

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD

30 April 2024 10:00 – 12:00

Present:

Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Alexa Fox (AF)	Head of Resourcing, HR, Essex Police
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny, PFCC's office
Fiona Henderson (FH)	Director of Continuous Improvement and Analytics, Essex Police
Richard Jones (RJ)	Head of Financial Performance and Reporting, Essex Police
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Finance Officer, 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
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager, PFCC's office
Samantha Bardsley (SB)	(Minutes), Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office

Guests:

Helen Notman (HN)	Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office
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Apologies:

Ben-Julian Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Richard Leicester (RL)	Director of HR, Essex Police
Claire Medhurst (CM)	Director of Kent and Essex Support Services

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1. JG welcomed all to the meeting, apologies were noted from those above.
- 1.2. HN was introduced as new to the role of Scrutiny Officer within the PFCC's office.

2.

2.1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1.1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and agreed.
- 2.1.2. There were no matters arising.

2.2. Action Log

60/23	Collaboration - CSP's No update due until November 2024. Remain Open
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- 02/24 POA**
No update due until May 2024.
Remain Open
- 07/24 Homicide Scrutiny**
It has been recommended that the Violence and Vulnerability Unit focus does not change.
Close
- 08/24 Public Contact Performance and Response to High Harm Crime**
No update due until May 2024.
Remain Open
- 09/24 The Procurement Act 2023**
No update due until June 2024.
Remain Open
- 10/24 Forward Plan**
The updates to the Forward Plan have been completed.
Close
- 11/24 Monthly Finance Report**
Update from RJ, there are two separate forecast receipts of circa £500k, that are reflected within the Month 12 financial monitoring report.
Close
- 12/24 Monthly Performance Report**
PBI clarified the action was to try to better understand the contribution the victim support services the PFCC's office commissions makes to the overall victim experience, and how that might be enhanced and work better. Where the appropriate forum to bring this in was queried. AP advised there is a victim and witnesses board currently chaired by ACC Baldwin and this would be the best place for this to be fed into. AP advised Greg Myddelton (GM) would be welcome to join this board and is happy for GM to link in with ACC Baldwin. PBI was happy for the action to be progressed on this basis and agreed to link in with GM.
Remain Open
- 13/24 Monthly Performance Report**
This refers to action 02/23 raised 30 January 2023, although it is unclear when exactly the criteria changed it does confirm that the reason for the drop was due to the change in criteria. JG agreed that there was no added value in trying to find out the exact date of the change and was happy for the action to close.
Close
- 14/24 Transparency, Contracts and Tenders (plan for statutory compliance)**
The paper has been circulated.
Close
- 15/24 Public Perception Survey (SMSR)**
It was suggested this cannot proceed until re-procurement was complete. Clarity on when this would be was sought and FH confirmed that there are 2 bids that are being evaluated at present with a DR coming to the June Strategic Board. SH asked if the action due date therefore needed to be amended to after the June Strategic Board? JP raised that October is when the Police and Crime Plan goes to the Panel and that August would be when it needs to be pinned down. FH also believed the contract runs out August/September and

EP needs to ensure there is not a latent period and that August was a good time for this action to be moved too. JG therefore agreed for this action to have the due date amended to August 2024.

Remain Open – due date to be amended to August 2024

2.3. Forward Plan

2.3.1. SH advised the Productivity Review was on the plan for this month, but a request was received to move this to June. This was agreed by JG.

Action 16/24

The Productivity Review is to be moved to June on the Forward Plan.

2.3.2. SH shared the proposed draft Deep Dive schedule. AP advised he has seen the proposed agenda and confirmed it works for the force, with a request from BJH that the Deep Dive meetings are linked to and follow the P&RS Boards, happening on one business day. SH confirmed that it has been diarised that they occur on the same days as P&RS Boards.

3. Monthly Finance Report

3.1. DM presented the month 12 finance report with the revenue forecast underspend at £1.735m (0.48% variance) this does include the PUP money having met the figures but it does not include the Op Hazel or Op Ivy reimbursements. Capital is underspend by £5.668m.

3.2. DM discussed the appropriations on pages 4 and 5 of the report, JP asked if these would all come in for approval on one decision report which DM confirmed they would. JP spoke about the timings of the decision reports for sign off which was complex. JG asked if this could be further discussed in the next monthly meeting held between the PFCC and Finance.

