



MINUTES
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND
ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
ECFRS Performance & Resources Board
27 February 2024 14:00 – 16:00

Present:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC's Office) (Chair)
Ian Adams	Assistant Director Prevention and Protection (ECFRS)
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services (ECFRS)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	CEO and Monitoring Officer (PFCC's Office)
Moira Bruin (MB)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer (ECFRS)
Emily Cheyne (EC)	Assistant Director Communications, 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)
Janet Perry (JP)	Chief Financial Officer / Strategic Head of Performance and Resources (PFCC's Office)
Jo Thornicroft (JT)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny –Fire (PFCC's Office)
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager (PFCC's Office)
Borka Price (BP)	Minutes (PFCC's Office)

Apologies:

Roger Hirst	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Sarah Smith	Procurement Manager (ECFRS)
Andy Smith	Director of Operations (ECFRS)

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1. JG welcomed all to the meeting and the apologies recorded above.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Action Log

38/23 On-Call Support and Development

Not due until April 2024.

Remain Open

48/23 Quarterly Working Well Together

The key elements were set out in paper 12 which has been withdrawn from this meeting, action to remain open and come back to a further P&R meeting.

Remain Open

50/23 Quarterly Ops Assurance Report

The 2023 plan plus the first 3 months of 2024 have been circulated, awaiting the full plan for 2024. Circulated on 14 February 2024.

Close

53/23 Q2 Annual Plan Update

A paper is going to SLT and a workshop with NC and RH will be arranged in due course. Workshop taking place on 19 March 2024.

Close

54/23 On Call Remediation Plans including Converted Stations

An On-Call Deep Dive took place and Roger Hirst has met with Rick Hylton. The focus of the PFCC's Office was about keeping people safe and changes would be made to the CRMP at the end of the year. JT confirmed it was about appropriate assurance on coverage up until the commencement of the CRMP. JT said that coverage at Dovercourt is reported as part of the transitional plan, together with an overall coverage percentage, but asked if there was any further assurance that could be given?

LC advised there was a coverage page within the Performance Report, covering the core stations coverage and a map. LC stated they do not show the non-core stations. LC said they could provide details of all stations and coverability as a one-off report. There would be a new framework from May onwards.

JG noted the availability but said we need to understand what is in place if availability is low until the new CRMP is in place.

KE confirmed that they have put in a technology solution (dynamic cover tool), in the product and efficiency plan and will be working with LC's team to implement. The dynamic cover tool will be part of the control room optimisation programme and will make recommendations regarding resources to the Service. It was agreed LC would consider the data they can provide and would update the Board at the next meeting on the timeline.

ACTION 08/24: LC to consider the data regarding coverage that they can provide and advise the Board on the timeline at the next meeting.

JG noted that JT was leaving and asked if JP could support LC with any enquiries which was agreed.

JG reported that one of the questions at the Castle Point Public Meeting was why Canvey Fire Station did not attend a local fire and asked why we name where the pumps come from. MB confirmed that they removed the names from the fire appliances and refer to them by numbers but this can be reviewed.

EC confirmed that the names have been removed but the attending stations can be found on some incidents on the website.

MB advised have added numbers to the roofs of appliances.

Close

01/24 Move the Information Governance Paper in February 2024 to March 2024

Close

02/24 Move the Quarterly Working Well Together Papers to align with the Negotiation Meeting dates.

Close

03/24 The Fire Standards Report produced by the ECFRS Continual Improvement Officer to be shared with the PFCC's Office and an item relating to the Implementation of Fire Standards to be introduced to the forward plan in line with this report being produced.

JT advised this was received on 27 February 2024 and the preference was to utilise something that already exists. JT proposed bringing to the March P&R Board. MB enquired as to the frequency of the Report whether it should be quarterly or half yearly. It was agreed this would be added to the forward plan for April 2024.

Close

04/24 Items 8 Annual Staff Engagement Survey, 9 Update on response to HMICFRS Spotlight on Cultures and Values and 12 People Strategy Update incl. key elements from Culture dashboard are to be expanded on and planned into the February and March 2024 P&R board.

Close

05/24 LC to update the PFCC's Office on how the decisions to abstract from the Central Prevention Team came about and if this was considered an appropriate reallocation of resources by SLT.

Agreed to be re-allocated to Andy Smith.

