



**POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND
ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES BOARD
21st December 2023 14:00 – 16:00
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)
Rick Hylton (RH)	Chief Fire Officer (ECFRS)
Moira Bruin (MB)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer (ECFRS)
James Palmer (JP)	Assistant Director, Response (ECFRS)
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services (ECFRS)
Sarah Smith (SS)	Procurement Manager (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)
Jo Thornicroft (JT)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny - Fire (PFCC's Office)
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)

1. Introductions

- 1.1. RH welcomed all to the meeting.
- 1.2. Apologies were noted from AS. JPa will be presenting the paper in his absence.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1. MB noted minor changes to the minutes from the previous meeting within section 3 of the Action Log informing of correct names and job titles and changes to section 4.3 HMIC to HMICFRS. MB highlighted section 9.2 correction of a new colleague's name. JT noted section 9 under action 49/23, to remove the words against the NRP. The amendments of the minutes of the previous meeting are now approved and agreed.
- 2.2. There were no matters arising.

3. Action Log

37/23 Performance Report

LC circulated Fire Fatalities report to the board today. **Propose Close.**

38/23 On-Call Support and Development

Report is not due yet. **Open.**

40/23 Converted Stations Transactional Group Update

JT is presenting the availability report in this meeting today. **Propose Close.**

43/23 Finance Report

NC presented the overdue recommendations at the Audit Committee on the 8th of December 2023. **Propose Close.**

46/23 Q2 Performance Report

KE to share FOI request to Darren Horsman and confirmed this is being done now. **Propose Close.**

47/23 Q2 Performance Report

RH and RHy have scheduled a 1:1 to discuss complaints process and outcomes. **Propose Close.**

49/23 Converted Stations Transactional Group Update

Cost against NRP is being presented in this meeting. **Propose Close.**

50/23 Quarterly Ops Assurance Report

Exercise plan for 2024 is not ready to be presented and will be picked up in January 2024. **Open.**

4. Forward Plan

- 4.1. JT updated on the Forward Plan for January 2024 which is as circulated. JT requested for the Quarterly Portfolio of Change Update report forward 1 month, so this aligns with the internal reporting. JT also requested to add a Public Sector Equality Duty update to March 2024 due this being part of the Scrutiny programme for the PFCC's office. CB confirmed the Staff Survey Engagement Report is taking place in January 2024. CB requested to take an action to discuss with JT the plan for the survey and what the report is going to cover.

Action 51/23 – CB and JT to have a meeting to discuss what information the Staff Engagement Survey report is going to cover.

5. Finance Report

- 5.1. NC presented the Finance Report for November 2023. The projected position of the outturn is currently showing a deficit of £538k, this is a movement of £57k from the last outturn position. NC noted the monthly movements are included in the calculation of the projected outturn position which explains most of the movement in the outturn. An increased expectation in the operational income due to come through for the year based on our income generated through interest on investments has been included in this month's forecast. The projected costs for on-call have kept in line with the yearly trend. There has been national agreement regarding the Green Book pay award on the 1st of November which is in line with previously submitted forecasts. This award is back dated to 1st April and will be processed in the December pay run and the budget will be phased from December to March to match the agreement.
- 5.2. NC updated on the months position which is showing a deficit position of £7k, which is £55k worse than the monthly Budget position, this is due to £138k overspend in on-call costs, £73k overspend in Support staff costs (£10k overtime for the Operational Training department, £40k overspend on casual and temp costs due to under establishment in teams). £2k overspend in Premises and Equipment costs. These are offset by £190k

additional operational income (£119k of interest on investment income). NC highlighted the service is saving on pension costs currently.

- 5.3. The YTD position shows a deficit position of £395k. This is a £1million adverse variance as compared to budget. The overspend on employment costs have been partially offset by additional unbudgeted operational income and funding.
- 5.4. NC stated updated plans for this financial year. 2024/2025 plans will be presented to the next ECFRS P&R board.
- 5.5. NC noted cash and cash equivalents decreased from £30.9m to £29.9m in the month. The Authority holds investments of £26.0m, down from £26.5m last month, including £16.0m of fixed term investments in UK government gilts, these investments have provided additional interest income for the Service, alongside rising interest rates.
- 5.6. NC highlighted The Capital Programme is actively monitored by several groups, including the Programme Management Board and Strategic Fleet Sub-Group. The forecast for 2023-24 is £6.2m.
- 5.7. RH questioned the capacity to spend capital and NC stated that much is planned with procurements and awaiting delivery.
- 5.8. NC highlighted the value for money audit is largely complete. The local government finance settlement come out on the 18th of December and the workshop that is happening in the new year will cover the full impact this had. NC noted the Services Grant has been cut to £100k down from £600k. NC said the pension grant has been rolled into the revenue support grant and has not been given an inflationary increase.
- 5.9. JP questioned the on-call costs being decreased going forward and NC narrated work is being undertook to reduce this figure.

