



MINUTES

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES BOARD 2nd November 2023 11:30 – 13:30 via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	CEO and Monitoring Officer (PFCC's Office)
Janet Perry	S151 & Strategic Head of Performance and Resources (PFCC's Office)
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services (ECFRS)
Lucy Clayton (LC)	Performance, Business Planning and Policy Manager (ECFRS)
Sarah Smith (SS)	Procurement Manager (ECFRS)
Neil Cross (NC)	Finance Director and Section 151 Officer (ECFRS)
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services (ECFRS)
Jo Thornicroft (JT)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny - Fire (PFCC's Office)
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager (PFCC's Office)
James Palmer (JPa)	Assistant Director, Head of Response (ECFRS)
Dave Bond (DB)	Group Manager, Head of Protection (ECFRS)
Heather Kinzett (HK)	Strategic Advisor (ECFRS)
Brooke Knight (BK)	Minutes, Scrutiny Officer (PFCC's Office)

Apologies:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Andy Smith (AS)	Director of Operations (ECFRS)
Moirra Bruin (MB)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer (ECFRS)

1. Introductions

1.1. RH welcomed all to the meeting, apologies were noted from those above.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and agreed.

2.2. There were no matters arising.

3. Action Log

33/23 Performance Report

Meeting held 19th October 2023. **Propose Close.**

34/23 Quarterly Risk Report

Calculations on GDPR Training show new joiners represent an impact of 1.6%. This suggests the impact is small. Work is underway to understand this for all courses.
Propose Close.

4. Forward Plan

4.1. JT confirmed no changes proposed to the Forward Plan that has been circulated.

5. Finance Report

5.1. NC presented the finance report for the period up to the end of September 2023. This covered the Month and the YTD position. Small deficit of £56k for this month. Pay pressures incoming due to the Pay Awards and On-Call costs which are around £180k. On Call YTD overspend of £609k (£429k last month).

5.2. YTD Employment costs are 3% adverse to budget in line with the pay award. No increase in Support staff pay is included in the budget but a rise is assumed in the forecast of outturn. Overall total employment costs forecast of outturn is £2,182k adverse (£1,507k last month).

5.3. £600k in Government Grants. Projected gap of £500k. Income received of additional £700k in terms of section 31 grant which is not reflected within this forecast, NC explained the uncertainty of this not being able to fully fund the district or whether the districts funds are higher than anticipated and will be able to recognise some of the income to cover the gap. NC confirmed the collection income will be shared within the coming days and will update the projection. RH questioned the grants and whether this will need to be paid into the district and not be visible to the PFCC's office as additional funding. NC clarified that this is correct.

5.4. Balance sheet has seen a reduced with the cash position for the month. The primary driver is due to the Pensions payroll and having to pay out this twice within September 2023. November 2023 will see less of an impact.

5.5. Capital spend forecast is £6.4 million. £2.2 million spent to date. Asset protection works budget has not been fully used yet. Orsett is due to complete this financial year. The spend will be allocated this year. Procurement about to close for thermal imaging cameras for £650k, the spend will also flow through this year. Control's systems are live but delay in receiving invoices from suppliers, another £1 million pounds due to flow through this year. NC confirmed the budget for 2023 will be spent this financial year and this is being reviewed regularly.

5.6. RH questioned the On-Call budgeting overspend of £500k and the action plan around this. JPa explained the contributors to the overspend being the incident costs and the dynamic deployment of on-call appliances around the county. This strategy was put in place to improve response times and elaborated this not just being an Essex ECFRS issue but countrywide. JPa advised there are a series of projects within agenda item 9 that are close to delivery that will support better support of resources and an action plan has been created to get the budget back on board and the potential to draw down.

5.7. JW questioned the operational income and reallocation which has not happened yet. NC confirmed to follow this up and update to follow.

5.8. JP questioned the forecasts prudence and the benefits that have been described and that they are not within the report presented and the problems are clear. NC confirmed this has been built into the On-Call and doubled the variants YTD.

