



## MINUTES

### **POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES BOARD 30th November 2023 14:00 – 16:00 via Microsoft Teams**

#### **Present:**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Roger Hirst (RH)    | Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)                        |
| Janet Perry         | S151 & Strategic Head of Performance and Resources (PFCC's Office) |
| Rick Hylton (RH)    | Chief Fire Officer (ECFRS)   |
| Andy Smith (AS)     | Director of Operations (ECFRS)                                     |
| Colette Black (CB)  | Director of People Services (ECFRS)                                |
| Lucy Clayton (LC)   | Performance, Business Planning and Policy Manager (ECFRS)          |
| Neil Cross (NC)     | Finance Director and Section 151 Officer (ECFRS)                   |
| Karl Edwards (KE)   | Director of Corporate Services (ECFRS)                             |
| Robert Ellis (RE)   | Senior Data Engineer (ECFRS)                                       |
| Jo Thornicroft (JT) | Head of Performance and Scrutiny - Fire (PFCC's Office)            |
| Jeremy White (JW)   | Finance Manager (PFCC's Office)                                    |
| Brooke Knight (BK)  | Minutes, Scrutiny Officer (PFCC's Office)                          |

#### **Apologies:**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI) | CEO and Monitoring Officer (PFCC's Office) |
| Jane Gardner (JG)           | Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner |
| Moira Bruin (MB)            | Deputy Chief Fire Officer (ECFRS)          |
| Sarah Smith (SS)            | Procurement Manager (ECFRS)                |

### **1. Introductions**

- 1.1. RH welcomed all to the meeting, apologies were noted from those above.
- 1.2. JT noted SS absence and NC will be presenting the paper in her absence.

### **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**

#### **35/23 Finance Report**

Update of Operational income has been completed with the allocation being presented in the latest finance pack. **Propose Close.**

### **36/23 Procurement Dashboard**

SS to present paper on impact of Procurement Act 2023 to December 2023 P&R board. It is on the Forward Plan to be presented at the December P&R board. **Propose Close.**

### **37/23 Performance Report**

LC had a meeting with Prevention to summarise trends for Fire Fatalities. A piece of work for annual ADF and Fire Fatalities is on January's work plan. LC noted to not bring the work forward but to continue with full analysis until the full report has been produced, to then circulate into P&R for information in March 2024. RH raised concerns on this being too far due to the current data being of concern. LC confirmed to circulate summary after the current meeting to the P&R board. **Open.**

### **38/23 On-Call Support and Development**

JPa to deliver key metrics in the report to the board in April 2024. JT noted the report will not come to the board until April 2024 and will be left open on the Action Log until confirmation in April 2024. **Open.**

### **39/23 Enforcement and Remediation on Clad Buildings Update**

DB and JT to work through papers and identify any information that needs to be redacted. JT confirmed this work has been completed with a redacted paper published. **Propose Close.**

### **40/23 Converted Stations Transitional Group Update**

Plan on how the service is going to get acquired availability levels at the stations. JT confirmed AS is going to be informing on this work when presenting the paper in the current meeting. **Open.**

### **41/23 Quarterly Risk Review**

Query over the Risk Report and anomaly between the exec summary and the main report. HO has confirmed the exec summary was correct and correction has been made to the report to ensure it is correct for the Audit Committee. **Propose Close.**

## **4. Forward Plan**

- 4.1. JT updated on the Forward Plan informing it is as circulated for 2024. JT raised outstanding response for the Unwanted Fire Signals paper and confirmed this is still in negotiation with the rep bodies.
- 4.2. CB updated on the HMI spotlight within the Culture and Values report. Last update was in March 2023. CB confirmed oversight of delivery actions to be included as an appendix within the paper on People in the next Strat Board meeting this year. CB noted to continue monitoring the scrutiny it would be appropriate to bring it to the P&R board in January 2024 with more detail. RH noted the importance of the topic and welcomed this.
- 4.3. RH raised HMICFRS not being on the Forward Plan for 2024. RH noted this paper will be available early 2024. JT noted being hesitant to add this to the Forward Plan due to the uncertainty whether it was for Strat Board or P&R Board. RH confirmed HMICFRS paper being presented at the Strat Board to agree and following up monitoring the performance and scrutiny at the P&R board.

