

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

14:00	Thursday, 07 December 2017	Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
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Quorum: 5

Membership

Councillor Kerry Smith
Councillor Wendy Schmitt
Councillor Chris Hossack
Councillor Godfrey Isaacs
Councillor Bob Shepherd MBE
Councillor Mike Lilley
Councillor Sam Kane
Councillor John Jowers
Councillor Tony Durcan
Councillor Penny Channer
Councillor Mike Webb
Councillor Ann Holland
Councillor Lynda McWilliams
Councillor Joycelyn Redsell
Councillor Jim Gordon
John Gili-Ross
Kay Odysseos

Representing

Basildon Borough Council
Braintree District Council (Vice-Chairman)
Brentwood Borough Council
Castle Point Borough Council
Chelmsford City Council
Colchester Borough Council
Epping Forest District Council
Essex County Council (Chairman)
Harlow District Council
Maldon District Council
Rochford District Council
Southend Borough Council
Tendring District Council
Thurrock Borough Council
Uttlesford District Council
Independent Member
Independent Member

For information about the meeting please ask for:

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Essex County Council

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Part 1

(During consideration of these items the meeting is likely to be open to the press and public)

		Pages
1	Apologies for Absence and Notices of Substitution The Secretary to the Panel to report the receipt (if any).	
2	Minutes To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2017.	5 - 12
3	Declarations of Interest Members are invited to declare any interest in any item on the agenda. Members may still declare an interest in an item at any time prior to its consideration.	
4	Questions to the Chairman from Members of the Public The Chairman to respond to any questions relevant to the business of the Panel from members of the public.	
5	Essex Police: Demand Review To receive a presentation and verbal report from the Chief Constable of Essex, Mr Stephen Kavanagh.	
6	2018/19 Budget Scene Setting To receive reports from Roger Hirst, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in relation to:	
6i	6i PFCP Finance Update 7th Dec	13 - 28
6ii	6 ii PFCP - Finance Update Dec 2017 V2	29 - 36
7	Essex County Fire and Rescue Service: Culture change following the Lucas review To receive an initial report (EPCP/27/17) from Roger Hirst, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on ECFRS culture change programme following the Lucas Review.	37 - 276
8	Feedback report from the PFCC Precept Public Survey	
9	The Police and Crime Commissioner Decision Report	277 - 280

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| 10 | The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on On-going issues | |
| 11 | PCC Annual Report 2016-2017
To receive the revised document (EPCP/29/17) following the meeting of 13th November 2017. | 281 - 296 |
| 12 | Minutes of the 9th November meeting of the Ethics and Integrity Sub Committee
To receive the minutes and a verbal report from the Chairman. | 297 - 300 |
| 13 | Forward Look | 301 - 302 |
| 14 | Date of Next Meeting
To note that the next meeting will be held at 2.00 pm on Monday 22 January 2018, in Committee Room 1, County Hall. | |
| 15 | Urgent Business
To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency. | |

Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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| 16 | Urgent Exempt Business
To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency. |
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Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Monday, 13 November 2017

Present:

Councillor	Representing
Kerry Smith	Basildon Borough Council
Graham Butland	Braintree District Council
Godfrey Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Mike Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
Sam Kane	Epping Forest District Council
John Jowers	Essex County Council (Chairman)
Tony Durcan	Harlow District Council
June Lumley	Rochford District Council
Lynda McWilliams	Tendring District Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member
Kay Odysseos	Independent Member

Apologies for Absence

Wendy Schmitt (Vice-Chairman) with Braintree District Council

Graham Butland as her substitute

Bob Shepherd Chelmsford City Council

Penny Channer Maldon District Council

Mike Webb with Rochford District Council

June Lumley as his substitute

Ann Holland Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Joycelyn Redsell Thurrock Council

1 Apologies for Absence and Notices of Substitution

The apologies as outlined above were noted.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Questions to the Chairman from Members of the Public

There were none.

5 Revised Membership of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

The Committee **noted** the revised membership as set out on the front cover of the agenda.

Following some discussion it was unanimously agreed to reappoint the Independent Members of the Panel for a further 12 months; and there should then be an open and transparent process of review.

6 Update on the joint governance of Police and Fire & Rescue Services in Essex

The Commissioner provided an update on the progress which had been made since the joint governance arrangements had come into force on 1 October 2017.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- The joint governance arrangements have all completed and the statutory instruments and consequential orders are in place. The new constitution and governance functions are active; and the new Performance and Resources scrutiny committee has met for the first time. A stage one implementation plan is in process of being agreed
- Savings in the region of £20-£23m have been identified through the Local Business Case and individual business cases will be developed and being presented over the next few months
- There is to be a strategic workshop involving senior management of the Police Force and the Fire & Rescue Service, as well as the OPFCC in early January 2018
- A strategic fire and rescue plan will be developed and will link directly to the integrated risk management plan of the Fire & Rescue Service
- Operational leadership and decision making is delegated to the Chief Fire Officer through the scheme of delegation; whereas finance and strategy will remain the responsibilities of the OPFCC. As employer, the Commissioner is able to call-in operational decisions of the Fire & Rescue service which he cannot do with the Police Force
- The current Chief Fire Officer has served notice of his intention to retire at the end of the financial year; although there is some level of flexibility if required. The job advertisement for the new Chief Fire Officer closed on the day of this meeting and there has been significant interest in the post. There is great confidence that a high calibre new CFO will be found. The recruitment process has been clear that the post is not just open to fire officers but also to leaders outside of Fire and Rescue. This is linked to the need for the new appointment to also take forward the significant programme of cultural change programme linked to the Lucas Report, Essex Advisory Panel and Sir Ken Knight's subsequent findings and recommendations. Within ECFRS there needs to be further cultural change, a clear, transparent and equitable performance

management programme; a fit-for-purpose learning and development offer; and renewed complaints and grievance procedures. Following a question from Councillor Butland regarding the potential appointment of someone without operational fire and rescue expertise, The Commissioner stated he wanted to attract the best person to the role of Chief Fire Officer and did not want this restricted to a current Chief or Deputy Fire Officer; however he did express he would be surprised if the appointee did not have some relevant experience around fire and rescue. The role will also be, effectively, Chief Executive of the Fire & Rescue Service. The proposed appointment will be brought to the Panel for ratification

- Further dialogue has taken place with the Deputy Chief Executive of the East of England Ambulance Service in order that police and fire can work more closely with the ambulance service. The ambulance service is now attending the Essex Strategic Collaboration Governance Board which is very positive. Following a question from Councillor Durcan, the Commissioner confirmed the discussions have been preliminary only about things the services can do in collaboration; as they are done in some other counties. The Commissioner confirmed that there is in no way any intention to break up the East of England Ambulance Service or separate it from the NHS; but reiterated that the service could potentially work together more closely with the Police and Fire & Rescue services
- Following a question from Cllr Smith, the Commissioner confirmed that all fire unions and staff representative bodies will be engaged in conversations about the agenda and papers for the new Fire and Rescue Strategic Board. By involving all the unions at an early stage with good dialogue is of great benefit, the Commissioner stated

The Panel unanimously approved each of the seven recommendations from the private meeting of the Panel on 14 September (EPCP/18/17) but agreed to keep recommendations two-seven under review. It was confirmed under recommendation six that the vast majority of the Home Office grant will be used to support the work of the Panel. The allowance would be a nominal amount and would be similar to the allowance other PCPs pay.

With regard to the terms of reference it was agreed to amend paragraph 2.4.1 and remove the word Commissioner for the sake of clarity of the appointed positions.

Paragraph 3.4 highlighted the issue, discussed under item 4, of the independent members of the panel. It was suggested a clause may be missing and, it was agreed, any constitutional changes be undertaken outside of the meeting. It was agreed the constitution is a working iterative document and any proposed changes can be brought to meetings of the Panel. On this basis, the constitution was unanimously agreed.

7 Police Technology including an update on Athena and the Emergency Services Network

The Committee considered report EPCP/19/17 by the Essex Police Director of Support Services, providing an update on police technology, including the Athena case management system launched in 2015 and the Emergency Services Network. The Commissioner stated he would provide more detail on finance, functionality and timelines than that provided in the presented report.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- The functionality of Athena is cutting-edge and communicates between different police forces. However, stability is an issue as it is so powerful with consequent delays and crashes
- The first three forces to trial the system were Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. Following the trial the system needed to be stabilised before further roll-out; and there will be nine forces in total using it. The Commissioner had been involved in discussion the CEO of the software designer and a consultancy company with regard to further improvements prior to the further roll-out in July 2017; and improvements are still being made with the next version of the system will be 5.1 which will link the upgrades to the Police National Computer
- West Mercia and Warwickshire forces went live on 3 October and this was a smooth, successful and well-resourced roll-out, which has had positive feedback. The remainder of the roll-out will be in May 2018 when the Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire/Hertfordshire consortium goes live; and finally in September 2018 with the Kent force going live when all the contracted functionality will be available. The order of roll-out was agreed when the contract commenced. The reason Kent is last to go live is due to backwards conversion, which took some time to develop
- In relation to finance the original contract cost of £31.4m are the same; Essex picks up 21.5% of the total. Additional commissioned projects have been met by Home Office funding rather than out of the contract costs. There have been incremental charges across the nine forces totalling £360,000. The Commissioner assured the Panel that appropriate programme directorship is in place at the developers and that no penalties have been negotiated with the developers taken on the incremental costs of further development
- Following a question from Councillor Durcan regarding the approximate cost of £6m to the people of Essex over a 10 year period, the Commissioner responded that in terms of IT transformation projects it is not an overly large money as the people of Essex get the value of the linked case management systems, and modernising the force. The system has, so far, allowed officers to spend an additional 20 minutes of their shifts on patrol – and it is hoped that this will increase to an hour in the future
- Following a question from Kay Odysseos on efficiencies, the Commissioner stated that since the introduction of mobile Athena

there has been positive feedback which has led to time efficiencies. It is difficult to ascertain, at present, whether this is hardware or software led

- The Commissioner stated he would provide Councillor Kane with information on the victim support service with regard to timescales and the interface with district community safety liaison teams
- With regard to the Emergency Services Network, the Commissioner reported the benefits will be around £1m per day over the current contract. These savings take into account medium-term financial planning. The roll-out has been pushed back but the completion date remains the same, resultantly the OPFCC is quantifying the impact on the Essex Police budget if the start date is deferred and consequent budgetary implications. The roll-out of the Emergency Services Network was not considered as part of the joint governance arrangements as the Fire & Rescue service does not use the system to the same level of the police force

The Panel thanked Mr Hirst for the report and requested an update in May 2018.

8

The Annual Report from the 2016/17 Review

The Panel considered report EPCP/20/17 by the

The Commissioner highlighted the report was a summary of achievements in the past year 2016/17 related to the priorities in the police and crime plan. The report should be read in conjunction with the Police and Crime Plan Performance Report (ECPC/21/17). The report relates to the time prior to the Fire & Rescue Service transition.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- Essex is still the most tightly funded police service per resident in England and Wales
- Recruitment of Special Constables is making progress
- Reporting of Domestic Abuse is going up and, consequently, this does impact on the solving of cases. However, reporting going up is very encouraging; as such a footnote should be included on the performance data on the report
- There has been a step change in public engagement
- Community hubs have been identified by the HMIC as best-practice nationally
- Following a question from Councillor Butland, the Commissioner thanked him for his feedback on page 75 of the report and resolved to improve how performance against priorities is highlighted. Councillor Butland suggested a RAG rating may make the reporting clearer
- Road safety has been explored in Performance and Resources Scrutiny meetings. The OPFCC works closely with other agencies on road safety including the County Council and voluntary

organisations, such as Speedwatch. Driver improvement courses have been found to be better in terms of speed awareness than the imposition of penalty points. John Gili-Ross stated that bikesafe courses are extremely good also and requested information on how many people had been on the courses; and whether there were any plans to stop funding these? The Commissioner conformed there were no such plans.

- Kay Odysseos suggested a look at the tone of the document as, in her opinion, it is, in part, difficult to ascertain whether the differences have been made by the Commissioner or the police force

Councillor Smith left the meeting at 4.05 p.m.

The Panel thanked the Commissioner and noted the draft report. The Report must be reviewed by the panel prior to publication. A revised version, reflecting the feedback will be circulated to the panel outside of the meeting prior to publication. .

9 Police and Crime Plan Performance Report

This had been dealt with alongside agenda item 8, with the report EPCP/21/17 noted.

10 The Police and Crime Commissioner Decision Report

The decisions on EPCP/22/17 were noted.

11 The Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on On-going issues

The Commissioner updated the Panel on national police funding as he is the national lead on the Association of Police and Crime Commissioner's on funding. He explained all forces are tightly funded with limited earmarked reserves. In April the APCC pulled together evidence of the stretch and strain on resources. The conclusion of this was that the APCC and NPCC assess that policing is able to respond to the very significant future demand and threat levels. Some forces, however, are struggling more than others.

The APCC has met the Home Office Minister, Nick Hurd MP and put an argument to him that the stretch comes from new types of crime, such as internet-based crime, with more monies required to combat serious crime and counter-terrorism measures, which increases the demand on police time. In total an extra £440m has been requested for 2018/19 for policing in England and Wales; with an additional £845m in 2019/20. It is recognised that the 1% pay-cap is no longer sustainable and around half of these requested monies is to deal with inflationary pressures. There may be some information in the Budget in November, but more is likely in the funding round announcement in December.

The Chairman of the Panel raised failings in the police 101 number which has seen 30 minutes wait, and his consequent concern that people will use

999.

12 Precept Planning

The Commissioner thanked the Panel for the initial feedback received on the draft survey EPCP/23/17.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- Since the survey went live the responses indicate, so far, that the public is willing to pay more for extra policing
- Most PCCs have undertaken a similar survey as it is good practice so to do. It also assists in any submissions to government
- Following a question from Councillor Isaacs regarding the public wish for police officers to be deployed on the beat; and how any extra officers would be monitored, the Commissioner responded that an additional 41 officers had been deployed in Essex – half of these in specialist areas. The Commissioner continued if there is more freedom in the precept he would spell out, by district, how many extra officers there would be to allow local monitoring of this
- Raising of the precept of funding from central government is still taxation and as such a clear message will be delivered by the Commissioner on what will be delivered by any increase in the precept

Councillor Isaacs stated there is little sight of visible policing unless one is at an airport, port or major shopping centre. He stated the public would be willing to pay more but they want to see the streets policed and the public will need to be convinced that this will be done,

Councillor Lilley supported the request for extra funding from central government. He stated he had sent the Commissioner's questionnaire to his local parish council which has seen a rise in crime, as has Colchester generally. Therefore, he raised his concern that any rise in the precept will not coincide with an increase in visible policing. However, he recognised the changing nature of crime.

Councillor Durcan stated people see a safer society if they see somebody in uniform.

In response to Councillor's Durcan, Isaacs and Lilley, the Commissioner stated that visible policing has not decreased in the county.

Councillor Butland stated public perception have changed and they would be, in the main, willing to pay more. However, he warned the Commissioner against 'pandering to populism' with police on the beat being a 1950s concept. He stated he would rather see child abuse, domestic abuse and internet crime tackled. The public would prefer better and more effective use of available resource to tackle the main areas of crime.

Councillor McWilliams left the meeting at 4.30 p.m.

The Chairman wished the Commissioner well with the survey and requested a report be brought back to the Panel with the complete findings. He stated he was impressed the survey includes proportionality of any precept increase by Council Tax banding.

13 Report from the Regional Police and Crime Panels Workshop of 30 September 2017

The original agenda item was somewhat out of date, given the change in the meeting date; therefore, the Chairman gave the Panel a report from the National Police and Crime Panel Conference held on Monday, 6 November. He reported there was an excellent geographical spread of delegates drawn from Panels and support officers. There was agreement that a steering group be established to set-up a special interest group within the LGA for a national body for Police and Crime Panels – and that John Gili-Ross will be on this steering group. A break-out session was held at the Conference which Essex led on police and fire collaboration. It was clear, from this session that not many other Panels are taking this road at present; however, Northamptonshire will likely shortly be confirmed as the next Police, Fire and Crime Panel. Overall it was a very good conference.

14 Forward Look

The Panel considered report EPCP/24/17 by the Secretary to the Panel concerning the planning of the Panel's business. The meeting on 7 December would also include a presentation from the Chief Constable on policing demand in the county; and a report on the 9 November meeting of the Ethics and Integrity sub-Committee.

15 Date of Next Meeting

The Panel **noted** that the next public meeting would take place on Thursday, 7 December 2017, in Committee Room 1, County Hall. It was agreed to amend the start time to 2.00 p.m., and that this would be preceded by a private pre-meeting starting at 1.15 pm.

With no urgent business or exempt urgent business the meeting closed at 4.55 p.m.

Chairman

Essex Police Fire and Crime Panel	EPCP/25/17
Date: 7 December 2017	

Finance Update for the Year to Date and Scene Setting for 2018/19

Incorporating the 2017/18 budget monitoring report and scene setting for the PFCC's January 2018/19 budget and precept proposal

Report by the Treasurer of the PFCC to the Panel

Enquiries to:

Charles Garbett, Treasurer, 01245 291612 charles.garbett@essex.pnn.gov.uk

1. Purpose of report

1.1 This report lays out:

- i) The 2017/18 full year forecast as at 31st October 2017.
- ii) Current and anticipated budget issues that will inform the Panel's discussions on the 2018/19 budget and precept.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Panel is requested to:

- i) Note the financial performance of the PFCC Group for the financial year 2017/18.
- ii) Consider budget issues and associated risks prior to the forthcoming proposed precept to be presented to this Panel on 22nd January 2018. Views of Panel members will inform the development of the PFCC Group budget strategy and precept proposal in supporting the Police and Crime Plan for Essex 2016-2020.

3. Executive Forward

The PFCC's Police and Crime Plan sets out seven policing priorities to protect Essex. This is a shared plan and its success depends upon the active involvement of the Police in concert with a wide variety of partners with mutual interest in building safe and secure communities. The effective and efficient use of resources provides crucial support to achieving the Plan's objectives.

Constructive critical challenge from Panel members will be invited on the PFCC Group budget and precept proposal which will be presented on the 22nd

January in order to enable the PFCC to resource the Police and Crime Plan for Essex.

This report outlines the financial position for the year to date, financial backdrop and key financial matters for members' consideration.

4. Financial Year 2017/18 to date

Revenue Account

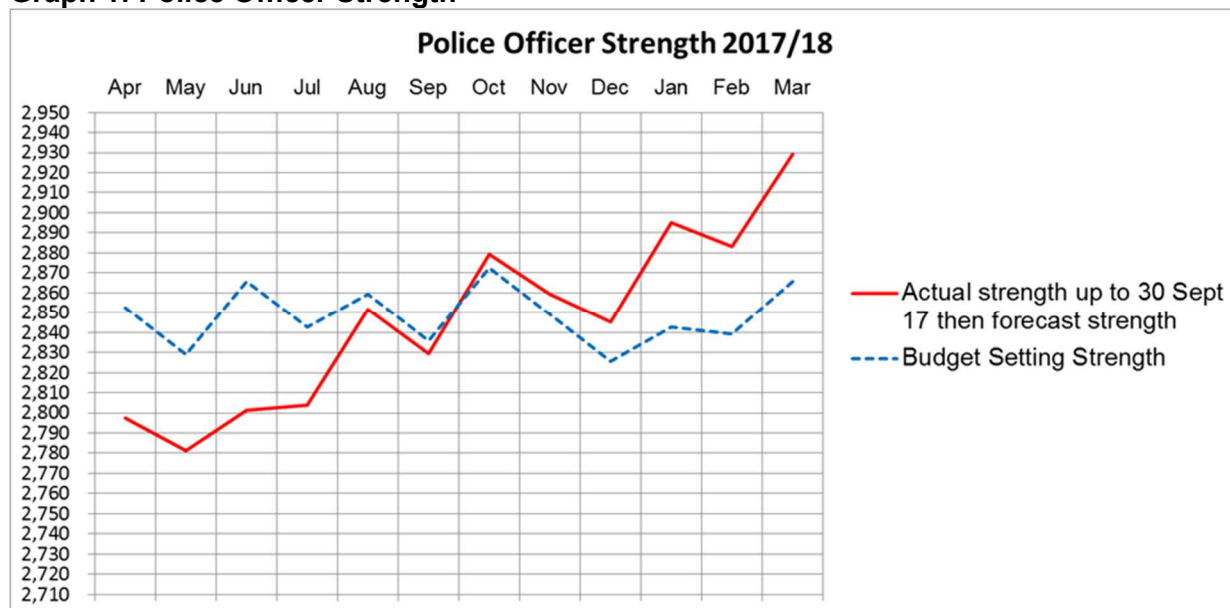
- 4.1 The month seven forecast results shows that the 2017/18 revenue budget is forecast to overspend by £1.243m. This position is summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Analysis of forecast 2017/18 revenue budget at the end of October 2018

Budget Heading	Current Budget	Actuals to Date	Forecast Outturn	Variance - Over / (Under) Spend
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employees				
- Police officer Pay and Allowances	153,812	88,868	155,460	1,648
- Police Staff Pay and Allowances	76,072	40,585	72,510	(3,562)
- PCSO Pay and Allowances	3,236	1,687	3,016	(220)
- Overtime, Pensions, Training, Expenses	14,495	9,560	16,571	2,076
Employees Total	247,615	140,701	247,556	(58)
Premises	11,155	6,073	11,149	(6)
Transport	4,699	2,414	4,599	(100)
Supplies and Services	28,742	16,948	28,930	188
Third Party Payments	5,595	2,136	5,787	192
Income	(26,167)	(12,528)	(25,700)	467
Interest and capital activity	289	(4,800)	466	177
Earmarked Reserves	(2,687)	(2,540)	(2,687)	0
In-Year Savings Shortfall	(295)	0	0	295
Net Expenditure	268,946	148,405	270,101	1,155
Contribution to/(from) General Reserve	89	0	(1,243)	(1,155)
Budget Requirement	268,857	148,405	268,857	0

- 4.2 The predominant reason for the forecast overspend on Police Officer pay at the end of October is the greater than anticipated number of police officer recruited and the 1% non-consolidated pay award from September 2017.
- 4.3 There were 2,879 officers at 31st October, 29 officers more than the planned 2,850. In order to address the forecast overspend for 2017/18 consideration is currently being given to reducing the Police Officer recruitment in March 2018 where the forecast officer strength at 31st March 2018 is 2,929 officers, 79 above the target of 2,850.