Remain Open

06/24 LC to consider extending the RBIP v's Target graphs to show future predictions and presenting the planning tool to a P&R Board.

To be presented at the May 2024 Board. IA confirmed on track and confident with the data they have.

Remain Open

07/24 Additional Funding and Reserves to be split in to two different columns on the Movement from YTD projected position to expected Outturn cascade graph.

Close

4. Forward Plan

- 4.1 JT reported the Forward Plan is as circulated and would liaise with LC regarding the Fire Standards Report. MB said we need to consider the frequency of reporting.

5. Finance Report

5.1 NC gave a brief overview of the Finance Report which is for the period up to January 2024:

- Surplus of £586,000 in January 2024 against a deficit of £20,000.
- £220,000 over budget with regards to pay costs, some of which relate to the pay award and support staff.
- Still overspending on on-call which is reducing (£140,000 to £84,000 per month).
- Non-pay costs were £139,000 underspent, with operational income at £200,000.
- Invoiced £40,000 to East of England Ambulance Service for the Community Wellbeing Officers.
- Received Firebreak income.
- £400,000 improvement in budget position, due to Section 31 Government grants, namely business rate relief.
- The forecast projected a deficit of £500,000 which has reduced to £78,000.

5.2 NC advised that Essex County Council has confirmed the Districts have used the Section 31 grants and nothing is repayable.

5.3 NC reported that monies received were being invested.

5.4 NC confirmed that suppliers would be paid in March 2024 to mitigate the need to transfer balances between companies as the new finance system will go live in April 2024.

5.5 NC referred attendees to the capital projection on page 10. The previous forecast was over £6m and this has reduced to £4.7m against the spend of £3.1m. The biggest commitment is the new appliances.

5.7 NC noted the precept approval is complete and a Decision Sheet will be drafted for the formal approval of the budget.

5.8 NC reported that a draft Value for Money Report has been received which has been amended and will go before the Audit Committee.

5.9 NC did not anticipate getting the Financial Statements by the March 2024 Strategic Board as the auditors are not in a position to complete the accounts due to the pension scheme information.

5.10 JP confirmed it was acceptable to publish the accounts pending the pension scheme information and it was agreed that JP and NC would speak to the auditors.

ACTION 09/24: NC and JP to speak to the auditors regarding the pension scheme.

- 5.11 JW said RH was interested in the actual capital spend against the original budget and observed a 32% difference in 2021, 59% in 2022 and 50% in 2023. NC confirmed that during the period they had refined the capital programme and in 2021 the asset protection was a £4m budget. NC stated that improvements have been made in procurement planning.
- 5.12 KE advised they included the committed spend to the Finance Report. A number of projects will be complete and KE was confident that the capital will be spent on target for this year.
- 5.13 JP queried the capital, noting that delivery was not going to take place by 31 March 2024 and asked whether this was our fault. NC said the BA Chambers was re-procured and there were some lessons learnt from the initial procurement. JG observed the structure and staffing may have had an impact. KE advised that procurement, finance, property and fleet are now working closer together and there should be an improvement in capital management and planning.
- 5.14 JG noted there were issues with the delivery of fleet from abroad. KE confirmed this has improved with expected deliveries being brought forward from 2025/26 to 2024/25. They are seeing an increase in material and labour costs for construction.
- 5.15 JP noted that interest receivable has been included in next year's budget as being a benefit and asked if it relies on high interest rates or higher cash and whether it is secure as predicted. NC confirmed when they budgeted, they did not envisage the cash position and interest rate to still be high. There will be a reduction in cash due to the number of projects and may have to borrow. They will be looking at the cashflow on a monthly basis and updating the projections.

6. Procurement Dashboard

- 6.1 NC talked through the procurement report and advised that the team has been working through the UAT process.
- 6.2 NC reported a 'Single Tender Action' was raised for the Property Services Team as the OxyReduct in the main server room had failed and it was not feasible to get a new system in place. KE said the system prevents a flame from igniting.
- 6.3 JG asked whether we were within contract for repair of the system. KE stated it had a life span of five years and the contract had expired. KE noted they needed better asset management control for assets with a contract end date.
- 6.4 JP queried whether there were any other alternatives other than 'Single Tender Action'. NC reassured attendees that they do consider other options and try to avoid going through the 'Single Tender Action'.
- 6.5 JG asked if the procurements are planned and manageable as they are coming towards the year end. NC confirmed they are procuring for next year in line with the contract pipelines.

