



**POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND  
ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE  
PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD  
20 May 2024 14:00 – 16:00**

**Present:**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Roger Hirst (RH)            | Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)   |
| Emily Bownes (EB)           | Head of Performance and Scrutiny – Fire, PFCC's office                                  |
| 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, Marketing and Brand,<br>ECFRS                        |
| Lucy Clayton (LC)           | Performance, Business Planning and Policy Manager,<br>ECFRS                             |
| Neil Cross (NC)             | Finance Director and Section 151 Officer, ECFRS   |
| Karl Edwards (KE)           | Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS   |
| Jane Gardner (JG)           | Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, PFCC's office                               |
| Heather Kinzett (HK)        | Occupational Health Manager, ECFRS  |
| Craig McLellan (CM)         | Temporary Area Manager, ECFRS   |
| Janet Perry (JP)            | Chief Financial Officer / Strategic Head of Performance and<br>Resources, PFCC's office |
| Andy Smith (AS)             | Director of Operations, ECFRS   |
| Sarah Smith (SS)            | Procurement Manager, ECFRS  |
| Jeremy White (JW)           | Finance Manager, PFCC's office  |
| Samantha Bardsley (SB)      | Minutes - Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office   |

**Apologies:**

|                    |                                    |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Colette Black (CB) | Director of People Services, ECFRS |
| Rick Hylton (RHyl) | Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS          |

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

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

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- 2.1. MB raised that on paragraph 10.2 it does not state which course is being referred to and the minutes will require amending to specify this, otherwise the minutes of the previous meeting were approved and agreed.

**Action 27/24**

**The minutes of the meeting held 24 April 2024 are to be amended in line with point 2.1**

- 2.2. There were no matters arising.

### 3. Action Log

**06/24 Performance Report**

The extensions have been included and are to be presented at this board.

**Close**

**10/24 Quarterly Risk Review**

A meeting with SLT was scheduled for 30 April 2024 and MB confirms the risk appetite has been revised.

**Close**

**15/24 Performance Report**

The data has been clarified and a footnote added to aid clarity.

**Close**

**16/24 Performance Report**

AS advised that this has been amended in the last performance report and an explanation will be in the next strategy update on the forward plan for June 2024.

**Close**

**17/24 Performance Report**

LC advised that this has been scheduled as a Workshop not a Deep Dive so there will be no supporting paper but there will be a slide show to support the action.

**Close**

**18/24 Q3 Performance Report**

A meeting was organised with LC, JP and EB on 14 May 2024 to discuss. This will be picked up in LC and EB's monthly one to ones.

**Close**

**19/24 Annual Accounts Timetable**

NC confirmed the annual accounts timetable was shared with JP.

**Close**

**23/24 Deep Dive Update**

Informal Key Lines of Inquiry have been agreed for the next Deep Dive and the new rolling 2024/25 schedule is being produced. The Terms of Reference will be completed in line with this.

**Remain Open**

**24/24 Deep Dive Update**

Meeting held for upcoming Deep Dives and invite list discussed.

**Close**

**25/24 Finance Report**

No update due until September 2024.

**Remain Open**

**26/24 Response Strategy Update**

The review has occurred, but no update is due until June 2024.

**Remain Open**

### 4. Forward Plan

4.1. EB advised from next month the Forward Plans will convert into a rolling 12 month plan so an extended forward look can be seen at all times. JP also advised that contractual

agreements and medium-term decisions would sit at the bottom of the Forward Plan going forward so they are not lost sight of.

- 4.2. JP reiterated that the Forward Plan should be reviewed before each meeting by all participants and points raised within the meeting should there be any comments or errors.
- 4.3. PBI noted that it would be helpful for The Service to have someone from the procurement team link in with EB to map out the key decisions coming up for noting on the Forward Plans going forward.