Graph 1: Police Officer Strength



- 4.4 An analysis of all budget variances to date leading to the forecast overspend is shown below:

Table 2: Forecast variances that affect the transfer to/from General Reserve

Budget heading	£m	Comment
Police Officers pay - 1% non-consolidated pay rise	0.8	Increased cost of £1.1m has been offset with £0.3m transfer from earmarked reserve
Operation All In	0.6	Overtime allocated to meet summer demand
Police Officer Overtime	0.4	Mainly SCD and cost of covering Custody Sergeant vacancies
Police Staff pay	(3.9)	Forecast vacancy factor of 7.7% against a budget assumption of 4.25%. The main service areas are CJOM, SCD, Support Services and Crime & Public Protection
Insurance claims & contributions to Insurance Provision	0.5	Increase in public liability claims.
Medical retirement capital equivalent costs	0.5	There have been 9 medical requirements requiring a capital equivalent charge to date and a

		further 7 are forecast for the remainder of 2017/18
Operation Russet	0.5	Increased activity following Manchester attack, includes £360k on overtime and £118k on Bank Holiday pay
Strategic Change savings shortfall	0.3	£0.2m set at budget time and £0.1m from the OPC restructure
Budgeted shortfall	2.6	The 2017/18 budget was set with an in-year shortfall of £2.6m
Underspend on 2017/18 growth items	(2.9)	Allocations are still under review
Other variances less than £250k	1.8	Over 200 budgets variances of less than £250k
Contribution from General Reserve	1.2	

Community Safety Grants

- 4.5 The progress in allocating £5.6m of community grants during 2017/18 is outlined in the Appendix. A total of £5.3m (95%) of grant monies have been allocated by the end October 2016.

Capital Account

- 4.6 Capital expenditure for the half-year position was £2.1m with the forecast spend for 2017/18 being £9.5m.
- 4.7 When the original 2017/18 capital programme was approved in January 2017 the forecast capital expenditure on approved projects totalled £6.1m. The increased spending during 2017/18 to £9.5m is largely due to slippage from projects approved for 2016/17, for example the mobile policing project and ESMCP (the Emergency Services Network). Although there have been some unavoidable slippage early indications show a significant service return on investment from mobile policing.
- 4.8 The PFCC's opening balance of capital reserves at 1st April 2017 was £nil. This balance is supplemented by Government grants and capital receipts during the year as highlighted in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Forecast 2017/18 capital spending and funding source at 31st Oct 2017

	Quarter 1 Actual £000	Quarter 2 Actual £000	Oct-17 Actual £000	Nov-17 Forecast £000	Dec-17 Forecast £000	Jan-18 Forecast £000	Feb-18 Forecast £000	Mar-18 Forecast £000	TOTAL Forecast £000
Opening balance of capital reserves - see note	0	1,201	4,502	3,895	3,090	4,386	5,162	4,927	0
Capital spend in year	(741)	(1,398)	(667)	(2,338)	(1,837)	(464)	(469)	(1,548)	(9,462)
Annual grant from the Home Office	234	234	-	233	-	-	234	-	935
Grants for specific capital projects	729	73	60	-	-	-	-	650	1,512
Property disposals	979	4,247	-	1,300	3,133	1,240	-	12,631	23,530
Transfer from Estates Improvement Reserve	0	145	-	-	-	-	-	-	145
Closing balance of capital reserves	1,201	4,502	3,895	3,090	4,386	5,162	4,927	16,660	16,660

Note: Opening balance of capital reserves excludes £1.69m of unfinanced capital expenditure from previous years.

- 4.9 Table 3 shows that the forecast balance of reserves for the end of 2017/18 amount to £16.6m, albeit that when internal borrowing is taken into account the available usable reserves are just under £15m.
- 4.10 An important assumption in Table 3 in forecasting a closing reserve of £15m is the disposal receipts of £12.6m during March 2018. The PFCC has been highly successful in driving through the disposals programme in ensuring that resources are not tied up with property assets that are surplus to requirements. The firm disposals strategy including spending on planning consents that change the status of surplus police property to achieve a much higher capital receipts is continuing.

5. Scene setting for the 2017/18 Budget and Precept proposal

- 5.1 The following subjects will be considered:

- i) HMIC PEEL: Police Efficiency 2017
- ii) Capital investment
- iii) Central Government Grant
- iv) Medium term financial planning
- v) Reserves
- vi) 2018/19 Precept

HMIC PEEL Police efficiency 2017

- 5.2 HMIC have recently published their latest PEEL police efficiency report following their recent inspection. HMIC rate the efficiency of the Force at keeping people safe and reducing crime continues to be 'Good'.

- 5.3 The Force have, to their credit, achieved a 'good' rating within the context of some telling comparators highlighted by HMIC in their recent publication of 2017 value for money profiles:
- An upward trend in the number of crimes
 - Above average number of recorded crimes
 - Below average funding from Government grant and precept per head of population
 - Lowest net revenue expenditure per head of population
 - Below average number of police officers
 - Lowest number of PCSO's per 1,000 population
 - Average number of staff per 1,000 population
 - Below average sickness levels but above average % of the workforce on restricted duties
 - Second lowest cost of the office of the PFCC
- 5.4 The profiles also show that Essex Police continues to have the lowest spending per head on local policing and this will be given close attention in the forthcoming budget along with other priorities within the Police and Crime Plan and emerging Strategic Fire & Rescue Plan.

Capital Investment

- 5.5 The PFCC Strategic Board has been overseeing and coordinating the full range of work associated with transforming Essex Police through investing in modern technology, reshaping the estate and providing fleet facilities to facilitate an efficient, well equipped Force.
- 5.6 The most substantial areas of investment are estates and IT. The strategies and plans for these service areas are supported by the Estates Strategic Board and Strategic IT Board.
- 5.7 Shared Governance with the 'Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority' has spurned a number of potential collaboration projects for police and fire collaboration and this in turn will open up a number of further potential opportunities for sharing services that require capital investment.
- 5.8 The acceleration of capital disposals will inevitably mean that at some point over the second half of the 5 year capital programme the potential for capital disposals will be exhausted. Alternative sources of capital funding through a mixture of additional revenue contributions and borrowing are therefore being considered where there is a justifiable business case. The PFCC's Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19 will establish a framework for short and long term investment and borrowing strategies.
- 5.9 Capital investment and disposal initiatives will present themselves through the capital programme which forms part of the 2018/19 budget and precept proposal to be presented to this Panel on 22nd January.

Central Government 'Formula' Grant

- 5.10 There are two main sources of income for Essex Police - The Government grant and the council tax (precept). Together these need to support the £268.9m net expenditure required by Essex Police in 2017/18.
- 5.11 Table 4 below sets out movement in both central government grant and precept income since the start of the first Comprehensive Spending Review in 2011/12, using 2010/11 as a base year. This shows that Government 'formula' grant has reduced by £24.2m from £182.9m in 2010/11 to £156.4m in 2016/17. However, along the way there have been some significant changes as highlighted in the notes below the table. Adjusting the 2017/18 grant level to enable a like-for-like comparison between 2010/11 and 2017/18 results in a government grant reduction of approximately £35m (19%) over the six year period.

Table 4: 'Formula' Government Core Grant since 2010/11

Government Grant	2010/11 £'m	2011/12 £'m	2012/13 £'m	2013/14 £'m	2014/15 £'m	2015/16 £'m	2016/17 £'m	2017/18 £m
Police Grant Note 1, 2 & 3	111.6	117.6	109.5	114.4	110.1	103.3	102.8	101.3
Revenue Support Grant	9.0	15.1	1.2					
DCLG Grant	62.3	50.1	62.4	60.9	58.1	56.3	55.9	55.1
Total	182.9	182.8	173.1	175.3	168.2	159.6	158.7	156.4

NOTES:

1. Neighbourhood police grant amounting to £7.2m was subsumed into Police Grant in 2013/14. Prior to 2013/14 this grant was a specific grant that offset service expenditure.
 2. The Council Tax Freeze Grant was not available prior to 2011/12 and included in revenue support grant during 2012/13.
 3. Community Safety Grant of £1.2m was channelled through to PFCCs starting in 2013/14 and thereafter included in Police Grant to provide funds for the PFCCs allocation of grants.
- 5.12 The PFCC is closely engaged with the Home Office, through the APCC as co-chairman of the Strategic Finance Board and also in his capacity as the first PFCC in the pursuit of a fairer allocation of government grant to match police service demand.
- 5.13 Following the Government's Autumn Statement announcement on 22nd November, specific government grant allocations for all forces are awaited which are expected to be announced around the 13th December.

Medium term financial strategy (MTFS)

- 5.14 The forecast position of the PFCC over the next five year period 2018/19 to 2022/23 is under construction which is taking into account:
- i) Police officer/PCSO/Staff pay awards
 - ii) Unavoidable non pay inflation
 - iii) One-off costs no longer funded from reserves

- iv) Revenue consequences of the capital programme
- v) Government grant levels

5.15 The level of Government Grant for 2018/19 will be provisionally known around 13th December, which will enable an updated MTFS will be incorporated into the 22nd January budget/precept report.

Reserves

5.16 The forecast General Reserve for 31st March 2017 is **£13m** (5% of net revenue expenditure). The PFCC revenue reserves (general plus earmarked) are amongst the lowest of all shire forces.

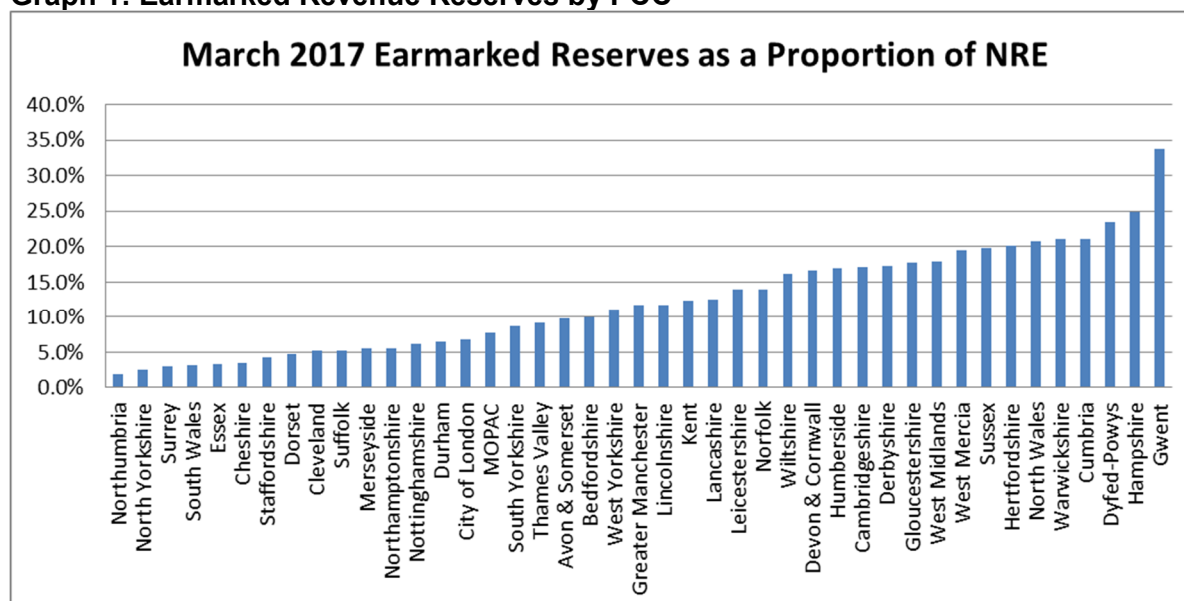
5.17 The Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurer's Society (PACCTS) have surveyed all Treasurers for an analysis of reserves held by each PCC at 31st March 2017. There was a 100% response rate to the survey which resulted in the widely publicised £1.6bn of revenue reserves held by all 43 PCC's.

5.18 A majority of PCC's have a policy of maintaining general reserves at 3% of net revenue expenditure or less and indicated a high level of mindfulness that reserves must not keep funds away from front-line policing. In setting the level of general reserves many respondents referred to an annual appraisal of risk when setting general reserve levels, particularly the risks that might be expected (unforeseen emergencies, uneven cash flow etc.).

5.19 Whilst the PCC for Essex has general reserves at 5% it is also the case that the level of earmarked reserves also has an influence on the level of general reserves. PCC's invariably having the option of transferring earmarked reserves to general reserves.

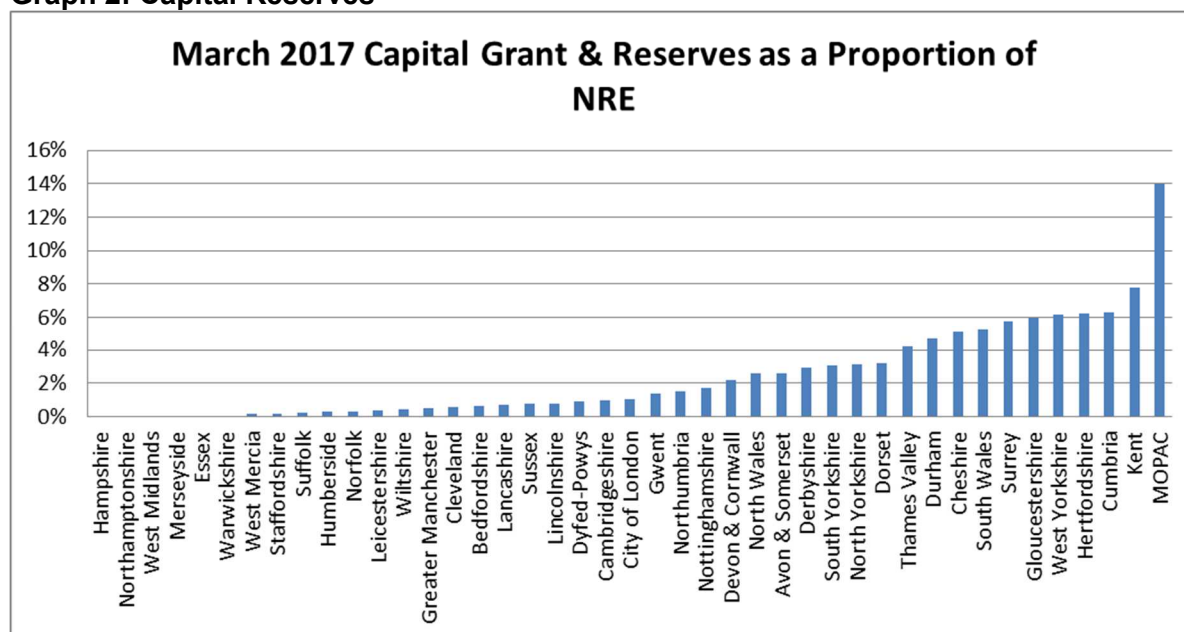
5.20 The PFCC's earmarked reserves compared to other PCCs in shown in Graph 1 below.

Graph 1: Earmarked Revenue Reserves by PCC



- 5.21 To complete the presentation of reserves capital grant and capital reserves need to be included and these are shown in Graph 3 below.

Graph 2: Capital Reserves



- 5.22 The low level of reserves held by the PFCC in Essex demands tight in-year budgetary control but there remains the risk that unplanned significant operations, such as murders, will disrupt service plans and delivery. The level of reserves will be reviewed in detail as part of the budget/precept report.
- 5.23 The close involvement of the PFCC as co-chairman of the Joint APCC/NPCC Finance Strategy Group has resulted in the acceptance of the need for greater transparency of reserves. Going forward each PCC will be required through the Home Office Financial Management Code of Practice to publish in a clear manner not only the level of reserves but also how the reserves are planned to be used. Specifically, each PCC should publish their reserves strategy on their website, either as part of their medium term financial plan or in a separate reserves strategy document. The reserves strategy should include details of current and future planned reserve levels, setting out a total amount of reserves and the amount of each specific reserve that is held for each year. The reserves strategy should provide information for at least two years ahead.
- 5.24 Sufficient information should be provided to enable understanding of the purpose for which each reserve is held and how holding each reserve supports the PCC's medium term financial plan. This approach marks a stepped improvement in the level of transparency for public consumption.

Precept level

- 5.25 The other key assumption is the level of precept. Out of 37 English Forces for 2017/18, Essex has the **sixth lowest precept at £157.05** for a Band D property.

2017-18 Council tax (average Band D) and % change on 2016-17: individual PCCs			
	Average PCC council tax (Band D)		
	£ Band D	Rank	% change from 2016/17
POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS			
Northumbria	98.33	1	5.36
West Midlands	116.55	2	4.48
West Yorkshire	150.95	3	3.43
Hertfordshire	152.00	4	3.40
Sussex	153.91	5	3.36
Essex	157.05	6	3.25
Kent	157.15	7	3.29
South Yorkshire	158.16	8	3.26
Greater Manchester	162.30	9	3.18
Cheshire	164.44	10	1.99
Lancashire	165.45	11	1.99
Hampshire	165.46	12	3.12
Merseyside	165.97	13	1.95
Bedfordshire	166.09	14	1.99
Durham	169.24	15	1.98
Wiltshire	170.27	16	1.90
Thames Valley	170.28	17	1.99
Devon & Cornwall	176.28	18	1.99
Suffolk	176.85	19	1.97
Derbyshire	180.60	20	1.99
Staffordshire	181.16	21	2.00
Avon & Somerset	181.81	22	1.99
Nottinghamshire	183.42	23	1.95
Cambridgeshire	186.75	24	1.97
Leicestershire	187.23	25	1.99
Humberside	187.33	26	1.99
West Mercia	189.60	27	0.00
Warwickshire	191.98	28	0.00
Dorset	194.58	29	1.98
Lincolnshire	205.47	30	1.97
Northamptonshire	209.04	31	1.99
Gloucestershire	214.49	32	1.99
Cleveland	214.54	33	1.99
Norfolk	217.17	34	1.99
Cumbria	220.77	35	1.91
North Yorkshire	221.32	36	1.99
Surrey	224.57	37	1.99

- 5.26 The additional income produced by a 1% precept rise amounts to at least £985k (based on a tax base of 627,578 Band D properties).
- 5.27 The average precept for all forces is £178.40 for a Band D property. If Essex had a precept level equal to the average this would have generated an additional £13.2m in the current financial year, equivalent to approximately 265 police officers.

- 5.28 The Government has consulted on the level of precept that they deem to be excessive before a referendum is required ('capping level'). For Essex, whose precept is in the lowest quartile for all PFCC precepts current rules allow a maximum of £5 per annum. A precept increase of £5 a year for a Band D property would yield approximately £3.1m in additional council tax receipts for 2018/19 and each subsequent year.
- 5.29 It is expected that the Government will confirm the capping limit alongside the Provisional Grant Settlement around the 13th December.

6. Managing Risk

- 6.1 The pressure placed on the Force to deliver within available resources are very challenging. The following risks can be highlighted:
- i) The risks associated with addressing increasing levels of crime with an insufficient complement of front line officers required to address this demand, particularly with significant unplanned demands
 - ii) The risks associated with failing to invest in officer and staff training, development, career incentives and motivation that an efficient force demands
 - iii) The risks associated with failing to invest in programmes that provide a justifiable return in service improvement and/or savings to enable a sustainable approach to force service delivery.
- 6.2 The future exchange and engagement between this Panel and the PFCC/Chief Constable's Joint Audit Committee, is welcomed as a means by which both the successes and risks associated with service delivery can be effectively shared.
-

COMMUNITY SAFETY GRANTS**APPENDIX A**

PFCC budget for Victims is made up of 3 budget lines. The below provides a clear breakdown of the three funds and the expenditure within each budget for 2017/18.

Budget Line	Description	Amount	Allocated Spend 2017-2018	Unallocated Spend ¹
Victims Fund	Ministry of Justice Grant that is provisioned to supporting Victims cope and recover from the impact of crime	£2,705,509 ²	£2,631,523	£73,986
Community Safety Fund	This fund is directly funded from the PFCC. This fund is to help deliver priorities within the Police and Crime Plan	£2,559,439 ³	£2,533,745	£25,694
Community Safety Development Fund	Fund is directly funded from the PFCC for community projects that support the Police and Crime Plan	£339,090 ⁴	£147,159	£191,931
Total		£5,604,038	£5,312,427	£291,611

Victims Fund

The Victims fund is a grant from the Ministry of Justice to allow the PFCC to commission services that provide Victims the services to ensure they cope and recover from the impact of crime. The below table provides a summary of the services commissioned using the Victims fund for 2017/18.

Service	Cost per annum	Provider	Term (years)
Domestic Abuse –	£700,000 (PFCC	Safer Places	3+1+1 commenced

¹ Unallocated spend as of November 2017

² MOJ Grant for 17/18 £2,094,803 rest of fund is made up from transfer of budget from Community Safety Fund, Local Authority and NHS

³ PFCC fund is £2,410,439 with additional budget from Essex County Council

⁴ £39,090 was carried over from previous year

IDVA	contribution £451,000)		Apr 2015
Domestic Abuse Partnership resources	£115,183	Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board	Ongoing
Sexual Violence – ISVA (including Young people)	£330,000	Essex Rape Crisis Partnership	3+1+1 commenced Apr 2016
Sexual Violence – Community Services	£440,000	Essex Rape Crisis Partnership	3+1+1 commenced Apr 2016
Sexual Violence – SARC (Forensic Medical Service)	£162,300	Mountain Healthcare	3+1+1 commenced Apr 2016
Non specialist - Referral and Assessment*	£655,000	Victim Support	3 contract expires March 2018
Restorative Justice	£120,000	PFCC Office – Restorative Justice team	Ongoing
Young Victims	£33,242	Catch 22	March 18
Children Society C.A.R.E	£30,027	Children's Society	March 18
Commissioning Support Officer	£45,000	PFCC Office	Ongoing
Other	£771	Victim Gateway website hosting	Ongoing

* New contract commences April 2018, expected cost £550k per annum 3+1+1 contract. Cost reduction is not due to reduction of the service but a change of service model that continues to deliver and support the needs of Victims in Essex.

Ministry of Justice monitor the fund allocation by bi-annual grant monitoring which the PFCC office completes. The PFCC office monitors compliance and value for Victims through quarterly performance reviews for each provider. Where the partner labelled above is within the PFCC office e.g. Restorative Justice and Commissioning Support officer this is monitored through annual performance management to ensure compliance and value.

