

**Meeting:** Joint Audit Committee

**Date:** 08 December 2023

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**The PFCC's strategic risk register**

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**1. Purpose of the report**

1.1. The purpose of this report is to brief the Joint Audit Committee on changes and exceptional strategic risks on the PFCC's strategic risk register and to summarise the overall strategic risk position for the PFCC.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1. The Joint Audit Committee should note the contents of this report, and approve, or challenge as necessary, the updated strategic risk register, attached at Appendix 1.

**3. Background**

3.1. The PFCC's strategic risk register has five categories which are:

- a) The Police and Crime Plan
- b) The Fire and Rescue Plan
- c) Use of resources
- d) Holding to account, and
- e) Other functions and statutory duties

3.2. There are 32 strategic risks on the PFCC's strategic risk register, which is the same number as reported to the Joint Audit Committee in September 2023.

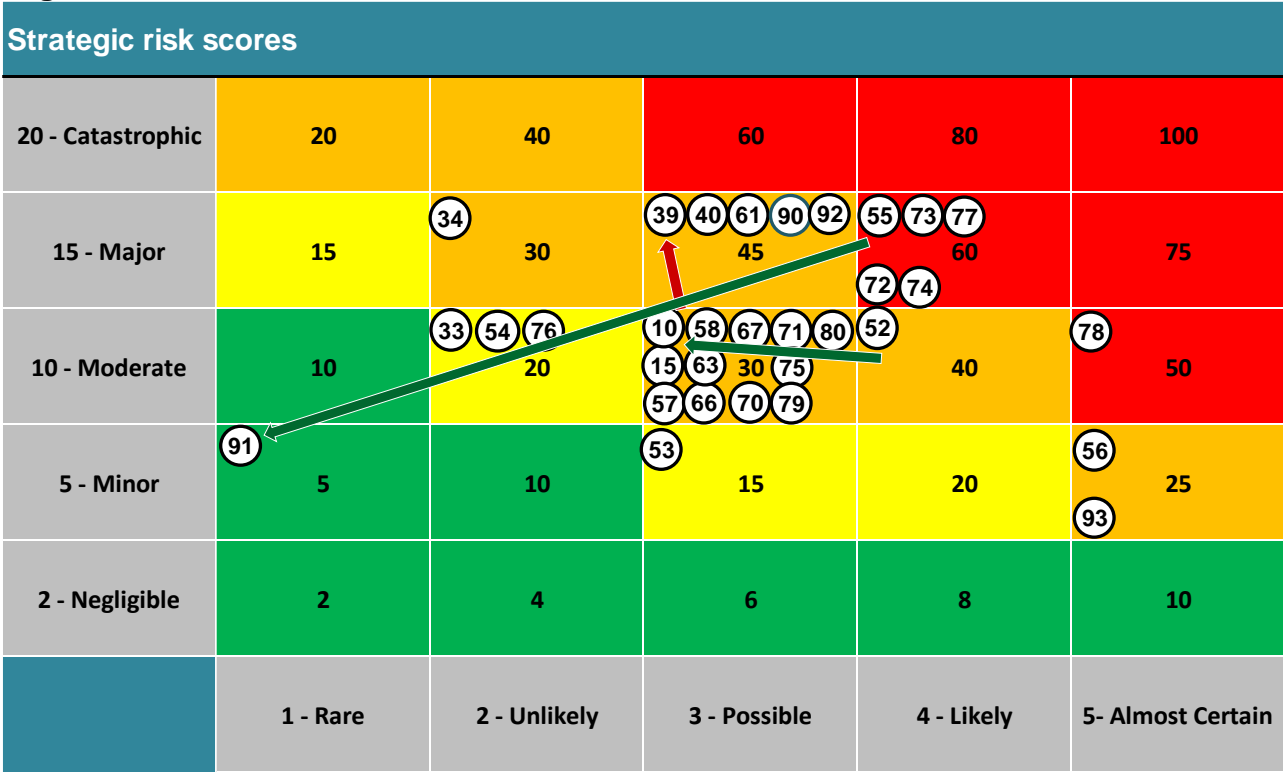
3.3. The overall RAG scores of the strategic risks are shown in figure 1 below, which illustrates that, since the previous report, at a summary level, the number of red strategic risks has reduced to six, the number of amber strategic risks has remained at 25 and there is now one green strategic risk.

