

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

ESSEX POLICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD 28 February 2024 14:00 – 16:00

MINUTES

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
James Gray (JGr)	MOSOVO DCI, Essex Police
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny, PFCC's office
Fiona Henderson (FH)	Director of Continuous Improvement and Analytics, Essex Police
Rebecca Humphreys (RHu)	Head of Operational HR, Essex Police
Richard Jones (RJ)	Head of Financial Performance and Reporting, Essex Police
Rob Kirby (RK)	Deputy Head of Serious Crime, Essex Police
David Levy (DL)	Director of Commercial Services, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, Essex Police
Claire Medhurst (CM)	Director of Kent & Essex Support Services, Essex Police
Rachel Nolan (RN)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Chief Financial Officer / Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's Office
Andrew Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Natalia Ross (NR)	Public Protection Det Supt, Essex Police
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager, PFCC's office
Samantha Bardsley (SB)	(Minutes), Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office

Apologies:

Kevin Baldwin (KB)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Ben-Julian Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Andrew Pritchard (APri)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1. RH welcomed all to the meeting, apologies were noted from those above.

2.

2.1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1.1. The minutes of the previous meeting required an amendment to action 03/24 which should have referenced the force performance framework and not the balanced scorecard, this has already been corrected on both the minutes and the action log.

The minutes of the previous meeting were otherwise approved and agreed.

2.1.2. There were no matters arising.

2.2. Action Log

50/23 Monthly Finance Report - Op Hazel

The letter has been produced, DM advised the Home Office had been in touch and will be able to provide some of this money but not the full amount.

Close

54/23 HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance - Officer Availability

A revised version has been returned to the PFCC's office.

Close

58/23 Use of Force / Stop and Search - Narrative

The information has been included in the Stop and Search/Use of Force report for this meeting.

Close

59/23 Use of Force / Stop and Search - Disproportionality

The information has been included in the Stop and Search/Use of Force report for this meeting.

Close

60/23 Collaboration - CSP's

No update due until November 2024.

Remain Open

66/23 Monthly Performance Report

Dr Natalie Mann met with Ch Supt Leighton Hammett and Michael Samuels. They feel that they can bring additional qualitative data to the monthly report for priority 12. They will liaise with the PAU moving forward to add this additional information, and their hope is that this priority can reflect the progress made in the last 12 months and be raised to good soon. It was agreed for the due date of this action to be changed to March 2024.

Remain Open

67/23 Monthly Performance Report

The detail was included in the appendices from December; however, it seems that the appendices may have been missed off the final papers shared. These will continue to be included in the appendices which accompany each month's performance report. Dr Mann has emailed the appendices for December to Suzanne Harris.

Close

72/23 Professionalism/Casey Review Update

Dr Mann, with support of Chief Officers, recommend that an update on Professionalism Trust and Confidence be shared through the Public Confidence quarterly updates; links to standards of behaviour will be picked up through the Quarterly PSD review meeting.

Close

01/24 Firearms Licensing

Finance have supplied this information to the PFCC's office.

Close

02/24 POA

This will be changed for the next POA paper which is due for the May 2024 Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board.

Remain Open

03/24 Balanced Scorecard

A meeting took place on 22 February 2024.

Close

04/24 Monthly Performance Report

An amended paper has been received by the PFCC's Office.

Close

05/24 HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance

An update was provided by Rebecca Humphreys and next quarter's update will include a breakdown of promotions by ethnicity and gender for the full financial year and will continue to be reported quarterly.

Close

2.3. Forward Plan

2.3.1. Changes were proposed as circulated with no other suggestions to add.

3. Monthly Finance Report

- 3.1. DM presented the month 10 position with an underspend of £658k on the revenue and a £5.353m underspend on the capital. The appropriations were discussed alongside the revenue summary and the waterfall graphs. The waterfall suggested there is still a large amount of income due to come in later in the year as profiled. The insurance recovery backlog is being worked on and putting money back into the income, there is also money coming in from immigration income. A capital summary was also provided advising EP will not be in a position where they will need to borrow for the capital programme.
- 3.2. JP Thanked DM and RJ for the inclusion of the waterfall graph at 3.3 showing Original Budget to Revised Budget to Forecast Outturn.
- 3.3. RH thanked EP for the progress made on the modernisation of the force without the need to borrow.
- 3.4. RH discussed the PUP figures and AP advised EP were confident around these and their ability to achieve the targets set.