Community Safety Fund

The Community Safety Fund is provided by the Home Office to allow the PFCC to support the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. The below table provides a summary of the Community safety Fund expenditure for 2017/18

Service	Cost per annum	Description
Community Safety	£272,558	Community Safety Partnership operates in every district of Essex. They are responsibility to protect

Partnership		and support their local communities from crime and to help people feel safer. CSP are monitored via an annual return to the PFCC
Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)	£502,998	The PFCC contribute to the Local Authority DAAT teams to provide Community Safety Interventions across Essex, Southend and Thurrock. Annual Monitoring arrangements in place
Youth Offending Service (YOS)	£443,835	The PFCC contribute alongside the local authority to the YOS whose aim is to work with children and young people who have offended and to help prevent them re-offending in further crime. Annual Monitoring arrangements in place
Safeguarding	£198,583	PFCC has a statutory obligation to contribute to the Essex, Southend and Thurrock's children and adult safeguarding board.
Crimestoppers	£56,024	Support an Essex Crime stoppers campaigns to prevent crime activity but also to support crime stoppers support line for anonymous information gathering
Other services (under £10k)	£26,510	Other services include support to a project/organisation that was under the value of £10,000 which supported the Police and Crime Plan e.g. contribution to multi agency events such as Barnados CAPI event and providing a small contribution to a Colchester begging campaign.
Gangs	£117,000	To support priority 5 of the Police and Crime plan the PFCC contract commissioned Gangsline (expire Jan 19 £100k) to provide awareness and mentoring to those at risk of Gang activity. The funding also provides a Gangs officer for the Tendring district.
Research	£140,000	2 pieces of research are commissioned to obtain feedback from members of the public to support activity within the police and crime plan. The funding will support activity until 17/18 year end.
Hate Crime	£22,500	StopHate UK was commissioned to provide a dedicated support telephone line to report cases of Hate crime anonymously
SafeLives Drive	£319,000	Pilot domestic abuse perpetrator programme co-commissioned with local authority
Victims Fund Transfer	£100,000	Fund is allocated to the Victims Fund from the Community Safety Fund. The victim fund from the MoJ doesn't support some elements of ASB. The transfer of this fund allows for such projects as Restorative Justice Team to support those individuals who are in need of support.
Domestic Homicide Review	£72,167	PFCC contribute to the provision of the Domestic Homicide review process
Local, visible policing	£65,000	Services are commissioned to support local visible policing by contributing to Rural policing specials and

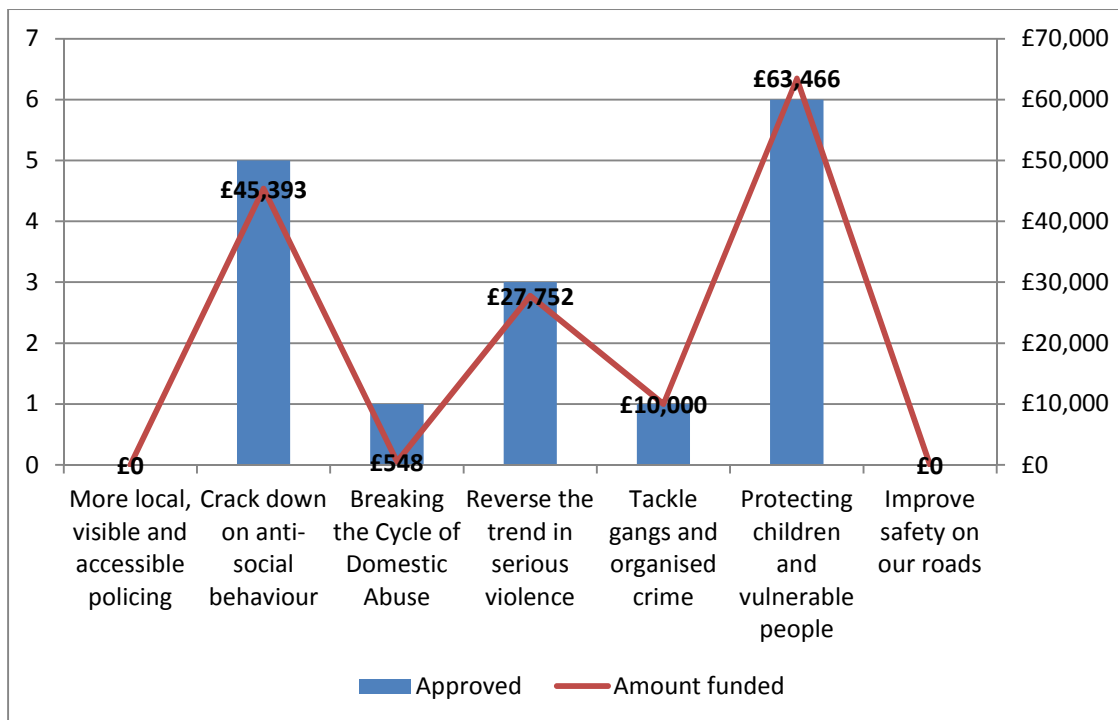
		the rural crime strategy. £10500 of this fund also contributed to neighbourhood watch programmes
Youth Social Action Fund	£44,000	The PFCC Match funded the Essex Community Foundation to promote youth social action in Harlow
Reducing reoffending	£75,000	PFCC use this amount of funding to support the coordination and interventions to Reducing reoffend. The fund includes the amount of £30,000 for a Reducing reoffending manager
Road Safety	£34,570	Services are commissioned to support priority 7 of the police and crime plan by Supporting Roads policing, the BRAKE programme and Speed Watch.
Criminal Justice board manager	£24,000	PFCC match funded a Criminal Justice Board manager to support the co-ordination of the Criminal Justice Boards. The funding amount is for the manager to remain in post until end of 18.
Violence against Women and Girls	£20,000	This funding amount has been provisionally secured to support the evaluation of the Violence against Women and girls strategy which includes a specific programme targeting and supporting Perpetrators of violence against women and girls.

Community Safety Development Fund

The Community Safety Development Fund is a £300,000 fund that is available to community organisations this fund offers grants of up to £20,000 for community projects that help to prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Essex.

The fund is split into two rounds. The first round of the Community Development Fund closed on the 1st September 2017. Applications were reviewed by Community Safety Partnerships and evaluated by a panel of independent local representatives.

£147,159 was awarded to 16 organisations. The below tables demonstrates the funds distribution across the PFCC's priorities. Full evaluation report of this first round can be found on the Essex PFCC website. The final round of the CSDF is due to close on the 31st January 2018.



**ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



Meeting	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	Agenda Item	6ii
Meeting Date	7 December 2017	Report Number	ECP/26/17
Report Author:	Mike Clayton, Finance Director & Treasurer		
Presented By	Mike Clayton, Finance Director & Treasurer		
Subject	Finance Update for 2017/18 and Scene Setting for 2018/19		
Type of Report:	Information		

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Panel is asked to:

- 1.1 Note the financial performance of the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2017/18; and
- 1.2 Consider budget risks and issues prior to receiving the proposed precept and budget proposals for 2018/19..

BACKGROUND

2. Governance of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service transferred from the Essex Fire Authority to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority on 1 October 2017. The budget for 2017/18 was set by the former Fire Authority and reflected the second year of delivery of service change proposals as part of the Authority's Efficiency Plan. The Efficiency Plan was agreed in September 2016 and was submitted to government to secure certainty for government funding for the period to 2020. In addition in 2016, following public consultations the Authority agreed an Integrated Risk Management Plan and a set of Service Change proposals to ensure a balanced budget from 2020.
3. As part of the public consultation on proposed service changes there was considerable support for the least change option and for increases in Council Tax of 2% per annum from 2016/17 to 2019/20.

2017/18 FORECAST

4. The Forecast outturn for 2017-18 is shown in the table below:-

Description	Current Full Year Budget £'000s	Current Forecast £'000s	Forecast Variance £'000s
Firefighters	28,849	28,785	(64)
On Call Firefighters	6,086	5,925	(161)
Control	1,382	1,375	(7)
Support Staff	13,209	13,582	373
Total Employment Costs	49,526	49,668	142
Support Costs	1,944	1,988	45
Premises & Equipment	10,474	10,138	(337)
Other Costs & Services	3,761	3,658	(103)
Ill health pension costs	2,118	2,221	103
Financing Items	6,160	6,139	(21)
Operational income	(3,781)	(4,127)	(346)
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(73)	(73)	-
Total Other Costs	20,602	19,943	(659)
Total Budget	70,128	69,611	(517)
Total Funding	(70,128)	(69,913)	215

- 5.
6. This shows the overall forecast spend is lower than budget by £517k.
7. Firefighter pay has been lower than planned because of a reduction in headcount with more firefighters leaving through retirements than forecast. This shortfall is being addressed through recruitment and in the summer period additional shift working helped to maintain operational availability. On-call firefighter numbers are also below the budget and lower operational activity for staff on this duty system has increased the savings in the first half of the year. Progress in changing the crewing for one appliance at Clacton is on track for a change in early 2018.
8. The Forecast includes a £373k overspend on Support Staff. Much of this occurred in the first half of the year through additional agency temporary staff, this is being discussed with Budget Holders to reduce this overspend.
9. The underspend forecast on Premises and Equipment of £337K is predominately on ICT projects where savings have been accrued from the "Cloud First" strategy and staff shortfalls have limited the activities being undertaken. Operational income is higher with a new government grant for maintenance of national resilience assets and funding for regional support for the emergency services mobile communications programme.
10. Offsetting the underspend is a funding shortfall of £215k from lower revenues for national non-domestic rates.

2017/18 CAPITAL

11. The forecast of capital expenditure is shown in the table below:

	Original Budget 2017/18 £'000s	Changes (mainly ICT) £'000s	Revised Budget £'000s	Forecast 2017/18 £'000s
Property				
New Premises				
Service Workshops	3,500	-	3,500	500
Asset Protection	2,500	-	2,500	1,900
Total Property	6,000	-	6,000	2,400
Equipment	605	21	626	626
Information Technology				
Projects < £250k	2,400	(1,550)	850	850
Total Information Technology	2,400	(1,550)	850	850
Vehicles				
New Appliances	2,060	-	2,060	2,060
Other Vehicles	825	-	825	825
Total Vehicles	2,885	-	2,885	2,885
Total Capital Expenditure	11,890	(1,529)	10,361	6,761

12. The main project delay has been in respect of the planned replacement of the Service Workshops currently located at Lexden, Colchester. Work on options that include co-location with the Police, or a joint workshops has delayed this project and significant progress is not expected in the current financial year.

SCENE SETTING FOR 2018/19 BUDGET

13. The overall plan for the Authority's budget was set in 2016 with the Efficiency Plan that was approved by the Essex Fire Authority and submitted to the government. Although the plan is on track and significant changes have already been made there are a number of key areas still outstanding that will need to be reflected in the 2018/19 budget. These include:

- Progress on the recruitment of on-call firefighters;
- Budget pressures and workloads for Technical Fire Safety following the Grenfell Tower incident, including the continued part funding of sprinklers in high risk homes; and
- The challenge to deliver non-operational savings through collaboration and partnerships.

PROGRESS AGAINST THE EFFICIENCY PLAN

14. The Essex Fire Authority initiated a programme of change (Programme 2020) in April 2015 to ensure that the Service was:

- ✓ *Service Led,*
- ✓ *Community Focused,*
- ✓ *Values Driven* (which has developed to kind culture)
- ✓ *Financially Sustainable.*

15. During the definition phase of the programme the Authority undertook two major public consultations, firstly on the response standards for the service and the

balance between prevention and response activities and secondly on the options for Service changes in the period 2016 to 2020.

16. After considering the fact that the majority of respondents supported the proposed standards in the first consultation the Authority adopted two key response standards for first attendance at an incident. These are:

- To get our first attendance to an incident which is potentially life-threatening within an average of 10 minutes from the time we receive a call; and
- To get our first attendance to an incident within 15 minutes on 90% of occasions from the time we receive a call.

17. It also agreed the following targets for its prevention and protection activities:

- Delivery of safety messages to every school child in Essex;
- Ensure there is a working smoke alarm in 100% of households;
- Working with partner agencies in meeting the social needs of the vulnerable members of our communities;
- Supporting the installation of systems such as sprinklers for the protection of buildings and occupants; and
- Working with drivers and riders to reduce the number of people killed or injured on the roads.

18. The commitments to response standards and the continued focus and investment of resources in prevention activities with clear and measurable targets for the Authority will ensure that the Authority's vision of a safer Essex are realised during the plan period.

SERVICE CHANGE PROPOSALS

19. A second consultation in 2016 sought the views of stakeholders on a range of options for Service changes to reduce the number of fire appliances and to convert the crewing of appliances to the On-Call (retained) duty system. The consultation had over 17,000 responses with a clear majority supporting the option that the Fire Authority approved in June 2016. In summary the key changes are:

- **End September 2016 (completed)** – Removal of second fire engines from operational service at Corringham, Orsett, Rayleigh Weir and Loughton fire stations. Commence the change to the crewing system for the first fire engine at Great Dunmow from Day Crew to On-Call;
- **End March 2018** (was September 2017)- Removal of Pinzgauer fire engines and introduction of replacement off-road capability;
- **End December 2017** – Removal of second fire engine from Frinton fire station,
- **End December 2017** – Transition to On-Call from wholetime for the second fire engine at Clacton fire station.

- **End March 2020** - Transition to On-Call at Dovercourt, South Woodham Ferrers, Great Baddow and Waltham Abbey fire stations;

20. The Service change proposals will enable the Authority to meet the Attendance standards set in 2015 and will support the release of additional resources to deliver against the community safety targets. This will include broadening the role of station and watch based firefighters to ensure that the key focus on prevention activity extends across the Service.

21. The Service changes will reduce the numbers of wholetime firefighters and increase the number of appliances crewed by On-Call firefighters. Progress will be dependent on the ability to recruit and retain On-Call firefighters and the opportunity to use the recruitment process to address the under representation of women and black ethnic minorities in the workforce will be fully exploited.

OTHER SAVINGS PROPOSALS

22. The reductions in the numbers of appliances and the change to the crewing of appliances will generate a net £6.4m of savings by 2020. In addition savings of £2.1m have been identified from the following areas:

- Management Review (Service Leadership changes in 2016 and Middle Managers from 2017) £0.9m (£0.5m achieved to date);
- Collaboration and Integration with Essex Police from 2019 (was 2017) onwards £0.5m;
- Reduction in the use of temporary staff £0.3m; and
- Reduced consultancy and external support £0.3m.

23. Since the efficiency plan was agreed the Fire Authority has been replaced by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner bringing new impetus to the collaboration opportunities and achieving savings in governance costs.

24. Looking forward, efforts to identify further efficiencies within the service from further modernisation, national procurement opportunities and collaboration are being pursued.

BUSINESS CASE FOR GOVERNANCE CHANGE AND COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

25. The Business Case developed by the Police and Crime Commissioner for the governance change for the Fire and Rescue Service identified the potential for £30m of benefits from the governance change over a ten year period, The main areas of savings are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------|
| • Better working together to improve public safety | £4.3m |
| • Sharing of estates | £10.1m |
| • Enabling shared business services | £5.9m |
| • Joint procurement initiatives | £2.3m |

- Further operational collaboration £9.0m

26. It was recognised that these savings would need some £0.9m of programme management costs to deliver and not all of the benefits would be realised. An overall target of £15m to £23m was agreed in the business case.
27. Progress towards these savings will need to start in 2018, but the budgetary impact is unlikely to be significant until later years.
28. The governance structures for collaborative work have been put in place with a Strategic Board chaired by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner providing direction and a Programme Board managing the projects. Transformation funding to support collaborative community safety work has been agreed and a bid for support from the One Public Estate programme made to support the sharing of estates.

COUNCIL TAX

29. The public consultation on the proposed Service changes included a range of change options with differing assumptions about the future growth in the rate of Council Tax. The consultations response was clear with almost three quarters of respondents supporting the option with the smallest degree of change and the highest proposed increases in Council Tax. The assumption is that Council Tax will increase by around 2% per annum during the forecast period. The Authority had previously agreed a freeze in the rate of Council Tax from 2010.
30. The impact of this on the expected rate of Council Tax is shown in the table below:

2020 Projections	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Rate	£66.42	£67.68	£69.03	£70.38	£71.73

31. In addition to the increases in the rate of Council Tax the Authority is projecting an annual increase in the tax base averaging 1.75% through the growth in housing and improvements in the collection rate from the joint approach adopted across Essex billing authorities.

EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS

32. The key assumptions on expenditure include the planned service changes agreed as part of the 2020 programme. The main area of variance to the planning assumptions relates to the level of pay. The Efficiency Plan included an assumption that the 1% target for public sector pay increases would remain in place. The 2017 pay negotiations for Firefighters have linked changes to the firefighter role map to higher rates of pay increase with a 2% offer from July 2017 and a further 3% in April 2018. The offer is also subject to government agreement to either increase the funding for fire and rescue authorities or allow freedom for larger increases in Council Tax.
33. It should be noted that the proposed changes to the role map could increase activity levels for firefighters, and put increased pressure on the on-call budget. Whether external bodies, including Health would be prepared to pay for firefighter activity in a wider range of activities remains unclear.

34. The in-year impact of any higher increases can be managed through the use of reserves, and in 2017/18 from savings in the firefighter pay budget from the lower headcount. The concern is whether the potential changes to the funding for the Authority will be sufficient to offset the increases in the running rate of expenditure by March 2020/ - this is the key concern for the Authority should higher pay rates be agreed at a national level.
35. Financial projections from 2016/17 onwards have been modelled based on the assumptions about firefighter numbers, pensions and the grant forecast, . The figures only reflect major changes and are in cash terms reflecting the impact of inflation. In summary the forecast changes that impact on each year are shown in the table below:

2020 Projections	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2019/20 Run Rate
Income					
Council Tax	41,224	42,822	44,417	46,053	46,053
Council Tax - Collection Fund	880	846	400	400	
Total NNDR	14,970	15,427	15,870	16,377	16,377
RSG	14,230	11,033	9,350	8,340	8,340
Total Income	71,304	70,128	70,037	71,170	70,770
Base Spend - Based on 2016-17 Budget	71,304	71,304	71,304	71,304	71,304
Normalise Reserves	303	303	303	303	303
Inflation	-	715	1,430	2,145	2,145
Apprenticeship Levy		300	300	300	300
Business as usual changes Base Spend	303	1,318	2,033	2,748	2,748
Reduction in Watch Based Firefighters	(1,297)	(3,608)	(3,772)	(4,797)	(4,797)
Increase to meet crewing requirements	0	1,800	1,268	1,596	1,391
Increase in on call Firefighters Budget	0	736	850	1,700	1,700
Support Savings	(540)	(1,010)	(1,380)	(2,060)	(2,060)
Investment in Community Safety	0	400	400	400	400
Cost of early exit options and reorganisation	2,900	0	0	0	0
Other Short tem costs & budget Savings	214	474	0	0	(160)
Net Cost/Savings Project 2020	1,277	(1,208)	(2,634)	(3,161)	(3,526)
Total Spend	72,884	71,414	70,703	70,891	70,526
Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,580)	(1,286)	(666)	279	244
Cumulative Use of Reserves	(1,580)	(2,866)	(3,533)	(3,254)	

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

36. A key risk for the Authority is employee pay and the need for additional funding if pay increases exceed the 1% government target reflected in the plan.
37. The Authority has a plan to achieve a balanced budget by March 2020. This makes use of the Authority's reserves as the timing of the service changes agreed on 2016 does not match the profiled reduction in government grants. After 2020 there is still a high risk of further reductions in government funding – the Authority will still have some £8m of revenue support grant and further reduction in this level of funding cannot be ruled out. Work will need to start in 2018 to consider how this risk should be addressed.

38. The risks associated with the delivery of the 2020 Programme, and with it the delivery of the Efficiency Plan are managed as part of the programme's management. There are a number of key risks to the level of change, in particular the Authority's ability to recruit and retain sufficient on-call firefighters to meet the overall response standard. This key risk is mitigated by the retained duty system project which is developing new approaches to recruitment, employer liaison, training and availability for On-Call firefighters. There have already been successful recruitment campaigns at Clacton and South Woodham Ferrers.
39. The other key risk is lack of employee engagement. The arrangements already established for the 2020 programme in its definition phase included regular meetings with all representative bodies. This engagement will continue. In addition, local business change managers for the areas affected will be responsible for managing employee engagement at the local level to ensure that this risk is mitigated.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

40. The need for the Fire Service workforce to reflect the communities it serves is recognised. There are challenges for on-call recruitment because of the requirement for these staff to live or work close to the fire station from which they will work. The Service is now in a position to be recruiting wholtime firefighters for the first time since 2010. Work to ensure that these opportunities are available to all in our communities is planned for early 2018 to support a move towards a more representative workforce.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

41. Representative bodies continue to be engaged in the delivery of the 2020 programme. In addition regular meetings of joint negotiation and consultation committees are held. The draft budget for 2018/19 will be shared with representative bodies for their comments prior to approval.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

42. The draft budget and precept will be brought to the panel before approval.

AGENDA ITEM 7

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	EPCP/ 27/17
Date: 7th December 2017	

Report title: Essex County Fire and Rescue Service: The Lucas Review and Cultural Change

Report by: Susannah Hancock – OPFCC Chief Executive
susannah.hancock@essex.pnn.police.uk

1. Purpose of Report:

This report presents the Police, Fire and Crime Panel with a set of published documents in relation to the Irene Lucas Review and the subsequent Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) culture change programme.

The documents are to inform the panel of the ECFRS cultural change journey to date and to inform their subsequent scrutiny.

Whilst it is apparent from the documents attached that much progress has been made since the Lucas review, it is also acknowledged that there is still much more to do.

The documents attached as Annexes are as follows:

1. Independent Culture Review by Irene Lucas - Sept 2015
2. Self-assessment report (3 papers) by the Chief Fire Officer Adam Eckley 'Evolving our Culture: Building on Firm Foundations' – July 2017.
3. Final Review report by Sir Ken Knight – Sept 2017
4. Final Report of the Expert Advisory Panel by chair Steve McGuirk – Sept 2017
5. The latest ECFRS staff survey report and results March 2017

The above reports have been presented to previous meetings of the former Fire Authority.

2. Recommendation:

The panel is asked to note the content of the reports.

Once the panel has reviewed the reports, the Chair of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel is asked to consider remitting the item to the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in order for them to undertake a more detailed review and scrutiny and report back to the wider Panel on their findings.

Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

September 2015

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Background to the Review

1. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) has been beset by a number of serious incidents including the suicides of two serving firefighters, allegations of bullying and intimidation, and ongoing and protracted industrial disputes.
2. The cumulative effect of all these issues, and the long-term absence of the Chief Fire Officer, has contributed to paralysis of the service and made it more challenging for ECFRS to make the necessary organisational changes to become a fire service fit for the twenty-first century.
3. Essex Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) decided to take decisive action and approached Irene Lucas CBE, an experienced reviewer, former local authority chief executive and Director General – and Acting Permanent Secretary – at the Department for Communities and Local Government, to carry out a formal inquiry into the causes of incidents that may have contributed to the above.
4. The invitation to carry out such an inquiry was declined on the grounds that this may cut across due legal processes already in train, and may not have been the most appropriate way for ECFRS to address their current challenges.
5. A Review of the Culture of ECFRS was proposed instead. This would explore the historical and current culture within the service, providing a report outlining a range of practical recommendations. This suggestion was accepted by the FRA members who commissioned a wide-ranging review, including the FRA itself, to look at how the culture of the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex is having a detrimental impact on the organisation, its employees and the communities it serves. The report would recommend practical steps to be taken to move the organisation towards one that is fit for purpose to deal with the challenges it faces.

