

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

ESSEX POLICE and ESSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE JOINT EXTRAORDINARY STRATEGIC BOARD 26 June 2024 12:45 – 13:00

MINUTES

Present:

Roger Hirst (RH)	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Colette Black (CB)	Director of People Services, ECFRS
Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI)	Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer, PFCC's office
Fiona Brown (FB)	Chief Information Officer, Essex Police
Moira Bruin (MB)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Emily Cheyne-Guess (ECG)	Assistant Director Communications, ECFRS
Patrick Duffy (PD)	Head of Estates, Essex Police
Karl Edwards (KE)	Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS
Claire Heath (CH)	Head of Continuous Improvement, Essex Police
Rick Hylton (RH)	Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS
Jane Gardner (JG)	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Head of Performance and Scrutiny, PFCC's office
Stephen Jennings (SJ)	Director of Intelligence, Essex Police
Heather Kinzett (HK)	Strategic Advisor, ECFRS
Debbie Martin (DM)	Chief Financial Officer, Essex Police
Janet Perry (JP)	Chief Financial Officer / Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, PFCC's office
Andrew Pritchard (APri)	Assistant Chief Constable, Essex Police
Andrew Prophet (AP)	Deputy Chief Constable, Essex Police
Jeremy White (JW)	Finance Manager, PFCC's office
Helen Notman (HN)	(Minutes) Scrutiny Officer, PFCC's office.

Apologies:

Ben-Julian Harrington (BJH)	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Neil Cross (NC)	Chief Finance Officer, ECFRS

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1. RH welcomed all to the meeting detailing the purpose of convening the Joint Extraordinary Board today as to consider Decision Reports in relation to land transfer and contract for work at Dovercourt. Apologies were noted from the above.

2. Dovercourt

2.1. Decision Report from ECFRS FRA 025-24

2.1.1. KE presented DR 025-24 which included two recommendations. Recommendation one was for the approval of the PFCC for the transfer of 155a Fronks Road, Dovercourt and additional land next to Dovercourt Fire Station from ECFRS, to Essex Police, for the construction of a new Police Station, achieving a capital receipt of £300k. The second recommendation was to execute the TP1 as a Deed and seal the site plan in order to formalise the transfer and legal ownership from ECFRS to Essex Police. KE highlighted the benefits this would provide, as it would provide a collaborative site, as there would be a number of shared spaces within the Fire Station for both organisations to access and utilise. Modest decorative improvements were being completed to the shared working spaces as part of the overall project funded by Essex Police. KE highlighted that ECFRS continued to pay rates on the existing building which was used infrequently and surplus to operational requirements.

2.2. Decision Report from EP 090-24

2.2.1. PD outlined DR 090-24. The first recommendation was for the PFCC to proceed with the transfer of 155a Fronks Road, and land associated with Dovercourt Fire Station, from the PFCCFRA, for the construction of a new Police Station, for the sum of £300k. The second recommendation was to execute the TP1 as a Deed and affix a seal to the site plan in order to formalise the transfer and legal ownership. The objective was to create a modern, fit for purpose emergency services facility for Essex Police. There would be shared space within the building for use by both Police Staff and Officers and ECFRS. The proposal would enable the existing Harwich Police Station to be declared surplus to operational requirements following the relocation of Staff and Officers to the new Police Station, with an estimated capital receipt for the existing Police Station of £450k, although this had not yet been included in the Estates Services disposal programme.

2.3. Decision Report from EP 058-24

2.3.1. PD then presented DR 058-24. The first recommendation was for the PFCC to award the JCT Minor Works contract to Pentaco Construction Ltd for £60,794.83 to undertake the demolition of the former Fire Station Commander's House and erect hoarding to secure the site in preparation for the construction works. The second recommendation was for the PFCC to award the PCSA contract to Pentaco Construction Ltd for £158,904.85 to carry out detailed design services required before formally entering into a building contract. A further Decision Report would be presented in relation to the full construction contract associated with the construction of the new Police Station.

2.3.2. RH explained that as this was all part of the same project, it made sense to scrutinise the three DR's together. RH questioned whether firstly the terms of the transfer were correct, secondly did the Board agree the legal structure was the right legal structure to do this under and thirdly in terms of procurement, were the Board comfortable that this had been completed under a proper competitive procurement process. RH also asked why the house next door was being offered at 80% cheaper rate than 155a Fronks Road. PD explained that in terms of the valuation they approached it in the same way as when ECFRS purchased Shoeburyness Police station a few years ago, with agreed upfront joint instruction with EP and ECFRS. The valuation of the house and land took place in October 2023. The house was valued at £250k house and the land at £50k. The question was raised last week by KE, of whether the value had changed since October 2023, and it was confirmed that there had been negligible changes within the market, and that the valuation was still correct. JP asked for this information to be added into the DR for clarity. PD confirmed that the cottage next door would not be suitable for EP or ECFRS due to its location and facilities.

