

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

ESSEX POLICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD

26 October 2023 14:00 – 16:00

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	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, PFCC's office
Fiona Henderson (FH)	Director of Continuous Improvement and Analytics
Rebecca Humphreys (RHu)	Head of Operational HR, Essex Police
Richard Jones (RJ)	Head of Financial Perform & Reporting, Essex Police
Natalie Mann (NM)	Head of Research and Analysis, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Chief Financial Officer and Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Andrew Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager, PFCC's Office
Samantha Bardsley (SB)	(Minutes), Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
BJ Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Richard Leicester (RL)	Director of HR, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police

1. Introductions

- 1.1. RH welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies were noted from those above and Natalie Mann was introduced to all as the new Head of Research and Analysis for Essex Police (EP).

2.

2.1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1.1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, however, it was queried by PBI if any of the content from the official sensitive papers should be redacted or moved to a Part B before publishing. AP agreed to check the minutes for restricted content.

Action 49/23

AP to check the minutes of the 02 October 2023 meeting for any sensitive material from the discussions around the official sensitive papers and advise SH if there is a requirement for redactions or a Part B to be created.

- 2.1.2. There were no matters arising.

2.2. Action Log

20/23 Crime Data Accuracy

Completed.

Close

28/23 PEEL Inspection AFIs update

No update due until December 2023.

Remain Open

39/23 Quarterly Performance Report / MSG Aspirations - Q3 drivers Priority 12

Greg Myddelton has picked this up and it is hoped a response will be ready for the November PRSB meeting.

Remain Open

39a/23 Quarterly Performance Report

Quarterly Performance and We Wills are now separate reports.

Close

43/23 Stop and Search / Use of Force

This will be completed for the next Use of Force/Stop and Search report that is scheduled for the 27th of November PRSB meeting.

Remain Open

47/23 Monthly Performance Report - Cadets numbers

Information received.

Close

48/23 Approval for publishing of documents - OPC Report

Paper classification changed and resubmitted.

Close

2.3. Forward Plan

2.3.1. No changes have been proposed to the current plan.

2.3.2. AP asked if there were any timings available for the deep dives due to take place in 2024? SH advised this is a work in progress, a proposed forward plan is being taken to SMT and it is intended that the proposed Deep Dive schedule will go to them at the same point. At present the known deep dives are scheduled up until January 2024; onwards is still to be agreed, this becomes slightly more complicated towards the end of 2024 when a new Police and Crime Plan will be in place. RH confirmed that the deep dive schedule should run until November 2024 based on the current Police and Crime Plan.

3. Finance

3.1. Monthly Finance Report

3.1.1. RJ presented the Monthly Finance Report which represents the half yearly position.

3.1.2. Section 2 covered the List of Appropriations to/(from) Earmarked Reserves. RJ advised there were 3 appropriations from earmarked reserves, one of which was a reversal.

3.1.3. Section 3 covered Revenue with RJ advising the revenue forecast overspend as at month six being £0.223m against the 2023/24 revenue budget of £363.7m (0.06% variance).

Additional funding of £2.265m in relation to an overachievement of 2023/24 Police Officer Uplift is included in the revenue forecast. It was noted there was still a sizeable amount there for income with a £22m gap to overcome by financial year end, EP are satisfied that there are various income streams like the Home Office PUP grant and some of the PFCC commissioning budgets around victims and violence and vulnerability where they are yet to receive the funding and anticipate they will have that by financial year end.

3.1.4. RH questioned that at this stage of the year, we are normally looking at an underspend starting to appear, yet it appears to be going the other way; and asked RJ for his feel for what was occurring? RJ responded that in terms of where they are heading for month seven, albeit they haven't finalised the figures at this stage, it is thought they will be reverting to a modest underspend at that point. RJ advised, however, that he exercises some caution because there are still some adjustments that are due to happen, but as things stand today, they are certainly going to revert to an underspend position.

3.1.5. JP asked, regarding the earmarked reserves, whether now is the time for us to start asking for the £1.6m we didn't get given for Op Hazel last year? RH noted this had been in his thoughts too, but that he was of the opinion it was still a bit early and would be better to wait until after the funding settlement; and to do so early in the new calendar year.