JW left the meeting at 14:22

4. Monthly Performance Report

- 4.1. FH advised that Priority 3 (protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse) was downgraded from Good to Adequate in the last report due to the decreasing number of solved Domestic Abuse investigations. In the current report, priority 9 (improving safety on our roads) had improved from Requires Improvement to Adequate, due to a year on year decrease in the number of people Killed or Seriously Injured. There were no changes to the gradings of any other priorities.
- 4.2. FH noted reductions are starting to slow in the areas of all crime, violence with injury and domestic abuse. FH reassured this was because good baselines were set last year, it would be difficult to continue this trajectory, and this tail off is to be expected.
- 4.3. FH advised there was a statistically exceptional increase in Residential Burglary in January 2024. There was a 13.7% increase in Residential Burglary in 12 months to January 2024 compared to the 12 months to January 2023.

DM left the meeting at 14:25

- 4.4. FH went on to present the monthly performance report priority by priority with data up to the end of January.

NR joined the meeting at 14:30

JG joined the meeting at 14:30

- 4.5. RH noted the Residential Burglary exceptional increase had been discussed at the Chief Officers away day with plans afoot to ensure this is tackled appropriately and advised there were also initiatives in place with the safer streets funding that could support this.
- 4.6. RH noted the board were advised that vehicle crime was up by 3%, however, that this related to all vehicle crime. When you look at Theft of a Vehicle it is up by 17%, RH therefore asked does this not stand out as being an exceptional increase that needs to be dealt with. AP advised that a crime problem profile came to Chief Officers the previous week; Thurrock, Basildon, Epping and Colchester saw the most significant increases. Activity is being significantly increased, prevention in terms of overt patrols, working with partners such as Lakeside around CCTV and promoting public awareness campaigns will be worked on quickly. The response will be led by roads policing, there is a lot of intelligence that there are organised networks around this crime type and how vehicles are being targeted; allowing EP to focus activity suitably here. The investigative side will also be looked at by the Serious and Organised Crime Team where appropriate.

DM re-joined the meeting at 14:40

- 4.7. RH talked about VAWG and RASSO where the solved number is up overall, but the solved number for Rape is down. The peak was at 90 in a 12-month period, and this is now down in the 70's which is quite a significant drop. RH asked if EP are really confident they are still Good? AP advised there is no significant change that has occurred, there are instances where CPS backlogs skew the figures, and assured that the detail is scrutinised regularly. NR concurred that the backlogs can be an issue and are chased up monthly by D/Supt Neil Pudney.

Action 06/24

AP to liaise with D/Supt Neil Pudney regarding any potential Rape case backlogs with the CPS.

- 4.8. RH discussed Safety on the Roads noting that it was good to see it going in the right direction, especially with there having been quite a big change in the number of people killed on the road falling below 40 in the past 12 months to January 2024. FH noted there was a noticeable downward trend. AP advised Ch/Supt Simon Anslow and the team have been working really hard on the deployment, the comms and being in the right places in this area; as it had been going in the wrong direction the previous 12 months and it is an encouraging picture now.
- 4.9. JG discussed Protecting Rural and Isolated Areas which was rated as Good and it is good that crime offences are down, but confidence is still falling and solved rates are dropping and wondered if this should be considered adequate or not. AP agreed this was a fair challenge and that EP are on the cusp here.