**Figure 1**

Summary of strategic risk scores			
Scores	Strategic risks in Current Report	Strategic risks in Previous Report	Movement
Red	6	7	-1
Amber	25	25	-
Green	1	-	+1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>-</b>

3.4. Figure 2 shows the spread of the strategic risk scores and the RAG scores of all 32 strategic risks. The red arrow shows the movement of the strategic risk with a deteriorating score and the green arrows show the movement of the two strategic risks with improving scores.

**Figure 2**



3.5. A review of the strategic risk register shows that, since the last report there is, one amber strategic risk with a deteriorating amber score, one amber strategic risk with an improving amber score, and one green strategic risk that was previously red.

#### 4. Exception Reporting

4.1. Figure 3 below details the exceptional strategic risks.

**Figure 3**

Strategic risk exception reporting - 32 Strategic risks - 9 exception reports		Score			
Risk No.	Risk (of not achieving)	Current	Target	Direction of Travel	Risk Appetite
<b>Police and Crime Plan - 12 strategic risks - 5 exception reports</b>					
72	Protection of vulnerable people & reduction in cycle of domestic abuse	60	45	No Change	Cautious
73	Reduction in violence against women and girls	60	45	No Change	Cautious
74	Improvement in the support for victims of crime	60	45	No Change	Cautious
77	Prevention of business crime, fraud and cyber crime	60	30	No Change	Challenging
78	The encouragement of volunteers and community support	50	10	No Change	Challenging
<b>Fire and Rescue Plan - 8 strategic risks - 1 exception report</b>					
55	The broadening of roles, developing a wider range of activities	60	20	No Change	Challenging
<b>Use of resources - 4 strategic risks - 2 exception reports</b>					
10	Commissioning resources supporting the Police & Crime Plan	30	10	Improving	Challenging
39	The setting of a balanced budget	45	15	Deteriorating	Challenging
<b>Holding to account - 2 strategic risks - No exception reports</b>					
<b>Other functions and statutory duties - 6 strategic risks – 1 exception report</b>					
91	Devolution proposal / PFCC functions and powers	5	5	Improving	Challenging

- 4.1.1. Figure 3 shows that **the Police and Crime Plan** has 12 strategic risks, five of which are red, with no other exceptions to report.
- 4.1.2. **The Fire and Rescue Plan** has eight strategic risks, of which one is red, with no other exceptions to report.
- 4.1.3. **Use of resources** has four strategic risks, of which one has a deteriorating amber score, and one has an improving amber score, with no other exceptions to report.
- 4.1.4. **Holding to account** has two strategic risks with no exceptions to report.
- 4.1.5. **Other functions and statutory duties** has six strategic risks, of which one has improved from red to green, with no other exceptions to report.

4.2. The nine strategic risks identified for exception reporting in figure 3 are considered in further detail below.

4.3. There are six red strategic risks, all of which were red in the last report, these are:

- 4.3.1. Strategic risk 72 (Police and Crime Plan) relating to protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse (DA). Essex experienced a 16.5% decrease (4,973 fewer) in the number of recorded DA offences for the 12 months to October 2023 compared to the 12 months to October 2022. The Force recorded 1,057 fewer offences in the three months to October 2023 compared to the three

months to October 2022 (6,304 v. 7,361). 9. Essex Police solved 16.4% fewer (553) DA offences for the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to October 2022. The Force also solved 169 fewer offences in the three months to October 2023, compared to the three months to October 2022 (684 v. 853). There was a 15.4% decrease (4,591 fewer) in DA offences and a 6.0% decrease (181 fewer) in the number of DA offences solved, for the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to December 2019. There were 2,315 fewer repeat victims of DA in the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to October 2022 (11.4% less). There was also a decrease of 12.2% (2,513 fewer) compared to the 12 months to December 2019. Confidence that the policing response to protect children and vulnerable people, from the independent survey jointly commissioned and funded by Essex Police and the PFCC, is at 77.9% (results to the 12 months to June 2023). Compared to the year ending June 2022, confidence has decreased by 3.8 percentage points. This strategic risk remains as red, and whilst there is improvement, the overall volume of offences are significant, and therefore still represent a considerable risk.

