service for reinvesting for future capital programmes. There are two properties which are anticipated to be sold before the end of the financial year which will leave one remaining property at Dovercourt (the collaboration property with EP).
- 5.6 The budget has now been submitted which will go to the panel meeting and ECFRS are up to date with the Key Lines of Enquiry ready for this meeting.
- 5.7 Regarding the audit, in the last couple of years there have been extended deadlines for the filing of the accounts, this year has reverted to publication of the drafts by end of May and final publication by the end of September. Some of the timetables will need to be aligned and this will be communicated accordingly. The deadlines may be extended although there has not been any communication at this time.
- 5.8 The Home Office have informally announced to FRAs that if there are any budget underspend in departments, the Service will be asked to submit information on the Heatwave costs in case there was any further funding. This has not been formalised at this time, the Service's costs were approx. £600k for the heatwave.
- 5.9 JG thanked the team for all the work on the Capital Work Programme and acknowledged the issues around budget timetables and closures. A similar conversation was held at EP and there are some issues with external audits and RH is following up to better understand these issues.
- 5.10 NC clarified that following the budget there is the updated Capital Strategy, Reserve Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy which are all drafted documents. There will be a decision to be made on further funding for the Capital Programme around sales valuations and any further capital from Estates. The Treasury Management Policy will probably show that the Service will need to borrow in a couple of years and will be driven by larger training projects.

5.11 JG thanked NC and the team for all the hard work on the budgets and Key Lines of Enquiry.

## 6 Procurement Dashboard

SS highlighted the key elements of the Procurement Pack for December

- 6.1 A workwear group has been to review all specifications for all items of workwear, excluding footwear. A suitable framework has been identified to run competition for 10 suppliers to bid for the requirements. Requirements were sent out to suppliers to assist with lead times, costs of samples, and to ensure that that any items were not bespoke items at a higher cost. The Tender Evaluation questions will be finalised at the next meeting.
- 6.2 Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Renewal, a decision sheet has been forwarded to PFCC with the benchmark figures, the final costs will be available on 16 February with the Decision Sheet and Contract to be signed by 24 March to secure the pricing.
- 6.3 The external audit procurement, which is being managed by 7F, has gone out and the Service are on track to meet the timelines set out in the letter to the Home Office.
- 6.4 JG noted that it was good to see no STAs again this month. RH passed on his thanks.
- 6.5 SS clarified that although 7F are leading on the external audit procurement, members of ECFRS procurement team is involved and liaising with NC on this.
- 6.6 KE said that one of the other major procurements is the purchase of 20 hybrid Volvo XE40s. The decision sheet is now with the PFCC office for approval and has a deadline to purchase to meet the build slots over the next couple of weeks if possible.
- 6.7 JG thanked SS for all the work that she has done in the procurement function as well as her team.

**PBI left the meeting at 15.06**

**SS left the meeting at 15.07**

## 8. Annual Staff Engagement Survey

CB shared the headlines of the Survey.

- 8.1 People Insights were used again for this survey which enables longitudinal data to be provided from 2018/2020 and 2022. Many other FRAs use the same provider which enables ease of comparison on data with other Services.
- 8.2 ECFRS maintained an engagement score of 82% which come from the 5 key driver questions and engagement was 5% higher than other FRAs who use People Insights.
  - Leadership
  - Development and Recognition
  - Enablement and Autonomy
  - Culture and Values
  - Engagement
- 8.3 There has been a lot of free text from this Survey which is invaluable, and a full Thematic analysis will be run on this text to ensure the right themes have been drawn out. The Thematic Analysis will be shared with the Board in 3 months' time together with feedback from the group sessions and any action planning.
- 8.4 JG raised the question of why some members of staff are not taking part in the survey, CB responded that the feedback showed that it was lack of time to complete the Survey and the perception of anonymity. Overall, the support colleagues are more positive in all areas and there is no disparity there, there are also differences in gender and length of service.
- 8.5 CP said that an update could be brought to the board regarding the work over next 12 months being done regarding whole time stations beginning to adopt on-call as far as training support, this is all part of relationship building and is working well in the

South of the County. In the North of the County is not working as well, largely due to demographics

#### **Action105/22**

**CB to bring back to the Board the Thematic Analysis together with feedback from the group sessions and any action planning to see the triangulation and where the Service are going with it.**

#### 9. Leadership Development Programme

- 9.1 CB explained that the Service are now into the next phase of the Leadership Development Programme. The Service invested heavily into this programme and over 100 colleagues have gone through the Programme in the first two years. The Contract has ended with the existing provider and the Service are taking the opportunity to rescope the Programme based on the feedback from those that have been through already and to go back out to tender using one of the existing frameworks. Appendix B outlines the tender which requires the Board to support which has a more modular and flexible approach.
- 9.2 JG clarified that the funds had already been earmarked for this phase and asked if on-call colleagues would be able to be trained sooner i.e driving courses, CB said that this is possible as some previous barriers will be removed.
- 9.3 JG confirmed that the Board were supportive of this course of action. CB anticipated that with today's approval the next phase would be able to go "live" in May and in between now and then the Core Learning Pathway Programme would be pushed so that training does not stop.