Action 35/23 – NC to update JW with allocation of the operational income.

6. Procurement Dashboard

- 6.1. SS presented the Procurement Report and confirmed the Procurement bill has received Royal Assent as of last week and is now called the Procurement Act 2023. Timelines for implementation and working under the new act are still on track for October 2024; 11 months to prepare for this to take place and regular updates to the board with key points will continue. Information on training will be live before Christmas and there are three different types of training to be undertaken.
- 6.2. JP requested an update paper with this being presented to the board. SS confirmed to clarify when the second legislation paper is due and will present in the December 21st, 2023, P&R board.
- 6.3. SS updated on the Category headlines. The new cleaning contract went live on the 1st of October 2023. The electrical plant maintenance contract has been submitted for signature. The work at Orsett has been signed off and stand still was successfully completed last month. ICT are seeking collaboration opportunities for station end equipment. The workwear tender was launched and working through a timetable where a decision sheet will be presented to the board May 2024.
- 6.4. SS updated on the Category spend. First fully electric van purchased. There were no STAs in September 2023. Cost avoidance savings in Q2 £45k.
- 6.5. JP questioned the cost avoidance savings and SS confirmed these are savings against the budget.

Action 36/23 – SS to present paper on impact of Procurement Act 2023 to the December P&R board.

7. Performance Report

- 7.1. LC presented the performance report for September 2023. Total number of incidents on a par with August, 13% above the five-year average, driven by False Alarms and Special Service incidents.
- 7.2. Special Service incidents are up 33% from September 2022 and 23% from last month.
- 7.3. False Alarm incidents have increased by 20% compared to the five-year average and increased 19% from the same period last year.
- 7.4. Unwanted Fire Signals, July and September's papers were submitted to SLT with detailed proposed approach. Responding to Unwanted Fire Signals these recommendations have been provisionally approved pending consultation. The recommendations remain unchanged and reduction in non-domestic AFA incidents from two pumping appliances to one with care homes being exempt from this change. Response will be reviewed as part of CRMP.
- 7.5. Deliberate fires were within higher tolerance levels for September, although the numbers are 19% less than in September 2022 and 11% above the five-year average.
- 7.6. ADF and Non-Domestic Fires are in the lowest tolerance levels 22% and 17% below the five-year average respectively. Non-domestic fires remain in low tolerance levels, tracking 19% below the five-year average and 29% below the same period last year.

- 7.7. In September there were no fatalities and no injuries from ADFs. Three injuries were recorded due to primary fires.
- 7.8. Coverage has remained stable at 97%. All strategic stations are at 95% or higher.
- 7.9. Prevention: a decrease in Safe and Well visits completed due to staff sickness and secondments.
- 7.10. RBIP Plan – commitment to visit all High-Risk premises by 31/03/28 and all Very High-Risk premises by 31/03/26. The planning tool projects that these targets can be met by 31/05/27 and 31/01/26 however is based in the assumption of 6 visits per inspector per month. Currently the average is 4.9 which would suggest completion dates of 31/03/28 (on time) and 31/07/26 (4 months overdue) respectively.
- 7.11. PBI thanked LC for the new scenario tool that has been built into the paper. Discussion took place around the scrutiny of the tools effectiveness and LC explained the support and in-depth narrative it will provide to the teams. DB gave reassurance on the performance and confirmed if entering a premises which is not compliant, revisits and follow ups will be scheduled. Targets are currently down due to inspecting officers being on sick leave but due to be back within the workplace very soon.
- 7.12. HFSVs are showing a 3% reduction from the previous month and 5% reduction compared to the same period last year. Operational crew visits are 5% higher than the previous month but like the same time last year, while Safe and Well/Safeguarding visits were down 7% from the previous month.
- 7.13. Data breaches: there were 7 in September 4 near-miss/minor and 1 moderate, and 1 major breach regarding papers left on desk. PBI questioned the recurring issues with data breaches and KE explained the biggest priority now is SharePoint infrastructure and has meant internally documents are in the wrong folders. KE confirmed the force have outreached assistance from a company called Silver Sands who cleanse the data within the SharePoint system to resolve the data breach issue.
- 7.14. RH noted the frustration around Unwanted Fire Signals absorbing resources which could be used elsewhere and what are the actions going forward. DB explained the extensive work around what is being done to drive this metric down but elaborated that the biggest challenge for the force with Unwanted Fire Signals is Hospitals which are attended to the most.
- 7.15. JW raised the increase on Special Service Incidents this month. DB explained it is due to a general increase in incidents and nothing else which is a cause for concern.
- 7.16. Discussion took place around the numbers for Fire Fatalities. LC agreed to hold a meeting with Omar Shariq and Will Newman to clarify a summary of trends and report back.