**Action 42/23 – JT to confirm whether the HMIC paper is on the 2024 Forward Plan for the Strategic Board.**

## 5. Finance Report

- 5.1. NC presented the finance report for the period up to the end of October 2023. This covered the Month and the YTD position. Small deficit of £81k for this month against a budgeted deficit of £54k. Pay pressures incoming due to the On-Call and Wholetime costs. £22k over budget for the period. Slight increase in overspend due to Support staff costs due to lack of staff within establishment.
- 5.2. Forecast YTD currently shows deficit projected at £595k. Green book pay award has been finalised and will reflect in the budget once the actuals are processed by payroll. Both Grey and Green pay awards are included in the forecast of outturn of £2,244k adverse (£2,182k last month). This will be paid out in December 2023.
- 5.3. NC confirmed Performance and Efficiencies Board taking place next week to discuss areas on how to close the gap. End of year plan is not to have to use any reserves.
- 5.4. NC updated on the Cashflow Forecast which is being invested tightly with continuing to monitor and invest in line with the treasury management strategy.
- 5.5. NC updated the Capital spend forecast which is £6,489k (no change from last month). YTD capital expenditure is £2,315 (up £129k since last month).
- 5.6. NC confirmed the External Audit is taking place, which started in October 2023. Majority of the field work is finished but the Auditors have left the high-risk areas until last. NC noted the team are heavily invested in the finance system project with extensive work currently taking place ensuring processes are aligned to the new ways of working throughout the system. Some challenges have arisen due to negotiations outstanding and system integration.
- 5.7. NC noted that the Cashflow Budget paper is being produced for SLT with the meeting taking place in December 2023 which will come to the Strategic Board.
- 5.8. NC raised several challenges in place for finance due to resources. Informing the key colleague Beth, who kindly produces this paper is leaving the service and moving back to the private sector with effect from tomorrow. NC thanked Beth for all the hard work and cooperation.
- 5.9. RH raised the importance of getting the Audit complete before the end of the financial year. NC noted how well the team have done to manage the Audit, but concerns may lie around receiving confirmation from the pension scheme. RH noted cooperation from him is there if needed.
- 5.10. JW raised the control system expecting to find efficiencies within exec summary. NC confirmed the team are still working through what these are. AS noted, looking at the On-Call costs first with several measures in place to reduce those before looking at the control measures.
- 5.11. JW raised new recommendations that have become overdue within the internal audit page. NC noted to confirm this and inform outside of the meeting.
- 5.12. JW raised the operational income with the budget being moved to Community Safety Youth Work, the budget is still sitting £86k below budget YTD. NC confirmed this relates to DoE schemes and the schemes have not been running as many as they have done previously which is the key driver behind this and is being reassessed for the next 2024/2025 budget paper.

- 5.13. RH narrated putting together a budget remediation plan to ensure the budget gets back to a balanced position by the end of the year. NC confirmed a savings plan was created earlier in the year and will confirm after the P&E board meeting takes place next week, what can be done to bridge that gap.

**Action 43/23 – NC to confirm to JW the reason for the overdue recommendations within the internal audit page.**

## **6. Procurement Dashboard**

- 6.1. NC presented the Procurement Report and confirmed the Procurement Bill has received Royal Assent on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October and the team are working on what this means with training taking place. NC noted the paper for the Procurement Act will be presented at the next P&R meeting.
- 6.2. NC confirmed the procurement capital is being prepared for 2024. No budget has been set yet but certain key projects such as the Station End Equipment project, that the scopes are being prepared ready for those tenders.
- 6.3. NC updated no STAs for October 2023.
- 6.4. JT noted that a Procurement Deep Dive has been completed in the last couple of weeks and the positive difference that has been found within Procurement over the last year is substantial. RH agreed and thanked the team for their hard work.

## **7. Performance Report**

- 7.1. LC presented the performance report for October 2023. Total number of incidents have witnessed a -23% reduction in Fire incidents compared to the previous month, with a +9% increase above the five-year average.
- 7.2. False Alarm Incidents exhibited a notable increase, up +16% from the same period last year and +12% uplift compared to the five-year average, although displayed a -10% drop compared to the previous month. Data is being fed back into the prevention and protection teams to try to identify any other trends and adjust the communication appropriately.
- 7.3. Special Service Incidents decreased slightly compared to the previous month showing a -7% drop, and a +7% increase compared to the previous year, and a 7% increase compared to the five-year average.
- 7.4. There was a notable spike in Accidental Dwelling Fires marking a 36% increase from September, a 15% increase compared to the five-year average, and a 17% increase compared to the same period last year. Analysis of these incidents revealed no discernible patterns in terms of ignition types or geography. Of the 8 Accidental Dwelling Fire (ADF) injuries, all but 2 occurred in separate incidents, and no discernible pattern regarding the source or location of these injuries was identified. A deep dive annual report is going to be created for Accidental Dwelling Fires with injuries and fatalities associated.
- 7.5. Both deliberate fires and non-domestic fires recorded figures within lower tolerance levels. Deliberate fires decreased by -27% compared to last year and -15% compared to the five-year average. Non-domestic fires also exhibited a decline, with a -63% drop from the previous year and a -48% decrease compared to the five-year average. An analysis of data spanning five years indicates a recurring pattern where deliberate fires tend to peak in the summer months and then decline throughout winter. Similarly, non-

