

## MINUTES

### Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

### ESSEX POLICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD

**30 August 2023 10:30 – 13:00**

#### **Present:**

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Kevin Baldwin (KB)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Ben-Julian Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny, PFCC's office
ACO Fiona Henderson (FH)	Director of Continuous Improvement and Analytics
ACO Richard Leicester (RL)	Director of HR, Essex Police
David Levy (DL)	Director of Commercial Services, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
ACO Claire Medhurst (CM)	Director of Kent and Essex Support Services
Lucy Morris (LM)	D/Ch/Supt, Deputy Head of Serious Crime, Essex Police
Rachel Nolan (RN)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Glen Oldershaw (GO)	Communications & Engagement Manager, PFCC's office
ACC Glen Pavelin (GP)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Andrew Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Dawn Walters (DW)	Finance, Essex Police
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager, PFCC's office
Brooke-Georgia Knight	(Minutes) Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office

#### **Apologies:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Darren Horsman (DH)	Strategic Head of Policy & Public Engagement, PFCC's office
Richard Jones (RJ)	Finance, Essex Police
Andrew Pritchard	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

- 1.1. JG welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted from those above JG and introduced BK and GP to all attendees.

## **2. Minutes, Action Log and Forward Plan**

### **2.1. Minutes of the previous meeting**

It was agreed to add an action under 5.2 to consult with RH re separating the 'we will' updates from the main quarterly report. This would be added as action 39a/23 and owned by SH/JP.

Subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the July Board meeting were agreed.

### **2.2. Action Log**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>20/23</b> | <b>Future Crime Data Accuracy Reports</b><br>Due October<br><b>Remain Open</b>   |
| <b>25/23</b> | <b>Disproportionality data in Use of Force/S&amp;S paper</b><br>Information now included in the report<br><b>Close</b>   |
| <b>28/23</b> | <b>PEEL AFI paper</b><br>Due December<br><b>Remain Open</b>  |
| <b>30/23</b> | <b>Resubmission of paper 8 – required for publication</b><br>Paper received and published<br><b>Close</b>  |
| <b>31/23</b> | <b>Aggregate crime harm scores</b><br>Update received. Noted that the rate is falling faster for high harm than for all crime<br><b>Close</b>  |
| <b>33/23</b> | <b>Monthly Finance Report - POCA Correspondence</b><br>PBI had shared information with BJH and JP had shared with DM<br><b>Close</b>   |
| <b>34/23</b> | <b>Monthly Finance Report - Waterfall Graph</b><br>The second waterfall to be added in September –due date to be amended to September<br><b>Remain Open</b>  |
| <b>35/23</b> | <b>Insurance</b><br>It was confirmed no additional Decision Reports are required for insurance<br><b>Close</b>   |
| <b>36/23</b> | <b>Insurance</b><br>Information provided concludes that any increase in costs fighting insurance claims are not related to JSO and costs cannot therefore be reclaimed from the HO<br><b>Close</b> |

- 37/23 Monthly Performance Report**  
Solved volumes are now showing on the same chart as offences  
**Close**
- 38/23 Monthly Performance Report**  
Comparison periods had been added to priority 10  
**Close**
- 39/23 Monthly Performance Report**  
Confirmed that targeted work for Halloween and Fireworks led to higher numbers on Q3. It was still unclear what was leading to the significant drop in the last year. AP agreed to look into this.  
**Remain Open**
- 40/23 Firearms Licensing**  
Redacted paper received  
**Close**
- 41/23 Victim Support Paper - Graph key amendment**  
Changes had been made to the graph key and the paper had been re- submitted  
**Close**

### **2.3. Forward Plan**

2.3.1. SH informed that there are no proposed changes to the Forward Plan.

## **3. Finance**

### **3.1. Monthly Finance Report**

- 3.1.1. DM presented the finance reports and explained there is an overspend of £369k due to the pay award announcements coming through earlier this month. The Home Office funding has been confirmed to partially fund the 2023/24 pay awards and is reflected as surplus income. Virements are going to be completed upon completion of the Police Staff and PCSO pay award.
- 3.1.2. DM continued discussing the forecast overspend last month and forecast overspend for this month, revenue, capital, waterfall and transporting spend, explaining that the price of fuel is coming down causing a nice deflation in figures. Restructuring reserve has another business case to come through yet as this could lead to decrease in revenue and need to keep a close eye on budget setting for next year.
- 3.1.3. JW questioned about the full time equivalent and the strength numbers that have decreased and how confident is RL is with this figure. RL explained that the FTE's are not of any concern as they are actively promoting returner schemes, part time working, etc. DM added that DW does the calculations for FTE and head count.