Aims and Terms of Reference

6. To address the long standing challenges within Essex Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that it is in the best possible position to deliver for the communities of Essex in the future.
7. To undertake an independent root and branch review of the organisation relating to its culture and relationships and the impact they have on the successful operation of the service.

Methodology

8. The review methodology was based on best practice from reviews of other public sector services and organisations with similar employee numbers and problems
9. The review included:
 - Desktop research and generation of key lines of enquiry for the review
 - Review of 213 documents
 - 49 Individual meetings with trade unions, employees, and members of the FRA
 - A survey of ECFRS staff to ensure everyone in the service had a voice with 459 respondents

- 14 visits and workshops with groups of staff in fire stations
 - 3 Interviews with officers of similar Fire and Rescue Services
 - 1033 email communications including confidential evidence submissions to the Review
10. This approach has been used to gather evidence to populate the report that will be presented to the FRA, staff and others on 2nd of September 2015.
11. In addition a Review Panel incorporating *trades union colleagues, non-union staff representatives, management and members of the FRA was created to act as a sounding board for the Review, challenging the methodology and being informed of the progress of the Review.
12. The Review Panel (Appendix 2) has not contributed to the findings of this report
13. The report is structured as follows:
- Executive Summary
 - Introduction to Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
 - Why culture is important
 - The vision, values, strategies and plans of ECFRS
 - Governance and leadership: how well led is this organisation?
 - Relationships, roles and responsibilities
 - Valuing people and challenging poor performance and behaviour
 - Learning, development and promotion
 - Communication and engagement
 - Summary of all recommendations
 - Conclusion
 - Appendices

*The FBU, which had been a respected contributor and member of the Panel from the outset in March 2015, withdrew its support in June as a result of an alleged statement made by senior management suggesting that the motivation behind the review was to remove the power of the trades unions.

Executive summary and key recommendations

Executive Summary

14. Culturally, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is a failing organisation. From its leadership to the frontline, the service is in urgent need of a radical overhaul to ensure that it is held to account, and becomes more adaptable to the needs of the twenty-first century, and ensures the safety and wellbeing of its employees.
15. The organisational culture in ECFRS is toxic. There is dangerous and pervasive bullying and intimidation and this may place employees and the communities that they serve at risk.
16. Even in more senior, corporate positions aggressive and inappropriate behaviour is commonplace, but it is worse in some fire stations. Rotation between watches and stations is very low to almost non-existent and this lack of movement has allowed a minority of malignant and vexatious long-serving individuals to dominate their watches, with negative consequences.
17. In the course of gathering evidence for this review it was often said that 'what goes on on station, stays on station', and that the 'Old Hands' within the service exert a deeply malign influence over anyone who attempts to challenge existing attitudes. Indeed, the cliquishness of the watch culture exacerbates these challenges, where loyalty is to the 'watch' first, then the station second, with the service as a whole (and any strategic goals it may have) a distant third.
18. There is an appetite for change across the board; firefighters are tired of industrial action and loss of earnings, the lack of trust means that they feel at an impasse, but are fearful of recrimination and ostracisation and lack of support and therefore will not speak out. Talented middle and front line managers feel that they are caught between trying to cope with the torrent of policies, procedures and processes whilst 'trying to keep the troops happy'.
19. There is no sense of one team united behind a common goal. There is a 'them and us' sub-culture of distrust at so many different levels – between management and staff, management and trades unions (and between different trades unions) and a divide between full time and on call firefighters and uniformed and non-uniformed colleagues.
20. Nationally, fire and rescue services are in a paradigm shift as they move from a traditional emergency response service to a balance of more preventative work, and the greater use of part-time, on-call firefighters. This has major staffing implications, and when the stakes are so high it is perhaps unsurprising that many staff, and their trades unions' representatives, are concerned, as they perceive that their profession and way of life is under threat. Unfounded as this position is, this has meant that any attempt at workforce transformation has been constantly undermined at every level by officers themselves, and not just the trades unions.
21. But transformation is still essential and needs the support of the whole organisation if it is to succeed.
22. It is clear that despite the challenges in the service, ECFRS is fortunate that many of its staff remain

proud to work here and are totally dedicated to keeping the residents of Essex safe. 'We are a collection of people who really care about what we do' was a typical remark encountered in the course of this Cultural Review; 'We have a brand that is built on strength, honour, trust and heroes. If we are not careful we will lose all that has been earned by generations of firefighters'. This is a precious inheritance that must not be squandered.

Key Recommendations

23. Whilst there are detailed recommendations at the end of this report the following summary of interventions and actions will begin to make the changes necessary:

- An external Expert Advisory Panel with a range of skills and backgrounds, and accountable to the FRA, should be appointed as soon as possible to provide strategic advice to the organisation for the next 24 months. The Panel will comprise senior people, experienced in addressing challenging organisations who will provide strategic advice to the FRA and senior officers on the leadership and change now needed.
- Working with the FRA and colleagues at every level in ECFRS, in conjunction with the external Expert Advisory Panel, needs to develop a concise narrative for change that is well understood and supported at every level of the organisation, respecting the roles of fire fighters, those in prevention work and other colleagues.
- The governance of the service needs to be strengthened with greater clarity and visibility given to the role of the FRA who need to focus on the strategic challenges facing the service, with more scrutiny support for elected members.
- The continued absence of the Chief Fire Officer needs to be resolved urgently.
- More needs to be done to recruit leaders from non-fire service backgrounds, bringing fresh perspectives and learning from the wider public sector and beyond.
- All disciplinary action should be independently led by a sub-group of the Expert Panel and subject to statutory constraints over the next 24 months, and all intimidatory behaviour against individuals, equipment or property need to be considered by the Expert Panel working with representatives of Essex Police who will advise on criminal proceedings. The sub-group will have a specific role in ensuring elected members are aware of matters without cutting across the existing process. This approach to take effect in respect of all new cases.
- Whistleblowing arrangements need to be clarified and simplified and overseen in confidence by a sub-group of the Expert Panel .
- Introduce a rapid mediation service as has been adopted by Staffordshire CFRS.
- Create more opportunities to recognise outstanding performance across the organisation on a regular and consistent basis.
- Make promotion to managerial positions more transparent and based on human relations expertise as well as firefighting specialisms. Involve the Expert Panel in overseeing all appointments for the next 24 months.

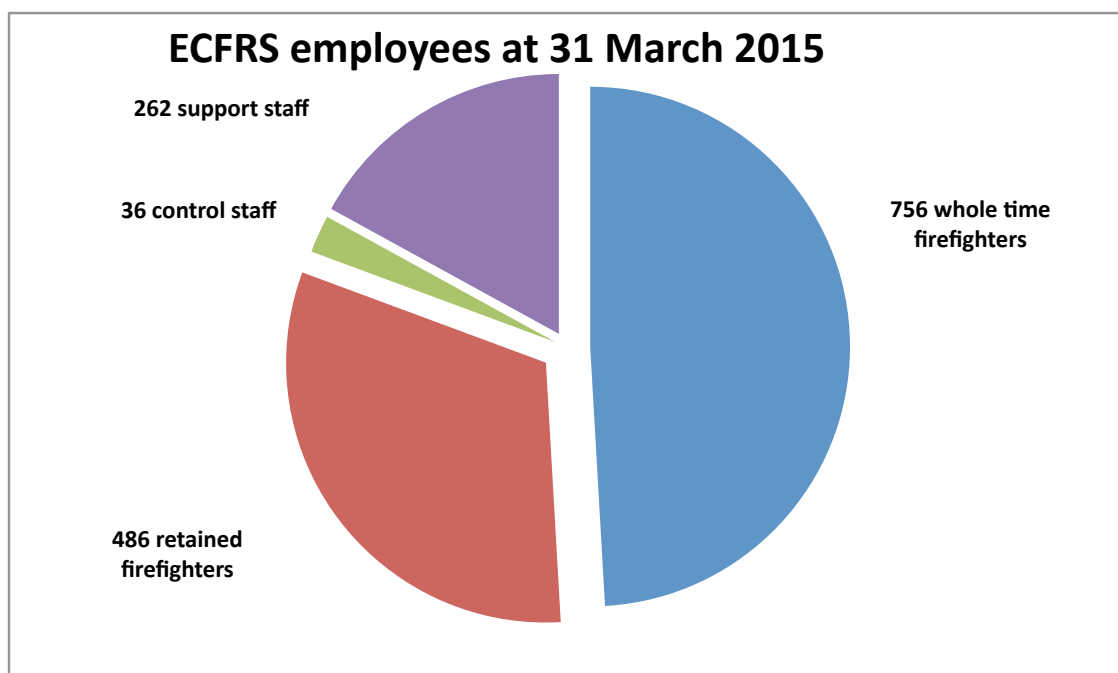
- Review existing management and delivery mechanisms to provide implementation ability with clear oversight of progress in implementing and, most importantly, embedding change
- Extend the suite of managerial skills required from operational to more inclusive leadership training, ensuring that the training is offered to those showing talent, potential and who have a desire to progress. Promotion should only be open to those who have completed and successfully graduated from the programme and demonstrated leadership and coaching skills.
- Ensure an independent, rigorous review in six months' time to check on progress.

Introduction to Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS)

Key facts

24. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) is one of the largest fire services in the country, covering an area of 366,980 hectares and a population of over 1.7 million people.
25. The service attends thousands of emergency incidents per year, mostly fires and traffic collisions, but also lift releases, effecting entry into buildings, flooding incidents and animal rescues as well as false alarms and malicious hoax calls.
26. ECFRS employs 1,540 staff including 756 'whole time' firefighters, 486 'retained' (on call) firefighters, 36 control operators and 262 support staff. Around three quarters of ECFRS's staff are employed primarily to deliver response services with 112 employees specifically engaged to undertake prevention and protection work installing smoke alarms and providing fire safety advice to homes and businesses across the county, as well as road and vehicle safety initiatives to keep people safe on Essex's roads.

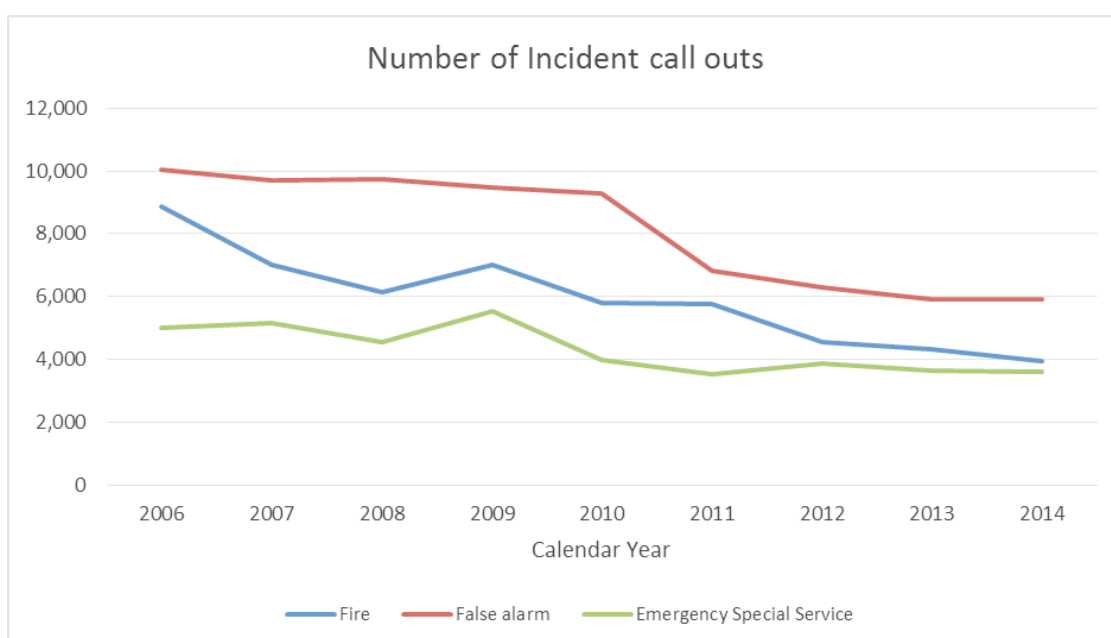
27.



28. There are 50 fire stations in Essex, twelve of which are staffed by full-time firefighters (and located in the densely populated areas of the county), 34 are staffed by on-call or retained firefighters who respond to a pager when an incident occurs and four are day-crewed with retained cover at night. There is also one Urban Search and Rescue Station, the specialist resource which is day crewed. The Service currently provides 74 frontline fire appliances to provide its response service across the County with between 55 and 70 of these available at any time.

The changing roles of fire and rescue services

29. ECFRS has seen a steady and repeated fall in incidents over the last nine years, mirroring trends throughout the country. It is widely accepted that as well as fire services' excellent response to incidents, tougher building standards, better furniture design and the uptake of alarms (all measures supported by firefighters' campaigns) have all made major contributions to improved fire safety.¹
30. These trends are reflected in Essex where demand for ECFRS services has changed dramatically over the last fifteen years. Between 2004 and 2014 the numbers of incidents attended by ECFRS dropped by 50 per cent, and in 2013/14, ECFRS was called to just under 14,000 incidents (the equivalent of 38 per day compared with a little over 28,000 or 77 per day in 2004). Around 40 per cent of these incidents are false alarms and many others require no action. This means that fire stations are only needed on average for 23 incidents each day, and whole-time pumping appliances do not attend any incidents at all on 40 per cent of shifts.



31. This marked reduction in demand (with the number of fires reducing by 36 per cent and false alarms by 38 per cent) has vindicated ECFRS's recent focus on prevention, but the service is now finding it challenging to meet the increased demand for prevention and protection services as significant resources and staff are still weighted heavily towards response activity. However there is evidence that support costs have also increased significantly and any organisational review to make ECFRS fit for purpose must include a critical look at management hierarchies and other increasing costs.
32. ECFRS has not yet seen a significant reduction in resources to mirror the decrease in demand for its response services, and so has not yet been compelled to remodel how it crews its appliances, or deploys its response services more flexibly to adapt to the increasing need for more preventative working (not least as the local elderly population is expected to grow by 28 per cent by 2033 – the highest risk group for fire incidents).
33. Sir Ken Knight's 2013 review² highlighted how the huge reduction in fires and other emergency incidents have provided the opportunity for fire and rescue services to change their operational

¹ RUSI Analysis, 7 Jun 2013 by Luke Gribbon, Research Analyst

² Facing The Future: findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England (Sir Ken Knight, 2013).

models to become more efficient. Sir Ken argued that in transforming themselves from 'organisations that dealt with fire response to organisations also covering preventative and wider rescue work they have made great progress in reducing incidents. They now need to transform themselves again to reflect the completely different era of risk and demand.'

34. Yet despite the undoubted room for efficiency and reconfiguration, the report found that fire and rescue services have remained focused on 'avoiding any redundancies, station closures or reductions in fire appliances (inputs), sometimes seemingly ahead of focus on reducing fires and incidents and improving services to the public (outcomes)'. This is true in Essex. However the focus on looking only at revisions to operational structures misses the considerable opportunity for more flexibility and efficiency, in ECFRS's hierarchical and antiquated rank model.
35. The impulse to protect front-line services is understandable and in part necessary. Despite the rhetoric of some senior officers there will always be a need for firefighters (although this is not automatically the same as protecting jobs as they stand) and in Essex that fact has not been adequately reflected in the narrative about the future of the service which has demotivated firefighters and brought greater uncertainty.
36. With modern fire prevention and protection work becoming so effective, reducing the need for the traditional 'blue light' response services, it is clear that ECFRS needs to do more to embrace change in order to become fit for purpose in the twenty-first century. The rhetoric however needs to emphasise protecting the important emergency response service to safeguard the communities of Essex. The two are not mutually exclusive, as appears to be the narrative in current strategies and plans.
37. Going back to basics around whole organisation collaboration, with everyone contributing to how this might be best achieved, including the review of the hierarchical management structure, is at the heart of this Review, but at present the culture of the organisation is holding this back.

Why Culture is Important

38. It is well understood that organisational culture is critically important both to achieving the aims of an organisation and the well-being of staff. Culture encompasses everything from an organisation's customary language, behaviours and attitudes to hierarchy, to the forms of dress, ceremonies and rituals.³ These all help to define an organisation's beliefs, values and assumptions and can be best understood as 'the way we do things around here', forming the context within which people judge the appropriateness of their behaviour.⁴
39. Questions of culture are important because they affect the performance of organisations – not just in innovative private sector businesses like Google and Facebook who invest heavily in creating a positive and productive employee culture, but for public services too, where the evidence shows that effective organisational culture helps to manage change and deliver significant public service improvement.⁵ Furthermore, an organisation's culture 'encapsulates what it has been good at and what has worked in the past, and can often be accepted without question by long-serving members'.⁶
40. If culture is to change then senior leadership is absolutely critical, in terms of both modelling behaviour and giving permissions to subordinate staff to innovate and appropriately challenge poor performance – including that of management. A significant function of leaders is to create and manage culture and successful leaders create an environment where positive teamwork, contribution and behaviours are valued and negative culture and behaviour is challenged.
41. 'One of the most interesting aspects of culture as a concept is that it helps to reveal phenomena that are below the surface, powerful in their impact but invisible and to a large degree unconscious'. It can be argued that that 'culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual' and that just as these attributes guide and constrain personal behaviour, so does organisational culture guide and constrain the behaviour of members of a group through the norms they hold.⁷
42. This Review has endeavoured to address what is called the 'cultural iceberg'⁸ that comprises the visible and invisible levels of corporate culture - from observable symbols, such as dress, ceremonies, physical settings and behaviours, to the 'invisible level' that comprises the underlying values, behaviours, assumptions and beliefs of an organisation. Therefore, the findings of this Cultural Review will attempt to surface the underlying beliefs and values of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, and their role in creating an organisational culture that urgently needs to change.

³ Pettigrew, A. (1979) 'On studying organizational cultures', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24: 570-81; Hofstede, G. (1990). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. New York: McGraw- Hill.

⁴ Facing Davies H Nutley S Mannion R (2000) Organisational culture and quality of health care. *Quality in Health Care*, 9: 111 –119

⁵ Boyne, G.A. (2003a) 'Sources of Public Service Improvement: A Critical Review and Research Agenda' *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 13, 767- 94.

⁶ Boyle Richard Orla O'Donnell (2008) 'Understanding and Managing Organisational Culture' [Online]. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration

⁷ Schein, E.H. (2004). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

⁸ Boyle and O'Donnell (2008)

The vision, values, strategies and plans of ECFRS

43. A service's vision and values should provide the framework through which an organisation engages with employees, the public, stakeholders – all of its audiences - and ultimately influences and shapes its culture.
44. It is important to recognise that the purpose of the organisation and the underlying beliefs, attitudes and behaviours behind its values aren't just written words; they need to be consistently communicated internally to ensure they are understood by everyone within the organisation. Values are hard to teach, unlike skills and techniques, and if they are not shared and lived by the people within an organisation, there can be conflict and disconnect. Therefore, this review has explored firstly whether the vision and values of EFRA and ECFRS are widely known and lived, and secondly if their strategies and plans have been created through proper consultation, and whether they too are widely understood and deliver on the vision in accordance with the values.

Vision

45. The Vision has been refreshed and summarised in the Service Strategy 2014/15 – 2018/19 as 'Where do we want to be'.
- Essex is safer, we have reduced the risk to life, property and the environment in our communities and the need for our emergency response service.
 - We will have maintained our ability to respond to all foreseeable risks in an efficient and effective way. We have an engaged and satisfied workforce who are highly skilled and well led.
46. In general this vision is widely understood, and it is clear from visiting the stations that there have been efforts to communicate this to staff, and this was confirmed by the results of an independently commissioned Cultural Review Survey⁹ which found that over two thirds of 459 respondents have a good understanding of the vision for the service

Values

47. The Corporate Plan sets out the values of the organisation:

Our values provide the foundation for all that we are planning to achieve in the future. These values illustrate what we expect from our staff and what the community of Essex can expect of us. These values have become embedded over several years and will remain at the heart of our Workforce Transformation Programme.

Respect

We treat everyone with consideration and value their contribution. We practise and promote honesty, integrity and mutual trust. We treat everyone fairly and value their differences. We recognise that we have both rights and responsibilities in the way we work together.

⁹ Essex County Fire & Rescue Service Cultural Review Survey, Verbatim Comments

Accountability

We believe that we are all accountable for our own actions and behaviours.

Openness

We are clear and transparent in our actions and behaviours. We are honest. We share experiences, thoughts, ideas and knowledge. We consider new ideas without prejudice.

Involvement

We create an environment that encourages participation by everyone.

48. Although these values are known and understood, this review found little evidence that they are lived within the organisation.
49. There are examples of good practice such as being flexible around work life balance – with those interviewed saying that they had received a sympathetic hearing to request for time off for personal reasons. There was also evidence of changing work patterns to accommodate caring responsibilities.
50. The Cultural Review Survey found that 81 per cent of respondents understood the values of the service - yet only 30 per cent believe the service lives up to these values. One member of SMB admitted that he doesn't know 'anyone outside senior management who would own the values'. A workshop of Trades Union members said that what promotion of values there is just a 'just a paper exercise', and a focus group of retained colleagues was particularly scathing: 'no one follows them or abides by them, respect doesn't exist'. 'Training covers the practical hands-on stuff, nothing about values'. Yet although this group also observed that 'morale is low' they also believed that the culture of ECFRS could become more productive if it had values that were followed.
51. 'People are not aligned to the core values, they have no connection with them – they are just words' one frontline member of staff commented, 'people don't see them as something to aspire to.' A member of the FRA agreed 'change is difficult. People joined to fight fires [but now] they are knocking on house doors re safety and they don't like it. We need to fit the people to the vision and the strategy or people close down quite quickly'. Other telling responses from the Cultural Review Survey included 'The organisational culture is more aligned with the 1970s than the 2000s' and 'The man smiling next to you having a cup of tea with his many stars and stripes on his epaulettes is the man who facilitated bullying 20 years ago on station.'
52. On living the values some staff remarked that 'the culture within the organisation is one where people think it is acceptable not to carry out an action, activity or task that they do not personally support', and the Service would benefit from educating employees on respect and what this means. Another senior officer admits that on culture and values ECFRS are 'behind the pace' with 'no focus on the wellbeing of staff'.
53. Some positive steps have been highlighted, with more staff 'widening their understanding of acceptable behaviours. Because of the background of some of them they were anaesthetised to what should be the right way, but are now better at respecting people'. This has been helped by members of SMB 'seeing the value of this work more than others', particularly those who have worked elsewhere.
54. The staff survey is starting to pay off too, and SMB are now bought in to employee engagement and are moving to a 'You said/We did' follow up. ECFRS have appointed an employee engagement manager who is starting in September 2015.