domestic fires typically hit their lowest point in October over the same period. Ongoing review of these numbers will ascertain whether they adhere to the historical pattern of the past five years or if October represents an anomaly with a lower number of incidents.

- 7.6. LC informed that October 2023 follows September with recording 0 fatalities from fires.
- 7.7. Coverage has maintained stable at 97%, showing a consistent level of service provision. All strategic stations are operating at 95% or higher coverage, with Basildon, Brentwood, and Maldon achieving their highest coverage rates in the past six months.
- 7.8. Prevention visits totalled 1,060, marking a 41% increase from September (751 visits) and a 47% increase from October last year (719 visits). Safe and Well visits surpassed the monthly target, achieving the second-highest monthly count since April 2021. Operational Crew visits rose by 45% compared to the previous month, narrowly missing the monthly target. This uptick in visits is largely attributed to the team regaining full capacity.
- 7.9. As outlined in the RBIP plan, the commitment is to ensure that all High-risk premises are visited by 31/03/2028, and all Very High-risk premises are visited by 31/03/2026. To support these objectives, a scenario planning tool has been developed for the Protection team to strategically plan future visits. The tool considers anticipated staffing levels and activity, projecting that High-risk visits will be completed 10 months ahead of the RBIP target 31/05/2027, and Very High-risk premises being completed 2 months behind the target, 31/01/2026. However, this plan assumes that each inspecting officer will perform a minimum of 6 visits per month. When the average number of visits completed by inspecting officers over the past 3 months (which is 6.3) is factored in, the revised forecast indicates that both High-risk and Very High-risk premises will be completed within target.
- 7.10. The Service received only one Freedom of Information (FOI) request, specifically related to maternity pay. Three FOI requests were completed, with one missing the deadline, resulting in a completion percentage of 67%. Regarding data breaches in October, there was one near miss/minor breach and an ongoing breach related to SharePoint information and usage. To address this, various tools are being developed to educate staff on proper data storage practices, clarify responsibilities for data security, and emphasise the importance of always maintaining data security.
- 7.11. Discussion took place around the near misses and data breach the reason of this not being referred to the Information Commissioner's Office. KE narrated the service have an in-house Data Protection Officer, there is a set criterion before going to Information Commissioner's Office and the data breaches did not breach outside of the organisation. KE noted the Information Commissioner's Office regularly audit the service to ensure the service are dealing with the breaches in the correct way.

**Action 44/23 – LC to ensure there is a narrative for RTCS in future reports as there is a substantial level of activity.**

## **8. Q2 Performance Report**

- 8.1. LC presented the Q2 Performance Report for 2023/24, the total number of incidents saw a 20% decrease from the same period last year, with a marginal 1% increase

against the five-year average. Fire incidents, specifically, are 49% lower than last year, and -19% below the five-year average, reflecting the influence of the prior year's heatwave. Notably, 61% of fires in Q2 were outdoor, 22% affected buildings, and 17% impacted vehicles.

