



## MINUTES

### **POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX AND ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD 24 June 2024 11:00 – 12:30**

#### **Present:**

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
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)
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)
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC's Office)
Heather Kinzett (HK)	Strategic Advisor (ECFRS) seconded from the Home Office
Andy Smith (AS)	Director of Operations (ECFRS)
Sarah Smith (SS)	Procurement Manager (ECFRS)
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager (PFCC's Office)

#### **Guests:**

James Taylor (JT)	Area Manager – Assistant Director National Inter-Agency Liaison Officer (ECFRS)
Emma Thomas (ET)	Head of Comms, Marketing and Brand, ECFRS

#### **Apologies:**

Emily Bownes (EB)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny – Fire (PFCC's Office)
Janet Perry (JP)	Chief Financial Officer / Strategic Head of Performance and Resources (PFCC's Office)

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

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

#### **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- 2.1. MB raised a small matter for accuracy in section 19.2, the second line is a reference to CL and to be corrected to CM for Craig McClellan. The minutes of the previous meeting were then agreed and there were no matters arising.

### 3. **Action Log**

#### **23/24 Deep Dive Update**

There was a Deep Dive on Performance Measures in May. JW/MB would discuss the Deep Dive programme for the rest of the year and report back to the next meeting.

**Open.**

#### **25/24 Finance Report**

NC to establish a schedule of transfers in and out of the earmarked reserves within the Finance Report over the next few months.

**Open.**

#### **26/24 Response Strategy Update**

NC and JW reviewed the pack in detail, but JP to follow up further outside of the meeting.

**Open.**

#### **27/24 Minutes 24/04/2024**

EB amended the minutes and recirculated.

**Closed.**

#### **28/24 Forward Plan**

SS and EB are gathering key contract dates to link in with Decision Boards and then the Strategic Board to present back an upcoming list of expected contracts that will require a decision sheet to be approved.

**Open.**

#### **29/24 Performance Report**

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.

**Open.**

#### **30/04 LRS Update**

CB provided further detail to RH on 30/05/24. Outcome of work relating to this to be presented within next LRS update in November 2024.

**Closed.**

#### **31/24 Digital and Data Strategy Update**

ECFRS was now signed up to the Eastern Cyber Resilience Centre which would provide a Free Training programme full of the latest guidance; Threat Alerts about the latest cyber-attacks in the sector; Signposting to lots of free tools and resources from both local policing and the National Cyber Security Centre; and access to Cyber PATH Cyber Security Services.

**Closed.**

#### **32/24 Annual Workforce Report Update**

MB advised that CB had circulated an email with the required information around the higher number of working days lost due to sickness absence.

**Closed.**

#### **4. Forward Plan**

- 4.1 JW advised the Forward Plan items for July P&R Board and noted the 'Quarterly Future Portfolio of Change Update,' and 'Quarterly Working Well Together Update' had been deferred from July to the August P&R board and 'The Estates Strategy Update' had been deferred from June to the July P&R board.

#### **12. Annual TU Facilities Report**

- 12.1 CB gave an update on the Annual TU Facilities Report that covered the period up to 31 March 2024. The Report would then be provided to the Cabinet Office by 31 July 2024. CB advised that the number of FBU Officials had decreased over the last year, which the Service had anticipated. There had also been a decrease in time spent on facilities time, and a corresponding reduction in the total pay bill spent on facilities time. CB noted that in comparison with the 23 Fire and Rescue Services that provided data to the Cabinet Office ECFRS was the seventh lowest of 23 regarding time spent on facilities time. ECFRS was the sixth lowest last year.
- 12.2 CB advised that one of the reasons for this decrease was that the FBU no longer had a full time official. CB also explained that they were encouraging accurate recording of FBU facilities time, as this was another potential reason for the decrease.
- 12.3 RH asked if there were any consequences to any of this? CB confirmed ECFRS were having to strongly encourage policy consultation to take place within the six weekly phases of 'Working Well Together'. This had resulted in the Service doing lots of thinking around the next phase of 'Working Well Together'. CB explained that the Service aimed to reduce the burden of consultation whilst also ensuring that everyone had a chance to have their say.

