

**MINUTES**  
**POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND**  
**ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
**STRATEGIC BOARD**

**14.00 – 16.30**

**16 March 2023**

**Via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive Officer, PFCC's office
Jo Thornicroft (JT)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny (Fire), PFCC's office
Rick Hylton (RHyl)	Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Moira Bruin (MB)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services, ECFRS
Neil Cross (NC)	Chief Finance Officer, ECFRS
Emily Cheyne (EC)	Assistant Director Communications, ECFRS
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Christine Butler	Minutes, PFCC's office

**Apologies:**

None

1 Welcome and apologies

RH welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

Attendees at December meetings were to be amended to reflect that Chris Parker and Moira Bruin were not present. Emily Cheyne's job title to be checked and amended if necessary.

Subject to these changes, the minutes were approved. There were no matters arising.

3 Action Log

35/22 Forward Plan – Fire Legal Network  
Close

- 38/22 PFCCFRA Constitution – Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy  
Waiting for work to be finalised on the Essex Police policy prior to working on the PFCCFRA policy. It is anticipated that the EP policy will have been presented at the December Joint Audit Committee thus allowing the PFCCFRA policy to be completed by end March to present at the March Audit Committee. Ongoing.
- 41/22 CIPFA PM code Assessment. Unable to identify appropriate quality mark.  
Close
- 48/22 AOB – Fire Finance System collaboration meeting. Decisions sheet in progress. Propose close
- 54/22 Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives – baseline  
Workshop being booked between CB, Nikki Hudson, DH and JT on metrics. Baseline report on Forward Plan for March 2023 together with the Annual Equality Compliance Report. Close
- 60/22 Proposed Budget and MTFs – Savings and Efficiencies Group  
NC to present a quarterly update through the Savings and Efficiency Group to P&R. Close
- 61/22 Proposed Budget and MTFs – cascade  
NC to produce a cascade of the £3.8 Gross Expenditure showing those clear movements for those figures in table 1 and show the net expansion.
- 62/22 Proposed Budget and MTFs – Cumulative savings position  
NC to rework cumulative savings position. Close
- 63/22 Proposed Budget and MTFs – requested Extraordinary meeting  
Extraordinary board meeting convened on 13 January 2023. Close.
- 64/22 Finance System – Decision Report  
NC to prepare Decision Report – on agenda for this meeting. Close
- 65/22 Old Harlow Station – cost comparison  
KE updated on 2 March. Close.
- 66/22 Assurance Strategy – P&R paper  
To be put on Forward Plan for June. Close
- 67/22 Building Risk Review – interim update  
Dates for Forward Plan to be agreed.
- 68/22 Recharge model  
NC to discuss with CP in order to review NFCC rates. Model reviewed and feedback give. Close

#### 4 Forward Plan

There were no amendments to the Forward Plan.

#### 5 Annual Plan 2023/24

MB presented the Services' Annual Plan 2023/24 which was tabled for approval. After a discussion, it was confirmed that the Annual Plan activities 'run the business' whereas the Change Projects will be dealt with under the Change Portfolio Board. It was agreed that Decision Report 007/23 be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.

**Action: 01/23**

**Decision Report 007/23 to be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.**

## 6 Annual Gender Pay Gap Report

CB presented the annual Gender Pay Gap Report and a discussion took place around the gap decreasing, the activities are making a difference in delivering an outcome, next steps, back pay (and narrative to explain this) and press release plans.

## 7 Annual Pay Policy

CB presented the annual Pay Policy Statement which provides the minimum statutory requirements as set out by the Localism Act 2011 and other relevant guidance in order to promote transparency and greater understanding. After a discussion around accountability and decision making, responsibility and scale, authority's Pay Strategy, pay arrangements for Principal Officers including over £50k, determining levels of pay for senior officers, employment arrangements, determining levels of pay for all other staff, pay design, pay grades and progression, fixed pay rates, gender Pay Gap reporting and financial and non-financial benefits, it was agreed that the Pay Policy Statement could be published.