#### **Action 28/24**

**SS to link in with EB regarding Key Decisions and Contractual Agreements to be mapped onto the Forward Plan.**

**Items 7 and 8 were brought forward.**

### **7. Performance Report**

- 7.1. LC presented the Performance Report overviewing the key points of the paper to the board.
- 7.2. JG reflected that regarding the home fire safety visits by operational crews, the numbers are significantly down on target again and asked when can we see that number increase? AS advised that although they are not near target yet, the numbers are increasing month on month. There has been a dip seen in the prevention activity also due to campaigns which will pick up again when the campaigns are not going on at the same time. JG asked if the level of sickness was also a factor. AS advised there are no themes or anything out of the ordinary identified in this area. JG commented that the paper also identifies community safety officer reductions and asked what kinds of reductions there were. AS advised, there was a restructure of the prevention team happening, they are therefore holding two vacancies at present which are being repurposed under the restructure.
- 7.3. JG asked if what3words is used to ensure that the appliances get to the right place more quickly. AS confirmed the new mobilising system allows the use of what3words and it is used, advising there has been social media promotions to make people aware of the benefits; EC advised these campaigns are also ongoing. EC highlighted that they would like Police colleagues to utilise what3words more when requesting Fire attendance as it really allows them to give a better service to the public, crews are also happiest when given a what3words location to deploy to.

#### **Action 29/24**

**The PFCC's office via the collaboration board to promote the use of what3words to Police Colleagues expressing the benefits of utilising this method of incident location when requesting the attendance of Fire Colleagues.**

- 7.4. RH asked how confident The Service are that the most vulnerable people are being targeted by home safety visits. AS advised that the NFCC Person-Centred approach is being used and that the highest risk areas based on vulnerability are being completed first. LC advised an interactive dashboard has been created to assist in this area also.

### **8. Performance Framework**

- 8.1. LC presented the Performance Framework overviewing the key points of the paper to the board and referenced the methodology.
- 8.2. JG advised it would be helpful going forward if the SLT owner on the reports was listed for transparency for the public and for accountability. LC agreed to add this in and to recirculate.
- 8.3. RH spoke about the variable targets and agreed there was logic in what was being said but noted these can have a knock-on effect to future targets. RH asked if there could be visual bar graphs for each of those variable targets otherwise it is very difficult to see what the consequences of any flexes are. LC advised the variable targets are just on the RBIP at this time and agreed to the point that if a target is variable, clarification on what the end point looks like is also needed.
- 8.4. JG noted in the Appendix under 'prevention, protection and response, that the measure for 'reduction in economic impact' is listed as to be developed and solely owned by the PFCC's office and queried if this should be jointly owned. LC advised she believed it has the PFCC's office name against it because it comes from the Fire and Rescue Plan. LC went on to explain it is one that is being reached out to the NFCC Data Lead on, as it is clear they do not want the methodology from the national report being taken down to a local scale.

LC left the meeting at 14:45

## **5. Finance Report**

- 5.1. NC presented the Finance Report to the board for April / month 1, these being the first results reported under the new finance system. There is a small surplus of £100k against a budgeted surplus of £68k. Employment costs are overbudget by £229k driven by wholetime and on call. NC noted that the employer's pension contribution rates increased by 8.5% from the 01 April 2024, which was not in the budgeted plan, although it was known there was an increase at the time of setting the budget the details were unconfirmed. NC advised they were underspend on support staff and control as there are some vacancies at present.
- 5.2. NC advised on the pay awards, the Grey Book pay award has been made at 4% (this was budgeted for 3%) which also included an enhanced maternity provision and an increase to the on-call retainer fee from 01 January 2025, the full year impact being around £1.1m unplanned. The Green Book pay award came out with the proposal £1,290 flat rate increase to scale point 43 and then 2.5% on all points above this from 01 April 2024, the impact figures for this are still being worked through.
- 5.3. NC continued to give an update on the accounts for the financial year 2023/24 advising on the update on the publication of the draft accounts and also provided an update on the implementation challenges of the finance system which has been newly embedded.
- 5.4. RH was understanding of the implementation challenges of the new finance system and was grateful for the production of the paper given the challenges. JP also reiterated what a fantastic job has been done under such circumstances. RH asked for the PFCC's thanks and acknowledgement to be fed back to the teams.

## **6. Procurement Dashboard**

6.1. SS presented an overview of the Procurement Dashboard to the board. SS discussed the Workwear Timeline Update on Pg 3 advising that as a decision report is now required via Strategic Board, the timeline will need to change, and the team will be working towards the September 2024 Strategic Board with an estimate of July/August 2025 go live for all the staff to have their new workwear.