- 6.6 In terms of the vehicle charging points procurement, JG asked how we limit these for service vehicles only and KE confirmed that a fob is required.
- 6.7 KE advised that staff would be able to use the charging points for private vehicles using an 'App' on their phones but that service vehicles would take priority. KE reassured attendees that dip sampling and monitoring would be carried out to avoid misuse.

7. Performance Report

7.1 LC gave a brief overview of performance:

- The number of incidents was 19% higher than the same period last year.
- Increase in secondary fires, compared to previous month.
- Primary fires remain in line with the previous month.
- 9% decrease in accidental dwelling fires.
- No fatalities in January 2024.
- The total number of individuals sustaining injuries is in line with the five-year average.
- Increase in the number of false alarms with 49% classified as 'good intent' and is consistent with the 51% previously. 42% were due to apparatus (human error and smoke alarms).
- A notable increase in Special Service incidents compared to the previous month and five-year average, due to high winds and rain.
- 123% increase in 'Making Safe' incidents predominantly involving television aerials, chimney and other items dislodged from roofs due to high winds.
- Increase in rescues from water which was expected due to the heavy rainfall.
- Core Station Coverage has maintained stability at 97%.
- 6.9 FTE protection visits over three months, the target being six visits per month.
- The high risks visits are in the green but the very high risk missed visits are in the red and they will be programmed in.
- Target of 644 Prevention visits was exceeded with 710 visits carried out.
- 84% increase in operational crew visits compared to December 2023.
- The targets will be forecasted in the planning tool.
- There were 19 Freedom of Information requests.
- Four data breaches recorded, one of which was a near miss and three moderate. No referrals to the ICO.
- 60% of ECFRS involvement in road traffic collisions focuses on ensuring scene or vehicle safety and 20% involved the extrication of individuals.

7.2 PBI expressed surprise at the 123% increase in 'Make Safe' incidents, which LC reported was due to the high winds and stormy conditions. MB said it was to make safe structures that have the potential to cause harm to human beings.

Outcomes

Metric vs Tolerance

Metric	5 Yr Avg	Last Month	Tolerance				
Number of Deliberate Fires	55	58	41	136+	105-136	79-104	0-78
Number of ADF Fires	62	62	67	73+	65-72	58-64	0-57
Number of Non-Domestic Fires	32	26	24	38+	31-37	29-30	0-28
Number of Primary Fire Injuries	5	5	8	9+	6-8	3-5	0-2
Number of ADF Injuries	4	4	5	6+	4-5	1-3	0
Fire Fatalities	0	0	1	3+	2	1	0
Accidental Dwelling Fire Fatalities	0	0	0	3+	2	1	0
Number of Unwanted Fire Signals	107	96	98	94+	83-93	72-82	0-71
Audits (RBIP Very High)*	15	25	23	0-15	16-25	26-35	36+
Audits (RBIP High)*	81	56	72	0-62	63-73	74-83	84+

* Audit data measured for past 3 years.

People

Metric vs 5 Year Average

Metric	5 Yr Avg	Last Month	Comments	
Sickness Rate	7.2% ↓	7.7%	7.3%	ECFRS Data calculated using the Cleveland method
Turnover	10.2% ↑	9.8%	10.1%	Standard CIPD calculation (Number of leavers in period divided by average headcount in period).

Inputs

Metric vs Target

Metric	5 Yr Avg	Last Month	Target	
Core Station Coverage	97% ↓	98%	97%	98%
Potential Life-Threatening Incident First Attendance	12:16 ↓	10:46	11:02	10:00
Potential Life-Threatening Incident Call Handling	02:25	01:55	02:00	-
Potential Life-Threatening Incident Turnout	02:50	02:48	02:28	-
Incidents attended within 15 minutes	77% ↓	84%	81%	90%
Safe and Well Visits conducted by Inspecting Officers	710 ↑	389	447	644
HFSC conducted by Operational Staff	346 ↓	197	188	436
Global Availability	72% ↓	72%	64%	80%
Freedom of Information Response Rate	89% ↓	87%	100%	90%

RTC

Metric vs 5 Year Average

Metric	ECFRS			SERP**		
	Metric	5 Yr Avg	Last Month	Metric	4 Yr Avg*	Last Month
RTC Incidents Attended	115 ↑	104	116	51 ↓	60	77
RTC Serious injury	8 ↓	12	11	51 ↓	63	85
RTC Fatalities	0 ↓	1	2	0 ↓	3	4

** The SERP (Safer Essex Road Partnership) data shows all Road Traffic Collisions attended by Essex Police where there was either a victim killed or seriously injured. A subsection of these incidents would have also been attended by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service when our assistance was required.