3.3. DM went on to overview the revenue summary, the waterfall graphs and main forecast movements since last month. DM further discussed the workforce analysis, advising the PUP target had been met. DM then overviewed the reserves, capital and cashflow.

4. Performance Reports

4.1. Monthly Performance Report

4.1.1. FH presented the monthly performance report advising there were no grading changes proposed. The priorities were showing as four at good, seven at adequate and one at requires improvement. Key headlines showed that crime is down in the most part particularly looking at high harm, however business crime is increasing as are vehicle crime, burglary and robbery. Solved numbers are up in many places, but as noted in the past few reporting periods, not with domestic abuse. Overall confidence is just shy of 75%. Exceptional increases were seen in three areas, business robbery, shoplifting and drugs trafficking. FH then went through each priority individually and advised on the headlines as outlined within the report.

RJ left the meeting at 10:35

4.1.2. JG asked about the PUP target, noting that it had been heard in the finance report that they are 63 over, but remarking that officers were reported to have reduced by 28 in the last month and by 54 in the past 3 months. JG asked for reassurance there were no concerns on maintaining the PUP

target. AP advised they are comfortable around this as it has a number of measurement points in place to keep a grasp on it.

- 4.1.3. JG asked what needs to happen to improve rape charge rates. AP advised this was discussed with D/Ch/Supt Andy Waldie and ACC Kevin Baldwin in a prior meeting; there are over 300 investigations of which around 30 are with CPS for active consideration. AP noted when he speaks with equivalent colleagues in the CPS, they have experience and capacity challenges themselves. AP praised that the teams are working really hard, but Essex Police (EP) would like to see it improve. AP finalised that the focus is on recording every occurrence, some other forces were inadequate in this area, and this is an absolute focus for EP and there are some positive aspects. JG appreciated and thanked AP for the efforts in this area.
- 4.1.4. JG asked how the Target Operating Model (TOM) was bedding into the Contact and Control Centre (CCC). AP advised that all was going well, the 999 call handling performance has been maintained, and the 101 call handling performance has been better than it has been looking back 8-12 months, with the average 101 call wait time being 3-10mins on average. The abandoned rate on 101 calls is around 5-7% which is much better than it was. AP continued there is work to do and the training is still being embedded, there are a few concerns with ICCS (the Integrated Command and Control System) but the public's experience is better than it has been.
- 4.1.5. SH advised on the positive picture regarding priority 2, with the figures moving in the right direction, and queried how to translate this to impact public confidence, as the improvements are being seen. FH advised there were some positive high-profile results for high harm incidents at court recently which might have an impact on the overall perspective.
- 4.1.6. JG advised she was slightly concerned about the child abuse solved rate which is lower than last year and wondered if there was anything there that required intervention or oversight. AP advised this is being watched and was picked up by the teams on the Essex Police monthly performance board, one of the areas noted was that more outcome 20's (which is a legitimate crime outcome but does not class as solved) are being used which are not therefore captured in the same way and affect the solved outcome rates.
- 4.1.7. JG advised she could not entirely understand why the solved rate was dropping for Priority 6 and asked if there were any abstractions from the Rural Engagement Team, as the crime solved has halved since 2016. AP confirmed there were no abstractions from the team and noted that when looking at the 12 months to March the crimes fell by over 5% and the outcomes fell by 4.6% so as a proportion the solved shows a higher percentage of the reduced number of crimes. The 5 year trend shows that in the 12 months to 2019 there is a reduction in solved crime offences of 500, but when you look at the crimes over that time there is something less happening. AP assured that the focus had not been taken away from this area.
- 4.1.8. JP brought up the point that cyber crime affects the people of Essex as much as the Business Crime affects the businesses and a way to bring this in would be beneficial. FH asked if JP had been contacted by anyone in the performance unit following previous discussion, to which JP advised she had not been, FH agreed to pick this up. PBI highlighted that the MAAF (multi-agency action against fraud) has asked to have a reporting line into Safer Essex which will help with linking into the work of the CSP's and hopefully to make some of the activity more locally targeted.

Action 17/24

FH to arrange for the Performance Unit to link in with JP regarding how to bring in more of a focus on the Cyber Crime aspect of priority 8

- 4.1.9. AP highlighted the work being done on shoplifting, advising looking at the rolling 12 months there is a 20% increase which is a high increase; but in the last three months this has reduced to 10% and there is a real sharp focus here.