55. The Competency Framework now gives clear guidance regarding the expectations of behaviours in the service. The document is clear and, if embedded, would bring greater clarity to a subject that some in the service still find inscrutable because of their history.
56. Yet the lack of action by senior management in the face of ECFRS's 'poisonous and ongoing watch culture' in some stations is a source of concern. For despite conceding that frontline staff 'get such a pounding it is really difficult to be the person you want them to be. They get worn down by it; it's a victim-centred culture. Lots of persecution as a result'. On being challenged on why steps had not been taken earlier, a Senior Manager's response was ECFRS 'culture was the last of the things we needed to do as we'd sorted IT, equipment - things that needed to be fixed first.' This was a breathtakingly misjudged position for an organisation with such a troubled history.
57. There is evidence that there have been attempts to improve the understanding of the importance of living the values. HR advise that the Managing Today Leading Tomorrow training programme, which offered 2,000 training places and was delivered to 400 Supervisory Managers and 150 Middle Managers, was partially designed to do this. But it is clear that ECFRS now needs a comprehensive strategy to develop a set of values for the organisation that command the support of members, management, emergency response and all other staff.
58. More importantly, they need to live them.

Strategies and Plans

59. The overarching strategy for each Fire & Rescue Authority is an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community. This is a technical document that describes protection, prevention and emergency response arrangements. Under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, IRMPs must be consulted on with a wide range of stakeholders, including FRA members, staff and public.
60. ECFRS have incorporated their IRMP into 'Transformation 2020' a strategy designed to deliver 'a future that is service led, community focused, values driven and financially sustainable'. However, this document is focused largely on the service's future financial sustainability and contains little on how the values of ECFRS need to change, other than an oblique reference at the end of the document 'Does the option directly tackle or create an opportunity to tackle the cultural challenges facing the Service?' - in the section on how feedback will be assessed.¹⁰ The response from the FBU (August 2015) to the Essex IRMP consultation contains a number of criticisms of the statistics used in the IRMP 2015-2020, but does not offer any support to the changes needed or contribute other ideas to tackle the challenges.
61. This review found that whilst there was understanding of the vision and the values of the organisation there was no belief in either and the behaviours of the organisation did not model the values. There was poor awareness of the strategic plans and a sense that the document was unimportant to the majority of the workforce.

¹⁰ ECFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation Document 2015–2020, p30.

Governance and Leadership: How well led is this organisation?

62. The expectations placed on fire authorities are set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (updated 2014). In demonstrating their accountability to communities for the service they provide, fire and rescue authorities need to:
- **be transparent and accountable to their communities for their decisions and actions, and to provide the opportunity for communities to help to plan their local service through effective consultation and involvement**
 - **have scrutiny arrangements in place that reflect the high standard communities expect for an important public safety service**
 - **provide assurance to their communities and to Government, on financial, governance and operational matters and on national resilience capability.**
63. Members of the FRA are empowered to provide a 'level of scrutiny their communities expect' holding their Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive to account for the delivery of the fire and rescue service, whilst ensuring that their own decisions are open to scrutiny. Therefore the role of elected members on the FRA is critical, not least in holding their fire and rescue services accountable for their actions and their performance.

Governance

Essex Fire and Rescue Authority

64. Essex Fire and Rescue Authority provides the non-executive governance of ECFRS. It was formed on April 1, 1998 by virtue of the Local Government Act 1992. Essex Fire and Rescue Service is directly responsible to the FRA, whose 25 members are elected members nominated by the three constituent councils in Essex: twenty members are nominated by Essex County Council, three by Southend Borough Council and two by Thurrock Borough Council.
65. At its Annual Meeting the Authority elects a Chairman and appoints a Vice-Chairman. The Chairman is Councillor Anthony Hedley and the Vice-Chairman is Councillor Ann Holland. Meetings of the Authority and its committees are open to the press and public, although they can be excluded if confidential information is likely to be discussed.
66. The governance of Fire Authorities was addressed in some detail by the Knight Review which observed that local elected member scrutiny varies considerably in fire and rescue authorities across England, and that although fire officers need to be robustly held to account, 'the evidence that this is happening was patchy.' The report made a range of practical suggestions that ECFRS need to consider including:
- **Authority members need greater support and knowledge to provide the strong leadership necessary to drive efficiency.**

- **Elected Members must ensure that local people understand their service and encourage an informed debate about change.**
- **Greater sector leadership is needed to drive through a culture of learning from good practice and challenging services to rise to the level of the best.**
- **Ensure a clear understanding that the authority is accountable for a quality, value for money, appropriate fire and rescue service for their area and that the fire and rescue service is a body they commission to help them discharge that duty.**

67. Essex's 2013 Peer Challenge Report was clear on the important strategic role that elected members need to play. 'Increasing downward pressures on budgets will require cohesive strategic support from elected members', they concluded, adding that:

The Service should consider how to develop Members' awareness of the strategic challenges and risks facing the authority in the medium to long term. The constraints imposed by Members on the development of efficiency options will need to be re-visited.

There is a need for Members to take more ownership of the Authority's direction, particularly in these financially challenging times when difficult decisions needs to be made.¹¹

68. 'We are bombarded by officers; [we] get papers to read which are difficult to understand what they are trying to achieve.' recalled one member. In a four-hour induction session he was told 'all is well as we have plenty of money. We were not told anything about historic issues, money issues, and personnel issues on our induction'.

69. There were concerns raised by firefighters and trades union colleagues that there was not a regular forum where members of the Authority could hear the voice of the workforce directly. They were described as 'remote' and 'receive a particular view from the management that they just accept'.

70. Another member commented that the FRA is 'very agenda driven, it's not very strategic. I have just once asked for something to be put on the agenda. We didn't discuss any cultural issues so what is on the agenda doesn't reflect culture'. One councillor on the FRA summed up the frustration of members:

'We [members] need to be able to understand options, not just be told these are the only options when there could be others. Reports from Senior Management are at a level and in a language that doesn't always explain that other options could exist so there is limited opportunity to challenge from a position of not knowing enough. Challenge is the best way to proceed but that is taken as personal criticism [by senior officers] which is not the right way to respond.'

71. In the course of this review some concerns were expressed about the Chair and Members becoming involved in operational issues. It is important that Members are aware of the distinction between the executive and their non-executive role.

72. From studying the papers of the FRA, it is clear that there has been an historic imbalance between time spent on operational, financial and risk matters, with little time spent by FRA members on scrutinising the culture of the organisation, despite long-standing industrial action and significant disciplinary and grievance problems.

¹¹ Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Fire Peer Challenge Report, May 2013

73. There is some encouraging evidence that members have started to address the service's strategic priorities. One elected member reflected that at that the most recent FRA meeting 'there were some new members trying to hold the service to account for outcomes'.
74. The on-going, long-standing absence of the Chief Fire Officer opened up a deficit at the heart of the organisation that has allowed the service to stagnate. The time taken to deal with this issue has negatively impacted the trust in both the non-executive and executive leadership of the Authority to the extent that at a recent FRA meeting it was recognised that 'satisfaction with leadership of the service' is a major concern'.¹² This led to members deciding that a plan should be developed to 'undertake some work on this' but with no clear detail on what this would entail. This was in June 2015 and this lack of action (although perhaps understandable in view of the prospect of the Chief Fire Officer returning) is continuing. The challenge now is that although it's clear that the authority wants to address the issues facing it - and particularly the frequency of strike action – as one interviewee put it 'they're not sure what they want to do about it.'
75. There is a clear appetite for change. Members do understand the scale of the challenge – as one put it 'other counties don't seem to have the problems that we have, and this type of difficulty is what was normal say 25 years ago, but not now' – the urgent task facing the authority now is to ensure that they deliver the leadership the service needs and deserves.

Leadership

What a good senior executive team should do

76. It is vitally important that senior leadership is visible, lives the values and models the behaviours of the service to engage their workforce and gain their trust. In Essex the Senior Team comprises seven officers including operational, technical, finance, legal, safer and resilient communities and human resources (HR) and is known as the Senior Management Board (SMB) (See Appendix 1).
77. The absence of a Chief Fire Officer, with significant change management skills, has contributed to a paralysis in the organisation and a split of loyalties. This has impacted the workforce who feel uninformed and uncertain about future leadership and their own futures as a result. There is an urgent need for clarity about the position and further and better communication between senior leaders and the whole workforce.
78. Many interviewees believe that Parade News was useful in this respect but all those interviewed across the organisation were concerned at the chasm that has been created between senior management, headquarters and the rest of the organisation.
79. Interviews demonstrated that the senior executive management are not well regarded and are seen to be actively protecting the status quo in relation to the tolerance of the bad behaviours that have taken place in recent years. For example 54 per cent of respondents to the Cultural Review Survey said that they have witnessed or experienced 'unacceptable or intimidating behaviour while working for the service' (44 per cent of which happened within the last twelve months) with over 50 per cent feeling unable to speak out openly about their concerns.
80. There is an overwhelming lack of trust in the senior leadership of the organisation. Whilst it is quite common to have criticism of leadership these results are damning:
- 36% believe that senior management do not give clear guidance to the organisation
 - 31% believe that senior management act to ensure fair play in the workplace

¹² Essex Fire Authority meeting 10th June 2015

- 38% believe that the senior management have the skills and capability to manage
 - 20% believe that they are well led.
81. Senior management seems powerless in the face of long-serving managers who 'work the system and keep a lid on things at the station' and a system of patronage that seems impossible to take on. As one firefighter put it: "it's not what you know but who you know."
82. Their sponsorship of others in promotion creates a lack of transparency and a perpetuation of the current style of management. Continuing with the status quo will not move the service forward into the 21st century and is perceived as rewarding the negative influence and bad behaviour of some managers.
83. One member of SMB even admits that 'Resilience people have a genuine fear' and has spoken frankly of the 'horror stories' they have uncovered, and 'the lack of understanding that this behaviour is intolerable'. There are reported incidents of burning and destroying property, sugar in the tanks of fire appliances, glue in the locks and car tyres slashed and paintwork scratched (in addition to current court cases) means that information has now been given to the Police and enquiries are underway. Yet there is evidence that those staff who had been dismissed or disciplined previously as a result of such incidents were re-instated, which many staff took to mean that 'you can do what you want in a trade dispute'. A more consistent application of the zero tolerance policy introduced in 2012 would remedy this.
84. An SDB member commented that 'management want to be seen as open and transparent but they are not seen like that', in fact 'SMB and SDB are seen as having nothing to do but make life difficult for those on station [so] why change anything? Some managers behave as organisational terrorists'. Across the organisation there is concern that SMB 'promote people with poor previous behaviours ... people in this organisation are caught but not prosecuted. It's not too difficult. But if people then just say, oh its banter, that's harder for us to stop'.
85. Views about the visibility of the senior leadership are variable. Ad hoc visits to stations to 'listen to table-talk gripes' are not purposeful or productive, and can be seen to undermine middle managers 'who need to be given the voice to own the directions cascading down.' Similarly, the composition and format of SDB is not helping to unite the organisation, or provide a clear steer on what its priorities and operating culture should be. SDB comprises seventeen members of staff and has been variously described as 'unwieldy', 'too subservient', and 'disconnected', with no chance to form relationships as it only comes together once a month. The comments of one female member of staff are a typical observation of ECFRS culture: 'professional judgment is taken away to some extent by the military style procedures. Culture needs to be challenged [but] style is banging the table, by male participants in meetings, in small pockets.'
86. There is a high degree of silo working within SDB. Evidence shows that each member sees their primary aim as ensuring the success of their own section. There is little concept of working as one team, focused on delivering the aims of the organisation collectively. Meetings are held and then SDB members return to their own section – often with their own view of what should be done rather than following the agreed line.
87. **Leadership is clearly important in determining the effectiveness of culture change. The leaders of organisations should be champions of understanding and managing the culture of the workforce and of challenging 'subcultures' that hold the organisation back, rewarding those that espouse positive values and attitudes. This is an area that the member and officer leadership of ECFRS have failed to address.**

Barriers to change in middle and front line management

88. Members of the SDB team do not translate the service's strategic objectives effectively and one senior manager regularly voices his opinion that 'this latest initiative is a waste of space and I'm not doing it – so I don't want anybody complaining that they are not getting an appraisal'. Indeed, the senior team are regularly briefed against by some in SDB who feel that they are never involved in decision-making, and grudgingly implement change 'against their better judgement'. As a consequence, SMB feel undermined by SDB who present their decisions as ill-judged 'dictats' to their frontline teams. One firefighter commented that middle managers 'see their job as protecting their group against the organisation. So they are a barrier to change, rather than an advocate. They never express the positive reason as to a change. Some managers are beyond change.' Another officer added that 'ADOs – station managers – are the biggest failing. To get an easy life they take the majority view ... they just see themselves as protecting the station.'
89. Loyalties are to their historical cadre and contacts, not to the aims or the objectives of the organisation. Divisional Officers and Assistant Divisional Officers see the echelons above them as being out of touch and see themselves as delivering the Service. There are cliques of groups of managers that have come from the same station or watch and 'brush under the carpet' any wrongdoing, even when there is clear and compelling evidence there is a lack of appetite to 'rock the boat'. The inadequate and inappropriate relationships between this layer and the layer below – the station and watch managers and the layer below that – are a major factor in the challenges facing the service. The bad behaviour on some watches is tolerated and when something serious occurs it is either overplayed by immediate escalation to disciplinary procedure – or underplayed and accepted as 'laddish' or 'banter'.
90. It is clear that the organisation needs to urgently refresh its strategy and values to move forward yet it is obvious that what plans and procedures have been put in place are not properly embedded and are only there to satisfy external scrutiny. These plans are superficial and the reporting on them disingenuous. For example, on appraisals 'many of the documents are 'pre-populated' for groups of staff - as long as the forms were submitted no one would look at the quality of them – they were just interested in getting them done'.
91. ECFRS staff seem to have little confidence in HR. One colleague remarked 'that HR is all big stick, not trying to get to the root cause of something that is wrong'. A Unison member commented that 'HR is an island' seemingly remote from the concerns of frontline workers. This is exacerbated by the 'uniformed' culture of ECFRS, where non-uniformed staff are regularly left out of important meetings and communications. Even attempts to try and improve the culture of the organisation have been clumsy and ineffective. One Unison member recalled 'going to a meeting room where a video was shown about having respect and respecting others; the video showed someone who didn't listen and talked over others – and funnily enough, there was someone in the room who was doing just that'.
92. This weakness in both leadership and HR support has meant that ECFRS have missed many important opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the service. One member of SMB recognised that 'there is massive under-utilisation of whole time, and massive under-utilisation of retained', which seems to be the ultimate concern of Fire unions, concerned to protect existing staffing arrangements despite the huge drop in incidents.
93. One critical issue is the anachronistic attachment to firefighting command and control management, even in non-operational areas. These have been adapted and modernised in most other fire services but Essex retains a rank-based hierarchy and pay framework which creates an unhelpful

and unnecessarily hierarchical bureaucracy. A key finding of Sir Ken Knight's review was that too many authorities have not reformed their senior management structures. In particular, the flexible duty system –which provides management and command capability at incidents by senior uniformed officers – has not changed enough to reflect the significant fall in incident rates. This is true in Essex, where traditional command and control management for incidents 'on the fire ground' is only required for less than 10% of the time. Yet having senior officers on rotas 100 per cent of the time leads to substantial number of days off during the working week, reducing the time otherwise available for managerial duties. The Knight Review pointed out that there is major scope for efficiencies in sharing senior operational command rotas between services, reducing the number of senior management roles that need to be operational.

94. 'We are the only Fire Service that hasn't gone from rank to role', observed one officer. This was attributed to both the complex impact this would have on pay, but also 'because the current regime preferred the old structure as it protected the status of the most senior officers'.
95. The hierarchy that exists in ECFRS is unnecessarily bureaucratic and divisive. There is clearly a need to maintain a command and control management style in situations of crisis on the fire ground, and the firefighters and operational staff in ECFRS do this effectively. There are also other occasions where, as a uniform service it is appropriate to wear uniform. It is not however necessary that this hierarchy is carried through to headquarters, creating a difference between uniformed and non-uniformed employees, or used as a style of management at other times.
96. Similarly, the local FBU are wedded to the 'Grey Book' that has a role map based on operational competencies, rather than behavioural descriptors. This means that training for managers is still based on a technical competency framework only that restricts the promotion of talented managers who model the right behaviours. This is not the case in comparable authorities such as Kent or Staffordshire.
97. One senior FBU representative commented that despite the changes expected in the Thomas Review (of operational Terms and Conditions)¹³ and Carr Review (of the law governing industrial disputes)¹⁴, 'we want to be sure that the Grey Book conditions are not eroded', and, revealingly, that any competency framework that deviates from this would be unacceptable as it has been based on a 'paradigm from the industry they [HR] come from' and not applicable to the fire service. One senior manager said that this impasse has made ECFRS 'a laughing stock'.
98. There is clear evidence that despite a reduction in the workforce there has been a significant increase in cost in property and support services costs. Whilst there have been understandable increases in fire prevention activity, IT transformation projects and a transfer of 10 staff from the County Council in Emergency Planning, this does not explain the significant additional cost at the centre. It is vital from the position of fairness that in seeking to realise economies within the service that this applies to all staff not just the emergency response workforce. One exceptional area of increased cost has been in the HR department where staff costs have risen from £613k to £1.15m, an increase of 87% since 2009. Whilst a significant number of HR initiatives, processes and procedures have been developed which may have required additional resource there is no evidence that these have been effective in brokering better relationships or improving the culture of the service.
99. **The skills and needed techniques to transform the culture in ECFRS are not apparent in the senior management of the service. It is unlikely that the situation will improve with simply tweaking existing processes and procedures. The Authority needs to take some profound and urgent steps to strengthen the executive leadership.**

¹³ Independent review of terms and conditions for operational staff in the fire and rescue service (presentation - not yet published)

¹⁴ The Carr Report: The Report of the Independent Review of the Law Governing Industrial Disputes. A Report from Bruce Carr QC to Government, October 2014

Relationships roles and responsibilities

100. Relationships in ECFRS are dysfunctional
101. In view of the long-standing history of difficult relationships in Essex (depending who was interviewed this has lasted 27 years, 15 years or 6 years) the situation has deteriorated to a default position that the behaviours of the 'other side' will be so predictable that 'failure to agree' is seen as an acceptable excuse for not working hard at resolving issues in a different way.
102. A firefighter observed that 'hard-core trouble makers are now officers, promoted to station officer and they give us the biggest problem'. Indeed, the experience of his colleague (who received what he saw as unconvincing feedback from HR on why he was passed over for promotion to leading firefighter) seems typical: '[ECFRS] don't appoint managers, we just appoint people who have been there the longest. No one challenges as it would ruin their chances of being made whole time if they ever wanted it ... I think I didn't get through because I am retained. The one who got the job didn't even fill in an application form'.
103. A good deal of this is down to organisational culture. Despite changes to fire and rescue services across the country ECFRS have remained stuck in a macho barrack-room culture more redolent of the 1970s than a modern public service. This has contributed to a bullying and intimidating atmosphere that continues to make life unpleasant for a significant number of its staff. The perception of one senior member of the 2013 Peer Review team was that it was very traditional, very hierarchical ... a place where the leadership and workforce were in confrontation about everything', and where the leadership team had been 'brought up on the idea that those that whack people the hardest, get promoted'.
104. Correspondingly, a traditional focus on the high visibility 'response' function of the service continues to hold the service back from the emerging role of a modern fire and rescue service, a point made strongly in the 2013 Peer Challenge Report which observed the 'perception amongst some staff that response is the Service priority' and that 'a more appropriate balance between prevention, protection and response activities would benefit the Service.'¹⁵ A feeling of 'us and them' is commonplace within the service, with divisions between watches, layers of management and management and firefighters. The Cultural Review Survey revealed that the three most popular words used to describe the behaviours of ECFRS were Professional, Inconsistent and Unfair, with the divide between uniformed and non-uniformed staff consistently highlighted as a major fault line within the service.
105. Similarly, those female members of staff interviewed were quick to describe 'an in-bred, jobs for the boys culture' with 'strikes, and fear, hatred, certain things carried on until "you couldn't do that now under Equality [laws]" which urgently needs to change, if only to bring ECFRS up to date with other parts of the public sector.
106. Retained firefighters also suspect that some in management may be deliberately falsifying their availability. 'They talk of us being off the run [unavailable] during the day, but we are not unless we are not [allocated work]', 'we've never been off the run in all these years, now, off the run, so no money [and] managers are ensuring this'. Claims were made by senior officers that Basildon was always 'off the run', whereas the retained fire officers we spoke to declared that they were available 97% of the time.
107. One senior member of the HR team explained to us that 'Retained' can't be recruited into whole

time as this would create budget pressures, so they can only go into retained vacancies. Yet this commitment to no compulsory redundancies and no station closures has been in her words 'unhelpful to cultural change' as in practice it means giving precedence to whole time firefighters and no opportunities to 'bring forward retained' as per the Knight review. One retained officer summed this up by commenting that 'Ken Knight said make more use of retained but they won't as they don't want the hassle'. The impact of this frustration on morale has been considerable. One retained officer stated simply that 'we're sick and tired of banging our heads against a wall', others added that they have 'never felt less needed or rewarded; first time ever I felt like leaving' and that they 'feel abused because of the commitment I and my family give every time I go out.'