- 3.1.4. BJH noted that the way that the pay award has been funded from government has created an in-year pressure. Equally, and perhaps more importantly, looking forward to 24/25 this creates pressure of c. £1.5m. As a result of being allocated by Funding Formula. In some forces, who have not had the success in terms of growth of workforce, they get a funding benefit as a result. As discussed with PFCC this budget gap is created by the way that the money has been allocated and has a detriment to Essex.
- 3.1.5. JP thanked the service for their hard work regarding improvement to the font sizes in the report which made it more easily readable.
- 3.1.6. DM continued to present the report and JW questioned the capital spend and the confidence around spending the full amount. DM went on to explain that is normal for this time of the year and the budget gets accrual which will make this achievable. JP doubts we will spend the full capital by year end if the service does not push this programme forward.

**Action 42/23**  
**DM to add headcount to future monthly finance report papers.**

## **4. Performance Report**

### **4.1. Monthly Performance Report**

- 4.1.1. FH presented the Monthly Performance Report. All priorities are in a similar place to where they have been the last few months and staying consistent. Reduction of all crime continues to improve as does violence with injury. High harm crime is overall positive, slight dip in May, but June/July recovered. 550 fewer sexual offences in the 12 months. Solved numbers are rising especially around burglary residential likewise vehicle theft. Acquisitive crime is up.
- 4.1.2. FH continued to explain that there are no changes in grading. Another increase in business crime and fraud, another short paper has been created and will be going to next week's Chief Officer Group (COG). Road safety still requires improvement, number of phone driving offences still rising. Drug and drink driving has improved, decrease in drink driving and slight rise in drug driving but this has levelled out on the graphs.
- 4.1.3. JP thanked the service for the overlay of offences and solved rates on the graphs. JP asked if the conversation had taken place with RH regarding separating the updates on the 'we wills' from the main quarterly performance report. SH confirmed that this is still to be picked up upon RH's return and agreed in due course. It was agreed that this should have been recorded as an action at the last meeting and would be dealt with as an amendment to the minutes of the last meeting.
- 4.1.4. Priority one - PBI questioned why, with a decrease in calls, there is an increase in waiting times for them to be answered. FH explained that the wait times are starting to come down across the board. AP also added the service are focusing on improving the quality of the calls as they come in and getting the risk assessments

consistent day to day. Work to be done but lots of change coming to consolidate this. BJH explained that PFCC's office need to give until March 2023 for these changes and he does not want to distract the team while these changes are taking place.

- 4.1.5. JG asked about ASB and how the sixth month trend is not looking great. PBI explained that the hotspots are not the best yet but the positive impact in is public and victim trust and confidence in the way the force and their partners are addressing it. FH added that there will be a level of increase seen from April onwards but most of this is down to seasonality, but the force is working to reduce this.
- 4.1.6. JG reflected on how effective Safer Essex now is under PBI leadership. JG thanked PBI and colleagues.
- 4.1.7. Priority three. PBI questioned about the steady decline in the use of DVPNs and DVPOs. BJH explained that sometimes this is due to alternative outcomes being pursued, but that the force does need to continue to encourage officers to make use of DVPNs and DVPOs where appropriate.
- 4.1.8. Priority four. PBI questioned the reports that come through on StreetSafe. FH added that the StreetSafe data is unhelpful data and is not consistent reporting. Common Place data is more helpful and should be focused on more for accuracy. JP asked why the number of solved is so low. Discussion took place around this, FH explained that the force is seeing some successes that other forces are not but across the country these rates have been low for some time. BJH explained that you can exclude many that will not see a CJ outcome and not all the data has been presented in this meeting to reflect this.
- 4.1.9. Priority five. SH questioned the average days to investigate high harm offences and what is good and bad. A discussion took place around this, FH emphasised on needing more clarity on the report understanding the good from the bad. Possibly attaching an appendix to the report to understand this. BJH explained that the only worrying thing to see would be a reduction in several solved outcomes and increase investigation time, but the force is not. It is one to monitor but no alarm bells ringing.
- 4.1.10. Priority eight. JG raised concerns around this, but the Business Crime team should increase reporting and what more PFCC's office can do to help.
- 4.1.11. Priority nine. JG explained the importance of partnership and what SERP are doing. Concerns sit around project Vision Zero but worrying the force is not going to make it now the pledge has been signed.
- 4.1.12. Priority ten. JG explained it is disappointing to see the decline in number of Specials. Discussion took place and AP informed that there is work being done around this and what the area of challenge is which will be back with AP in the next few weeks.
- 4.1.13. Priority twelve. PBI is very impressed with the updates and questioned how to build the collaborative work into this report or the Strat Board report as there is very valuable work happening. BJH explained the possible difficulty to