Action 50/23

Review if it is an opportune time to write the letter requesting the £1.6m we did not receive for Op Hazel early in the new calendar year.

3.1.6. Section 4 covered Workforce Analysis and RJ advised it was noted in the yellow forecast strength section that they have now put in row 24, which is the officer headcount and that confirms the position that at the end of September they were 46 over. Confirming they have met the Police Officer Uplift (PUP) requirements and are forecast to do so by financial year end as well.

3.1.7. Section 5 covered Detailed Reserves Analysis, RJ advised they started the year at total revenue reserves, including general reserves, of £28.9m. They did appropriate £2.4m as part of budget setting which included £3.1m from the general reserve which was in effect to balance the budget and form part of the budget papers that went to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in February. Based on all the appropriations that they have transacted today, the total of revenue reserves is £18.850m with a further forecast £1.603m to transact by financial year end.

3.1.8. Section 6 covered Capital. RJ advised they were reporting a circa £1m underspend as at month five, and that has now increased to circa £3m.

3.2. Police Objective Analysis (POA) Report

3.2.1. RJ presented the Police Objective Analysis Report. He advised they are still working with a £223k overspend and the report maps the position from month three, which was £0.7m underspent, to a £0.2m overspent at month six. This is predominantly in relation to the pay award inclusion.

3.2.2. JW noted, on dealing with the public, the forecast of outturn is £5m above last year's outturn and asked for the force's comments on this. RJ advised some of this is in connection to pay related budgets for both officers and staff. £3.2m of the £5m is an increase in investment in both officers and staff within that area and it also includes the overtime position.

3.2.3. JW noted that the training budget appears to be £4m lower than last year's outturn and asked for the force's comments on this. RJ advised that this will predominantly be in connection with the PUP uplift programme, so that the amount that they are going to receive this year far outstrips what we had for last year. That said, they have had their outliers information through for their statutory POA return and the only areas where they are identified as an outlier is within training. RJ therefore believed they need to revisit whether they have got PUP reflected correctly within support functions or whether it should actually be reflected across the broad range of the POA headings.

3.2.4. JW noted that the IT outturn is £6m up on last year's outturn and queried why that had gone up so much? RJ advised they had a similar sort of increase on outturn for IT at month three and it is predominantly in relation to new revenue investment and contractual legal pressures. RJ indicated they probably need to take the remainder away because they do acknowledge that a 25% uplift does seem quite sizeable for IT as a whole.

Action 51/23

RJ to further scrutinise the £6m IT outturn variance 2023/24 vs 2022/23 and report back.

4. Performance Reports

4.1. Monthly Performance and Quarterly Performance reports

4.1.1. FH presented the Monthly Performance and Quarterly Performance reports concurrently and advised there have not been any changes to the gradings of the 12 priorities since last month's report.

4.1.2. Investment in Crime Prevention remains at Adequate, there has been no change in the individual metrics. FH advised it is the Force Control Room and general call handling performance that remains their biggest area of focus with this section of the report. 101 calls have reduced in both the Control Room and the Resolution Centre. Wait time is stable compared to last September with the Resolution Centre actually reporting 101 calls answered 16mins quicker than last September.

4.1.3. Reducing Drug Driven Violence remains at Good and there has been no change in the metrics. FH advised they are seeing year on year a reduction in Violence With Injury, about 3.5% lower, and both quarter 1 and quarter 2 of this financial year have both been lower than the previous year. Alongside that they have seen a 12.5% reduction in knife enabled offences and a stable performance in terms of confidence that they are dealing with drug driven violence. It was also noted that Essex Police has been highlighted as leading the way in dismantling organised drugs related crime by ERSOU.

4.1.4. Protecting Vulnerable People and Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse remains at Good with a slight change in the metrics with three improving. FH noted this month they saw a slight reduction in the number of domestic abuse offences they have solved for the first month, so they will monitor this to make sure this does not continue, but overall they continue to see fewer repeat domestic abuse victims year on year.