**4.3.2.** Strategic risk 73 (Police and Crime Plan) relating to reducing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). Essex experienced a 13.9% decrease (5,398 fewer) in the number of Violence Against the Person (VAP) offences, committed against females in the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to October 2022. There was a 5.4% decrease (1,919 fewer) in the number of VAP offences committed against females in the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to December 2019. Where gender is detailed, over half of victims of offences are identified as female (55.7%). 3.6% of offences (2,232 offences) had no gender recorded. There were 3,891 fewer Stalking and Harassment crimes committed against females in the 12 months to October 2023 (12,706 crimes), compared to the 12 months to October 2022 (16,597 crimes). There was an 11.8% decrease (577 fewer) in the number of Sexual Offences committed against females in the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to October 2022, and a 13.2% increase (504 more) compared to the 12 months to December 2019. Essex Police solved 51 more of these offences in the 12 months to October 2023 compared to the 12 months to October 2022 and solved 112 more compared, to the 12 months to December 2019. From the independent survey jointly commissioned and funded by Essex Police and the PFCC, 43.8% of females feel safe walking alone in their area after dark for the 12 months to June 2023, compared to 76.4% of males. Improving the safety of women and girls continues as a key priority and the strategic risk score for this priority remains red.

**4.3.3.** Strategic risk 74 (Police and Crime Plan) relating to improving support for victims of crime. Essex experienced a 16.3% decrease (7,723 fewer) in the number of offences with a repeat victim for the 12 months to October 2023 (39,524 offences), compared to the 12 months to October 2022 (47,247 offences) and a 7.4% decrease (3,180 fewer) compared to the 12 months to December 2019 (42,704 offences). Except for August 2022, the year-on-year change for repeat victimisation has decreased each month since December 2022. The number of individual repeat victims decreased by 9.7% (2, 210 fewer) for the 12 months to October 2023 (20,670 individual victims), compared to the 12 months to October

2022 (22,880 individual victims). There was a decrease of 637 individual victims compared to the 12 months to December 2019 (21,307 individual victims). Confidence among victims (from the independent survey jointly commissioned and funded by Essex Police and PFCC is at 59.7% (results to the 12 months to June 2023). This is 14.8 percentage points lower than confidence of non-victims for the same period (74.5%). Confidence in the local police amongst victims has remained stable, in contrast to confidence amongst non-victims where there was a statistically significant reduction of 5.2 percentage points. The gap between confidence of victims and non-victims has therefore narrowed, but has done so through this reduction in the confidence of non-victims. The risk appetite for this strategic risk remains as cautious and continues with a red score.

- 4.3.4.** Strategic risk 77 (Police and Crime Plan) relating to the prevention of business crime, fraud, and cybercrime. Essex experienced a 6.8% increase (1,408 more) in the number of Business Crime offences and a 5.6% increase (188 more) in the number of these offences which were solved in the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to October 2022. Shoplifting accounts for approximately 50.9% of business crime. There was an 8.5% decrease (2,047 fewer) in the number of Business Crime offences and a 27.6% decrease (1,352 fewer) in the number of Business Crimes solved in the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to December 2019. There was a 5.0% decrease in the number of fraud offences related to Business Crime in the 12 months to October 2023, compared to the 12 months to October 2022; this equates to 18 fewer offences. There was also a 29.1% decrease in the 12 months to October 2023 compared to the 12 months to December 2019; this equates to 141 fewer offences. Confidence that Essex Police are dealing with cyber-crime from the independent survey jointly commissioned and funded by Essex Police and PFCC, is at 46.1% for the 12 months to June 2023. Essex has a judicial outcome rate for fraud crimes reported for 2022/23, up to August 2023, of 1.09%. The overall national judicial outcome rate is 1.96%, and Essex is ranked 32 out of 42 forces in this measure. This strategic risk remains as red.
- 4.3.5.** Strategic risk 78 (Police and Crime Plan) relating to the encouragement of volunteers and community support. Confidence that there are good opportunities for volunteers to assist policing and reduce crime in Essex, from the independent survey jointly commissioned and funded by Essex Police and PFCC, is at 54.3%, for the 12 months to June 2023. The Special Constabulary having reached a peak of over 519 officers in 2021, has retracted in size (286 at the end of October 2023) due to a combination of officers deciding to join the regulars and the cost-of-living pressures making volunteering more difficult. With the size of the Special Constabulary continuing to decrease this strategic risk remains red.
- 4.3.6.** Strategic risk 55 (Fire and Rescue Plan) relating to broadening the roles and the range of activities undertaken by the Service, in particular providing more protection and prevention. This priority remains at substantial risk and the strategic risk continues as red.