Industrial Relations

108. Out of a total workforce of 1590 there are 1242 uniformed firefighters including on-call. There are over 1,000 in a union, including over 850 in the FBU. This has given the union significant power and influence over the culture and attitudes within ECFRS. As one member of staff put it "you have to join the union before you are shown where the toilet is. You mustn't say anything that challenges the unions."
109. The history of poor industrial relations and a poor culture are long standing. Some interviewed said that the situation has existed for more than 20 years but has worsened in some respects more recently. The Fire & Rescue Act 2004 gave the Government the power to instruct Fire Authorities to make their own vehicles available for future industrial action. The Green Goddesses have been sold off, mostly to developing countries. This has created an additional dynamic between firefighters and resilience workers from the same workforce who work during strikes and this has damaged the relationship between firefighters, resilience workers and management.
110. Some emergency response staff are known to hold decades old grudges about previous strikes. This is perpetuated by the watch culture where vociferous union members hold sway 'around the mess table', and, as the members of a workshop pointed out 'if one of us leaves the union, they would be sat on their own, no one will talk to them, just make their life a misery' and that 'the militant FBU culture has always been Essex and Merseyside, and FBU laugh about Essex and say they like to keep it that way'. This is not actually true in that Merseyside took decisive action more than 10 years ago and have made significant strides with improved industrial relations to achieve agreed changes.
111. Some of the examples of grievance and discipline cases are telling. From the almost comic - where a grievance was taken out on the grounds that removing a snooker table had such an impact on [the person's] family life as he now had to go to a snooker club to play, or when a FBU member wrote a letter (the contents of which were a disciplinary offence) so the FBU instructed all 40 men on the station to write the same letter so they all had to be disciplined – to more disturbing examples of alleged bullying by trade union members, including damage and vandalism to cars and property belonging to FRA members and senior officers, and bricks through the windows of those who leave the FBU.
112. There was some evidence from the interviews and in the workshops that the extremely physical hard-line initiations have stopped. Previously physical aggression towards new recruits being 'beasted' – 'tied up and put in a pit – with water up to your nose' and being pulled across carpets until you had carpet burns on your face' – and physical humiliation of being made to stand naked while genitalia is measured etc. no longer happens, although equally unacceptable behaviour continues with mistakes, or perceived mistakes, being punished by physical intimidation such as

¹⁵ Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Fire Peer Challenge Report, May 2013

repeated slapping on the head by watch members. However, there have been continued instances of damage to and sully of personal property, the abusive use of the word 'Scab' and even criminal activity such as blocking fire appliances, obstructing the Police and causing damage to the Authority's and personal property. Yet as part of dispute settlements there have been regular 'amnesty' agreements whereby the Authority has agreed either not to take disciplinary action or to exonerate those already subject to disciplinary sanctions. A more positive and consistent application of the zero tolerance policy introduced in 2012 would remedy this.

113. More importantly there was overwhelming evidence of serious psychological intimidation of those who had fallen out of favour with the trades unions or were not welcome on the watch. This includes repeated sexual innuendoes about the victim, being ostracised, not being able to use the mess room, finding their food had been spat in - or worse and other degrading behaviours.
114. The majority of FBU members are not supportive of these behaviours, or industrial action that creates additional tensions and loss of salary. In fact, this diminishing dominance of the trades union view has meant that some FBU colleagues in certain stations have become ventriloquists for an increasingly reluctant group of firefighters, who find the culture distasteful but fear being vilified and persecuted if they speak out. They are fearful of the recriminations and expect no support from HR or the management. Long-serving firefighters who are passionate about the service are speaking about leaving because they feel that the conditioned behaviours imposed by the trades unions, and the distance and lack of support of management, do not sit comfortably with them.
115. There is a belief that any escalation to try and remedy the situation, such as whistle blowing, is likely to be heard by a manager who's likely to be a member of a trade union and 'doesn't want to rock the boat'. 'It ends up with the whistle blower being penalised and no-one is prepared to risk that'.
116. Relationships between trade unions are problematic too. The representatives of the smaller Fire Officers Association noted how differently their FOA colleagues are treated in London and Staffordshire. The hostility they faced when they challenged FBU members on the fire risk posed by storing things for a private business being run from the station caused them major problems. FOA members claims that theirs is not a 'table-thumping' union, yet the FBU 'refuse to sit round the table with them and take the view of why do we need two trade unions? The FBU don't want us to exist'.
117. The position is untenable for both the trades unions and management. It is clear that the numbers and support of union members in ECFRS will continue to erode unless its officials have a clear claim as to whether they truly represent the views of their members. If they do not then the present incumbents will find themselves overseeing the decay and demise of vital trades union involvement in contributing to a way forward that removes unnecessary dilemmas of loyalty and support for their trade union among many of their current membership. Consideration should be given to a more progressive model of advocacy, in an environment where they are more respected and are able to truly provide a voice for their members, thereby becoming more relevant for the firefighters they represent.
118. Trades union colleagues will only take this step forward if there is clear evidence that the authority and management are authentically interested in providing a level playing field for real contribution and negotiation about the future of the authority, including revisions to managerial structures.
119. **There are too many barriers between groups of staff in Essex. Radical action is necessary to ensure that unacceptable and out-dated practices will no longer be tolerated.**

Valuing people and challenging poor performance and behaviours

120. Ensuring that the organisation is focussed on valuing their people and challenging poor performance appropriately is crucial to the culture. Appreciation produces higher levels of enthusiasm and satisfaction, resulting in a more positive working environment and motivated staff. Valued workers work harder and this leads to better results. Studies show that organisations that place a premium on thanking and recognising their employees outperform other organisations by 14% with respect to employee engagement, and productivity. Recognising the contribution of everyone in the organisation is one of the foundations of a successful culture. The findings of the Cultural Review Survey reveal that only 31 per cent of respondents felt valued by the service and just 23 per cent think that the service acts in a reasonable and equal manner with all employees.
121. Recognition of staff is not part of any strategic approach to valuing people in ECFRS. Previously award ceremonies were held at least once a year until 2007 but because of industrial action this was stopped. In Staffordshire CFRS, for example, the headquarters and staff restaurant have pictures of employees from their most recent awards ceremony. The service works hard to ensure that 'back room' staff, and the work that they do, is showcased and recognised as much as firefighters and those working in the community. In both public and service communications the Chief Fire Officer makes positive statements about the staff in almost every interview viewed. He is visibly proud of his people and sees recognition of their work as a key part of his.
122. A regular criticism is that senior managers do not value the role of firefighters or consistently speak highly or proudly of the service. One example given was of a senior officer giving a PowerPoint presentation to colleagues showing a fire engine and crew. His comment was 'if that is what you think is the future of this service then you are wrong'. A more sophisticated dialogue about describing firefighting, prevention initiatives and community work as all being important in the future of ECFRS would not have been as widely reported across the service or had such a debilitating and demoralising effect on the workforce.
123. Speaking to firefighters on the stations they are absolutely committed to fighting fires and keeping their communities safe. Their public service ethos and willingness to put themselves in harm's way to safeguard others is what most joined for and is the reason why they are held in such esteem by the public and command such respect. Diminishing this laudable dedication is naïve, demotivating and counter-productive.
124. There is some good staff recognition practice in pockets. Some managers send a 'well done' email if a member of staff has not had any absence in the previous year. Those on the frontline have noticed the difference in emphasis. 'You appreciate the occasional pat on the head', observed a member of the resilience team, 'but there is more emphasis on what you do wrong'. One colleague recalled a 'Christmas card with thank you on it one year', as well as the star from her line manager that she has 'kept on her whiteboard for years'.
125. One officer however claimed that colleagues were so disenfranchised by the culture of the organisation that of the 30 staff who were up for their long-service medal 'only five would go and collect the medal as generally people feel the service doesn't treat them well'. All those in the Retained workshop said they are never thanked, and others added that they 'don't get any appreciation from [senior management] except when in resilience'

126. Firefighters do appreciate praise for their work. One SMB member recalled inviting two firefighters onto the stage at an award ceremony, (before these events were stopped) who were moved to tears by being acknowledged for 'delivering for the community'.
127. Some retained officers claim that after twenty years' service they were not awarded the standard Queen's Medal, in comparison to their whole-time counterparts, and that after a major house fire at Harlow the key role of a retained crew was not acknowledged in the debrief which has caused resentment. Another SMB member added that capacity within the service to do reward and recognition properly has simply been 'squeezed out by competing priorities'. 'It's the naughty child who gets the most attention.'
128. Even additional commitment is not always recognised. One member of the retained team was annoyed that 'there must be six of us who do far more hours on call than contracted, machines would be off the run if we didn't ... but we are used to being taken for granted ... people don't see how much effort it's taking to keep things going'. What is more the opportunities for firefighters at all levels to 'act up' and demonstrate their potential is severely limited, not least for retained firefighters whose frustration in the focus groups was palpable. 'We dress properly and look and act the part', argued one retained fire officer [but] 'there are no opportunities for retained', 'it's dead men's boots' added another. This has meant that the management core of the organisation have little understanding of the retained workforce and often little respect for what they can contribute.

Valuing Equality and Diversity

129. ECFRS needs to do more to ensure its workforce reflects the diversity of the communities of Essex and that the needs of minorities who work for the service need to be addressed strategically.
130. For example as of 2013, BAME employees accounted for only 0.5 per cent of the workforce (the average for similar fire and rescue services to Essex is 3.7 per cent)¹⁶, whilst the BAME population of Essex as a whole is 8.6 per cent.¹⁷ The Cultural Review survey revealed some of the challenges faced by the female and BAME staff of ECFRS. Seven per cent of respondents stated that they had witnessed sexual harassment (with seven per cent preferring not to say) and of these 30 per cent stated that it happened in the last twelve months, and nine per cent within two years. Nine per cent of respondents had witnessed sexual discrimination, and seven per cent had seen some form of racial discrimination – 46 per cent of whom stating that it happened with the last twelve months with a further 14% within the last 2 years indicating that this is still an issue.
131. At least one member of the FRA had observed this as a concern, and that one report he had seen had claimed 'that there were no diversity or equality issues' in the service, and that they had raised it as an issue 'as we're still recruiting as we did 40 years ago.' A 'cultural audit' was carried out in 2003 and there is evidence that in the late 90s and early 2000s there were a number of diversity groups who worked with officers on policy and procedures, regular meetings were held and the subject of diversity was taken seriously. However, feedback from colleagues suggests that not enough is being done to address prejudice within the service.
132. Comments from the Cultural Review survey endorse this view: 'the number of ethnic minority groups, LGBT employees and those with disabilities and women in senior management positions' could be vastly improved if we had maintained the focus we used to have', and that 'just about every 'ism' is present: sexism, racism, ageism', another added that 'senior Management and HR involvement in assisting with LGBT issues is virtually non-existent.' Those interviewed said that despite several requests of HR to reinstate a forum this had not yet happened.

133. Insensitivity to culture and gender manifests itself in a number of ways. One member of staff observed 'look at the cultural make-up of the Service. It is all of a kind. I find the nationalistic display of flags on room doors etc. threatening'; another pointed out that Kelvedon Park 'lacks automatic doors in certain areas, to allow people with mobility problems to travel around the building independently - equal access to all?' There were also a number of complaints from female staff about the absence of suitable changing and toilet facilities for women or well-fitting and smart uniforms. The initial clothing issue forms were marked up in male only sizing (i.e.: collar size for shirts, no female sizing options). 'This creates a dignity at work issue' commented one female officer 'and sends a clear message to prospective employees that women are tolerated and not welcome on stations.'
134. One female member of staff added that too many officers and firefighters 'believe that women should not be firefighters. Their only argument is that women are not as strong and the aging process acts differently on their bodies. Even when faced with the reality of a female firefighter performing perfectly well in the role right next to them they are not convinced.'

Listening to staff

135. The introduction of the Make Some Noise survey, produced by People Insight for ECFRS, is a significant step in the right direction, and the emerging analysis of its results and the recommended next steps provide the service with an excellent route map forward. In this survey of over 700 staff the significant benefits of staff engagement were made clear, as were the stark challenges faced by the service in addressing the deep-seated discontent within the service.
136. The most positive responses from staff concerned their care for the organisation, their goal clarity, and the knowledge and skills they are equipped with to do a traditional firefighter's job. The pride in being part of a respected service and serving the community is a touchstone for most firefighters as was being part of a close-knit team that makes a difference. Yet the most negative responses reflected what we discovered in the focus groups: that the culture and values of ECFRS, as well as management's approach to reward and recognition, employee involvement and change management needs to improve significantly. In particular:
- **Collaboration - better working relationships between departments (e.g. uniformed vs non-uniformed), unified organisation, remove silo working**
 - **Senior management visibility – more contact with employees and verbal communication from leaders**
 - **Development – easier access to training and development opportunities, clearer career paths, fairer internal promotion processes**
 - **Change management – reduce the amount of change going on at once, consider employee input, change of direction to be clear**
 - **Living the values – ensure core values are adhered from top to bottom, leading by example, being more open and honest**
 - **Clear organisational structure – integrate some departments rather than have so many, review current hierarchical management structure.**

¹⁶ www.essex-fire.gov.uk/_img/pics/pdf_1374154454.pdf

¹⁷ www.ebemrc.org.uk/about/essex-county-and-the-bem-community states that BAME population of Essex is 8.6% (accessed on 21 August 2015)

137. The report from People Insight strongly recommended that work is done to address the gap between staff and senior management through 'increased visibility, consultation and communication, not forgetting to lead by the ECFRS core values', whilst 'consulting staff appropriately during periods of change, demonstrating a willingness to listen and act accordingly to allay fears.' This is sound advice and underlines the importance of reviewing the organisation's values going forward so that performance and commitment is recognized more explicitly, whilst giving staff more opportunities to feedback on what works and what doesn't work.
138. Whilst an action plan has been put in place to address the findings this area needs more focus and attention. If staff could feel a difference as a result of their voice being heard this would send a positive signal of change.

Challenging poor performance and behaviours

139. The approach to discipline in ECFRS is antiquated, bureaucratic and has contributed to the paralysis within the organisation. Managers are not trained to deal appropriately with underperformance or breaches of discipline and formal grievance procedures are the default position for even the most minor disagreement. (In addition to those suspended as a result of the pending court case and current Industrial Tribunal claimants, there are 'approximately 2 grievances a week – about a 100 a year' according to one senior officer).
140. Guidance from HR that every conversation between managers and their staff is logged on Form FB163 is supposed to provide a record of conversations relating to positive or negative behaviour. It is however generally used as a record of transgression and it is placed on the file. There is clear evidence that there have been vexatious grievances and inappropriately heavy-handed and often inconsistent escalation of issues.
141. All this is time consuming and costly to the organisation, but the main issue here is the overwhelming reliance on policy, process and procedure - with no focus on real mediation or conflict resolution.
142. Disciplinary issues take too long to bring to resolution, which causes significant distress to those involved in the process and prolonged disciplinary matters often result in anxiety and depression for those involved. In the first five months of 2015, six cases took in excess of four month periods to resolution.
143. At the behest of the Director of Finance a report was presented to the FRA in June 2015. The report showed that 3,190 days have been lost due to suspension since 2011. The cost to the authority for cost of salaries, on-costs and replacement was identified as £822,399.
144. No cost was identified for those involved in investigations or any professional costs or legal advice. This is estimated to be significant – but this cost was not established as part of this Review.
145. The causes of the suspensions reflect the nature of the problematic culture within the organisation and include:
- Abusive behaviour towards other employees
 - Abusive behaviour and insubordination
 - Mismanagement
 - Insubordination and breach of trust

146. Lack of consistency is one of the biggest issues. For example, absence management is dealt with how each station officer thinks fit. 'Our station managers adopt different approaches to absence management and or the recording of it', commented one officer. This means that senior managers remain unaware of the level of sickness in the organisation, and the main causes of it. One sickness policy seen (dated January 2015) has still not gone to the managers and supervisors. Similarly, on appraisals, staff said on a number of occasions that some line managers think they are a 'load of nonsense', this means that managers don't appraise staff properly and so staff don't feel valued. Policies and strategies do have their place, but if they are not consistently applied, no one knows where they stand and can often feel unfairly treated. Sickness absence was formerly administered through the disciplinary process but will in future be administered by the Attendance Management Policy.
147. The introduction of appraisals into the service is a significant step forward and it is acknowledged that this has not been an easy process. However the focus on the number of appraisals completed over the training of appraisers and appraisees and analysis of quality needs revisiting. If embedded properly the process could have a dramatic effect on the culture of the organisation in the longer term.
148. Inconsistency in dealing with the disciplinary process is alleged to be unfair with those who are perceived to be protected by the organisation being given a 'slap on the wrist' and 'those on a similar misdemeanour being escalated to level 3', depending upon which officer you get doing the discipline. (There is also a perception that there is a difference in treatment between FBU and other members – with a harder line being taken against those in the union.) This is reflected in the Cultural Review Survey where only 22 per cent think that the service recognises and rewards good performance. Just 20 per cent believe that performance evaluation is fair and 40 per cent do not feel that the disciplinary process is used appropriately in all situations.
149. Positively, 49 per cent say they receive regular feedback on their performance and 58 per cent feel that their manager recognises exceptional performance. How people are valued in an organisation depends upon what the organisation values. In ECFRS these remain traditional operational firefighting tasks (despite the fact that the number of roles directly relating to firefighting is diminishing) to the exclusion of broader managerial skills including basic human relations competencies.
150. As one officer put it 'promotion is about operational abilities. Command and control exercises and technical improvement. Very little about management skill.' A point echoed by a SMB member who argued that there needs to be a change of emphasis onto people management at stations rather than who had the cleanest appliances.' Equally, examples of misconduct and poor behaviours are not consistently and fairly challenged. Members of the HR team have pointed out that despite an official 'zero tolerance policy' to all acts of misconduct during industrial action, misconduct has included alleged unlawful picketing, bullying and harassment in the form of intimidation, threats and the use of inappropriate language.

Use of Mediation

151. 'Mediation is a process of conflict resolution whereby a neutral third party is invited to intervene into a workplace situation to assist with the constructive resolution of that conflict'. This is how Staffordshire CFRS describe how the use of mediation has resulted in significant benefits to the Service in both staff wellbeing and financial savings.
152. In healthy organisations disputes can be resolved with discussion with the other party. In ECFRS

the ability to deal with conflict resolution is very weak and is hindered by a policy, process and procedural approach as opposed to a human one. Staffordshire CFRS uses mediation effectively by training its own staff on the National Certificate of Workplace Mediation. This means that issues can be resolved 'prioritising the people and working relationships over the processes. Confidentiality is kept between the mediators and the parties involved so no reports to managers after the event and no reports on personnel files.

153. **In view of the personal cost to individuals and the on-going focus on pressure of funding in the organisation it is imperative that urgent and serious intervention in the disciplinary processes in ECFRS takes place.**
154. **Accountability mechanisms need to be strengthened and more needs to be done to recognise the diverse needs of the workforce in the first instance by reinstating regular meetings.**

Learning and development and promotion

155. It is essential for any successful organisation that wishes to value their staff and challenge poor performance to identify their learning and development needs.
156. Operational training is very well developed in Essex, but other training opportunities in ECFRS are limited and *ad hoc*, with a narrow focus on technical competencies instead of human relations skills and leadership development. For emergency response staff, observed one firefighter 'all training is generic, fitness and technical' and even for managers they have very limited leadership training, which has meant that the service now has too many people 'leading who can't take charge'.
157. Attempts to introduce modern training programmes have been undermined by the attitudes of attendees as one HR manager recalled of the Managing Today, Leading Tomorrow (MTLT) programme 'the lead trainer did not expect the behaviour of some of our staff. He's worked with over a 100 organisations and this is the worst behaviour he has ever known. Questions on the day included 'how would you feel if a member of your family died today [in a fire] because I am on this course?'
158. A typical attitude among emergency response staff is 'I'm here to fight fires, I don't need to know all that', and HR professionals in ECFRS concede that in relation to Managing Today, Leading Tomorrow 'we hadn't thought enough about the challenges of changing the organisation'; another attendee added that 'people with quite a lot of experience were taught as though they were juniors. There were external facilitators and they didn't respect anyone's experience and qualifications.'
159. 'What a waste of two days', recalled one middle manager', '[they had] no way of measuring what they have achieved. It was planned so senior management were enabled to say – you've had this training'. Another added that the problem with the programme was that 'it doesn't flow out of appraisal. I can't recall the last time I had any training. I can recall when last assessed – annually on competencies. We are now a testing organisation rather than a nurturing organisation.'
160. As 550 staff were placed on the MTLT programme it's clear that this resource was not targeted at the right people, or used as a tool to improve the performance of and culture within the organisation. In an organisation of 1540 it is highly unlikely that 550 staff have the potential or desire to progress to a position of leadership. The sheer number attending reflects on the hierarchical managerial structure where the current span of control is 1 manager to 1.75 employees. This is a low span of control and suggests a top-heavy management structure requiring review.
161. The *ad hoc* training and development arrangements reflect ECFRS's unsystematic approach to staff appraisals and how they are used to identify candidates for promotion. In a workshop with Unison members, staff pointed that they had 'never had an appraisal in 10 years. I didn't know we did appraisal. Now it's Achievement First so I filled it in but no follow up and nothing's been done. And there is nothing for you in the future; it's dead men's shoes, so what's the point – is the general feeling.' Another added that 'it's all subjective and depends on your line manager.' Similarly a member of the retained team noted that 'We all have appraisals but they are a waste of time as we don't have a future, and some of the resilience workers we interviewed added that 'appraisals are generic, pre-populated on the Internet. You receive a thought-jogger with generic bullet points on it. You just put the same thing, year after year. No training on appraisals was given to me'.
162. Encouragingly, ECFRS introduced its first mandatory Performance Appraisal process, Achievement First in March 2014, with the setting of planned achievements and development goals. Previously,

there was an optional appraisal process that had a different form or approach for each rank or staff group. Traditionally, appraisals only tended to be carried out where the staff member had identified a desire for promotion and was focussed on technical competencies. The new appraisal process assesses the behaviours and attitudes staff are expected to display when carrying out operational tasks so that:

‘all employees give and receive regular feedback on their performance and have clearly defined objectives. The appraisal process will enable the Service to reward good performance, identify training needs, and support career progression and identify talent.’