- 8.2. Two fatalities were recorded, both occurring in August 2023. The first fatality resulted from a light aircraft crash in the Dunmow area. The second fatality involved an unidentified female in the Loughton area due to call from a gas company reporting high carbon monoxide. RH questioned the fatality not being related to an ongoing investigation by Essex Police. LC noted to confirm this to RH after the meeting. Following the incident, a Targeted After Incident Response (TAIR) activity was conducted in the area, resulting in 251 targeted properties, 116 engagements, 14 Home Fire Safety Check referrals, and 2 safeguarding referrals.
- 8.3. Discussions underway within the service on the performance framework for Unwanted Fire Signals in 2024 and how the impact can be presented correctly within the paper.
- 8.4. Overall coverage increased in Q2 to 97% with a notable increase in the coverage rate of Braintree which struggled to exceed 90% during the previous year.
- 8.5. While not hitting the 10-minute target, it was noted that Q2 experienced the best average turnout time since April 2019 of 2 minutes 20 seconds. There were 77 potentially life-threatening incidents which took more than 20 minutes to respond. Of these incidents there was a total of 8 individuals with minor injuries requiring hospital treatment, all received from RTC incidents.
- 8.6. Low availability is a national issue that ECFRS are alive to. To improve on call availability, the response function has delivered a 17-point action plan to deliver new ways of ensuring appliances can remain on the run. This plan will be monitored through the response performance board and onwards to the Continuous Improvement Board/Senior Leadership Team and the OPFCC. The plan has measurable targets to ensure direction of travel and improvements can be tracked. RH questioned when the 17-point action plan is going to be presented. KE confirmed to present the plan at the next P&R board meeting now that SMT approved the paper at the most recent SMT meeting.
- 8.7. In Q2, there were a total of 2,277 Prevention visits, marking a 14% increase from the same period last year. There is an expected slight drop in the total number of visits completed compared to Q1 2023/24. The decline can be primarily attributed to resource limitations stemming from staff absences due to sickness and secondment assignments. As the team anticipates operating at full capacity in the future, an uptick in visit numbers is expected. A revaluation of vulnerability categories has led to more visits being referred to operational crews, aligning with the target of 438 monthly allocations to operational crews. Notably, visits completed by operational crews have increased by 54% compared to the same period last year and are 14% higher than the previous quarter. Continual information on fires and prevention is being communicated to the residents of Essex via a variety of social media platforms.
- 8.8. The sickness rate has experienced a slight increase compared to the previous quarter and is currently slightly above the five-year average. Musculoskeletal issues remain the predominant cause of long-term sickness. Turnover rates have remained relatively stable, supported by a newly developed dashboard that provides a detailed breakdown of information gathered during exit interviews.

- 8.9. During Q2, ECFRS received 17 Freedom of Information requests, a figure significantly below the five-year average and notably decreased from the previous quarter. Among these requests, 3 were submitted past the deadline, although none exceeded a delay of more than two days. Despite the limited number of Freedom of Information requests received during this period, the impact of responses missing the deadline is more pronounced, underscoring the importance of timely and efficient handling of these requests. RH raised that election period is forthcoming and for ECFRS to be in preparation for people to request Freedom of Information for their manifesto planning. RH requested if the Frinton incident data could be shared with The PFCC's Office to ensure the team are fully prepared with forthcoming public engagement. KE confirmed to share this information with The PFCC'S Office.
- 8.10. A total of 16 data breaches were reported, consisting of 6 minor/near miss breaches, 6 moderate breaches, and 4 major breaches. One incident was referred to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in August 2023. Major breaches involved issues such as data exposure in the SharePoint infrastructure, papers containing personal information left on desks or in drawers during personnel transitions, incorrect entry of personal data into systems, and accidental sharing of a form with a small group via email. All breaches were reviewed, and no intentional wrongdoing was found. KE noted all aspects of Information Governance paper is going to be presented to the P&R board in February 2024.
- 8.11. During Q2, ECFRS experienced an increase in the number of complaints, surpassing the figures from the previous year and exceeding the five-year average. A detailed analysis of these complaints did not reveal any discernible patterns, as all complaints were related to individual issues. RH requested more detail of the complaints process and the outcomes to be shared with The PFCC's Office. RHy confirmed to have a 1:1 to discuss this.
- 8.12. JT raised ECFRS having the best turnout time with response time and what activity is going on to enable that. AS confirmed there has been no direct targeting. RHy noted there are on-call appliances available at the stations, so the 5-minute turnout time is limited with crews already on standby. RH narrated this may be having a factor and ability to increase coverage, but the downfall is costs which LC is investigating further.

**Action 45/23 – 17-point action plan for on-call to be presented at the next P&R board meeting.**

**Action 46/23 – KE to share the Frinton FOI request with Darren Horsman.**

**Action 47/23 – RH and RHy to discuss the complaints process and outcomes at their next 1:1.**

## **9. Quarterly Working Well Together**

- 9.1. CB presented the Quarterly Working Well Together Report 2023/24. The Annual Leave Policy has agreement on four out of the five changes. Those 4 changes will now go live. Changes to the policy started out as 5 but after investigation there will be more changes to follow going into the next phase. 4 polices are outstanding with reference to page 3 of the paper. 2 out of 4 policies have been resolved with Phase 19 commencing as of last week.
- 9.2. CB raised ECFRS have several new managers within the service who are involved in consulting. A Working Well Together training workshop has taken place for them.

Change of personal in the representative bodies and the Fire Brigade Union Secretary is now Richie Adams.