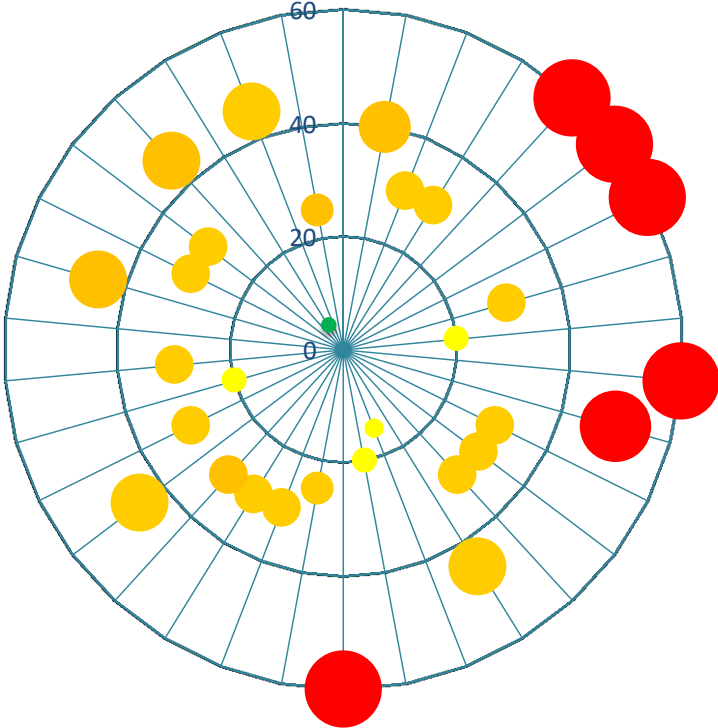
- 4.4. There is one strategic risk, with a deteriorating amber score since the last report, which is
- 4.4.1. Strategic risk 39 (Use of Resources) relating to the setting of a balanced budget. As we move further into the budget setting period for 2024.25, both Essex Police and ECFRS have produced draft budgets for 2024/25, which are currently reporting deficits. Therefore, with these gaps not yet addressed, as well as the uncertainty over next year's pay awards and inflation, the strategic risk has heightened, and has moved to a further deteriorating amber strategic risk.
- 4.5. There is one strategic risk, with an improved amber score since the last report, which is
- 4.5.1. Strategic risk 10 (Use of Resources) relating to The Community Safety and Community Safety Development Funds being used effectively to support the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. The Commissioning Officer role has been vacant over the last few months which has limited the PFCC's capacity for commissioning. However, the newly appointed Commissioning Officer is now in post which will improve our commissioning capacity and capability going forward and we have therefore improved the amber score as a consequence.
- 4.6. There is one green strategic risk which was red in the last report which is.
- 4.6.1. Strategic risk 91 (Other functions and statutory duties) relating to proposals to negotiate a devolution deal for Greater Essex. Since the previous report, a Level 3 deal, which would incorporate the creation of a new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) and a directly elected mayor to whom the PFCC's functions and powers would be transferred, is no longer being considered for Essex. Greater Essex has been negotiating a Level 2 devolution deal with the Government, which would not involve the election of a mayor, nor the transfer of PFCC / PFCCFRA powers. Should this go ahead, the PFCC is expected to become a non-constituent member of the new Combined County Authority. The risks previously identified have therefore significantly reduced, and it has now been improved to a green strategic risk.