present this to RH and PBI as being operational and without reporting on this twice. Discussion took place around this and PBI mentioned to JG that it may be beneficial to invite Stacey Rothwell, who is the 7F Network Director and lead for the Eastern Region Innovation Network (ERIN), to a future SMT meeting to keep sighted of this information. AP finished on there is a lot of voluntary work that is not captured in this report to bear in mind.

**Action 39a/23**  
**SH/JP to consult with RH regarding possible separation of the 'we wills' from the substantial part of the report.**

## **5. Use of Force / Stop and Search**

- 5.1.1. GP presented the report. Stop and Search is still being used for Operation Grip and Operation Dial. Proactively working to understand why disproportionality still exists. Independent Advisory Group (IAG) Strategic members volunteer to come in and review the body worn videos, which gives useful feedback. Confirmation of scrutiny ongoing for under 18s strip search. Lots of new work around monitoring Stop and Search in 2023.
- 5.1.2. JG questioned the utilisation on IAGS body worn videos. GP explained this is happening regularly, once a quarter. Further discussion around new feedback from the IAGS. Cultural policing significantly improved and in the right place. Some incidents have been reported from police work which have not gone to plan but the force have been able to pick up on these learning points and report back to the team for immediate improvement.
- 5.1.3. SH questioned around the positive outcome rates around the under 18s and why they are lower than overall positive outcomes. GP explained the operational view and why it is likely that there are more cases reported of suspicious behaviour of young people in groups, where all in the group would be searched but perhaps only one or two resulting in positive outcome, e.g. possession of illegal substances. Further discussion took place around strip search and the public's perception. SH suggested separating these figures in the report, to show the difference between strip search (which could be removal of a coat) and revelation of intimate parts (which is what the public often perceive as 'strip search'), as the force could be supporting the media's narrative on strip search as an issue of concern. GO agreed to look at separating these in future reports.
- 5.1.4. JG thanked GP and the team for all the hard work.

**Action 43/23**  
**GP to separate strip search/intimate body search figures in future reports.**

## **6. Homicide Scrutiny**

- 6.1.1. LM presented the report for Homicide prevention. Performance is strong, significant reduction in 2023 from the peak year in 2021/2022. Op Mango has been in the press recently and the family of the victim have reported a good quality

service from the force for such a tragic offence. Lots of family meetings and community events attended to ensure the force could have done all they should for the family. Current work on the next homicide profile which will include the near miss data, data deadline has been prolonged. Victim gender data is changing due to homicide rate falling. Domestic abuse remains the main influencing factor for homicides, focusing more on prevention work. Homicide inspection has been published. More work to do on analytic position. Mental health team is now embedded with an Inspector, a Sergeant and two PC's. Mandatory training video available to all staff on mental health.

6.1.2. RN and JG thanked LM and the team for all their hard work.

6.1.3. AP discussed that there is a formal post implementation review three months in due at the back end of October 2023.

6.1.4. SH informed the PFCC's office looks forward to reading in the future reporting what the force finds regarding its research into racial disproportionality.

## **7. HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance**

7.1.1. RL presented the report and informed of the static performance for officer recruitment. On track to achieve target head count in September 2023. Positive traction on applications and intake for September. Outreach work is continuing, campaign targeting transferees especially around the London border. Turnover is lower than projected for officers. Ethnic minority joiners only one this year. Interest is high and understand the profile of the people wanting to join the force. Absence oversight meeting this morning, data will be updated. PCSO's next intake is November 2023. Internal sports physio is now available to the force, he is fully booked up.

7.1.2. SH questioned the leavers profile and the information on gender, age, rank and level of service to be included in the future report. RL explained they do not report on every characteristic but can certainly share the existing reporting which goes to COG with the PFCC's office. Further discussion around the absence rate in contact management. RL confirmed there is a focus is on contact management absence rate. Absence is effective with the uncertainty of change affected by it. RL updated PFCC's office on contact management rate.