#### **7. Performance Report**

- 7.1 LC talked through the monthly performance report and confirmed that the data was 97.43% quality assured at the time of reporting.
- The number of total incidents were 2% less than the same period last year and 3% above the five-year average for this period and 10% above last month.
  - The total number of incidents attended were 1363, fires were 282, special services were 366, false alarms were 600 and RTCs were 115. LC noted no significant changes in those numbers.
  - There was a noticeable increase in flooding incidents during the early evening of 21 May, with many incidents requiring ECFRS advice only. This was reflected in the number of calls received, which was 122 on that day, compared to the average of 90 calls the previous year.

- In terms of false alarm types this was in line with the preceding months with good intent false alarms accounting for 52%, false alarms due to apparatus was 45% and malicious false alarms remained low at approximately 3%.
- LC explained that the Service was trying to understand how much effort was being spent on false alarms. On average the Service were deploying 1.6 - 1.7 appliances, with each appliance mobilised for 15-16 minutes per false alarm incident. LC advised of the proposed new mobilising policy, which would be sending one appliance instead of two, which might not necessarily impact on the volume of false alarms that the Service was going to, but they hoped would reduce the amount of effort and resources taken from the Fire Service, thus improving the Services fire cover.
- There was one fire fatality recorded in May. Which was the result of an accidental dwelling fire in sheltered accommodation, where the first appliance responded in 5 minutes 44 seconds.
- Primary injuries were at the higher tolerance level and were higher than the Service had seen in previous months.
- ECFRS coverage overall was 97%. The report stated that coverage was 78%, but this was incorrect.

#### **Action 33/24**

#### **LC to amend Performance Report and reissue before publication.**

- The Safe and Well team had been impacted by abstractions due to staff sickness and a flexible working agreement initiated ahead of recruitment to backfill. Of the available 147 working days, the teams did lose 67 days, which impacted the number of visits that they were able to complete in that time.
  - During May the average number of audits per FTE was 6.8, generating a 3-month average of 7.0 visits per FTE.
  - The Service received 14 FOI requests in May 2024, with 93% completed within time limits.
  - Four data breaches were recorded, one was graded as major, one as moderate and two minor/near misses. The data breaches involved email attachments and details contained within the body of emails. The moderate breach involved an opened letter containing potentially sensitive information being left out of a secure container.
  - Zero referrals were made to the ICO.
- 7.2 JW asked for feedback from ECFRS around the steady increase in fire alarms and unwanted fire signals over the five-year trends and why that continued to happen? AS confirmed the increase was a national trend and noted a lot of Services were now considering a non-attendance policy through the CRMP. This was not a proposal yet, but something the Service were considering.
- 7.3 JW queried the response times worsening recently and whether the Service could provide any feedback around this? AS confirmed that there was work to be done to improve that area with LC and the control team. AS would provide a clearer update in the July P&R board. AS advised that there was a new mobilising system which could potentially have impacted the second half of last year.

7.4 JG queried whether the new mobilising system was working properly? AS said, he believed it was more a problem of embedding the new system rather than a failure of it.

**Action 34/24**

**AS/LC to investigate the data for the response times to understand why the averages were declining.**

7.5 PBI queried the percentage of satisfactory audits, which had reduced from 46% in April to 42% in May and whether there were any recurring themes within the unsatisfactory audits? AS confirmed that the Service were trying to drive down the number of audits they completed, to ensure the focus was on the ones that would cause the greatest risk.

7.6 PBI queried the FS040 data in May, where there were 315 referrals, but only 130 completions. PBI asked whether there was a reason for such a significant difference between these figures? The Service agreed to take an action to gather this information and report the findings at the July P&R Board.