## 5. The strategic risk register.

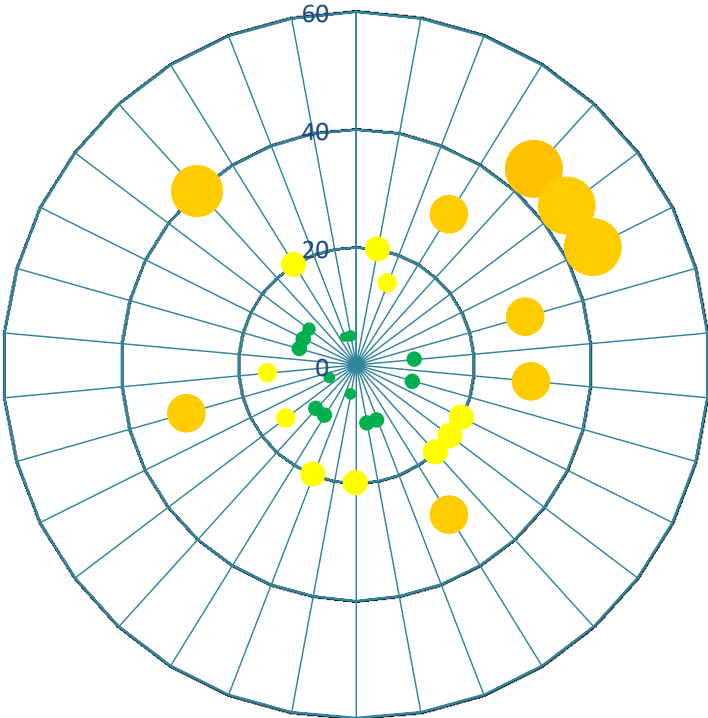
- 5.1. The full detail of each strategic risk is included at Appendix 1, which is the complete strategic risk register. Figure 4 below shows the spread of the current scores and the RAG ratings together with the spread of target scores and the RAG ratings for the strategic risks on the PFCC's strategic risk register. A summary of the strategic risk register is shown in figure 5.

Figure 4

Current RAG scores



Target RAG scores



**Figure 5**

Strategic risk register - 32 strategic risks - 6 red , 25 amber and 1 green		Score			
Risk No.	Risk (of not achieving)	Current	Target	Direction of Travel	Risk Appetite
<b>Police and Crime Plan -12 strategic risks - 5 red and 7 amber</b>					
52	Improvement in safety on our roads	40	20	No Change	Challenging
70	Further investment in crime prevention	30	15	No Change	Challenging
71	Reduction in drug driven violence	30	30	No Change	Cautious
72	Protection of vulnerable people & reduction in cycle of domestic abuse	60	45	No Change	Cautious
73	Reduction in violence against women and girls	60	45	No Change	Cautious
74	Improvement in the support for victims of crime	60	45	No Change	Cautious
75	Protection of rural and isolated areas	30	30	No change	Challenging
76	Prevention of dog theft	20	10	No Change	Challenging
77	Prevention of business crime, fraud and cyber crime	60	30	No Change	Challenging
78	The encouragement of volunteers and community support	50	10	No Change	Challenging
79	Supporting our officers and staff	30	20	No Change	Challenging
80	Increase in collaboration	30	20	No Change	Challenging
<b>Fire and Rescue Plan - 8 strategic risks - 1 red and 7 amber</b>					
15	Assurance of value for money achieved in contracts.	30	20	No Change	Challenging
40	Protection, prevention and response	45	30	No Change	Cautious
53	Protection of vulnerable people, not exposed to preventable danger	15	10	No Change	Cautious
54	Promotion of a positive culture	20	10	No Change	Challenging
55	The broadening of roles, developing a wider range of activities	60	20	No Change	Challenging
56	Being transparent, open and accessible	25	5	No Change	Cautious
57	Collaboration with partners	30	20	No Change	Challenging
58	Best use of resources	30	10	No Change	Challenging
<b>Use of resources - 4 strategic risks - 4 amber</b>					
10	Commissioning resources supporting the Police & Crime Plan	30	10	Improving	Challenging
39	The setting of a balanced budget	45	15	Deteriorating	Challenging
66	Forecasting not including too much downside	30	5	No Change	Challenging
90	Cost of living (budget, recruitment & retention impact)	45	30	No Change	Challenging
<b>Holding to account - 2 strategic risks - 2 amber</b>					
33	Joint Governance of Police and Fire & Rescue Services	20	30	No Change	Challenging
34	Positive outcome from future inspections of the ECFRS	30	15	No Change	Challenging
<b>Other functions and statutory Duties - 6 strategic risks - 5 amber and 1 green</b>					
61	Protection against fire in high-rise clad building/student accommodation	45	10	No Change	Cautious
63	Compliance with GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018	30	10	No Change	Minimal
67	Appointment of LQCs and IPMs for police misconduct panels	30	10	No Change	Minimal
91	Devolution proposal / PFCC functions and powers	5	20	Improving	Challenging
92	Appointment of local auditors from 2023/24 and beyond	45	5	No Change	Challenging
93	Compliance with Specified Information Order on publication of contracts	25	5	No Change	Cautious