- 7.3 LC reported that the average response time for Potential Life-Threatening Incidents was 12.16 minutes, median 11.01 minutes and the mode was 12.10 which was slow.
- 7.4 JW noted that the response times for some incidents was 20 minutes plus (one fire and a road traffic collision involving serious injury). MB confirmed that various deep dives have taken place regarding protracted attendance times and some of these could be due to the fire appliance remembering to press the button to say they are in attendance. In some cases, they may send a Flexi Duty Officer to assess the situation before they mobilise a fire appliance.
- 7.5 LC reassured attendees debriefs are always carried out for protracted attendance.
- 7.6 MB stated that some incidents cannot be found easily due to the information that has been provided with callers not knowing the location.
- 7.7 JP asked about the prevention work being done in hospitals regarding false alarms. IA confirmed they are aware of the risk in hospitals and have a dedicated resource in the Comms and Media Team to work with the hospitals advising them on the impact of the false alarms.

8. Unwanted Fire Signals – Verbal Update

Withdrawn.

9. Annual Staff Engagement Survey

- 9.1 CB reported the paper is for information and an update on the progress against the One Survey Action Plan.
- 9.2 The Thematic Analysis actions are all complete and reflected in Appendix 3 and other actions with the team are 89% complete with 8 actions outstanding which are summarised in Appendix 2. Examples of the communication can be found in Appendix 1.
- 9.3 The next step is preparing for the next Survey.
- 9.4 JG observed that they cannot make a comparison until the results of the next survey. Communication is key in getting the message to frontline staff. JG offered support.
- 9.5 CB advised that monthly Pulse surveys will commence in March 2024.

10. Update on response to HMICFRS Spotlight on Cultures and Values

- 10.1 CB stated the paper was an update on the HMICFRS Spotlight Survey released last year for all Fire and Rescue Services. The HMICFRS provided a list of actions to be completed within 12 months, most of which ECFRS were already doing and these were reflected in the Options and Analysis Section.

- 10.2 JG asked how many DBS applications were outstanding. CB confirmed there were 1300 applications with 118 outstanding. CB thanked IA and his team for their support and queried whether some of the outstanding should be enhanced or standard.
- 10.3 JG asked about those that do not comply and whether they would go on restricted duties. CB confirmed it would be a frustration of contract but they would engage with individuals beforehand.
- 10.4 JG noted the helpline number was changing on 1 April 2024. CB confirmed 'Safe Share' was launched on 16 January 2023 and will remain in place. The 'Whistleblowing' helpline has been with Protect for a number of years, which is still in place but they are refusing to share any data regarding numbers or themes, meaning that ECFRS are not fully compliant with the HMICFRS' recommendation. CB confirmed a new number would be available by 1 April 2024.
- 10.5 PBI asked whether there was any insight regarding colleagues using multiple sources. CB has commissioned an evaluation of Safe Share which will go before SLT and will include feedback from colleagues who have telephoned 'Safe Share' and provided details.

11. Culture Dashboard

- 11.1 CB advised the paper is for information which has been shared with SLT for the last six months.
- 11.2 CB stated the Culture Dashboard matrix is in the early stages with eight metrics linked to the people strategy.
- 11.3 CB is leading on the NFCC work and as it develops so will the Culture Dashboard.
- 11.4 JG asked whether the Code of Ethics is part of the mandatory training which was confirmed.

12. Quarterly Portfolio of Change

- 12.1 MB reported the Quarterly Portfolio of Change covers Quarter 3 2023/24 and page 5 provides an overview of the portfolio, the programmes they are running and the projects that sit below the programmes which are colour coded:

- Blue – start up
- Green – delivery
- Red – closure
- Yellow – on hold
- White – information only

- 12.2 Page 7 references the progress:

- **Projects Initiated** - Control Organisation and Mobilisation
- **Project Moved into Delivery** – Community Wellbeing Officer

- **Project Closed** – Intranet Replacement. Applicant Tracking System and Frontline Technology

12.3 Page 10 refers to the Impact on the Public.

12.4 Page 11 references the timelines for the milestones.

13. **Quarterly Risk Review**

13.1 MB confirmed there were 16 risks on the register:

10	amber
6	yellow
0	red

13.2 A new red risk has been added regarding a risk that operational personnel do not have access to the most up to date risk information.