**Action: 02/23**

**Pay Policy Statement to be published in accordance with statutory requirements under The Localism Act.**

## 8 Annual Equality Compliance Report

- 8.1 CB presented the annual Equality Compliance report which contained action taken during 2022 to progress objectives against the Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives which are published in line with The Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act and the closure of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.
- 8.2 A discussion took place around training completion rates, changes in the Grievance Policy (which need approval from the PFCC before implementation), the proposed mapping exercise and the LGA FRS Equality Framework. It was agreed that CB would check the changes in the Grievance Policy and whether they are minor or need sign off from the PFCC. It was also agreed that the LGA FRS Equality Framework is not to be closed at this time but that the mapping exercise will be carried out to show that the Framework can be of benefit.

**Action: 03/23**

**CB to check changes in the Grievance Policy and whether they are minor or need sign off from the PFCC.**

**Action: 04/23**  
**CB to carry out the mapping exercise with the results to be presented at the next Strategic Board meeting, keeping the LGA FRS Equality Framework open.**

**RHy left the meeting at 1425.**

9 Strategic Property Update

KE presented the Strategic Property update which included items on the progression to date and next steps against each of the key strategic deliverables and the estimated total capital funding requirements that require further planning in terms of identification of funding streams.

10 Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Strategy

KE presented the Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Strategy for information and awareness as there is an upcoming need to change to alternative fuel sources for the fleet along with the associated capital spend for both vehicle replacement and associated charging infrastructure.

11 Treasury Management Strategy

NC presented the Treasury Management Strategy 2023-24 which was recommended for approval by the PFCC. The highlights for noting from the Strategy included the Authority may need to borrow to deliver the 2025/26 capital programme, loans of £24.5m are held against an approved limit of £40m of debt, the Authority is unable to repay loans early without significant penalties and the Authority aims to maintain an investment portfolio of high credit quality investments with a liquid maturity profile. NC went through the proposals as set out in the report. It was agreed that Decision Report 014-23 would be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.

**Action: 05/23**  
**Decision Report 014-23 would be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.**

12 Medium Term Financial Strategy

NC presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy for approval by the PFCC and which set out the Authority's budget expectations over the next three years and what savings were required to support the priorities in the Fire and Rescue Plan. After a discussion, it was agreed that NC would amend the Decision Report to reflect the timings around the Framework and then submit the Report to the PFCC's office for processing.

**Action: 06/23**  
**NC to amend Decision Report 012-23 to include the timings around the Framework and then submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.**

13 Reserves Strategy

NC presented the Reserves Strategy for approval and publication. After a discussion, it was agreed that Decision Report 011-23 would be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.

**Action: 07/23**

**Decision Report 011-23 to be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.**

14 Capital Strategy

NC presented the Capital Strategy and MRP Policy 2023-24 for approval. The recommendations were noted and approved. It was agreed that Decision Report 013-23 would be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.

**Action: 08/23**

**Decision Report 013-23 to be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.**

15 Efficiency Statement

A discussion took place around the Efficiency Statement and the Home Office guidance for Productivity and Efficiency Plans.

16 Risk Strategy

KE presented the Risk Strategy which was tabled for approval prior to publication. After a discussion, it was agreed that Decision Report 008-23 would be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.

**Action: 09/23**

**The PFCC's Risk Appetite Statement and Risk Appetite Matrix to be shared with ECFRS.**

17 Phase II Public Perception Paper

EC presented the Public Perception Paper which was seeking approval for the progression of Phase 2 of the Public Perception Survey and associated work along with shared costs implications. After a discussion, it was agreed that Decision Report 009-23 would be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.

**Action: 10/23**

**Decision Report 009-23 to be submitted to the PFCC's office for processing.**

18 Any Other Business

There was no further business.

**The meeting closed at 1610.**