#### 10. Deliberate Fires Update

- 10.1 CP said that this report was requested by the Board due to the fluctuation in deliberate fires and the work in this area was not able to be fully articulated. The team have put together a very comprehensive report to provide reassurance that there is a large amount of work going on in this area. There is an understanding of links with the Community Safety Partnerships as this is a partnership approach and cannot be done by ECFRS in isolation and a lot of work has been done to work on building those relationships.
- 10.2 There is a lot of benchmarking and evaluation underpinning this work which will be a benefit when HMI are inspecting, we can track progress and be able to explain and demonstrate the difference made in some of these areas.
- 10.3 JTh referred to the analysis and valuation as this provokes criticism, as although there are a lot of activities taking place, being able to prove it will make a difference, this is both key and important.
- 10.4 JG thanked CP and the team for the incredible work done on this.

**JG informed the Board that the update papers had been read and only key items were needed to be highlighted.**

#### 11. People Strategy Update

- 11.1 CB said that this update reflects Q3 of the people program, there have been some updates marked red/amber that are overdue and each of those has a remedial plan in place to ensure that they are delivered before the 31<sup>st</sup> of March.

#### 12 Working Well Together

- 12.1 CB said that this update reflects the work done with the Rep bodies through the Working Well Together consultative approach and we are now in Phase 14. The

Equality Report 2022 is being finalised ahead of the Strategic Board and the Service have worked on 19 policies with Rep Bodies in that period.

- 12.2 JG commented that this was a good news story, and a lot more is now being agreed due to the dialogue that both the Service and PFCC are having with the Rep Bodies.
- 12.3 There are two outstanding policies, the Transfer Policy which is almost at agreement and the Expenses Policy which there is more work to be done, but the dialogue is ongoing.
- 12.4 JTh referred to the National Operation Guidance which appears to be under negotiation through the Ops Policy Committee and is surprised that this is not dealt with nationally. CP replied that Guidance has been agreed nationally, the application in that and how it is presented is part of local agreement. FRAs are presenting it to their own crews in slightly different ways. ECFRS are adding more detail as this is what Crews have asked for, as part of this process a commitment has been made to the Rep Bodies that the Service will keep them informed.
- 12.5 The Consultations are run through the JNCC Cycle, although the Service have made a commitment to have all our National Operational Guidance in by August this year, the FBU do not have the capacity to do the Consultation. CP has moved to a position where the FBU are aware that the Service are implementing without their agreement but will keep them informed and the FBU can come back with any adjustments and improvements in the future.

### 13 Quarterly Portfolio of Change

- 13.1 MB said the feedback from the last P&R was to track and document non-financial benefits as well as financial benefits, this section has been added in but at the time of circulating the paper the section was not well populated, this paper has now been updated and MB will circulate to the Board.
- 13.2 The headline of this paper is over five programmes it is the Data and Digital Programme that has changed to Amber due to time delays in the Control project and Motorola not being able to meet commitments. The “go live” date has currently changed from April to June 2023.
- 13.3 MB clarified that regarding operational impact of the delay, there is a little concern that it will coincide with a potential heatwave but there will be a “no go” decision point to ensure that the Service are fully sighted on what the consequences might be.
- 13.4 MB clarified that Annual Plan picks up changes from the HMICFRS Inspections and those items are tagged to flag that they are areas for improvement.

#### **Action 106/23**

**MB to send the updated Quarterly Portfolio of Change to JTh for circulation to the Board.**

### 14 Response Strategy Update

- 14.1 CP brought the headlines to the Boards attention:
- Data to response times, there have been ways to track outliers and track the process of receiving calls and duplicate/open calls which impact on response time.
  - Productivity on Stations which is now being tracked via Station Plans which gives a benchmark to performance manage against and specific target work with those Stations that struggle with availability with Station Managers taking ownership of this.
  - Risk information looking at the process for more efficiencies with the help of Tracy King and JTh with a Deep Dive peer review on this.



- The Service are awaiting approval on the Precept which will secure the OCLOS which will be able to move the On-Call project forward as there will be additional capacity in the team.

14.2. JG thanked CP and the team and for involving JTh in the ongoing work. Good, proactive work and praised CP for the involvement of the Station Managers

## 15 Enforcement and Remediation on Clad Buildings

15.1 CP said that progress is being made and highlighted two of the properties.

### **Action 107/23**

#### **CP to deliver a briefing to Roger on one property.**

15.2 JP expressed concern over individuals losing their homes and finances with this. CP replied that unfortunately ECFRS have a responsibility as regulator and to maintain its legal duty but do provide support to the responsible person and developers.

## 16 Q2 Annual Plan Update – Updated Report

This has been covered

## 17 Converted Stations Update

17.1 CP has visited the Group managers for more information on those transitional arrangements that will be useful to add into future reports. CP is able to provide reassurance that as from April 2024, when the funding is removed from the transitional arrangements, that the Stations will be o.k.

17.2 It has been encouraging to see that Group Managers and Station Manager are thinking outside the box.

Dovercourt – To increase the availability Dovercourt, Weeley, Manningtree and Frinton Stations have merged which gives the local managers the ability to move staff around which provides availability at Dovercourt. This is working well. Twelve hour shifts will begin at these Stations to give greater availability across the peak times. In the background, training for drivers is still continuing.

Great Baddow and South Woodham Ferrers have the same buddy scheme in place and the Embedded Officers have amended their Contracts to say that they are working from either Station which provides more flexibility. South Woodham Ferrers now has a substantiated post for the Watch Manager as well as a Crew Manager and two drivers.

CP said that there is a focus on training with new recruits, existing staff, and ensuring that they can sustain themselves in 2024, going forward there should be an improvement in availability which will be able to be benchmarked.

## 18 AOB

### **Action 108-22**

**CP asked that the details on Enforcement Notices in Section 15 to be redacted prior to publication**

**Meeting ended at 15.55**



**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.03**