6.2. There were no questions posed by the board for this paper.

**SS left the meeting at 15:08**

## **9. LRS update**

9.1. MB presented the Leadership Resources and Succession Update to the board on behalf of CB. MB advised as of 30 April 2024 there are 143 people active within the LRS, 64 have completed and 85 are working on the portfolio and there are others in the resource or the development pools. Outlining the steps for the next six months MB advised one of the main things that requires further analysis is regarding why people are choosing to withdraw from the programme as this is not yet fully understood although it is known there doesn't appear to be any disproportionate impacts.

9.2. RH raised that it was a hefty number of people that withdraw, and it is unfortunate that we do not know why this is. MB promised that although they don't know yet they will find out. RH advised he would like to hear back when this is known. MB advised the work itself is considered urgent and she would feed this back before the next report in 6 months time.

### **Action 30/24**

**MB to discover why there is a large number of people withdrawing from the LRS and report back to RH.**

9.3. RH asked is the programme regarded as a success. MB believed it was a success for most people, the people that have successfully completed are moving into ultimately substantive promotions, but that it could be better as people are withdrawing and this should not be the case.

9.4. PBI advised her understanding was that in previous years through both internal staff surveys, and through staff surveys the HMICFRS undertook, there was a perception that the promotion processes were not fair. PBI further recalled that this was not highlighted in the latest HMICFRS report and presumably the LRS has been one of the means through which this perception has been tackled. MB advised she would like to think this had contributed to this too.

## **10. Digital and Data Strategy Update**

10.1. KE presented the Digital and Data Strategy Update providing an overview of the paper to the board.

10.2. RH noted that the HR & Payroll system did not seem to have much movement since the last update. KE advised it is recognised this is something that needs to be done but they are still looking at the scope of how this is achieved, it is on the Forward Plan, but the full scope of delivery has not been determined yet.

- 10.3. RH asked if The Service were a member of the Eastern Region Cyber Resilience Centre, KE believed they were but that he would need to check this. RH advised if the service were not, that they should be.

**Action 31/24**

**KE to confirm if The Service are a member of the Eastern Region Cyber Resilience Centre.**

**11. Quarterly Grenfell Phase I High Level Action Plan Update**

- 11.1. AS presented the Quarterly Grenfell Action Plan Update advising all 46 Phase One recommendations are completed and made BAU, The Service are still awaiting Part Two expecting publishing in late June/early July. The impact is expected to be less than Phase One and this will be moved forward as and when The Service get the recommendations. Regarding the Manchester Arena Inquiry, only 48 of the 149 recommendations sat with Fire and 35 of those are closed with 10 progressing and 3 awaiting. There are two failures to agreed that will be heard around MTA and 10 second triage.
- 11.2. RH advised on the actions there are a lot of TBA dates and TBA owners and that it would be ideal if these are completed even if they change in due course as it is hard to evidence there is an expectation they will be done without this information. AS advised the TBA action owners are pending due to the movements in the senior manager team where the area managers are changing and will be reallocated when the process is complete, they are currently owned at Group Manager level by Dan Kirk. The deadlines are being reviewed due to national issues.

**12. Quarterly Organisational Assurance Report**

- 12.1. MB presented the Quarterly Organisational Assurance Report, highlights included; The building of the evidence portal in line with the HMICFRS inspections, reflecting the strengthening of the assurance offer against the organisation. The good learning identified in the incident documentation, ensuring this is maintained as evidence and used for learning. The identification of improvements around risk information circulation.
- 12.2. RH noted when looking at the various scores for station audits a number of them are at adequate and RH wanted to make the point that the aspiration should be good. MB agreed and stated she would be working with the area manager for operational response to work on that.

**13. Quarterly H&S Report**

- 13.1. MB presented the Quarterly Health and Safety Report, advising there were two safety flashes and there are 3 Ongoing Significant/Serious Accident Investigation Boards. There were six RIDDOR reportable events. The number of in house RTC's has increased which is being looked at through the health and safety strategy group. There were two attacks on fire service personnel.
- 13.2. There were no questions posed by the board for this paper.