4.1.10. SH asked if the grading on Priority 8 should be reconsidered given the steady increase over the years since January 2021 and the confidence dropping. FH advised her instinct is that as they are still below pre-covid levels that she did not believe they have fully settled since then and that a watching brief would be prudent for now. JG agreed to keep a watching brief.

4.1.11. JG praised the positive impact young people being cadets can make and was therefore really pleased that there were more cadet leaders and congratulated the team on this work.

DM left the meeting at 11:00

4.1.12. SH noted that April had been a really sad month on the roads of Essex and that figures are not moving at the speed required to achieve Vision Zero. SH advised that this priority had recently moved from Requires Improvement to Adequate, but asked if it should still be Adequate given EP are not on target for Vision Zero. JG agreed that this was a tricky one as Vision Zero is spoken about as if it is just down to EP, but it is a partnership piece; JG noted that P&RS Board is not a forum to hold partners to account, but to ensure that EP are doing what they need to do, and if EP are, they need to be much stronger in holding the partners to account. FH advised from June 2023 they have seen improvements and they need to see if this continues or stabilises, it is certainly not above adequate but there are improvements and given these adequate feels right. AP agreed with JG's point on partnership working. PBI agreed adequate should be the assessment of the Essex Police contribution, and raised that surveys taken through Safer Essex show that for the first time this year a number of CSP's have identified road safety as one of their priorities which is good news in terms of the broader partnership taking its fair share of responsibility for this.

4.1.13. SH raised the increase in sickness to 27% for PCSO's being quite significant and would be one to watch. FH advised that this is due to small numbers and is down to one person with long term sickness but agreed that this needs to be watched to ensure it does not become an embedded issue.

4.1.14. SH advised for Priority 12 the audience numbers are still lower than 2019, SH noted there were conversations previously about the team at ECFRS not being at full strength and asked has that been rectified now. PBI advised that she believed this was but that this would need to be double checked with GM. JG advised this would be taken away.

Action 18/24

SH to speak to GM to clarify if the ECFRS team are up to full strength.

4.2. Quarterly Performance Report

4.2.1. FH presented the quarterly performance report going through each priority individually and advising on the headlines as outlined within the report.

4.3. Force Performance against National Crime and Policing Measures

4.3.1. FH advised at a high level the national trends show Essex to be performing in exactly the way EP report their own performance as EP report on the same crime trends and Essex are not currently an outlier for any of the metrics the Home Office look at. Vehicle Crime however would show as an outlier if it was measured as such. It was also noted that the national averages around call handling saw Essex underperforming against other forces for 999 calls.

4.3.2. JG talked about how knife crime on under 25s is not as positive as the monthly report data and asked for clarity on what this means. FH advised this was specifically on knife crime data on the under 25's who have been assaulted by a sharp object noting that what EP are doing is using their own data to replicate what is looked at nationally and that data quality has had a focus and if you looked at the wider detail of knife crime data you would see similar fluctuations.

4.3.3. JG questioned the district disparity on victim satisfaction, noting there seems to be something not quite right in Castle Point and wondered if it is a lack of investment in their CSP. PBI advised she was in the process of setting up a discussion with the Chief Executive there, as they are not fulfilling on their Op Dial commitments, and she would be happy to broaden this out to EP if helpful. AP advised he agreed with JG's sense regarding the CSP adding there are complications. AP noted Ch/Insp Paul Hogben (PH) was appointed as the new District Commander 6 months ago and is making a difference with the SMSR moving 8 points since he has been in post. JG echoed that Ch/Insp Hogben's contribution to the last public meeting at Castle Point was beneficial. SH flagged a fall of 8% from both Brentwood and Epping Forest also showing at the bottom of the table, AP advised all three of these districts have improvement plans in place through the confidence star chamber and confirmed the district commanders are working intensively here to address the issues.

4.4. Essex Police Performance Framework

4.4.1. FH presented confirming that the new approach to force performance monitoring has commenced with a new star chamber which is bespoke to each command giving a good oversight of how EP are performing on each of the six pillars. FH confirmed the position for each of the pillars advising that Prevent was Good, Respond Requires Improvement, Investigate was Adequate, Trust and Confidence was Good, People was Good and Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness was Adequate.