6. Procurement Dashboard

- 6.1. SS updated on the Workwear tender and the tender is now closed, 3 responses received and evaluation underway. Stage 1 samples due by 8th Jan for review before Stage 2 samples at the end of February for extensive trials in operational roles. Expecting a 6-month implementation period before rolling out can begin.
- 6.2. Grays and Basildon Boilers the evaluation is now complete and awarded this month (December). The Internal Decorations Contract has been awarded for 4 stations totalling £109k. Wivenhoe includes minor works, contractors due to start on site in December. Cleaning and PPM electrical contracts meetings have been scheduled to take place monthly and quarterly.
- 6.3. SS highlighted the ICT procurement and how the service has been working closely with HR and Payroll looking at compliant award options to continue with the current provider. Procurement review of contracts for included updates, functionality and refresh of firmware on printers for the print management service across our estate documenting savings of £14,400.
- 6.4. SS noted the Public Perception Survey contract has been awarded to SMSR Ltd, £159.7k over two years, kick-off meeting set for 11th December. PHEM D training estimated costs £350-£400k over 4 years - tender closed 30th November with 3 responses received under evaluation. Tender run under the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service national framework. Tender has closed for the Thermal Imaging Cameras and the decision report is to be presented for approval to proceed to award. Positive-Pressure Ventilation Fans has an estimated cost £130k - Tender launched 23rd

November in collaboration with Suffolk Fire Service with evaluation testing taking place in December. This is being run under the NFCC National Emergency Response Equipment Framework.

- 6.5. SS advised no single tender actions to report on in November 2023.
- 6.6. RH questioned the Public Perception Survey contract cost and if this is value for money. SS narrated the service went out to tender for this contract and a full process was followed to ensure everything was in place correctly.

7. Performance Report

- 7.1. LC updated on the Performance Report for November 2023. The number of total incidents is -4% less than the same period last year, 3% above the five-year average for this period and are -10% below last month. The number of total fire incidents are -18% less than the same period last year, -21% below the five-year average for this period and are -32% below last month. The number of total special service incidents are 4% greater than the same period last year, 13% above the five-year average for this period and are 1% above last month. The number of total false alarm incidents are -4% less than the same period last year, 6% above the five-year average for this period and are -9% below last month. The number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended by ECFRS are the same as the same period last year, 5% above the five-year average for this period and are -4% below last month.
- 7.2. LC narrated the protection numbers; high and very high audits are now moving in the right direction and are found outside of the unacceptable tolerance levels. The scenario planner also provides a high degree of confidence that Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) activity will be completed before the planned target outlined in the RBIP, if activity remains at the same pace as the past 3 months. The planner considers anticipated staffing levels and activity, projecting that High-risk visits will be completed 12 months ahead of the RBIP target 31 August 2026, and Very High-risk premises being completed on target, 31 May 2026.
- 7.3. LC noted the Prevention numbers are not as high as the previous month and the number of Safe and Well visits in November is average for Prevention and above average for Operations. Mitigating circumstances specific for November in Prevention include the abstraction of 2 team members to the Community Wellbeing Officer team. In December is it anticipated there will be a lessening of the impact of this as they undertake self-generated Home Fire Safety Visits and alternative resources are in place to support their absence from the Safe and Well team.
- 7.4. Global Availability is up 2 points on last month but remains below target. LC advised the service has developed an availability improvement plan which has 17 points and will be reported through response governance and to the PFCC.
- 7.5. RTC attendance is around 60% of ECFRS activity is concerned with making the scene or vehicles safe, and around 20% of incidents where there is release or extrication of persons. The majority of RTC's attended to in November occurred in Southend, Grays and Loughton area. LC noted a new analyst has been employed at Safer Essex Road who is very experienced within this field, which will provide more accurate data.
- 7.6. Since July 2023, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Environmental Information Requests (EIR) have been split. This has resulted in very low numbers of FOI requests and associated completion rates, as most requests are EIR. These have now been combined, and the completion rate now reflects the efforts that the team put in to complete all requests within the statutory time periods.