#### **14. Quarterly Working Well Together**

- 14.1. MB presented the Quarterly Working Well Together paper to the board on behalf of CB. There were five people policies published and two operational policies agreed. Details on some legislative change from the 06 April 2024 have had to be included in policy covering carers leave, pregnancy and family leave, redundancy protection, paternity leave amendments and flexible working rights. There are three failures to agree: MTA, 10 Second Triage and Unwanted Fire Signals.
- 14.2. RH asked what the failure to agree was on the Unwanted Fire Signals and MB advised this was on what level of resource was mobilised.

#### **15. Annual Workforce Report Update**

- 15.1. MB presented the Annual Workforce Report Update to the board on behalf of CB, advising this is an annual snapshot of the workforce looking back on the previous financial year. Items on the workforce demographic, the pay gap, age profile and turnover and absence actions were discussed.
- 15.2. JG noted that 4280 more working days were lost to sickness absence this year in addition to last year, citing this seems to be a lot. MB accepted this was not acceptable as it is both high and moving in the wrong direction. JG asked what actions are being taken around this. MB advised she would take this away and have an official response provided.

#### **Action 32/24**

**MB to provide JG with details of what actions are being taken around the higher number of working days lost due to sickness absence.**

#### **16. Information Governance Update**

- 16.1. KE presented the Information Governance Update to the board advising they are focusing predominantly on records management, training and awareness and risk and assurance, these being the highest risk in terms of the information governance strategy. KE discussed the appointment of Silver Sands who were commissioned to quality assure and audit the office 365 infrastructure and ensure all the right securities and permissions were in place. A formal office 365 working group with additional resourcing into the Information Governance team to review SharePoint sites has been set up off the back of this and will be monitored through the next iteration of the continuous improvement board.
- 16.2. There were no questions posed by the board.

#### **17. Quarterly Risk Review**

- 17.1. MB presented the Quarterly Risk Review reporting on the 16 strategic risks currently held with the only change since the last update being one risk (150036) has turned red.

17.2. RH asked that now the detail of the likely pay outcome has been received does that change the financial risk assessment. NC advised a conversation around this has been had at SLT and they are working through an improved in year productivity and efficiency plan and they may choose to increase their risk depending on the outputs of this, confirming it is under consideration.

17.3. PBI noted that through the Statutory Officers meeting of herself RHy and NC, they have started to have some preliminary conversations about how both risk registers need to be updated in light of the new Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan once agreed and a conversation should be had around this at a later stage.

## **18. Quarterly Portfolio of Change Update**

18.1. MB presented the Quarterly Portfolio of Change Update to the board advising the overview of the portfolio of change and how this fits with the internal governance map, what has changed and what are the future plans/projects.

18.2. There were no questions posed by the board.

## **19. Converted Stations Transitional Group Update**

19.1. AS presented the On-Call Remediation Plans including Converting Stations Update. The key headline being The Service have maintained the 98% coverage again for a second month. Items on remediation plans, reinvestment of underspends, recruitment and training were also discussed.

19.2. RH asked when taking away the embedded and training up more on-call what is the lag gap between this. RH also commented that it looks from the commentary like there is a lack of drivers and asked do we need to train more. AS advised the issue at present is they cannot start drivers training until they have completed phase 2 and are moving into stage 3 and what they need to do is unpick that so they can start training drivers earlier. CM advised it was approximately 3 years, as its 12 months and 18 months for phase 1 and 2.

19.3. JG noted there was a debate last P&R about South Woodham Ferrers as embedded officers were to be removed and the point was made that there were concerns about resources being removed if the impact was going to have a negative effect; and the availability has gone down. It is cited this is due to the Easter leave period and shortage of specialist skills. JG asked for reassurance that The Service are completely sure this isn't due to the removal of embedded officers. AS advised the forecasting was that there wouldn't be the impact at South Woodham Ferrers, but this is monitored monthly and if it is found this is not as forecast remedies will be looked into.

## **20. Any Other Business**

RH asked if there were any papers that shouldn't be published in line with the agenda and MB agreed there were not.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:10 hours



### **Future meeting dates**

- Monday 24/06/2024 10:30
- Monday 29/07/2024 14:00
- Tuesday 27/08/2024 14:00