Action 37/23 – LC to set up meeting with Omar and Will to summarise trends for Fire Fatalities and report back.

8. Procurement Contract Transparency Plan

- 8.1. SS presented the Procurement Contract Transparency Plan. From the 1st of April 2024 ECFRS will state in all tender documentation that there is a requirement to publish contracts entered above value of £10,000. And these will be published.

- 8.2. Recommending that we do not retrospectively publish the existing 95 contracts that are within scope. Currently ECFRS do not state in the procurement pack to publish the full contract documentation, going forward this can be added to the tender packs. Proposal of way forward to meet the order is to work with Capsticks and will be approximately £4,500 to undertake this work.
- 8.3. Out of the 95 affected contracts approximately 50% will expire in the next 2 years. ECFRS have no internal legal assistance, where questions may be sought from Capsticks regarding redactions or FOI assistance this will be an additional charge to ECFRS.
- 8.4. SS proposed to publish within the contract documentation starting from April 2024 to allow time to undertake advice from Capsticks and deliver relevant training to the team to enable this.
- 8.5. RH raised the importance of transparency and how the plan makes sense. RH agreed the use of Capsticks and to ensure the plan is completed by April 2024.

9. On-Call Support and Development

- 9.1. JP presented the On-Call Support and Development report. The focus of the On-Call team is on retention, recruitment, and response. The key focus is on retention as there is excellent success recruiting staff with improvement needed on the retention numbers.
- 9.2. HR are now able to track exit interviews for On-Call firefighters to enable a clear picture to why staff leave the force.
- 9.3. The Resource Management Unit is now fully established. Workforce management system will go live in January 2024 and is on track for delivery. Training has already started.
- 9.4. The Annual Leave Policy has now gone through consultation and is within final stages before going live. This policy will support those with dual contracts to increase their availability at their On-Call station.
- 9.5. The project will implement centralised crewing that will manage all operational availability 24/7 in Wholetime, On-Call, Control, and the Flexi-Duty officers to meet the needs of the Service operationally.
- 9.6. JT asked when will the retention figures and metrics will be available within the report to provide assurance that the activities undertaken are making a difference. AS confirmed to deliver the key metrics within the report going forward.

Action 38/23 – JPa to deliver key metrics in the report to the board in the next update in April 2024

10. Enforcement and Remediation on Clad Buildings Update

- 10.1. DB presented the Enforcement and Remediation on Clad Buildings Update. In the process of reviewing the Building Risk Review (BRR) that took place in 2020/2021, issues were identified from the programme. The BRR as a programme was a request not a legal duty.
- 10.2. The buildings which ECFRS was not aware of led to the creation of section two of the report which is now available to access.

- 10.3. Several current buildings within Essex are being challenged. Once the owner of the properties has been identified and enforcement notice will be issued.
- 10.4. A lot of work is being undertaken to review the buildings, take enforcement action were needed and hold Responsible Persons to account.
- 10.5. RH thanked the team for their work and the understanding around how difficult this project is and happy to help wherever possible.
- 10.6. PBI raised the papers being suitable for publication and whether the papers need to be protectively marked or redacted due to high sensitivity information with cases.

Action 39/23 – DB and JT to work through the papers to identify what can be published.