4.1.5. Reducing VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) remains at Good with no changes to the metrics. FH stated the percentage of women and girls who feel safe walking alone at night remains similar. In Tendring in particular, there is a piece of work looking at CCTV and lighting provisions; to see what they can do to improve the feeling of safety as part of the wider Safer Streets project.

- 4.1.6. Improving Support for Victims remains at Requires Improvement with no changes to the metrics. FH advised there is a reduction in the number of offences where the victim is a repeat victim and there is a slight decrease in the number of referrals to Victim Support. RH noted that this priority really isn't improving and asked if the right things are being done, or if there is a need to take a radical look at this priority. AP stated there is a determination to shift this, but it is clear from the 4 year graphs that this is not shifting. Focus is going into the new Target Operating Model in the Control Room with a drive to answer the phone quicker and get a better service for the victim, however, it doesn't start until April 2024. AP also advised there is work around the victims App being completed, so there is less need for victims to use the 101 service and improve call taking capacity. AP was therefore confident that in the next 12 months we should expect to see a positive improvement.
- 4.1.7. Protecting Rural and Isolated Areas remains at Good and there are no changes to the metrics. It was noted that of all forces impacted by rural crime, Essex is the only force to experience a reduction in the cost of rural crime, according to NFU data.
- 4.1.8. Preventing Dog Theft remains at Good with no changes to the metrics. The Rural Engagement Team have been deployed well in this aspect, attending local engagement events and providing an increased awareness around dog theft.
- 4.1.9. Reducing Business Crime, Fraud and Cyber Crime remains at Adequate and the metrics remain the same. FH advised numbers of offences dropped in September to just over 1700. That is the lowest it has been for seven months. FH continued that quarter on quarter offences are still increasing and they do need to continue to watch that. FH also noted they are working in really close partnership with the University of Essex to create a fraud victims recovery tool kit. This looks at ways to identify victims of fraud and then helps them to recover; and potentially protect them from becoming repeat victims. AP noted the volume of crime is retail and shop theft, there is a national strategy Op Pegasus that has just been launched to combat this. RH highlighted the recent report on Op Pegasus and asked if there was any gap analysis being completed and if this could be fed back into him. AP advised that yes there was and that he is expecting a report back into the chief officer group on the 29th November and will ensure this is further fed back to the commissioner. JP appealed that we needed to do more on the prevention side, when it comes to fraud, as the personal impact here is far greater than the business side. FH noted that the work with the University of Essex on the fraud tool kit will be a good opportunity to expand here.
- 4.1.10. Improving Road Safety remains at Requires Improvement and has done since the beginning of the year, the metrics have not changed. FH advised they see small year on year reductions, but these fluctuate month on month. In September it was a reduction of 1.5% year on year, previously we've seen reductions of around 5%. Quarterly trends do appear stable, and the number of fatalities is also sitting at a slight reduction.
- 4.1.11. Encouraging Volunteers and Community Support remains at Adequate with no change to the metrics. FH stated when it comes to the specials head count, which was last counted in July, it is 27% lower in those twelve months and significantly lower than 2019, it has been dropping quarter on quarter since quarter one of 2021/22. FH advised they do see a considerable effort being made into how they recruit and retain specials. Something that was drawn out from the We Wills report is focus groups that look at how they can draw in potential future recruits and how they can engage them in wanting to volunteer. FH mentioned concepts such as online engagement, there is now a portal where you can engage with existing officers, to have a discussion around what it is really like. RH remarked that it was becoming increasingly more difficult to justify this priority remaining at adequate. With the indicators going so far back and with Specials now numbering fewer than they were 7 years ago. RH believed we are in need of considering a regrading to requiring improvement. PBI noted in the We Wills report it talks about EP having 144 volunteer cadets and 72 volunteer cadet leaders which sounds like a ratio of one leader per two cadets and

therefore queried why we need to recruit more leaders to reinstate the four units? AP advised a number of these leaders are young cadets themselves relying on lifts to those cadet units and to take them to a new district to set up a new unit is slightly trickier. There is a plan from the Local Policing Support Unit to recruit more cadet leaders. They think they need about 24 more leaders to put themselves in a position to open the units that aren't running.