163. However, this element has been introduced on a voluntary basis as the Fire Brigades Union maintain an objection against staff being appraised against competencies. ‘We continue to work with the FBU to find a resolution before 2016 when we plan to make assessment against competencies a mandatory element of the process’. A senior member of the HR team explained that appraisals were brought in to standardise practice, with 87% completed. ‘But’, she argues ‘the challenge comes back as to why firefighters need an appraisal and that the Grey Book covers competencies. FBU takes the position that there is no right to appraise firefighters and won’t accept objectives outside the national framework’.
164. Therefore the opportunity for a systematic system of a well-embedded and high-quality staff appraisal to identify future managers, refocus the organisation on strategic priorities and address low morale continues to be missed.
165. Frontline staff have noticed this and observed to us that ‘the manner in which people have been promoted has changed almost year by year over the last 10 years, not necessarily for the better’. A female member of staff added that ‘there is no transparency, with a different rule for support staff from the uniformed staff when it comes to promotion e.g. only a firefighter could work up to CFO, their career path is set out. Other jobs are kept well under the table. It’s who you know, not what you know.’ Staff also noted that job opportunities are not communicated properly and that ‘the decision is made before you apply, you know who will get it before it’s advertised’.
166. Promotion processes have become less clear than previously. Claims that there have been changes in the promotion criteria and selection process ‘just about every month’ were common. Examples were given of the current Acting CFO explaining the process to be interrupted by a colleague and told ‘it changed this morning’.
167. There is a common feeling that the promotions are based on ‘long-term personal relationships – I know men who thoroughly deserve to be promoted but they won’t be because they have spoken out about something or their face doesn’t fit’.
168. The emphasis needs to change from a focus on technical competencies only to more inclusive leadership training, and that training programmes are used more explicitly to reward and encourage those showing leadership potential who have a desire to participate.
169. **There needs to be trust in the promotion process that there is fairness and consistency. There needs to be adherence to a transparent structure that is widely understood and engenders belief in the probity of the process**

Communication and engagement

170. Many of the challenges faced by the service could be effectively addressed if there were clear and consistent communications from the ECFRS senior team and regular engagement with frontline staff.
171. "I don't hear about SMB decisions generally", observed one firefighter, whose views were typical of many of his colleagues. 'Sometimes people stop by and say 'have you heard this' and you think you should have. On the grapevine and someone tells us something important', adding 'No I don't trust the leadership ... we get a lot of 'for these four walls only'. One resilience officer commented 'even station commanders don't know what's going on. You feel you're kept in the dark about how decisions are made and why. No one tells us what's going on behind the scenes.'
172. A great deal of staff engagement is still done remotely and staff have noticed that 'we don't get visits from senior management unless we ask'. Some claimed to us that 'Group Commanders are very good friends of militant stations', whilst members of the retained workforce pointed out that they are largely invisible to senior management because of their shift patterns. 'Whole time switch off their phones and go home. We don't as we are on call. We drill after hours, and we never see anyone as it's out of their management hours'.
173. Some attempts by senior management to engage with staff have been undermined by the middle managers. A programme of station visits that involved all of SMB to gain staff feedback and improve two-way communication was abandoned due to accusations that they were undermining managers so now they cascade information through team briefs and the service intranet. This has led to a belief that the senior management are remote and out of touch.
174. Yet the use of electronic communications has its limits. Some staff commented that they heard about this cultural review first via email but many complain that they only get limited time to check emails, of which there already too many. The Cultural Review Survey findings showed that around half of staff say they receive regular updates through team briefings, and only 40 per cent think communication is improving in the service, just 43 per cent are satisfied with the amount of internal communications, and 23 per cent are not satisfied. Only 35 per cent value Parade News (28 per cent don't value it and 37 per cent are uncertain about its value) and some staff pointed out that now it's on email many staff don't read it any more. 'We get things that aren't relevant and it's not realistic to sift through' commented one firefighter. 'Everyone is fed up and losing interest as they are off the run. So if you send an email, as we are in limbo, we don't read them.'
175. There have been recent attempts by the service's interim leadership to become more visible. Under the previous regime there was, one manager remarked, 'a fear culture' where on staff awareness days they would be 'told what's new and up-coming [but] if people asked questions, he shot them down in front of the group.' The acting Chief Fire Officer has been praised for his openness and willingness to be challenged in group meetings, but even then some staff have pointed that 'SMB are almost scripted in their answers' and that speaking frankly in these settings can have repercussions on stations. No wonder some staff noted that as long as the culture in the organisation remains the same 'our engagement is valueless'.
176. The 2013 Peer Challenge Report concluded that communications in ECFRS are 'top down and transactional', and reflects 'a traditional command and control management style.' They concluded that a more open, transparent and inclusive approach to leadership and management is needed,

and that the benefits of early engagement with staff in relation to major change projects need to be recognised. As ECFRS enters a crucial period of change, they argued that a comprehensive communications strategy reflective of the cultural aspirations is likely to facilitate continued improvement in the relationship between the workforce, SMB and the Authority. The defined benefits of the major change projects need a clear communication strategy in order to convince all key stakeholders of their value.¹⁸

177. **Additional external support is needed to improve the reach and consistency of strategic communications and how it is used to drive forward change in Essex.**

Conclusion

178. The culture of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has been variously described as corrosive and toxic and its relationships dysfunctional. On balance there is the prospect, if there is no significant intervention, that the culture in ECFRS creates a danger to individuals, equipment and property. This may in turn put the communities of Essex at risk.
179. The overall trajectory in relation to intimidation, bullying and harassment is moving in the right direction from a physical point of view but it is evident that it pervades the culture in ECFRS from the bottom to the top of the organisation and many are still fearful of falling foul of either the senior managers or the trades union.
180. The passionate, determined people that I had the privilege to meet on fire stations, in support services and in some managerial positions are willing and eager to move on from an environment that only a very small, malignant minority want to continue.
181. There is however a significant degree of cynicism as to whether or not the Fire and Rescue Authority will embrace the recommendations and start to make the change that is so badly needed.

¹⁸ Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Fire Peer Challenge Report, May 2013

Summary of Recommendations

- R1. An external Expert Advisory Panel with a range of skills and backgrounds, and accountable to the FRA, should be appointed as soon as possible to provide strategic advice to the organisation for the next 24 months. The Panel will comprise senior people, experienced in addressing challenging organisations who will provide strategic advice to the FRA and senior officers on the leadership and change now needed

Vision, Values, Strategies and Plans

- R2. A cross section of staff should be involved and engaged in the development of the vision, values, strategies and plans to bring a whole organisation perspective to the processes and to engender a sense of ownership
- R3. Ensure that all staff understand their role in delivering the strategy by making the strategy simpler with a concise summary that can be prominently displayed

Governance and Leadership

- R4. Ensure that the position in relation to the Chief Fire Officer is clarified as quickly as possible
- R5. The role of the elected members on the FRA must be more widely understood and more visible to staff, stakeholders and the public through publication of summary updates on the intranet and in Parade News
- R6. FRA meetings need to be focused on strategic solutions to ECFRS's most pressing challenges
- R7. Ensure that FRA reports address a wider range of cultural and industrial relations subjects and not just operational, financial and risk issues
- R8. Ensure that there are planned meetings with representatives of the FRA to meet around key issues with representatives of the workforce and trades union colleagues
- R9. More work should be done to ensure the accuracy of reports that are presented to the FRA with the service's Performance Manager signing off all reports containing data to the FRA in future
- R10. A review of the framework of how the FRA operates should be commissioned to ensure effective governance and accountability of ECFRS
- R11. An external organisational development expert on the Panel, with support from all trades unions and staff representatives, needs to lead a review of the organisation's hierarchical structure to remove management layers, redesignate roles away from rank and improve spans of control from the current 1.7 FTEs per manager
- R12. Identify agents for change across the service, trades unions and staff representatives and begin to jointly develop proposals relating to the Programme 2020 vision

Relationships, roles and responsibilities

- R13. The mixed crewing model that has now been implemented in Essex at Great Dunmow, with the station staffed by both whole time and retained – this needs to be adopted across the county, sensitively and with the involvement of all trades unions
- R14. Make it clear at every level that everyone is personally responsible for removing barriers between whole time and retained
- R15. Do more to recruit leaders from other sectors, bringing fresh perspectives and learning from the wider public sector and beyond
- R16. Reserve the wearing of rank markings for operational staff, fire control incidents, public events, partnership meetings and ceremonial occasions only. Either adopt civilian attire in head office or, learning from Staffordshire FRS, introduce a new 'team strip' that is worn by both firefighters and support staff
- R17. The Expert Panel to invite a representative of the Essex Police to advise on the seriousness of any reported behaviours
- R18. Refer any intimidatory behaviour against individuals, equipment or property for immediate consideration by the Expert Panel who will consider criminal proceedings

Valuing People and Challenging Poor Performance and Behaviour

- R19. To address the perceived inconsistency and unfairness all disciplinary action should be overseen by a sub group of the expert panel (subject to statutory constraints) over the next 24 months. Any intimidatory behaviour against individuals, equipment or property needs to be considered by the Expert Panel taking advice from representatives of Essex Police. The sub-group will have a specific role in ensuring elected members are aware of matters without cutting across the existing process. This approach to take effect in respect of all new cases
- R20. Create a clearing house for dealing with the unnecessary number of vexatious and low grade grievances that are submitted
- R21. Clarify and simplify arrangements for whistleblowing and the escalation of incidents of this nature directly to the independent Expert Panel
- R22. Consider the use of a rapid mediation service as has been adopted by Staffordshire CFRS
- R23. Create more opportunities to recognise outstanding performance and actively promote nominations for an annual awards ceremony
- R24. Consult with BAME, LGBT, female and disabled colleagues regarding the reforming of appropriate groups to look at the ways in which the service could proactively progress the issues raised and proactively use the different perspective that diversity can bring to the organisation

Learning, development and promotion

- R25. Revise future training programmes to ensure that they are focused, and are limited to those showing talent, potential and have a desire to progress. It should focus on a smaller number of future leaders
- R26. Promotion should only be open to those who have completed and successfully graduated from the programme
- R27. Change the emphasis from operational to more inclusive leadership training, learning from Kent CFRS that has introduced Level 5 coaching qualifications, including back-office staff, to improve the management skills of middle managers
- R28. Make promotion to managerial positions more transparent and involve the Expert Panel in overseeing all appointments for the next 24 months
- R29. Ensure that leadership and coaching skills and qualifications are considered as much as technical competencies in all appraisals
- R30. Set clear and consistent expectations that annual appraisals need to be completed by all managers across the service and introduce an audit to ensure that the quality of the appraisal meetings and paperwork is actually delivering a satisfying process which will take the service forward
- R31. Review of existing management and delivery mechanisms to provide implementation ability with clear oversight of progress in implementing change and most importantly, embedding change

Communication and engagement recommendations

- R32. Engage the Communications team at Essex County Council to improve the range and credibility of the information communicated to stakeholders, and establish a staff reference group to better understand what messages are important to the service as a whole
- R33. Ensure that the agendas and papers of every meeting of the FRA and SMB are posted on the intranet so staff can see what is being discussed. A summary of decisions should be published after each meeting
- R34. Develop a style guide for corporate communications to ensure consistency and protocols for sign off by at least one member of SMB and bring in some measurement to evaluate positive and negative coverage of the service

Final Recommendation

- R35. After six months carry out a short independent review on progress

Appendix 1

Membership of Senior Management Board

- Chief Fire Officer (who is also the Chief Executive)
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer - Service Support, responsible for Democratic Services, Fleet Services, Legal Support, Property Services, Technical Services, Water Supplies, IT, Technical Communications, Challenge and Innovation, Corporate Communications, Media and Marketing.
- Finance Director and Treasurer - responsible for Finance, Insurance, Purchasing and Supplies.
- Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development - responsible for Human Resources and Organisational Development, including implementing the Work Force Transformation Project
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Operations - responsible for Area Commands including fire stations and associated areas.
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Safer and Resilient Communities - responsible for Safer and Resilient Communities
- Service Solicitor – who is the Head of Law & Corporate Administration

Appendix 2

Strategic Delivery Board

- Programme Manager
- Senior Divisional Officer - West Area Commander
- Risk & Business Continuity Manager
- Divisional Officer - Health & Safety Manager
- Senior Divisional Officer Head of Quality & Improvement
- Deputy Finance Director
- Divisional Officer Operations
- ICT Manager
- Interim Head of HR & OD
- Property Services Manager
- Senior Divisional Officer, Safer Communities
- Deputy Director HR & OD
- Senior Divisional Officer East Area Commander
- Divisional Officer Emergency Planning
- Fleet Engineering Manager
- Head of Service (Emergency Planning)
- Performance Improvement Manager

Appendix 3

Membership of Review Panel

- Four Fire and Rescue Authority Members
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer /Acting Chief Fire Officer
- Retained firefighter and Secretary to the Retained Firefighters Union, Essex branch
- Operations and Risk Data Information Officer
- Community Development and Safeguarding Manager
- *Firefighter and Assistant Secretary to the FBU, Essex branch
- Assistant Divisional Officer and internal Fire Officers Association representative
- Local Unison representative (external)

*FBU colleagues withdrew their support for the review in June 2015

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FBU 2007	All Equal, All Different v4
Carr B. 2014	The Carr Review: The report of the independent review of the law governing industrial disputes
ORS (for the Chief Fire Officers Association) 2008	Equality and Diversity Survey: graphical report of survey findings
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Knight K 2013	Facing the Future: Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England
Baigent 2009	Fitting-In, Work in Progress on Culture
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Bowles DJ et al 2012	Investigation into Management Culture in NHS Lothian
CIPD and PPMA 2012	Leading Culture Change: employee engagement and work-force transformation
FBU site	Three issues of Firefighter 2015
House of Commons records 2006	Memorandum by the Fire Service Research & Training Unit at Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge (Fire & Rescue Cultures)
LGA (Baigent & O'Connor) 2011	Fire and Rescue Services: going the extra mile
Johnson G 2001	Mapping and re-mapping organisational culture: a local government example
ORS 2005	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service: Cultural audit survey
ORS 2009	Cultural Audit Survey 2008: Final report for Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Silvia and Simona 2013	Research Methods Used in Analysing Organisational Culture

Baigent, O'Connor, Smitherman 2010	Perceptions: what is believed to be true can become true in its consequence A snapshot cultural Audit of South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Baigent et al 2003	Sunrise: A new dawn in training: training today's firefighters as the emergency workers for tomorrow
YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvTxxHHPJs	Ann Millington CFO Kent Fire & Rescue: Culture and Leadership dimensions of valuing female talent

EFRS documents reviewed

2003	EFRS Cultural Audit	
June 2005	Disciplinary procedure	
11 Sept 2006	Management Team Meeting	To consider the approach moving from Rank to Role – initial thinking
ECFRS	Equality Scheme 2006-9	
EMA Solutions Feb 2008	Equality Standard Review 2008	EFA/044/09
SMB 29 January 2008	Audit Recommendations – Report on progress against action plan	
SMB 29 January 2008	Related Action plan with progress commentary	Training DVD
April 2008	Lease Car Scheme: assessment of options against the lease car scheme previously proposed	
April 2008	Minutes of SMB re comparison of lease car scheme	
Feb 2008	Review of the light vehicle provision for staff conditioned to grey and green book contracts	EFA/082/13
Feb 2008	SMB Minutes re light vehicle provision as above	Appendix to 4 Sept 2013 report
Nov 2008	Minutes of SMB incl car scheme	
	Staffordshire FRS Principal Officers Car scheme	EFA/044/13
SMB Nov 2008	Revisions to the EFRS lease car scheme	EFA/044/09
Policy & Strategy Cttee 22 June 2011	Strategic Review of HR & Training – findings from the external review of HR & Training – leads to Workforce Transformation Programme	EFA/061/11

2011	Strategic Workforce Development Review; final report	
2011	Appendices to the report	Includes significant stats
Policy & Strategy Cttee 22 June 2011	Workforce Transformation Programme	EFA/062/11
Policy & Strategy Cttee 20 June 2012	Industrial Dispute	EFA/076/12 Partial performance Access Zero tolerance and no amnesty
Policy & Strategy Cttee 20 June 2012	Minutes of meeting	As above Includes reference to industrial action
Nov 2012	Report to Audit, Governance & Review Working Group on PO provided car scheme: needs and comparison of costs	EFA/221/12
Dec 2012	Report to Fire Authority on PO provided car scheme	EFA/233/12
15 Jan 2013	SMB Board meeting HR & OD Position and Strategy - to align to workforce transformation programme	
April 2013	Letters re Whistleblowing Complaint	
Ken Knight 2013	Charts with authority detail from Ken Knight report	
Fire Authority 2013	Response to the Knight Report- Facing the Future	EFA/081/13
Fire Authority 2013	Appendix with detail re Knight Report – Facing the future	EFA/081/13
Feb 2013	PO provided car scheme: the recommendation from the Working Group	EFA/024/13
Grievance, Discipline & Remuneration of Principal Officers Group	CIPFA Stats relating to Fire Authorities	
LGA 2013	ECFRS Fire Peer Challenge Report	
Audit Governance and Review Committee	Sickness Absence Analysis Report Sickness absence data 2012, 2013	EFA/117/13
February 2014	Achievement First Appraisal Policy	Principles, roles etc
2014	Achievement First eLearning PowerPoint	50 minutes of modules

Fire Authority 12 Feb 2014	Workforce Report HR casework Jan 13 – Dec 13	EFA/011/14
Cleveland Fire Brigade March 2014	Performance Improvement Family Group 4	Comparisons with family group 4
Audit Governance & Review Committee 23 April 2014	Organisational Performance Report April 13 – Feb 14	EFA/028/14
	Performance Summary Feb 14	As above
Fire Authority 16 April 2014	Performance for April 2013 to January 2014 and Target Setting for 2014/15 to 2018/19	EFA/022/14
	Service Strategy Poster 2015/15 – 2018/19	As Above
	Summary of Performance January 2014	As above
Fire Authority 16 April 2014	Performance April 2013 to Jan 2014 and Target Setting for 2014/15 to 2018/19	EFA/022/14
May 2014	MTLT Communications Plan	Key messages and timing
	Customer and Services Workstream report – Managers Feedback on HR	
	MTLT Leadership Module 1	
	MTLT Leading Change Module 2	
	MTLT Managing Performance Module 3	
	MTLT High Performing Teams Module 4	
	MTLT Influence, Interaction and Team Working Module 5	
	MTLT Organisational Strategy and Decision Making Module 6	
	MTLT Developing Self and Others Module 7	
	MTLT Diversity and Integrity Module 8	
May 2014	SDB Terms of Reference	
Fire Authority 10 June 2014	Sickness Management Action Plan	EFA/035/14
	Chart of sickness in depts./cost centres to March 2015	

14 July 2014	SMB re abatement of pension on re-employment and continuing secondary employment	
Audit Governance & Review Committee 16 July 2014	Organisational Performance Report June 13 – May 14	EFA/054/14
	Organisational Performance against objectives	As above
Aug 2014	SMB Terms of Reference	
September 2014	SDB TOR for Absence Management Working Group	A sub-group of SDB
25 Sept 2014	Achievement First - Completion rates - Spreadsheet of completion rates by week and by East, West, Corporate	Excel sheets
	Achievement First- SMART Planned Achievements	Explanations and examples
	Achievement First – completing the form, end of year review	Nutshell
	Achievement First – completing the form, mid-year review	Nutshell
	Achievement First – completing the form, setting planned achievements and development goals	Nutshell
	Achievement First – service goals and measures	Nutshell
	Achievement First – appraisal calendar	Monthly actions
	Competency Framework	
Audit, Governance & Review	Organisational Performance Report	
Committee 8 Oct 2014	Sept 13 – Aug 14	
	Chart of Performance 2013-14 2	
ECFRS Press release 23 Oct 2014	Cost Saving ECFRS Scheme wins government funding	To establish insurance consortium. Also refers to a procurement consortium, successful bid led by Kent
Policy & Strategy Cttee 5 Nov 2014	Draft Minutes – includes Workforce Transformation, and partial payment	Confidential part 2 item
Press release Nov 2014	Fire Authority Commissions Independent Inquiry	Note that TOR later amended
Fire Authority 3 Nov 2014	Reputational issues: Actions to address challenges	Part 2 item confidential EFA/096/14

2014	Strategic Assessment of Risk 2014	
Press release 13 Jan 2015	Resilience Crews Will Provide Cover for Entire FBU Strike	
	Chart of Performance 2013-14	
Cleveland Fire Brigade	National Fire and Rescue Service- Occupational Health Performance Report April- December 2014	
Audit Governance & Review Committee 21 Jan 2015	Organisational Performance Report Nov 13 – Oct 14	
Jan 2015	Attendance Management Policy – proposed updated	
Jan 2015	Grievance and Dignity at Work – employee guidance- draft	
Jan 2015	Grievance Policy Tracker –draft	
January 2015	Attendance Management Policy- proposed update	Approaches to absence management
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables shown by Role	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables by Flexi Working Arrangement	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables by Function	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables by Gender	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables by Length of Service	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables by Place of Work	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables by Role Category	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables by Support Staff by Gender	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables Support Staff by role	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables Uniformed Staff by Gender	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables Uniformed Staff by role category	
Jan 2015	Survey Data tables by Workforce category	
Jan 2015	Survey Themed comments the Best Thing	

Jan 2015	Survey Themed comments Things to Change	
Jan 2015	Comparison on engagement and survey return with five other FRS	
Jan 2015	Workforce Equalities Summary Data	
February 2015 HR	People Policies Brochure – things you should bear in mind in periods of industrial action	
February 2015	Achievement First Overview	Annual process explanation
Fire Authority 11 Feb 2015	Workforce Report 2014 HR casework Jan 14- Dec 14	EFA/019/15 Statistics of various actions and stages
2015	Achievement First and ideas for development goals	
	Achievement First: planned achievements and development goals for 2014-15	For different roles and levels of seniority
	Achievement First 2014-15 end-of-year review	
	Achievement First 2015-16 Planned achievements, competencies, and development goals 2015-16	
	Achievement First Employees Checklist	Prep for each stage
	Achievement First Managers' Checklist	Prep for each stage
	Achievement First – Employee's Thought Jogger	Covers Review and Plan
	Achievement First – Manager's Thought Jogger	Covers Review and Plan
	Achievement First – End-of-Year Sign-off process	Flowchart
6 March 2015	Parade News 77	
18 March 2015	Signed Project Brief RDS project-final	Includes OBC for the Retained Duty System Development project
March 2015	Integrated Risk Management Plan and Consultation document 2015-20	
March 2015	JNCC minutes significantly re ASW	
	Independent Enquiry Preliminary Report Accounting for injury pension payments	EFA/080/14

March 2015	Safer and Resilient Communities- discussion document	
2 April 2015	Parade News 78	
April 2015	Grievance Procedure Flow Chart – draft	
April 2015	Grievance Manager's Toolkit – checklist guidance and templates	
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Programme 2020: a plan to meet future strategic challenges and provide VFN	EFA/033/15
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	2020 : the context for change Includes incident trends	Summary of programme rationale
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Employee Engagement survey update: process for the survey and action planning to respond to the survey findings	EFA/000/15
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Make Some Noise, We're Listening -Employee Survey: feedback and planning April 2015	Presentation from consultants of findings
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Results of the Employee Engagement Survey Dec 2013	Summary findings and commentary
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Employee Engagement Strategy Action Plan	
April 2015	Grievance Policy and Procedure – draft	
April 2015	Grievance Procedure	
20 April 2015	Minutes of meeting 20 April FBU and EFRS – Failure to Agree re ASW	
	Appendix B – prearranged Failure to Agree – extracts re Grey Book	
23 April 2015	Press statement from the Chairman	
30 April 2015	Parade News 79	
	MTLT Feedback Tells Us	
	Slides from Executive Coaching Workshop MTLT : from negativity to positivity	
	Key Messages: engagement planning MTLT	
	RDS Action plan	

	Sickness Management Action Plan	
April 2015	Competency Framework Final	
April 2014, review April 2015	Learning and Development Policy	
13 April 2015	PID for RDS project	
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Employee Engagement survey update: process for the survey and action planning to respond to the survey findings	EFA/000/15
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Make Some Noise, We're Listening -Employee Survey: feedback and planning April 2015	Presentation from consultants of findings
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Results of the Employee Engagement Survey Dec 2013	Summary findings and commentary
Fire Authority 15 April 2015	Employee Engagement Strategy Action Plan	
compilation May 2015	Calendar year and fiscal year stats re incidents, false alarms, fires	
May 2015	Age profile breakdown of workforce	
	Brochure of workplace options	Employee assistance programme
2015	Confidential Employment Tribunal findings	Confidential
May 2015	Succession Pool – DO advert	
	Divisional Officer Pen Picture	
	Succession Pool Guide	
	Candidate Guide to Selection Interviewing and Additional Selection Tests	
	Succession Pools Policy	
18 May 2015	Letter to FBU: Failure to agree re additional shift working	
May 2015	Extract from draft IRMP re engines availability v use	
Fire Authority 10 June 2015	Employee Absenteeism and summary of financial burden	Part 2 item confidential EFA/049/15/2
Fire Authority 10 June 2015	Employee Absenteeism: Issues of financial burden re suspensions	EFA/049/15

June 2015	Draft SDB Terms Of Reference – revised	
Confidential	17 documents/emails relating to the investigation of the death of Joe Keighley, firefighter	Confidential
Review period	Fortnightly extracts from the Facebook page: Stop Fire Cuts, Defend Essex Firefighters	
Review period extracted	Council Tax Band D 2008- 2016	
	BR2 Forms 2004-8	Expansion re CT requirements
	Restatement of accounts 2013-14	Adjustment for pension injury payments
	CIPFA Stats 2003-15	Annual returns for each year
	Retained Pay 2002- 2015	
	Whole time overtime paid 2002-2009	
	Fixed assets 2002- 2015	
	Auditors report to Essex Fire Authority on its best value performance plan y/e 31 March 2007	EFA/008/07
	Demand and Availability spreadsheet 2010- 2015	
	Sickness data 2004 -2015	
SMB June 15	Implementing Service Performance and Change Management	
June 2015	Numbers of employees, membership of unions, 2005-2015	
June 2015	Pay for employee groups with numbers 2009-2015	
	Pay Policy Statement 2014-2015	EFA/021/14
Fire Authority 10 June 2015	Trade Union Facility Time 2014-15 Report (DCLG Transparency Code) and JNCC arrangements- Includes pay bill consequences	EFA/048/15
July 2015	Employee Engagement Action Plan with highlighted actions	
July 2015	Make Some Noise: Managers Briefing Pack	
July 2015	Week by Week Make Some Noise Action Plan	

July 2015	Make Some Noise – Action & Delivery Groups TOR	
July 2015	Interim Employee Engagement Strategy	
	Sickness Absence 2012-13 East, West, Corporate	
	Sickness Absence 2013-14 East, West Corporate	
July 2015	Transfer Policy	
	Transfer Policy FAQs	
July	MTLT Evaluation Report	
August 2015	Statistics on discipline and grievance 2011-2015	
FBU August 2015	Essex IRMP 2015-2020 Statistical Response	
August 2015	Workforce Transformation Benefits Realisation Plan (updated)	



Essex Fire Authority and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

Evolving our Culture – Building on Firm Foundations

July 2017

Evolving our Culture – Building on Firm Foundations

INTRODUCTION

At its meeting on 7th October 2015 Essex Fire Authority accepted, in full, the 35 recommendations made within the report of the Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS).