4.4.2. SH picked up the point around the Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness with the report acknowledging the concern that the metrics in this area are not appropriate and potentially need revisiting, asking is this in hand or can the PFCC's office assist here. AP thanked SH for the offer but advised that BJH would prefer that the force picks these up and it remains only for the PFCC's office to have overall scrutiny through this board.

4.4.3. SH advised looking at the Police Officer and Staff overtime there are variances of 21% and 27% respectively in difference to the budget, noting sometimes the vacancy rate is looked at as positive, but when we are looking at overtime to cover vacancies it puts a different angle on this. SH asked is there a way this data can be seen as to how it compares together; as it may be that the vacancy rate is still providing us with a saving, but it may be that actually we are paying more in order to cover the resource we don't have because of the vacancy rate. FH noted this needed to be articulated in a way that is helpful in the performance reporting so when it is looked at, the wholistic picture is understood.

5. Crime Data Accuracy

5.1. AP presented the Crime Data Accuracy report advising there is a team looking at this month on month reviewing crimes to ensure they are recorded as they should be. AP advised the proxy measure of where EP think they are, has been how many incidents converted to a crime and this has been consistently two out of three and that is the threshold to be outstanding when inspected on this.

5.2. AP further advised in October there was a dip sample of violent and sexual crimes and found 95.2% were accurately recorded, certainly also on the verge of being outstanding. A second survey specifically on sexual crime was completed in December where it was found 98% of crimes were properly recorded in the first instance.

5.3. AP noted that the measure for all crimes being recorded in 24hrs is not quite there yet, but this is being worked on with February 2024 at 84.5%.

- 5.4. AP reassured that all this is overseen at the crime data accuracy board and once a quarter at Chief Officer Group (COG) and EP believe they are in a reasonably strong position with the next CDA inspection due in the autumn.
- 5.5. SH advised the NCRS Support and Review Team (NSRT) are showing 3 vacancies and asked what this represents as a proportion of the team. AP advised it is three of 11 as this team is a Sgt and 10 PC's, AP clarified that they are in the process of recruiting two of these, but it is a difficult role to recruit to.
- 5.6. JG noted crime data accuracy was an area that EP are strong on and thanked EP for the work here.

AF joined the meeting at 11:40

6. HR, Sickness and Attendance management, Staff Performance

- 6.1. JG advised that the report was noted as read by all members of the board and opened the floor to questions.
- 6.2. SH raised that the diversity data shows there are no PCSO's with an ethnic minority background, which seems like a stark figure when EP are trying to increase diversity. SH asked if there was any insight into how this has happened and if there is any work being done to try and change this. AF advised that PCSO's haven't been recruited to for a period of time, and currently there is no planned recruitment activity for them. AF noted however, this will be picked up on in line with the strengths seen from the campaigns run for Police Officers when EP are able to recruit.
- 6.3. JW noted the ethnic minority candidates are 13.3% but actual recruits are 6%, is there an unusual number dropping out during training or have we made more of an effort with candidates that will come through in the future. AF advised there is a high number of applications, with 50 in for April alone with 9 being progressed for the June intake. The pipeline is continuing to remain positive, and this is a trajectory EP would hope to see increase.
- 6.4. JW noted the specials turnover being 37% which seems remarkably high. AF advised this is a challenge with the volunteering sector being in high demand nationally. There is a separate specials board with a separate report coming into the PFCC along with a growing piece of work led by Leighton Hammett; though agreed EP do recognise this is high.
- 6.5. SH asked regarding the recruitment events, is there any monitoring of the impact of attendance at those events. AF advised this is followed through as they have funnel data to ascertain where the applications have been sent through from, be that friends and family, Indeed or events. The possible issue in capture however is potential recruits would go home, do a search, and apply on Indeed, which would show this as the pipeline as it is not referenced that they were at the event. Events are therefore not the strongest pipeline, but it does encourage people to learn more about the role.

AF left the meeting at 11:47

7. Approval for publishing of documents

- 7.1. SH advised there was no papers marked as official sensitive and all papers were proposed for publishing. This was agreed.

8. Any Other Business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:50 hours.

Future meeting dates

- Tuesday 28 May 2024 10:00
- Tuesday 25 June 2024 10:00
- Wednesday 31 July 2024 10:00