4.1.12. Supporting Staff and Officers remains Adequate. FH advised in terms of their ethnic and minority representation; it remains lower than where they want it to be. In the We Wills there was a real focus on staff well-being, in September there was a focus on suicide awareness and suicide prevention. There were also a few events throughout the month which included guest speakers. There was focus on helping staff to think about how they can support, prevent, spot warning signs and actually help people deal with issues such as bereavement as well.

4.1.13. Increasing Collaboration remains at Adequate with no changes to the metrics.

4.1.14. PBI noted that on comparing the numbers for the indicators in both the monthly and quarterly reports there were around half a dozen or so indicators that were giving different numbers. Some marginal but some quite significant and asked why that would be? FH agreed that she herself had also flagged this to the teams. The marginal ones are likely because of the timings on reports being run, the more significant ones are where they actually use different reports for some things as well. FH advised this is something they can investigate to make sure they are genuinely pulling back the same information.

Action 52/23

FH to investigate differences in numbers reported between monthly and quarterly reports.

4.2. Force Performance against National Crime and Policing Measures.

4.2.1. FH presented the Force Performance against National Crime and Policing Measures report. She advised that the report is providing the same messages as the internal performance reporting shows, and confirmed that the force is not an outlier for any criteria. Of note, it was highlighted that the 999 response times perform better than the national average in terms of the calls that we answer in under 10 seconds and were the same as the national average for the calls that wait for 60 seconds or longer.

5. Balanced Scorecard

5.1. FH presented the Balanced Scorecard advising they have not seen any changes in gradings. Keeping People Safe remains Adequate; How We Work remains Adequate; Our People remains Good and Community Focus remains as Requires Improvement.

5.2. AP provided an update on the approach to the assessment of the Balanced Scorecard, there is a piece of work to refine how Keeping People Safe is looked at which will break this element down into 'prevent, respond and investigate'. He assured that the details within are not changing.

5.3. RH noted the Disclosure Compliance Rate has fallen quite a long way and asked if there was anything there that needed flagging. AP agreed there was a deterioration and EP are not happy with it; this should improve as a result of the Athena Version 6 upgrades.

5.4. RH also queried that the Drink and Drug Driving data seems to imply that we are doing fewer proactive stops. He asked if that is the case, and if so why. FH advised it could mean we are doing fewer stops due to lack of proactivity or it could be there is a genuine improvement in peoples driving behaviour. SH suggested that looking forward it may be better to have this reported as a

percentage of outcomes rather than figures, as this would tell us whether there is an increase in those being stopped or not, whereas at present we are not sure whether this is about proactivity or outcome. RH recommended figures and a percentage would be the ideal.

6. Crime Data Accuracy

- 6.1. FH presented the Crime Data Accuracy paper, firstly highlighting the proxy measure that is currently being used to advise what proportion of incidents they are converting into crimes. FH advised there is some work to be done to look at whether that is the right information to have and of those crimes that are converted, how accurately is that being done. FH assured they are doing some work in the background to enhance that measure and more detail will be behind this in future reporting.
- 6.2. FH discussed the Stalking and Harassment Cancellations and it was noted that as well as the new recording measures that have contributed to a reduction in stalking and harassment offences, they are also seeing genuine reductions as well. FH drew attention to the fact that the Force Crime Data Registrar has been in contact to advise the figures in the report are ever so slightly incorrect, due to a technical error. SH advised that we would require a revised version of the paper for publication.

Action 53/23

An updated version of the crime data accuracy report to be provided to the PFCC's Office for publishing correcting the known errors.