13.3 Risk 00005 - having the right people at the right time, right skills has gone up due to a recruitment campaign by neighbouring services.

13.4 Risk 00009 – data breach – the score has gone up due to some issues regarding the management of Sharepoint.

13.5 JP was concerned there were no red risks and asked if this could be reviewed. It was agreed MB would review the risk appetite at SLT.

ACTION 10/24: MB to review the risk appetite at SLT.

13.4 JW noted the last quarter's data column was missing from the risk register spreadsheet, which MB would reinstate.

ACTION 11/24: MB to reinstate the last quarter's data column to the risk register spreadsheet.

13.5 JT asked if the new risk was the same risk that formed the Operational Risk Information Peer Review. MB confirmed it was and that a Task and Finish Group has been set up and they have invited the author.

14. **Prevention Strategy Update**

14.1 IA advised he will be carrying out a prevention restructure in line with the CRMP arrangements to ensure the risk and vulnerability data matches what the current need is as the CRMP closes and the new one commences in 2025.

14.2 IA stated that officers are reviewing the performance pillars and separating safeguarding so it hits 100% on the fire standards in prevention, as well as achieving all the outcomes.

14.3 The recruitment freeze remains in place to relieve the pressure on the budget whilst they carry out the restructure.

- 14.4 Excellent feedback has been received on the Community Wellbeing Officer partnership with the East of England Ambulance Service with an evaluation meeting for the region scheduled for March 2024.
- 14.5 IA is taking over as the NFCC Regional Lead for the Prevention Strategy from 28 February 2024 and JG noted that Rick Hylton is the National NFCC Lead for Prevention.
- 14.6 JT enquired as to the Home Fire Safety visits, noting they are struggling to meet the target. JT observed that the same target has been set for next year and asked whether there were any plans to change this. IA confirmed this is being reviewed through the CRMP and the mapping of the risk and vulnerability data. They will move from an organisational service approach to command areas. A paper will go before SLT in March 2024 on the resource model in the structure.
- 14.5 JT asked about the GP and pharmacy initiatives and partnerships with Kwik Fit. IA reported it was about working with local partners and sharing information regarding home fire safety, business safety and working with those teams on prevention and protection together. There is a Memorandum of Understanding in place.

EC left the meeting at 4pm.

15. Quarterly Working Well Together

- 15.1 CB confirmed there was nothing further to add.

16. Converted Stations Transitional Group Update

- 15.2 IA advised sickness levels had improved.
- 15.3 JW noted that Dovercourt went down. IA advised they had lost a driver and officer in charge and they are trying to get staff trained.
- 15.4 JW asked whether the embedded roles in April would have an impact. IA confirmed a discussion was taking place at a Board on 28 February 2024 and would provide an update at the next meeting.

ACTION 12/24: IA to provide an update on the embedded roles in April 2024.

17. Quarterly Grenfell and Manchester Arena Update

- 17.1 AJ advised all the recommendations have been closed and assured and being managed through JCAD as individual control measures. They will stay as individual control measures for 18 months until they are assured the business as usual is working.
- 17.2 AJ confirmed that Manchester will follow suit. Manchester has been complex in sorting out the assurance and governance piece at they are a multi-agency. The

Ambulance Service is a challenge with Essex not being compliant until all three blue lights are compliant, before they can take through the assurance process.

18. Quarterly Ops Assurance

18.1 MB advised they are changing the name from Ops Assurance to Organisational Assurance.

19. Quarterly H&S Report

19.1 MB reported two attacks on Fire Service Personnel both of which were by individuals suffering from mental health episodes as well as safeguarding concerns. JG offered to raise at the Health & Wellbeing Board which was welcomed by MB.

19.2 JW enquired as to the hydrants with plastic/nylon outlets. MB confirmed they were cheaper alternatives used by some developers.

20. Any Other Business

20.1 JG thanked JT for her support as Head of Performance and Scrutiny and wished her well for the future. Thanks, were also given by MB who stated JT would be missed by the Service and was grateful for the incredible work.

Meeting closed at 15:55 hours.

Future meeting date

- Thursday 28 March 2024