**Action 35/24**

**LC & AS to investigate the FS040 data in May 2024 to understand the reasons behind the differences in the referral and completion rates and to present the data at the July P&R Board.**

**9. Q4 Performance Report**

9.1 RH noted the average response times had not been green since Q1 of 2021/22. RH requested that this be investigated ready for the presentation of the report to the Panel.

**Action 36/24**

**LC & AS to investigate the average response times before the Panel meeting.**

9.2 PBI queried the FS040 data. Referrals had dropped in 2023/24 compared to previous years.

**Action 37/24**

**LC & AS to investigate the FS040 data and report back to the meeting the reasons for the fall in referrals.**

9.3 PBI also asked about the RBIP being projected to complete ahead of schedule whilst the report suggests the targets were not being met every quarter. RH noted a step change was required to meet the target date.

**Action 38/24**

**LC & AS to bring the tables in the monthly report into the quarterly report to better show the progress towards completion of RBIP.**

## **8. SMSR Survey Results**

- 8.1 ET advised that the SMSR Survey was a joint project with the PFCC, which would provide results every quarter. The results were from the first tranche of the survey completed earlier in the year. The aim was to engage with a minimum 8,000 people over the course of 12 months.
- 8.2 SMSR used several methods (telephone survey, digital, face-to-face interviews) to engage with and reach the communities that the Service specifically asked them to reach.
- 8.3 ET confirmed the team had made some changes to the questions moving forward and advised that the second quarter results would be issued w/c 8 July 2024.
- 8.4 RH credited ET and the team for the work on the survey and expressed the importance of a longitudinal survey to understand how the public perceive the Service.
- 8.5 PBI queried the findings within the survey around what risks there are in communities, as there was a significantly lower response rate for people with disabilities compared to those without disabilities, while on Slide 20, there was a significant drop in confidence around emergency response for people with disabilities compared to those without. PBI also highlighted that there were a number of areas where those of all other ethnicities were much less likely to respond positively than white, British or Irish and queried how the Service planned to unpack those discrepancies to better respond to the findings? ET confirmed the Service were connecting with those communities as part of the CRMP planning and looking at how the Service could target those groups that were more difficult to reach.

## **5. Finance Report**

- 5.1 NC gave an update on the financial report for May 2024:
  - YTD position was a surplus £700k against a budgeted surplus of £300k.
  - Payroll costs were £582k over budget at month two. NC highlighted that the firefighter pension rate did increase to 8.5%. The impact of this increase for those two months was £436k.
  - NC noted a discussion with JP to potentially present a second income and expenditure statement that would take into account the pension adjustment, so it would not completely distort the figures.
  - Ill-health pension costs were £42k over and NC noted that there was an unexpected claim that went through and was paid in the period that was driving that overspend.
  - On-call costs were over by £60k.

- 5.2 NC noted there was a Green Book Pay Offer, but the Service had not quantified this through the P&R Board. NC confirmed that would be between £60k to £70k. It was not too significant but was still a pressure. NC confirmed that the forecast based on the pay awards would be included in the June 2024 Report.
- 5.3 RH questioned the performance being affected by the release of earmarked reserves and queried if this was going to reoccur? NC confirmed it was not going to reoccur and that any earmarked reserves that the Service released would have approved decision sheets attached to them.
- 5.4 JW requested waterfalls to be added back into the finance report next month. NC confirmed that this would be done.

## **6. Procurement Report**

- 6.1 SS confirmed the Procurement Act 2023 had an official go-live date of 28 October 2024. The Cabinet Office had confirmed that ECFRS could continue to state a higher limit on their procurement procedures despite this being above the figure set in the new Procurement Regulations. SS was therefore working on updates to the Constitution and the Service Strategy
- 6.2 It had been officially announced that Blue Light Commercial were taking over the NFCC procurement hub. SS noted they were retaining the category management approach which was beneficial to the Service.
- 6.3 SS advised ECFRS are currently reviewing the procurement routes for the building conditions, water treatment and legionella contracts.
- 6.4 ECFRS have awarded renewals of a couple of ICT systems to Civica. These consist of Fire Risk Management and the Fleet Management System.
- 6.5 SS advised the thermal imaging camera tender was rerun last month. The Service had demonstrations of only two cameras from two companies who submitted bids. SS noted the team are awaiting a copy of the decision sheet that was approved at Strategic Board, so the Service can move forward to award the contract.
- 6.6 SS explained that the Phem D contract had passed the standstill period and the contract would require signing.
- 6.7 SS reported that there were no STAs in May 2024.