- 7.7. Sickness rate is above the five-year average at 6.7%. LC noted call handling is slightly high and the team are going to be doing a deep dive into this for improvement and root cause.
- 7.8. LC confirmed there were 109 RTC's attended, 4 serious injuries and 1 fatality.
- 7.9. RH questioned the parked cars causing delays in response times and LC confirmed information has been provided to Comms on the whereabouts of the parked cars to ensure targeted social media comms is established.

8. Q2 Annual Plan Update

- 8.1. LC updated on the report. The annual plan activity status which has 27 activities on track, 3 proposed for closure and 3 to roll over and 4 that have closed.
- 8.2. LC narrated the service are changing and utilising the definition of done and if the activities are not due to be completed by the end of March 2024, then this will be finalised and completed in the next financial year.
- 8.3. LC noted the ECFRS Continual Improvement Officer meets with all the leads monthly and will provide early insight of any that may roll over.
- 8.4. RH questioned the changed definition of done against the policies rolling over. KE explained there are 5 different car policies across the services and the service is therefore having to undertake a lot of consultation on terms and conditions. KE agreed to take this as an action to discuss with LC on the appropriate meaning of the definition of done and report back to the board.
- 8.5. RH raised concerns on adopting the NFCC's assessment of productivity criteria and requested a workshop to take place around this. KE narrated the service are also looking at other measures as well as the NFCC's, and confirmed there is a report coming to SLT where Tim Bartlett has obtained all of the information and benchmarking of wholetime level of firefighters and reassured RH as previously stated by NC a workshop will be arranged and put into the diary to go through this in more detail.

Action 52/23 – KE to discuss with LC on the appropriate meaning of the definition of done for Annual Plan action, and report back to the board.

Action 53/23 – NC to arrange a workshop with RH to understand productivity.

9. Procurement Directive Update

- 9.1. SS updated on The Procurement Bill, which will reform the existing procurement rules, received Royal Assent in October 2023. In early 2024 secondary legislation will be laid to bring some elements of the Bill and the wider regime into effect. This document sets out to explain the differences between the new legislation and the current rules. The new legislation is The Procurement Act 2023 (hereafter referred to as the Act) and the current regulations which these replace are The Public Contract Regulations 2015 (hereafter referred to as PCR).
- 9.2. A minimum of 6 months' notice before 'go-live' will be given to allow for implementation, go live is anticipated to be October 2024. Secondary legislation is still being finalised and is expected to be laid in Parliament in March 2024. More detail around elements of the Act, such as the transparency notices, will become clearer in this secondary legislation. A formal policy guidance will be published in February 2024 which will include guidance on the transition and how to navigate.

- 9.3. SS highlighted new tender procedures; there are currently 7 and these will be changing down to 3. There are changes to frameworks and how tender evaluations will work. SS noted the transparency requirements, with regards to how the information is published is going to be changing. This is a big change with currently 4 notices which is going to be increased to 14.
- 9.4. SS noted before entering into a contract, a contract award notice must be published. A set aside condition is met if the court is satisfied that a required contract award notice was published. This will in most cases start the standstill period (now 8 working days instead of 10 calendar days). This is a big change from PCR in that a contract award notice is not published until after the standstill period has successfully passed and the contracts are fully signed.
- 9.5. SS advised next steps are waiting on the updates to the regulation 84 report requirements. The procurement strategy will be updated and submitted to the May SLT and June Strategic Board. The strategy was due to be submitted early 2024 but due to some legislation not being due until early 2024 it has been agreed to push back the update to ensure that a fully comprehensive update consistent with the Act can be provided. A further update can be taken to the September Strategic Board should further amendments be required.
- 9.6. Training is being rolled out for all procurement practitioners throughout 2024. The Category Procurement Manager is a superuser for the new Act and all available free resources, webinars, training etc. are being taken advantage of.
- 9.7. RH thanked the team for their hard work and efforts on this project.