5. Right Care Right Person

- 5.1. NR presented the Right Care Right Person (RCRP) report with an overview of the journey so far. This included the national partnership agreement, the 4 phases of RCRP, the Governance Structure, the effect of RCRP and what this all means.
- 5.2. RH noted a spike in the Effect of RCRP data for December 2023, NR noted there were a lot of ambulance calls directed into EP and advised that they have just worked with them regarding the daily escalation service and the flow pathway to ensure that responses are being moved to the right areas.

RN joined the meeting at 15:00

- 5.3. JG asked if there was any information about children's services and how they fit in with this policy. NR noted they believed they have gone further than the national position in this area and that

safeguards have been built into the call scripts for EP. With regards to the concern for welfare for children there is training being delivered and the MOU and Escalation Services are in place.

- 5.4. PBI noted the feedback was very complementary from the Adult Safeguarding Board meeting regarding RCRP.
- 5.5. RH asked do we have the reassurance that East of England Ambulance and EPUT are wanting to resource this in the way the national agreement says they should. NR believes there is good strategic support from both East of England Ambulance and EPUT but the issue is how they are going to do it, they are perhaps slower in identifying what their gaps are.
- 5.6. RH also advised given our proximity to London and the harsh rhetoric being used by the senior officers of the MPS, do we have the resources to put communications out on how well we are doing here. AP noted in terms of the communications we do have something to talk about, but we would want to think about this carefully and to liaise with ACC Kevin Baldwin regarding anything put out.

NR and JG left the meeting at 15:25

6. Homicide Scrutiny

- 6.1. RK presented the Homicide Scrutiny paper advising of two homicides this quarter, Op Guitar and Op Intern. There were 14 homicides in the calendar year of 2023 which was the joint lowest since 2013. Long term Homicide Trends, Disparity Data and Influencing Factors were also discussed. Essex was also confirmed not to be an outlier for any Home Office Criteria.
- 6.2. RN went on to discuss the homicide prevention activity including Clare's Law activity, the DA Threat to Life Cohort, Serious Violence, Night-Time Economy's Op Gerberra and Vulnerability/Mental Health.

DL joined the meeting at 15:35

- 6.3. SH noted following her attendance at the Homicide Prevention Board it was helpful to be part of that discussion and highlighted from that, the work being completed around the over 80's homicide to try and understand this picture better. The VVU aren't targeting the 25+'s although they are an age group that are flagging up in the data and an action has been taken away for the VVU to see if it is appropriate for them to see how they may be able to get involved in addressing this or for others to adopt their ways of working. RH queried if this was the most appropriate use of the VVU and PBI noted that this was discussed at the three boards joint meeting where responsibility for this 25+ cohort might sit, and we may need to join this up better to avoid potentially tasking the wrong place.

Action 07/24

AP to speak to the VVU Op's Board to look at the over 25's piece and see if this does fit or not.

- 6.4. RH noted that overall this looked like a phenomenally successful programme and thanked RN, RK and the teams for their contributions.
- 6.5. RH noted that it is worrying that the near miss offences remain so high, and wondered what is making the difference here to stop this level of violence turning into death. RK advised that medical advances are helping, with stab victims being more likely to survive than they ever were.
- 6.6. JG asked on the DA, is there something to be done about how we join up with SETDAB. JG noted in the SETDAB board there was a concern regarding the recommendations that come out of the homicide reviews and there appears to be a time lag. RH asked if this crossed over with the work of the Rapid Review Process and RK advised it does to some extent.

RK left the meeting at 15:45

7. Use of Force / Stop and Search

- 7.1. RN presented the Use of Force / Stop and Search paper providing an overview of the Executive Summary to the board.
- 7.2. RH complemented that the paper is helpful and gives the PFCC the level of assurance that is needed. It shows that EP are subjecting themselves to a level of scrutiny that enables EP to exercise use of force and stop and search with a level of confidence that they are not going to be losing police legitimacy because of doing so. RH noted that in the public meetings he attends there are few questions relating to these matters and SH also noted she has seen a drop in the number of complaint reviews that relate to this area of business, further evidencing that it is of a lower issue / concern. JG reiterated that it was good to hear how EP are scrutinising themselves and thanked the force for their work here.

