
Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Thursday, 13 February 2020

Present:

| Councillor | Representing |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Wendy Schmitt (Chairman) | Braintree District Council |
| Maria Pearson | Brentwood Borough Council |
| Aidan McGurran | Basildon Borough Council |
| Jeremy Lager | Chelmsford City Council |
| Frances Mason | Harlow District Council |
| Mike Webb | Rochford District Council |
| Ian Shead | Southend-on-Sea Borough Council |
| Lynda McWilliams | Tendring District Council |
| Michael Helm | Maldon District Council |
| Joycelyn Redsell | Thurrock Council |
| Colin Day | Uttlesford District Council |

Also in attendance

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|-----------------------|--|
| Pippa Brent-Isherwood | Chief Executive, Office of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner |
| Jane Gardner | Essex Police, Fire and Crime Deputy Commissioner |
| Victoria Freeman | Secretary to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel |
| Roger Hirst | Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner |
| Rick Hylton | Acting Chief Fire Officer, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service |

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report of the Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received.

1. The following apologies were noted:

- Councillor Chris Hossack, Brentwood Borough Council (substituted by Councillor Maria Pearson)
- Councillor Godfrey Isaacs, Castle Point Borough Council
- Councillor Mike Lilley, Colchester Borough Council
- Councillor Nigel Bedford, Epping Forest District Council
- Councillor Malcolm Maddocks, Essex County Council
- John Gili-Ross, Co-opted Independent Member
- Kay Odysseos, Co-opted Independent Member

2. Councillor Lynda McWilliams declared a Code Interest in that her son is a police officer. Councillor McWilliams participated fully in the meeting.

2 Questions from members of the public

There were none.

3 Essex Police Performance Report - Quarter 3 2019/20

The Panel received report EPFCP/08/20, which provided an overview of Essex Police's progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2016-20, based on data and other information to December 2019.

Introducing the item, the Commissioner highlighted that progress had been made in a few areas, in particular the Special Constabulary was 8.8% larger than at the same time the previous year, with 519 officers compared with 477 in December 2018; there had been great success with the neighbourhood watch and the hate crime reporting centres. The Force Control Room had reduced the average waiting time for calls to 11 minutes and investment continued in this area. The Force Control Room Digital Online Team went live in October 2019 and provided information and intelligence in the initial stages of a critical operation / investigation in cases where digital sources could be exploited. The Resolution Centre had been opened fully in December 2019 and managed less complex crime investigation.

The Panel's attention was brought to the success of the Essex Police Victim Navigator, which had triaged 76 Modern Slavery Human Trafficking crimes since October; and the Police Online Investigation Team who had executed 50 search warrants in October and November this year and safeguarded 81 children in the same period. In response to questioning, the Commissioner stated that there had been much scrutiny regarding the effectiveness of Essex Police following the recent incident in Thurrock. A submission had been made for the reimbursement of additional costs, and although the request would not automatically be granted as the threshold had not been met, the Commissioner remained optimistic. An interest was indicated by the Panel in modern slavery trends and clusters.

Essex Police continued to work closely with the multi-agency Safer Essex Road Partnership on enforcement, engagement and education to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Essex roads and were on track to reduce these numbers.

The Panel asked what strategies were in place in reduce the drug supply throughout Essex. The Commissioner explained that the Violence and Vulnerability Unit continued to be a hugely successful partnership and that county line drug operations were being disrupted.

Members asked questions about the report, relating to a number of issues, including the possibility of a 101 divert scheme and learning from market leaders; the impact that the new Force Control Room Digital Online Team

had since its introduction; and the viability of holding completed home forensic samples in excess of 25 years.

The report was noted.

4 Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report - Quarter 2 2019/20

The Panel received report EPFCP/09/20, setting out the performance of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service for the second quarter of 2019/20, against a number of key metrics aligned to the Fire and Rescue Plan.

Introducing the item, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner highlighted that the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires and deliberate fires had fallen in the last quarter; first attendance to potentially life threatening calls had been steadily improving; there were no fatalities from fires during the second quarter; and the availability of on call crews remained a challenge. There was a plan to deal with the issue of technical fire safety and inspection of non-residential properties and the new Integrated Risk Management Plan would be key in providing direction in resolving these issues.

Members asked questions about the report, relating to a number of issues, including the sprinkler installation projects; staff sickness, in particular in respect of mental health; management steps taken to change the culture within the Service; and home visits to vulnerable groups.

The report was noted.

5 Police Complaints Reform

The Panel received report EPFCP/10/20, which provided an overview of the changes to the police complaints system and how the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner was responding to these.

During questioning, it was explained that it was the role of the Commissioner's office to review the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and that the Commissioner received and reviewed quarterly data.

It was confirmed that there were sufficient Independent legally trained Chairs available following a recent recruitment round which had attracted a good quality calibre of candidates.

The report was noted.

6 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA) Constitution

The Panel received report EPFCP/11/20, which invited comments from the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on the contents of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's updated Constitution prior to its adoption.

It was noted that Schedule 16 of the Constitution needed to be updated to reflect the current terms of reference for the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

The report was noted.

7 PFCC Decisions

The Panel received report EPFCP/12/20, which provided the Panel with information about financial and strategic decisions made by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The Panel reviewed the information provided and questioned the use of speed camera devices by local residents. It was explained that a branch of Community Speed Watch were trained to use the Trucam technology, however the technology was becoming outdated and consideration would be given to rolling out the new generation technology when available.

The report was noted.

8 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on any ongoing issues

The Commissioner explained that the National Audit Office had previously reported a lack of national strategic direction in policing and that the new Government was looking to reshape police within existing legislation to find better ways of co-ordinating nationally and there was now a National Policing Board which looked at improvements in national co-ordination.

9 National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panel Update

The Panel received a report from John Gili-Ross which provided an update on the activities of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels.

The Panel noted the report.

10 Forward Look

The Panel received report EPFCP/14/20, setting out the business proposed to be taken to meetings up to December 2020.

It was noted that a Confirmation Hearing would need to be arranged as a separate meeting on the 4 June 2020.

The Panel requested that the Decision Report be presented to each meeting, with the exception of those meetings where the Panel were requested to consider the precepts.

The Panel noted the report.

11 Future Meeting Dates

The Panel received report EPFCP/15/20, setting out the proposed Panel meeting dates for 2020.

The Panel noted the report.

12 Dates of the next meetings

The Panel will next meet at 2.00pm on Thursday, 4 June 2020 in Committee Room 1, County Hall. There will be a pre-meeting for Panel Members only, commencing at 1.00pm.

13 Urgent Business

In the opinion of the Chairman, there were no matters that should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances as a matter of urgency.

With no urgent business, the meeting closed at 3.23 pm.

**Chairman
4 June 2020**