- 9.3. RH questioned the Animals – Smoky Paws operation. RHy explained it is oxygen masks for Animals that have been rescued from smoke filled buildings to help revive them as you would do a person. They have been provided free of charge.
- 9.4. RH questioned what ECFRS are doing to embed better behaviours as part of the Quarterly Working Well Together. CB noted several evidence points to give assurance, and these will be reflected on the Culture dashboard which has been in place since June 2023. RH requested to include key elements from the dashboard into the Quarterly Report. CB confirmed to action this.

**Action 48/23 – CB to share key elements from the Culture dashboard into the next Quarterly People Report.**

## **10. Digital and Data Strategy Update**

- 10.1. KE presented the Digital and Data Strategy Update. On track for delivery in all aspects of the Programme. The Control Systems Project had initially 150 issues logged from end users, and this has now been resolved and reduced to 20 issues.
- 10.2. Decision report will be brought through to The PFCC's Office for Station End Equipment when the next steps of scoping have progressed.
- 10.3. Replacement of Mobile Data Terminals for fire appliances due to these being end of life. Signal issues have now been resolved for EE network around Loughton and Newport.
- 10.4. ECFRS are looking to implement a dynamic cover tool through a piece of software which will be another thing that contributes to the efficient resources.
- 10.5. Collaboration with Essex Police for telematics which will allow better use of fleet resources and better efficiency around this.
- 10.6. Number of IT skills workshops are running to help ECFRS colleagues to embed the technology.
- 10.7. RH questioned if any critical issues are currently in place. KE raised a few outstanding issues and ECFRS are withholding payments until this is resolved which will be by the end of Q4.

## **11. Converted Stations Transitional Group Update**

- 11.1. AS presented the Converted Stations Transitional Group Update. Reduction in the availability for Dovercourt. One Crew Manager was sick over the past month which has resulted in direct impact on the availability.
- 11.2. ECFRS are looking to improve this and all strategic stations by use of the Day Duty Officers. Retyped the guidance which will be relaunched next week with an aim to use Day Duty staff out on stations more to provide better cover alongside their current roles.
- 11.3. Extending mix crewing at Dovercourt day and night, which allows more resilience for the stations pumps to be moved into standby and doing this is a reduction in costs.



- 11.4. Training is being reviewed with CB and the team around Phase 1 and Phase 2. ECFRS have recruited many new On-Call crew.
- 11.5. RH narrated the availability rate for On-Call stations is not acceptable and needs to be 100% availability not 98% and to this needs to be incorporated in the action plan along with the costs. AS confirmed to incorporate the costs against the availability to ensure the balance within the action plan for the next P&R meeting.

**Action 49/23 – AS to incorporate the availability and costs and present to the next P&R board.**

## **12. Quarterly Grenfell Phase 1 High Level Action Plan Update**

- 12.1. AS presented the Quarterly Grenfell Phase 1 High Level Action Plan Update. All Grenfell 46 recommendations have been closed and assured. Business As Usual plans have been built in to ensure the strategic risk is monitored correctly.
- 12.2. Manchester Arena Inquiry Vol 2 (MAI2) sits with the Emergency Services Collaboration Portfolio for oversight of all 149 recommendations. The NFCC have asked for a total of 48 recommendations that all FRS need to consider their compliance against. In addition to the 48, there are 29 recommendations directed to JESIP and requiring a multi-agency approach to compliance. ECFRS are reporting on a larger number to the NFCC not just the Fire Recommendations.
- 12.3. RH thanked and endorsed ECFRS for the work around completing the 46 recommendations.

## **13. Quarterly Ops Assurance Report**

- 13.1. AS presented the Quarterly Ops Assurance Report. Station audits are giving 'adequate' assurance. A lot of failings are around recording information.
- 13.2. ECFRS took part in the JESIP inspections and are still waiting on the report back for this, the report is looking like it is going to be positive feedback.
- 13.3. RH questioned to why the exercises are not taking place. AS confirmed plans are in place on the Forward Plan for 2024 to ensure these exercises take place.

**Action 50/23 - RHy and AS to share the exercise plan for 2024 with The PFCC's Office at the next P&R meeting.**

## **14. Quarterly H&S Report**

- 14.1. There was no summary presented with this paper just straight to questions.
- 14.2. RH questioned the well-being of the staff with the Orsett incident. KE narrated the staff want to get back into the Station relatively quickly with plans to have the station re-opened in the new financial year.

## **15. Any Other Business**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15:50pm.

## **Future meeting dates**

- 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023