7.1.3. JG thanked RL and the teams hard work and efforts.

## **8. Vulnerable Groups**

8.1.1. KB presented the report and informed the force is working closely with the new KPP and they came to the last Strategic Vulnerability Board. Katie has stepped in for the position that Tanya held and continue to see great work from Katie.

8.1.2. Volume of offences overall are going up but so are solved outcomes. Online investigations have an increased but again the solved rate is going up. Increase

over the last 12 months in missing children. Mental health saw a significant drop in calls at the start of 2023, but this could be connected to how incidents are recorded. Mental health team in place and seeing great results from the team so far. Fraud and vulnerability have increased. Online children abuse activist groups numbers have increased and the force have charged and convicted all of those.

8.1.3. Pleased to report the vacancy rate has reduced and a further 18 officer posts are expected to be filled this year. The force has the highest conviction rate for rape and serious sexual offence. Maintaining excellent relationship with the forces partners especially who support rape victims. Can comply with new guidance of the new working together to safeguard children paper.

8.1.4. JG thanked KB and the team for hard work and efforts.

8.1.5. SH questioned around the benefit of Cellebrite responder kits for victims. KB explained that the victim will get their mobile phone back within 24 hrs, often quicker.

## **9. Transparency, Contracts and Tenders (plan for statutory compliance)**

9.1.1. DL presented the report. The PFCC is required to publish two key pieces of information under legislation: the contract opportunity and the contract award. Contract opportunity is anything advertised/tendered; anything above £50,000 is looked after by DL's team and is published on Contracts Finder, a national system, which means those contract opportunities are compliant. Anything below the threshold of £50,000 is self-served by forces; they are not required to be published by contract standing orders because they are not advertised. Contracts awards over £50,000 are compliant because they are also published on Contracts Finder. For sub-£50,000 contract awards, Essex (along with all other forces in the region) are not compliant. This is due to the local nature of working and lack of consistency. It was agreed at the Commercial Executive Board in May to extend the use of Atamis which is the e-tendering system for the use of quotes, still on a self-service basis by forces. This would provide the audit trail and publication of necessary contract opportunities and awards. There is a rollout plan and DL's team will provide training to the force to use Atamis. The proposal is to target a defined group comprising the main users to begin with.

9.1.2. PBI noted that DH had sought legal advice and had spoken to SH ahead of the meeting. SH spoke in DH's absence querying the time frames. She sought clarification about the time needed to achieve the first 70% and the remaining 30% of contracts not currently compliant. CM confirmed that the first six months will focus on the 70%, i.e. key areas. The remaining 30% is with individual officers and there is a need to take time to explore a proportionate way to achieve compliance. Further discussion around accountability on who is responsible in the force for this. CM confirmed ownership of the process within the force. SH asked how the PFCC's office would receive updates on progress between now and March. CM confirmed happy to give update and progress at year end.

9.1.3. AP proposed bringing a paper to the P&RS Board in March 2023. JG agreed to add this to the Forward Plan. JG suggested more frequent updates could be



provided through regular conversations between DH and CM; this was agreed and SH agreed to feed back to DH.

9.1.4. JP raised concerns about the suggestion that anyone in the force can seek three quotes, and how they would assess the quotes received. DL responded that 7 forces train over 900 staff yearly to gain quotes and choosing suppliers. JG asked about quality assurance for smaller value contracts. DL responded that internal audit check that processes are followed, but there is no dip sampling on a regular basis. CM assured that the Business Centre would check due process is followed and Line Manager approval is always required.

**Action 44/23**  
**Item to be added to the Forward Plan for an update in March 2023**  
**‘Transparency, Contracts and Tenders (plan for statutory compliance)’**

**Action 45/23**  
**CM to provide DH with regular updates on progress in achieving compliance, between now and March paper**

## **10. Approval for publishing of documents**

10.1.1. SH confirmed that the appendix to the Homicide Scrutiny paper is official sensitive, but everything is publishable.

## **11. Any Other Business**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 13:19 hours.

### **Future meeting dates**

- Monday 2 October 2023 14.00
- Thursday 26 October 2023 14.00
- Monday 27 November 2023 10.30
- Thursday 4 January 2024 10.30