10. Protection Strategy Update

- 10.1. MB updated on the revised Service Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) which started on the 1st of January 2023. Since this date there has been continual improvement with the way RBIP reporting has evolved for premises that fall within it. Changes are referenced within the next section of the report to demonstrate the Service will complete the timeframes of 5 years for High and 3 Years for Very High premises.
- 10.2. MB noted an evaluation of the ABP data revealed discrepancies in property risk grading compared to the Service's statutory duty under the Fire Safety Order. For instance, ABP categorised individual rooms in care homes as Very High Risk, whereas the service data only considered the entire building. Consequently, the property count exceeded what the Service were required to audit under the Fire Safety Order. To address this, the Protection team has provided a dedicated resource to work with CFRMIS to continually review all properties and remove buildings from the RBIP where necessary.
- 10.3. MB confirmed the service are on track to achieve what was set out to do.

11. On Call Remediation Plans including Converted Stations

- 11.1. JPa presented the report and informed there is a recommendation for the Dovercourt options and stated this recommendation has not yet been formally ratified by ECFRS, JPa is working with the service to understand what this may look like moving forward to get this recommendation approved and achieved.
- 11.2. JPa noted the availability for Canvey Island, Braintree and Witham has increased this month December 2023. JPa raised the key headlines for all the stations is reducing the timelines for the pathways between the phases of competency.

- 11.3. JPa advised that two stations are having some employee relation cases, but the team are working well to expedite the process.
- 11.4. RH questioned the timeframe for seeing improvement on the plans, how long ECFRS have to intervene and put in temporary measures, and the timeframe for the long-term sustainability. JPa confirmed the timeframe for improvements should be with immediate effect. JPa noted the 17-point action plan is looking to conclude by the end of this financial year and the increase in availability across all those stations which will be continually monitored by the service. RH requested a timeframe for when the target is going to be met. JPa said to take this as an action and work with the team to confirm an exact date with SLT and refer this back to the board.
- 11.5. JT asked how the challenges with availability are being factored into the CRMP. JPa highlighted retention is the biggest challenge the service face with the on-call section, but the modelling scenarios are working on this to close the gap.

Action 54/23 – JPa to confirm a date when the availability target is going to be met for those stations covered by the 17-point action plan and report back to the board once a date has been confirmed.

12. 17 Point Action Plan

- 12.1. JPa updated on the challenges around the availability across the stations with this being the level of developed fire fighters who have the skills to keep the pumps continuously running. This is linked to the retention issues within the service. JPa reported the availability across the stations will be increased by 10% by the end of this financial month and 80% on call availability by the end of the financial year.
- 12.2. JPa noted an overspend with the budget and this is due to resourcing the response strategy and strategic stations by moving appliances across the service in order to maintain coverage. JPa highlighted the team are working to reduce the overspend.
- 12.3. Standby moves for November and December 2023 have seen a significant decrease and JPa noted the team will continue to work to keep this reduction down. JPa highlighted standby moves are only going to be made for Strategic stations other than in spate conditions. Use of wholtime crews primarily to cover strategic stations. On-call only to be used at shift change overs. Increased use of on-call to on-call additional shift workers to put on-call strategic stations on the run. Mixed crewing to be utilised more regularly. Day Duty Officers to be used more often and department heads to be encouraged to release their people to work at on-call stations. This will become mandated and move from a voluntary position.
- 12.4. RH questioned the risks that may impact the rep bodies. JPa advised the risks it may have been slowing down the process but is confident the work the team have been doing with the rep bodies at an early stage should certainly mitigate this.
- 12.5. JT questioned the movement around what phase 1 and phase 2 firefighters could do and if there are any risks. JPa confirmed there are no risks to this.
- 12.6. RH thanked JPa and the team for such a comprehensive plan and noted any assistance or support the PFCC's office can provide to please consider.

13. Leadership Resourcing and Succession Pool Update

- 13.1. CB noted the Leadership Resourcing and Succession Pool (LRS) continues to align to the leadership framework values and ethics. CB said an impact assessment was conducted to ensure LRS was being accessed proportionately by the service. 13.8% of

the participates were female compared to 18.5% of the rest of the workforce but work is being done to increase the representation.

14. Deep Dives Update

14.1. This was to formally bring a quarterly update to the Board of the Deep Dive Programme. During the last quarter there was a deep dive undertaken on Procurement. The notes are attached for reference. There were no actions to take forwards.

15. Any Other Business

15.1. There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:00pm.

Future meeting dates

- 29th January 2024