## **10. Deep Dive Programme 24/25**

- 10.1 There was no Deep Dive Programme 2024/25 update to note.

## **11. Protection Strategy Update**

11.1 AS summarised the highlights within the report, advising that there had been a change in reporting. The work carried out by the Performance and Analytics and the Protection Team has led to the targets within the 2024/25 Performance Report been aligned to the targets set within Protection's plan, as Protection could now be held accountable against targets much more effectively. This change also confirmed that Protection remained on track to achieve both their three-year target for the very high-risk premises and the five-year target for the high-risk premises.

- Inspecting Officers achieved their nine audits per month, which included six at new premises which were either classified at high-risk or very high-risk.
- Six staff have now completed their level 3 training.

11.2 ECFRS were still progressing with the policy change to reduce attendance, further to discussions with FBU. AS confirmed the Service had agreed to move the process into the CRMP to review more fully.

11.3 The Service had decided not to pursue the ISO accreditation at this stage. AS explained that this was because there was an issue nationally with the accreditation being formalised, and the Service did not want to pay costs for an ISO, when the ISO accreditation had not been finalised, although when this had been finalised, they would consider pursuing this.

11.4 AS finalised and said there was a new Business Engagement team which was providing real benefits both within the business community as well as with rural engagement through the Rural Engagement Officer and their links with the National Farmers Union and local landowners.

11.5 RH questioned to what extent the Service was affected by staff leaving? AS confirmed the Service were confident to maintain the 22.6 FTE, but that they would continue to monitor this.

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

13.1 AS advised Craig McLellan is in place as the new Head of Response and he would be conducting a review of the Service's approach to every transition and on-call availability and the Service would expect to see some of the benefits of that already coming through in the report.

13.2 AS summarised the highlights within the report, advising the coverage was being maintained well at 97%. AS noted the challenging environment around on-call recruitment but noted that the team were working hard to get staff trained and in post.

## **14. Quarterly Information Governance Action Plan Update (Removed)**

14.1 There was no report as this was presented last month.



## **15. Complaints and Compliments Process and Outcomes**

- 15.1 KE summarised the highlights within the report, advising the innovative approach ECFRS want to take with the complaints and compliments process and additional metrics that the Service would like to measure.
- 15.2 KE advised that the Service would like to ensure they were capturing all the compliments and recognising them in a slightly different and improved way.
- 15.3 RH credited KE and the team for their work and the report.
- 15.4 AS requested to deliver a key themes and metrics report back through the P&R board to show where the Service was in terms of process and what was coming in. RH and JG welcomed the report and JG requested to have a conversation offline to discuss the PFCC's scrutiny within that report.

### **Action 39/24**

**KE to deliver a quarterly report on key themes and metrics to the P&R board for the complaints and compliments process.**

### **Action 40/24**

**JG and AS to liaise offline to discuss the PFCC's scrutiny around the complaints and compliments process with ECFRS.**

## **16. Fire and Rescue Plan 2019-24 Closure Report**

- 16.1 JW advised that the Fire and Rescue Plan 2019-24 Closure Report presented in the meeting was not the definitive version, but that this would be circulated in due course.
- 16.2 RH asked for the graphs to be reported in the same way as the reports to the Board.

### **Action 41/24**

**JW to complete and distribute the Fire and Rescue Plan Closure Report before the Panel meeting.**

## **20. AOB and publishing**

- 20.1 There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:00pm

### **Future meeting date**

- Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024