Action J46/24

PD to add to DR 090-24 that the Force had reviewed whether there was any change in the valuation of the property and land and were reassured that this was still correct as there had been negligible changes within the market.

RH suffered technical issues and left the meeting at 13:02. JG took over Chair of the meeting in the meantime.

- 2.3.3. JP noted that there was nothing mentioned about MRP in the DR's. PD explained that the budget had already been approved for £700k, and it was already forecasted borrowing. JP requested that MRP was included in the DR, so the PFCC could see the impact of this. PD agreed to ensure this was included in the DR.

Action J47/24

PD to include MRP in DR 090-24 and 058-24.

- 2.3.4. PBI explained that there was an outstanding query about the redaction status from the review meeting, where normally with property disposals the PFCC did not publish the report and appendices until after the property sale had completed. However, as this sale was between two public sector authorities, should the PFCC to be more transparent than usual? PD stated that the Force would not normally publish the transfer document itself and explained that this was not yet the final version as it was not yet signed. All the information would be available on the Land Registry website.

RH re-joined the meeting at 13:05 and resumed as Chair.

- 2.3.5. PBI then raised a query about the construction contract, asking about the difference between the DR and the Reg 84 report in terms of the quoted value of the disposal of Harwich Police Station, which was still in the DR as £450k, whereas Reg 84 quoted £800k, and those should be consistent. PD confirmed that £450k was the correct value and apologised for this error and confirmed he would update this.

Action J48/24

PD to correct the value of the disposal of Harwich Police Station in the Reg 84 to £450k.

ACC Pritchard & DM joined the meeting at 13:06

- 2.3.6. PBI wished to clarify that in section 13 of the construction contract PD had stated in the risk and mitigations section that 'manageable risks in terms of agreeing the contract amendments' and asked whether PD was satisfied that the mitigations put in place around that were adequate. She added that there was an indication that those contract amendments were still being worked through and asked whether the contract the PFCC had at the meeting was the final version to be executed, or whether there were still issues that needed finalising? PD confirmed that there were still some issues that needed finalising. PD explained that the contractor gave the Force their proposals to the contract amendments as part of their tender and the Force did not have any concerns with them and reassured the Board that they were minor points. The reason this had not yet been finalised was because the Force had only received Reg 84 a week and a half ago and had not yet notified the supplier that they were the successful bidder. PD explained that the notifications would run out on Monday or Tuesday and then the Force could notify the supplier they were successful. PD confirmed this was not yet the final version, and added that this was under Delegated Authority, so the Force were not asking for this to be signed directly, but that they would

tease out any amendments, and would notify the PFCC if these were more significant than anticipated.

2.3.7. JP asked whether the £2,122k remaining was expected to be sufficient to cover the rest of what the Force intended to do with Dovercourt, or could there be a shortfall there? PD explained that potentially there could be a shortfall, it was currently hard to anticipate the costs of this due to the construction market, and tenders were coming in higher than pre-tender estimates. PD added that by using the PCSA route it allowed the contractor time to de-risk this to make the price more competitive, which is the reason the Force had used this process, as the pre-market engagement helped to reduce the risk and provide more reassurance of the costs. JP requested that it be added into the DR that this had been done in order to minimise risk. PD confirmed that he could do this. RH added that they would still be returning with final positions on this anyway.

Action J49/24

PD to provide an updated Reg 84, in respect of any amendments on notifying the supplier they were successful, and to let PBI know if there were any significant amendments within this. PD to add into DR that the PCSA route was used in order to minimise risk and provide more reassurance of the building costs.

2.3.8. RH confirmed that when he appeared to be out of the meeting due to technology issues he could still hear the discussions. RH then asked RHy and AP if they were happy to progress in accordance with the proposals made in the Decision Reports which had been presented, and whether these proposals would fulfil the operational requirements of ECFRS and Essex Police. RHy confirmed that he was happy for RH to proceed with this. AP explained that this would meet the Forces operational plan so he was also happy for RH to progress with this. AP thanked the Board for their feedback on the Decision Reports and stated that the force would amend them as discussed and submit to the PFCC's office as soon as possible. Once the actions above were completed the recommendation of the Board was to progress DR ECFRS FRA 025-24, DR EP 090-24 and DR EP 058-24 for formal approval and signing within the PFCC's office.

Action J31/24

DR ECFRS FRA 025-24 to be progressed for formal approval and signing within the PFCC's office.

Action J50/24

DR EP 090-24 to be progressed for formal approval and signing within the PFCC's office.

Action J51/24

DR EP 058-24 to be progressed for formal approval and signing within the PFCC's office.

3. Approval of paper classifications for publishing

3.1. Papers for all items would not be published as meeting papers due to sensitivities prior to contracts being signed. The Decision Reports would be published at a later date on the PFCC's website in line with published decision making, subject to their final security classification.

4. Any Other Business

4.1. RH thanked everyone for their hard work in getting to this point of a clear way forward and that it was an excellent example of positive collaboration.

4.2. There being no further business the meeting closed at 13:15 hours.