

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

26 April 2023, 1030 to 1230 via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny (Policing), PFCC's office
Fiona Henderson (FH)	Director of Continuous Improvement and Analytics, Essex Police
Richard Jones (RJ)	Head of Business Partnering and Management Accounting, Essex Police
Richard Leicester (RL)	Director of HR, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Andrew Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager, PFCC's office
Samantha Bardsley	Minutes, Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office

Apologies:

BJ Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Rachel Nolan (RN)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office (JW attending in place)

1 Introduction and welcome

JG welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from those above. Samantha Bardsley was welcomed as new to the PFCC office's team.

2.i Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

SH advised that reference to priority 1 being downgraded is incorrect; the priority was not downgraded in the final report. This sentence needs taking out as concurred by FH. Other than the above they were seen as accurate and, once amended, approved by JG. There were no matters arising.

2.ii Action Log

Hybrid report received. RH has requested amendments prior to the paper being shared with the Police Fire and Crime Panel. JG agreed that if all is to be covered in the agenda item, this action can be closed.
Closed

67/22 Engaging with people with Asperger's syndrome/ autism
JG has discussed with AP and closure agreed.
Closed

02/23 Monthly Performance Report
Additional information in victim support referrals is included in the monthly report. PBI believes that Greg Myddelton compiles a report on VCOP compliance which may link in. It was agreed that SH would speak to Greg Myddelton about how this might link to the data in the Performance Report. SH to be added to action owners.
Remain open

03/23 Monthly Performance Report
Additional information in victim support referrals is included in the monthly report. PBI believes that Greg Myddelton compiles a report on VCOP compliance which may link in. It was agreed that SH would speak to Greg Myddelton about how this might link to the data in the Performance Report. SH to be added to action owners.
Remain open

11/23 Monthly Performance Report
Data hoped for regarding killed and seriously injured on our roads is unavailable. Discussions were had around work around options by FH but agreed by JG/AP, with thanks, that although additional insight could be given, the work required would not justify the outcome and this can be closed.
Closed

12/23 Action Log (Stop and Search)
Not due until May
Remain open

13/23 Monthly Finance Report
Finance paper has been resubmitted
Closed

14/23 Strategic Policing Requirement
Added to Forward Plan for 2 October 2023
Closed

15/23 Independent SMSR Survey
Discussion has taken place between SH and FH relating to SMSR Survey and Demographic data, the conversation is ongoing, but the action can be closed.
Closed

16/23 Operational Policing Command
Redacted OPC paper not yet received
Remain open

17/23 Update on the Roads Policing Strategy
Received on 6 April
Closed

2.iii Forward Plan

- 2.1 SH confirmed that the Strategic Policing Requirement had been added to the Forward Plan for 2 October 2023 meeting. FH Agreed and added this would be co-sponsored with ACC Pritchard.
- 2.2 SH advised that the Public Contact paper was scheduled for September and proposed to add/include High Harm Crime and move the joint item to November, with the paper(s) expected to include data to end of Q2. JG/AP agreed.

Action 18/23:

SH to update the Forward Plan to show SPR on 2 October 2023 and Public Contact/High Harm Crime for 27 November 2023

3 i Monthly Finance Report

- 3.1 DM presented the 2022/23 Month 12 position for the Force.
- 3.2 It was noted that additional funding of £1.020m in relation to an overachievement of 2022/23 Police Officer Uplift allocation by 51 Officers (headcount), in the form of additional grant, is included in the revenue forecast, and currently applied to the General Reserve, resulting in a force underspend of £0.016m at Month 12. If this funding were applied to another earmarked reserve, this would result in a force overspend of £1.004m at Month 12. The forecast assumes remaining Op Hazel money will not be received (£1.628m). The YTD shows the current figures whilst the forecast is post year end accounting adjustments.
- 3.3 It was recommended that the three appropriations to Restricted Grant Reserve were noted along with the two appropriations to the Future Capital Funding Reserve that require a Decision report as noted in section 2 of the report.
- 3.4 The Executive Summary included revenue forecasts on overspends, underspends, police officer strength, police staff strength, Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) strength, vacancies, reserves, capital spends and forecast capital expenditure.

4 Performance Reports

- 4.1 FH introduced the performance reports, noting that nothing was significantly different since the last reporting period.
This was the first month showing a reduction in overall crime year on year from March of just over 1% - a lot of this reflects the promising trends that have been seen in high harm crime.
There are still challenges with acquisitive neighbourhood crime (burglary, robbery and vehicle crime); solved rates are still looking good, but offence rates need tackling.