11. Response Strategy Update

- 11.1 JPa presented the Response Strategy Update report. Resource management unit has been established and fully resourced, this will enable more effective use of operational resources.
- 11.2 The Performance metrics for control call handling times has been developed and embedded into the control room. This will enable a greater level of continuous improvement in this area.
- 11.3 Mixed crewing has been implemented in the service which will enable more effective use of people.
- 11.4 Work has begun on a revised Prevention, Protection and Response Strategy aligned to the new CRMP and the commands and response teams have begun the work of building new team plans aligned to that.
- 11.5 The new Response performance board has had the agenda changed to reflect the performance report to ensure greater accountability and transparency.

12. Converted Stations Transitional Group Update

- 12.1. JPa presented the Converted Stations Transitional Group Update. The availability across all 5 pumps that were converted has increased. The trend is heading in the right direction and Jim confirmed his confidence that this trend will continue. The teams are on track with the planning to be able to withdraw the embedded resources from three of the four stations by the end the financial year.
- 12.2. RH questioned the remediation and requested a plan is submitted on how the Service will get the levels increased to where they need to be in line for the next P&R meeting taking place on the 30th of November 2023.

Action 40/23 – JPa to provide a report to the November P&R Board with a plan on how the Service are going to get to the required availability levels at these stations.

13. Estates Strategy Update

- 13.1. KE presented the Estates Strategy Update report. Head of Fleet Service and Head of Property Services positions being vacant, the Service was advertising for an Assistant Director of Strategic Asset Management to oversee the delivery of both functions. The advert has now closed, and several applicants have applied which will be interviewed over the coming weeks. The appointment will be before the end

of the calendar year for the role. Jon Withers has been appointed as temporary Fleet Operations Manager and the 6 weekly strategic briefings continue with all staff.

- 13.2. Progression of live fire training. ECFRS Strategic Board 13th December KE will be bringing an update on the detail on costing, next steps and why ECFRS are continuing to do training.
- 13.3. This year's 2023/24 capital programme is on track to deliver as per the planned schedule of works and 2024/25 capital asset works will be commissioned in Q4 of this year. This is a key progression that has not historically been delivered and is highlighting the importance of managing the works through a project management methodology.
- 13.4. EEAST Collaboration Response Posts - Frinton, Dunmow and Braintree are complete, with Shoebury and Rayleigh to follow. This agreement generates an income of £6k per site per annum. ECFRS continue to grow the servicing and maintenance of EEAST fleet, which will transfer with the joint fleet workshops programme.
- 13.5. Wholetime Station Modernisation Programme – Will be reviewed in line with the SAMP. 7-year investment programme may be accelerated.
- 13.6. Old Harlow Fire Station – Feasibility and options being explored. An appendix is included amongst the papers. Agreement in principle for ECFRS to acquire a 99-year lease on further land.
- 13.7. Shoeburyness Fire Station – Works complete, and crew are back on site. Project has exceeded cost parameters, so a decision sheet is required.
- 13.8. Control and CIT Upgrade – Full refurbishment of the Control Room is complete.
- 13.9. Wellbeing Gardens - A pilot is underway to review the outdoor wellbeing space for stations with Basildon Station planning the first initiation of an outdoor wellbeing space. This is being achieved through community engagement and community contributions with some supported ECFRS investment.

14. Quarterly Future Portfolio of Change Update

- 14.1. CB presented the Portfolio of Change Update. Confirms that there are 3 new projects initiated and 4 projects have now closed.

15. Quarterly Risk Review

- 15.1. CB presented the Risk Review. Key changes are 1 new risk on data quality and strategic risk 19 has been reshaped to reflect the circumstances from when it was first drafted. Decrease of 2 risks.
- 15.2. JW raised the tolerance being exceeded within the executive summary being different within the risk register. CB confirmed to speak to subject experts and update accordingly.

Action 41/23 – CB to update JW with subject experts input within the report.

16. Any Other Business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 13:30pm

Future meeting dates

- Thursday 30 November 2023