- 6.3. FH went on to advise that new to this report, they are also starting to look at Single Online Home contact event recording compliance. For this report, they reviewed 225 events to test for the correct creation of an incident and then correct application of the recording. Of these, 14 potential missed crimes were identified.
- 6.4. An overview of the sexual offences audit and violence offences audit was also given by FH advising that overall there was a 93.4% compliance rate for recording of sexual offences and the compliance for violence recording was 92.1%. Based on previous experience of Crime Data Accuracy as part of the HMIC inspection cycle, the aim is for 94/95%. RH agreed.
- 6.5. SH noted the Crime Data Accuracy training only has one trainer doing three cohorts a week, which will take around a year to get the 1500 people left to be trained completed; and asked what sort of risk this creates. FH advised they have also brought in the online Crime Data Accuracy training packages so there is not total reliance on the one trainer, and officers and staff can access the training in a timely way.

7. HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance

- 7.1. RHu presented the report starting with detail around recruitment advising in the last quarter a total of 98 officers have joined the force resulting in total recruitment for the financial year to date of 148. As a result, the force has ended with a headcount of 3813 which is +48 higher than the minimum headcount requirement of 3765 and +3 against the increased headcount requirement of 3810.
- 7.2. RHu went on to advise the proportionality of candidates remains strong, both in terms of ethnic minority individuals and females, from a diversity perspective. They continue to find, however, the drop off rate for ethnic minority individuals is slightly higher, so that results in less actually joining the force. In terms of gender, the balance is looking very strong in this financial year to

date with 41% of those who have joined as officers being female, which is the highest ever proportion they have had based on the data available to the force (since 2009/10).

- 7.3. RHu noted with regards to officer turnover, a total of 150 officers have left the force this financial year to date. This equates to a turnover rate of 3.94%, which is marginally higher than the same period in 2022 (139 / 3.80%). There was a spike in attrition in August 2023 however, this appears to be an outlier as attrition in the months prior to this and September 2023 were stable. In addition, there are just 18 leavers confirmed for October 2023, which is lower than the monthly projected leavers of 23.
- 7.4. RHu informed that the promotion board saw two successful promotions to the rank of Superintendent, 39 in the Inspector process and there is a forthcoming Sergeant process due in December.
- 7.5. RHu went on to discuss Absence which has reduced for officers when compared to the same period in 2022. Psychological absence remains the highest reason, but it is reducing in terms of days lost. Respiratory reasons have been reducing, but we now move into the winter months and with Covid cases increasing, they are keeping an eye on this; there is also the winter health and flu vaccinations programme in place to help combat. Absence due to Musculo skeletal reasons has increased in terms of the proportion of absence reasons, the new force physio is now in post however and there is proactive work being completed here.
- 7.6. RH firstly praised the overall recruitment and retention outcomes as conversations with the Minister and the Home Secretary show that they regard us as being a role model for delivery against the uplift programme. RH went on to ask if the role of the new Retention Ambassadors could be explained in more detail. RHu defined that they based their model on Greater Manchester and that the majority of Essex Retention Ambassadors are relatively senior sitting at Inspector rank (or staff equivalent) and above. They can discuss issues with lived experience to help anyone expressing a desire to leave the force consider all options available. There are 29 across the force, they are a mixture of officers and staff and they are relatively evenly spread and they also encompass detectives and non-detectives. They have been trained through HR and equipped with various signposting options and importantly they have links into people who can help.
- 7.7. RH advised, following a conversation with the minister, he was unable to answer a question regarding the total number of undeployable officers/staff within EP, some forces are reporting percentages of around 17/18% undeployable due to the culmination of a variety of factors including sickness, health, restricted duties, IOPC investigations, disciplinary matters and grievances. RH requested that this should feature in future reports as a stacker graph that adds up all factors to show a total. RHu advised that this could be looked into and put into a report but there would need to be context around this. AP added this would be best brought back as a bespoke report to be looked at in isolation before looking at integrating it into the main report. RH guided it would be quite good to look at it over a couple of years to see if there are any trends also.

Action 54/23

RHu to produce a report showing the number of officers not available to deploy, for whatever reasons, going back previous years for comparative benefits.

8. Approval for publishing of documents

- 8.1. AP confirmed that as per the agenda there is nothing official sensitive to be precluded from publishing.

9. Any Other Business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:05 hours.

Future meeting dates

Monday 27 November 2023	10.30 (November meeting)
Thursday 4 January 2024	10.30 (December meeting)