8. Public Contact Performance and Response to High Harm Crime

- 8.1. RN presented the Public Contact Performance and Response to High Harm Crime paper. Public Contact Highlights covered items on the implementation of RCRP, a new analyst, how retention is better with 93% establishment and absence management is improving significantly. In January, a new telephony system was installed (ICCS). Items relating to reporting online, the abandonment rate and the implementation of the interim triage team to the force control room were also discussed. RN went on to discuss the Response element, advising this is an area with good oversight with work developing, the understanding is that it is ensuring the people are freed up to attend incidents which is being supported by RCRP.
- 8.2. RH asked on 101, advising on pg9 Fig5 it states 101 wait times have remained steady since the last quarter only increasing by 557 seconds (10 minutes) since September 2023. RH queried that this does not sound very steady, and the graph does not look particularly stable either, and asked if this wording could be looked into.

Action 08/24

RN to review the wording of Fig5 – Longest wait time FCR 101 for clarity.

- 8.3. RN asked on pg14 the National Comparisons it looks as though EP are getting better but others are getting better faster as Essex is moving down the table. RN advised EP often vary on where they sit on the tables, but generally EP performance is consistently at six seconds and it is others getting better or worse which indicates where we land.
- 8.4. RH spoke about the response tables and that it was encouraging to see the Burglary attendance up to 90%, however it was noticeable that Rape has a low attendance and asked what the right attendance level to Rape should be? RN advised it was not the right level but consistently there are legitimate reasons for them not having the high harm response such as them being historical reports or there are other services involved such as when the victim goes to the SARC before police attendance.
- 8.5. RH asked regarding the four AFI's, how close they are to being closed. RN confirmed that one of the four areas for improvement from HMRC has been discharged (Providing the public with crime prevention advice) and EP anticipate another being discharged very shortly (Our response to repeat callers and victims) the other two are in hand and both progressing.

9. The Procurement Act 2023

- 9.1. DL presented The Procurement Act 2023 paper. The Procurement Bill received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023 and will come into force in October 2024. The Act will replace the existing

legislation, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Concessions Contracts Regulations 2016 and govern how contracting authorities procure goods, services and works. There are less prescriptive procedures; there will be Open, Competitive Flexible Procedure, and Limited Tendering, currently there are seven different procedures. There are potentially more additional transparency requirements e.g. publishing “pre-market engagement notices”, “contract change notices”, and “contract termination notices” adding an additional administrative burden. 7F Commercial Services staff will undertake a minimum of ten hours training from the Government Commercial function in readiness for the new Act as well as further deep dives.

9.2. JP asked what the likely timeline for amending the standing orders are, as they are looking at amending the finance regulations and would like to do this at the same time. DL advised once the secondary legislation is in, there will be a better idea of this, and that September 2024 was likely suitable.

9.3. PBI asked about other people that this impacts upon such as the PFCC Commissioning colleagues, do they also require this additional training mentioned. DL advised they would not need the level of training the 7F team is undertaking but that they will be delivering briefings as required.

9.4. SH asked if it was required to schedule and update for this paper. RH advised this would depend on the secondary legislation. CM advised that it might be beneficial to bring this back depending on how the secondary legislation lands, this is likely to be known early summer.

Action 09/24

CM/DL to advise if an update paper or a note is required on the Procurement Act 2023 once it is known how impactful the secondary legislation is, this is believed to be known by early summer.

10. Approval for publishing of documents

10.1. SH advised there are no papers marked as official sensitive and it was agreed that papers 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 would be published.

11. Any Other Business

11.1. JP raised that there was an urgency for the Ernst Young Contract for the external audit to be signed, PBI noted that any Decision Report would also need to go through her for contracts to be signed.

11.2. There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:26 hours

Future meeting dates

- Tuesday 26 March 2024 10:00
- Tuesday 30 April 2024 10:00
- Tuesday 28 May 2024 10:00