4 i Monthly Performance Report

- 4.1 FH presented the monthly report and from the Executive Summary; there were no changes in grading with three of the twelve PFCC priorities graded as 'Good', seven had a recommended grade of 'Adequate' and two had a grade of 'Requires Improvement'.

Of note to priority 5, the number of individual repeat victims has decreased this month, being the first time this year this has occurred. AP noted a recent work around whereby victims are being able to get OIC details quicker which Athena was not supporting, saving days of delay and unnecessary 101 calls.

Census data showed an increase to the numbers of vehicles per household with 30% of households now having three or more vehicles, it will be interesting to see what impact this has on vision zero for priority 9.

- 4.2 SH advised that RH believed priorities 1 and 2 had been optimistically graded.
- 4.3 SH asked if the adjustment to the recording of stalking and harassment crime, would impact on the ability to compare figures retrospectively. FH advised yes, an impact on the comparability of data will occur.
- 4.4 JG queried why priority 6 is adequate despite such good work being done in this area. AP commented that nothing in output is different, but confidence appears not to reflect the same good work is being done. FH added that the data set is small which may affect the grading.
- 4.5 JG would have liked to have seen priority 8 graded higher given the team uplift and was concerned that solved rates were lower than that of 2019. AP agreed that increased focus in this area was needed given the investment that had been put in.
- 4.6 JG asked if we were still the second largest Special Constabulary? AP Confirmed that to date we can still officially say we are the second largest but noted that Hertfordshire and Greater Manchester are only around 20 Special Constables below us.
- 4.7 FH advised she would rather priority 12 be able to be graded as good based on the wider collaborations we have. AP asked if the priority is focussed on collaboration with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) or broader partnership working? SH advised that in the Police and Crime Plan, which we should be guided by, it is heavily weighted to ECFRS although not exclusively (collaboration with Kent Police is mentioned) JG reiterated the plan should be the benchmark.

4 ii Quarterly Performance Report

- 4.1 FH presented details of this report alongside the monthly reporting.

Priority 1 noted the high volume of multi-agency work to tackle local crime issues and this ranged anything from ASB, knife crime and serious organised crime, at every level there are some compelling collaborative initiatives which would be nice to feed into priority 12.

Priority 3 evidenced innovation with a new app, Culpa, being piloted, which allows victims to upload their own evidence to support prosecutions, empowering and giving them some control back.

Priority 4 showed focus through the Crime and Public Protection (C&PP) Command looking at Child Sexual Abuse (CSE) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); enhancing the quality of investigations and interactions with victims. Good use of high-profile cases (such as the recent Steven Bear case) highlighting that the good work we do is being received positively locally.

In relation to priority 10, approval for volunteers to go into high-risk areas, with six signed up to go into the Domestic Abuse Investigation Team (DAIT) for example, is really encouraging and will provide a great level of support. PBI commented she was pleased to see this.
- 4.2 SH advised the new format of the report was welcomed, with the inclusion of the graphs and key observations being most helpful. There were some additional graphs

RH would like to be added to this report before it is shared with the Police, Fire and Crime (PF&C) Panel at their next meeting, along with some minor changes to the formatting/presentation. It was agreed that SH would liaise with FH to enable these changes to be made by mid-May to meet the required deadline for the Panel papers. Looking ahead, RH would like to see more of a forward look included in the reporting, but not expecting amendments to be made to this report in that respect.

Action 19/23:

SH and FH to work to ensure that RH's requested amendments to the Q4 Quarterly Report can be made before the report is shared with the PF&C Panel.

- 4.3 SH noted that examples of good practice cite the meetings between Brentwood and Epping Community Policing Team (CPT)/Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which could indicate this not being the case elsewhere? FH reassured yes, relationships are as strong in other areas. AP concurred, noting a need to be careful with future narrative to ensure good work in one location does not suggest poor work in others.
- 4.4 SH observed that the Rural Engagement Team (RET) have increased patrol hours by 24%, this seems like a high increase; what has caused/enabled this? AP there is no analytical answer to this question, however, a lot of work with the community teams around Op Community has been done, pushing them to think about how much time they spend and where, so they are likely reporting more.
- 4.5 SH noted the report suggests plans to increase the Special Constabulary headcount by 100 over the coming month; which seemed high as there are only 340 at present. AP advised that this is a target for the full financial year.

4 iii Force Performance against National Crime and Policing Measures

- 4.1 FH presented the paper on National Crime and Policing Measures. It was confirmed that Essex is not an outlier for any of the measures which have outlier criteria in place. There had been no significant change since the report on the last quarter, with performance improving or stable in all areas.
- 4.2 A brief discussion took place and the paper contents were noted.

5 Balanced Scorecard

- 5.1 FH presented the Balanced Scorecard paper. Community Focus had been downgraded from Good to Adequate since the last quarter which meant that all quadrants were graded as adequate in this report.
- 5.2 A brief discussion took place and the contents of the report were noted.

6 Crime Data Accuracy

- 6.1 FH apologised that the crime data accuracy report did not break down accuracy by specific crime types. It was acknowledged that change in personnel had likely resulted in the previous action being overlooked. A new action was noted for this to be included in the next report.

Action 20/23:

Future Crime Data Accuracy Reports to include data broken down by the specific crime types.

- 6.2 FH presented, advising compliance level remains at around 65% or above which is considered Good.
- An audit regarding the accurate recording of stalking and harassment has been completed. This is targeted at quality of recording and quality of service for victims. Areas for improvement from the audit were found in initial contact, supervisory contact, timeliness and use of outcomes. This has led to an improvement plan owned by ACC Mariner. This will be reaudited in 3 months time.
- There has been focused work reviewing our live chat function, there was potential under recording; out of 197 reviewed 12 crimes had been missed. These were rectified immediately.
- The malicious communications audit, driven by the national force crime registrar, looked at 363 crimes, our assessment was 66 were over recorded. It is currently a proposal for malicious communications to be moved from the violence crime type to non-notifiable. PIU has been contacted to see how we can track what impact this has on figures should this come to pass.
- An Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) audit targeted on a two-week period was conducted to see if we are missing any hidden crimes in this area. Out of the 550 crimes looked at, we believed 80 were wrongly finalised as ASB. These have all been rectified. Of that 80, 15% should have been a crime such as low-level assault, public order, harassment and criminal damage.
- On the new non-fatal strangulation offence, we looked at what impact that had on our violence figures, the answer is none. They would have been categorised as a violence crime of another type were they reported before the offence existed.

7 Update on Performance for Public Contact and Response to Crime

- 7.1 These papers were deferred to the next meeting

Action 21/23:

Update on Performance for Public Contact and Response to Crime to be added to Forward Plan for May 2023

8 HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance

- 8.1 RL presented that the success of the Police Uplift Program (PUP), which had been exceeded by 51 officers, puts Essex Police in a positive position nationally. The proportion of ethnic minority candidates is down on previous years but has still been healthy; the reduction is marginal not significant. Female proportionality is up, the force is in the best position ever in that respect and can be proud.
- There is an increase in absence for Police Officers for the reporting period and for the financial year. Opportunities have been identified to strengthen the early intervention, the management and the utilisation of formal attendance management more effectively; this work will continue into the next financial year. Absence rates for Staff and PCSO's are improving.
- 8.2 JG noted that 12 leavers resigned who had minority ethnicity and asked if any of the reasons for leaving were relevant to their ethnicity. RL confirmed that reasons are explored, and this was not the case. He added that the Positive Action Team (PAT) give independent guidance in this area if and when required.
- 8.3 SH commented that statistics for Essex show that between November and February Essex lost 9 student constables and 9 probationers, accounting for 18 of the 33 leavers. Is this normal or concerning? RL confirmed that the number of individuals

voluntarily leaving is increasing, but so is recruitment, so correlates. There are issues with pay and alternative options outside the force being more attractive. For some, at an early point, they discover policing is not for them. HR do track and look at what can be done to provide support, but the issue is not unique to Essex or an unexpected result. SH sought assurance that the force is starting people with their eyes open to the career ahead, to limit leavers due to it not being the career they expect? RL assured yes, the force does do more than what they need to do locally, with briefing processes to highlight the realities of policing. There is also the national and in-force selection processes to check values and behaviours and to ensure their understanding of the job is correct.

9 Approval for publishing of documents

It was agreed that the papers for publishing would be 3i, 4i, 4ii, 4iii, 5, 6 and 8.

10 Any Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1224.