In the twenty-two months that have elapsed since the meeting of Essex Fire Authority (EFA) on 7th October 2015, Members of the EFA, the Acting Chief Fire Officer (A/CFO) and members of the Service Leadership Team (SLT) have continued to meet with and benefited from the support and guidance of members of the Expert Advisory Panel (EAP). This sustained interaction has contributed to a range of developments, initiatives and actions that have served to improve the culture within ECFRS.

The purpose of this report and supporting appendices is to summarise both quantitative and qualitative changes effected since the acceptance of all Cultural Review recommendations, conveying perspectives from SLT members and Heads of Department that link to the main themes set out by Irene Lucas CBE:

- General Recommendation – Expert Advisory Panel
- Vision, Values, Strategies and Plans of ECFRS
- Governance and Leadership: How well led is this Organisation?
- Relationships, Role and Responsibilities
- Valuing People and Challenging Poor Performance and Behaviour
- Learning, Development and Promotion
- Communication and Engagement

It is hoped that both objective results and subjective observations will enable the reader to note how the Service has responded to the Cultural Review. More importantly, a clear record of progress will illustrate how strong and sustainable foundations laid since October 2015 are empowering the Service, Departments and Individuals to implement positive change; subsequently encouraging dialogue and shared learning to support sustained growth.

This report is underpinned by the following documents:

- **Appendix A** - An insight into different departmental perspectives against the central themes listed in the Cultural Review.
- **Appendix B** - Service Leadership Team's Self-Assessment – 'Building Strong and Sustainable Foundations'.

Although the above sources are not exhaustive, they serve as an overview and reflect our journey as an Authority and Service, learning from lessons by listening to feedback and converting this into action; demonstrating our commitment to improving culture and creating an environment that truly represents our Values to ensure that Essex is a safer place to live, work and travel.

CULTURAL REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The following illustrates Authority and Service actions and activity achieved against all specific 35 Cultural Review recommendations, made by Irene Lucas CBE and accepted in full by Essex Fire Authority.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION – EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL

1 - An external Expert Advisory Panel with a range of skills and backgrounds, and accountable to the FRA, should be appointed as soon as possible to provide strategic advice to the organisation for the next 24 months. The Panel will comprise senior people, experienced in addressing challenging organisations who will provide strategic advice to the FRA and senior officers on the leadership and change now needed.

What We've Done So Far

- EFA accepted all 35 recommendations including the appointment of an EAP and establishing a budget to support this work.
- EAP appointed to provide strategic advice and assist EFA, SLT and Staff Representatives.
- EFA established a sub-group of the Principal Officers Human Resources (POHR) committee to both provide oversight to the work of cultural transformation and engage with the EAP.
- A Governance process was developed and agreed that established the relationship between the EAP and the Political Leadership (The Authority), Professional Leadership (The Service) and Staff Leadership (The Unions).
- The EAP were invited to provide oversight to the work of the Service and Authority as they developed plans for Programme 2020, the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), Options for Change and a revised Strategy for the Service.
- The Authority and the Service supported a number of reviews to ensure that progress could be assessed and evaluated against all recommendations.

Future Steps

- The EAP have clearly been influential in assisting to normalise the operating climate of the Service and there is evidence of a maturing of working relationships between Senior

Service managers and Staff Representatives. Whilst relationships are maturing, there remains fragility in the trust that is developing and that should not be overlooked.

- The Authority will explore the need to maintain an ongoing relationship with some members of the EAP to support the work that remains ahead of the Service in terms of cultural transformation. This will, of course need to be discussed with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) should the proposed Governance change go ahead in October 2017 as planned.

VISION, VALUES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS OF ECFRS

2 - A cross section of staff should be involved and engaged in the development of the vision, values, strategies and plans to bring a whole organisation perspective to the processes and to engender a sense of ownership.

What We've Done So Far

- A new Service Leadership Team has been formed.
- A revised and defined Vision Statement.
- The new Service Values written by Staff.
- A new Service Strategy has been developed and communicated through workshops encompassing Staff Groups.
- Key Service priorities defined in the Service Strategy.
- Key delivery themes and defining purpose defined in the Service Strategy.
- Quarterly Corporate Planning days introduced to ensure SLT and Managers work together to agree Business Plans and Priorities. This helped develop a shared sense of ownership over the decisions made. Moving from a less directive, silo style of management to more collaborative approach.
- Feedback from the Staff Survey indicates a further improvement of understanding of the Strategy and the work of their team in support of the Service Strategy.

Future Steps

- Continue to engage Staff and their Representatives in the process of ongoing change.
- Test and evaluate the reach and efficacy of communication channels in support of delivering organisational change.
- Planning will need to be undertaken early for the preparation of the Service Strategy for 2020 and beyond. Early communication of this plan to Staff and Stakeholders will offer the best opportunity for all to get involved.

3 - Ensure that all staff understand their role in delivering the strategy by making the strategy simpler with a concise summary that can be prominently displayed.

What We've Done So Far

- New Service Strategy communicated via Manager Briefings, Emails, Acting Chief Fire Officer's (A/CFO) Week Ahead, Weekly eBrief and Intranet.
- Published a full 'Strategy' and a 'Strategy at a Glance' document.
- Electronic and paper copies of new Service Strategy issued in full and 'Strategy at a Glance'.
- New Fire Station Plans – Linking Service Strategy and Values to operational activities and actions.
- Staff Survey used to check understanding of Service Strategy.
- Largest improvement in the Employee Engagement Survey was for "I understand the Service Strategy and objectives of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS)" which increased from 12% to 70%.
- All Business Plans presented to SLT for visibility and alignment to the Service Strategy.

Future Steps

- Continue to focus on the Service Strategy through delivery and report to EFA and/or PCC as appropriate.
- Be clear about the role of Managers at every level in the delivery of the Authority's Strategy for the Service. Linking this to our development plans for Managers and embedding this within the Appraisal Process.
- Manage the performance of Teams and Fire Stations through the Fire Station and Team Plan Process that has created the link between the Service Strategy and the outcomes expected from Teams at every level.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP – HOW WELL LED IS THIS ORGANISATION?

4 - Ensure that the position in relation to the Chief Fire Officer is clarified as quickly as possible.

What We've Done So Far

- Outstanding position with the former Chief Fire Officer (CFO) was resolved in April 2017.

Future Steps

- EFA and the PCC to take decisions about the future of the CFO position and recruitment of a permanent CFO.
- Undertake a ‘lessons learned’ review from the management of this case.

5 - The role of the elected members on the FRA must be more widely understood and more visible to staff, stakeholders and the public through publication of summary updates on the intranet and in Parade News.

What We’ve Done So Far

- Agendas and papers of all EFA meetings communicated internally ahead of meetings and published on the Intranet.
- EFA meetings video-streamed live for all Staff over last eighteen months.
- Recent move away from video streaming to audio streaming in line with most other local Authorities.
- Updates published via A/CFO Week Ahead and On-Call 60 second briefings.

Future Steps

- Consideration to be given to the visibility and understanding of the role of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) following the proposed Governance change in October, should it go ahead.
- Assess how the outcomes of any future PFCC decision-making process will be communicated in an open and transparent way.

6 - FRA meetings need to be focused on strategic solutions to ECFRS’ most pressing challenges.

What We’ve Done So Far

- Essex Fire Authority Members made key strategic decisions including:
 - Cultural Review, transformation and appointment of EAP.
 - Integrated Risk Management Plan.
 - Options for Change.
 - Revision of new Service Strategy.
 - Restructure of Principal Management and Service Leadership Team.
 - Proposed changes in Governance to PCC.

Future Steps

- Maintain strategic political focus throughout the current work to define the revised Scrutiny and Governance arrangements under the PFCC.

7 - Ensure that FRA reports address a wider range of cultural and industrial relations subjects and not just operational, financial and risk issues.

What We've Done So Far

- EFA established a sub group of the POHR Committee to both provide oversight to the work of cultural transformation and engage with the EAP.
- A Governance process was developed and agreed that established the relationship between the EAP and the Political Leadership (The Authority), Professional Leadership (The Service) and Staff Leadership (The Unions).
- Staff Survey results for the last 3 years presented to EFA.
- Dispute Resolution document approved by EFA.
- Programme 2020 Advisory Panel established and subsequently revised to meet future needs of the staff representatives, the Service and the Authority.
- EFA Members attended 'Your Voice' staff meetings.

Future Steps

- Incorporate cultural and industrial relations section to all information and decision report templates so the Service can demonstrate the positive and negative implications of report content.

8 - Ensure that there are planned meetings with representatives of the FRA to meet around key issues with representatives of the workforce and trades union colleagues.

What We've Done So Far

- 2020 Transformation Programme Advisory Panel established with EFA Members and Representative Bodies.
- Representative Bodies consulted on all projects and initiatives.
- Trade Dispute Resolution agreement reached through meetings and discussion with Representatives from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).
- Joint Negotiation Consultation Committee (JNCC) meetings re-established.

Future Steps

- Ensure JNCC arrangements are in place for all Representative Bodies.

9 - More work should be done to ensure the accuracy of reports that are presented to the FRA with the Service's Performance Manager signing of all reports containing data to the FRA in future.

What We've Done So Far

- New Performance Framework agreed with EFA.
- Performance Manager has presented Performance Report to Audit, Governance and Review (AG&R) and EFA.

Future Steps

- Consideration should be given to a quality assurance process for all reports. This would need to be incorporated into the report timetables and reports presented well ahead of the submission deadline to ensure quality checking can be done thoroughly. As a minimum, all Directors should be responsible for quality assuring all reports to SLT and the EFA that originate from members of their directorate.
- There is a need to determine the scrutiny and performance framework that will exist under the PFCC should the Governance change occur in October 2017 as planned.

10 - A review of the framework of how the FRA operates should be commissioned to ensure effective governance and accountability of ECFRS.

What We've Done So Far

- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) workshops have developed further Members and Senior Officers understanding of Governance, Roles and Responsibilities.

Future Steps

- Work being undertaken to refine the Governance arrangements ahead of the PFCC Governance change.

11 - An external organisational development expert on the Panel, with support from all trade unions and staff representatives, needs to lead a review of the organisation's hierarchical structure to remove management layers, redesignate roles away from rank and improve spans of control from the current 1.7 FTEs per manager.

What We've Done So Far

- EFA supported the appointment of Natasha Edmunds to the EAP.
- EFA Members and Service Managers advised by Natasha Edmunds, EAP.
- New Management Structure agreed for upper two tiers. 50% of Principal Officer roles removed. 50% of Area Manager roles removed. Second phase of Management Review underway.
- Early Exit Options offered and subsequently managed in two phases.
- People Structure Project, ongoing.
- Rank to Role in delivery. Principles agreed which reduce the number of management tiers on fire stations and also simplifies the grade structure by removing A grades at WM and SM.
- Review of Grey and Green Book roles.

Future Steps

- Implement revised role and management structures.
- Ensure we invest in Managers at every level.
- Post Management Review II - The Service should evaluate new spans of control to ensure improvement has been delivered.
- Publish Organisation Structure Charts showing all posts and grades to aid openness and transparency and for use within Succession Planning.

12 - Identify agents for change across the Service, trades unions and staff representatives and begin to jointly develop proposals relating to the Programme 2020 vision.

What We've Done So Far

- 30 trained coaches in place.
- SLT members providing 2020 face-to-face briefings to all Staff.
- Engagement has continued to increase throughout the duration of Programme 2020 (P2020). Following the first phase, which set the overall direction and objectives, engagement has continued to assist in refining the detail of change plans and the approaches taken to implement change. A very high level of engagement of Representative Bodies in the Options Development phase of P2020.
- Monthly Managers briefings now being held for Station managers and above.

- Dispute Resolution Agreement reached with FBU.

Future Steps

- The default position in Programme 2020 is to include Representative Bodies from the earliest point. This approach is being rolled into changes occurring outside of P2020.
- Implement a process for regular Manager briefings for Watch and Crew managers.

RELATIONSHIPS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

13 - The mixed crewing model that has now been implemented in Essex at Great Dunmow, with the station staffed by both whole time and retained – this needs to be adopted across the county, sensitively and with the involvement of all trade unions.

What We've Done So Far

- Dispute Resolution Agreement reached with FBU around Mixed Crewing (MC) and Additional Shift Working (ASW).

Future Steps

- Positive start to crewing model changes at Clacton Fire Station where mixed crewing will be utilised.
- ASW advert published to recruit volunteers.
- ASW to go live in July 2017 which supports Mixed Crewing.

14 - Make it clear at every level that everyone is personally responsible for removing barriers.

What We've Done So Far

- New Service Values written by Staff.
- JNCC re-established and dialogue created.
- New Dignity at Work policy agreed with Representative Bodies.
- New Inclusion and Diversity Lead employed by the Service.
- New Inclusion and Diversity Action Group set up.
- Inclusion and Diversity Lead meeting Wholetime Watches and On-Call Fire Stations.
- EAP member Jim Barbour, extremely helpful in resolving the industrial dispute.

Future Steps

- The Inclusion and Diversity Action Group is supporting a review of recruitment activity to identify positive action initiatives and interventions. This will include revising website content as part of our commitment to attract, recruit and retain a more diverse workforce.
- Minutes, actions and supporting documents will be available on the new Inclusion & Diversity intranet pages once available.
- A draft Strategic Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan has been developed and due to be submitted to SLT in July for ratification.

15 - Do more to recruit leaders from other sectors, bringing fresh perspectives and learning from the wider public sector and beyond.

What We've Done So Far

- Appointments made including the Director of Transformation, Deputy Directors of Human Resources, Performance, Programme 2020 and Head of Talent, Inclusion and Diversity Lead.

Future Steps

- Internal/external advert for vacant Area Manager role.
- Future Talent Pool processes will include external adverts.

16 - Reserve the wearing of rank markings for operational staff, fire control incidents, public events, partnership meetings and ceremonial events only. Either adopt civilian attire in head office or, learning from Staffordshire FRS, introduce a new 'team strip' that is worn by both firefighters and support staff.

What We've Done So Far

- Staff Pulse Survey conducted and consultation with other Fire Services.
- EAP and EFA paper written to evaluate effects of uniform and explore different perspectives.
- Uniform at Headquarters is now optional; Grey Book Staff attend meetings in both civilian attire and uniform.

Future Steps

- Continuous review will be sought in line with the national Fire Rescue Service agenda.

17 - The Expert Panel to invite a representative of the Essex Police to advise on the seriousness of any reported behaviours.

- This was not deemed necessary.

18 - Refer any intimidatory behaviour against individuals, equipment or property for immediate consideration by the Expert Panel who will consider criminal proceedings.

- Since the Cultural Review, no serious behavioural breaches reported that required referral to the Police.

VALUING PEOPLE AND CHALLENGING POOR PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOUR

19 - To address the perceived inconsistency and unfairness, all disciplinary action should be overseen by a sub group of the expert panel (subject to statutory constraints) over the next 24 months. Any intimidatory behaviour against individuals, equipment or property needs to be considered by the Expert Panel taking advice from representatives of Essex Police. The sub-group will have a specific role in ensuring elected members are aware of matters without cutting across the existing process. This approach to take effect in respect of all new cases.

What We've Done So Far

- EAP advised on a range of Discipline and Grievance processes.
- EAP advised on seeking a resolution to historic cases linked to Operation Neaton.
- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) undertook a review and subsequently provided a report to SLT on improving Discipline and Grievance, shared with the organisation in June 2017.

Future Steps

- It is important that we develop our Managers to ensure that they understand what is required in the management of Discipline cases and, if required, in the role of Hearing Manager.
- It is also important that all cases are reviewed to ensure that the outcomes remain appropriate, proportionate and consistent across the Service.

20 - Create a clearing house for dealing with the unnecessary number of vexatious and low grade grievances that are submitted.

What We've Done So Far

- EAP met to examine outstanding Discipline and Grievance cases providing direction, where appropriate.
- EAP advised on seeking a resolution to historic cases linked to Operation Neaton.

Future Steps

- It is important that we develop our Managers to ensure that they understand what is required in the management of Discipline cases and if required, in the role of Hearing Manager.
- It is also important that all cases are reviewed to ensure that the outcomes remain appropriate, proportionate and consistent across the Service.

21 - Clarify and simplify arrangements for whistleblowing and the escalation of incidents of this nature directly to the independent Expert Panel.

- The Whistleblowing Process was clarified for Staff.
- The EAP made themselves available for Staff to contact directly and a number took the opportunity to do so.

22 - Consider the use of a rapid mediation service as has been adopted by Staffordshire CFRS.

What We've Done So Far

- Linda Dickens EAP, advised and supported Service and Managers.
- ACAS has reviewed Discipline and Grievance procedures – Meetings with Representative Bodies conducted collectively and separately.
- External Mediation Services used to address Grievance behaviour.
- Dignity at Work policy developed and introduced.

Future Steps

- There will be an introduction of Dignity at Work Advisors to support the new policy and toolkit. Volunteer advisors will be trained to support colleagues across the Service to identify and address inappropriate behaviour, bullying, harassment or disadvantage.
- Where proportionate and appropriate, informal resolution will be supported.

- It is important that we develop our Managers to ensure that they understand what is required in the management of their teams and that they have the skills to resolve conflict at the lowest practicable level.

23 - Create more opportunities to recognise outstanding performance and actively promote nominations for an annual awards ceremony.

What We've Done So Far

- Reward and Recognition process developed as part of the People Structure Strategy.
- We have changed our approach to communications; CFO Weekly Blog continues to recognise excellent performance from across the Service.

Future Steps

- First annual Awards Ceremony planned for November 2017.

24 - Consult with BAME, LGBT, female and disabled colleagues regarding the reforming of appropriate groups to look at the ways in which the service could proactively progress the issues raised and proactively use the different perspective that diversity can bring to the organisation.

What We've Done So Far

- New Inclusion and Diversity Lead employed by the Service.
- New Inclusion and Diversity Action Group set-up to maximise a diverse workforce and promote inclusion.
- Diversity events advertised on Service intranet and attended by ECFRS Staff.

Future Steps

- The Inclusion and Diversity Action Group currently has a total of 22 active participants from a range of roles across the Service with growing interest. The group are currently supporting the Service response to the Inclusive Fire Service Group in relation to the improvement strategies that have been identified as a result of 'the behaviour and cultural survey' (NJC/6/16).
- The Inclusion and Diversity Action Group is supporting a review of recruitment activity to identify positive action initiatives and interventions.

LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

25 - Revise future training programmes to ensure that they are focused, and are limited to those showing talent, potential and have a desire to progress. It should focus on a smaller number of future leaders.

What We've Done So Far

- New Head of Talent recruited.
- Assessment and Development Centre (ADC) process implemented for all Managerial levels, which includes the provision of a Talent Pool.
- Two new members of SLT put on Essex Leadership Programme.
- Group Manager and Station Manager assessments completed.
- Area Manager assessments in progress.
- Crew Manager assessments in progress.

Future Steps

- The priority was to resolve the uniform recruitment and reduce the temporary environment in the uniform area of the Service. Work is planned in the future to shape opportunities for Green Book employees.

26 - Promotion should only be open to those who have completed and successfully graduated from the programme.

What We've Done So Far

- Talent Pool Process implemented to develop and support successful candidates. We want, and indeed need, the people with the right skills to do their jobs and who also have the right attitudes.
- Talent Pool process for all levels being conducted during 2017.

Future Steps

- Through the Talent Pool process it is intended that long-term Succession Planning will take place.
- It is important to note that this is and will remain a meritocratic process.
- Re-run the Talent Pool Process in 6 months.

27 - Change the emphasis from operational to more inclusive leadership training, learning from Kent CFRS that has introduced Level 5 coaching qualifications, including back-office staff, to improve the management skills of middle managers.

What We've Done So Far

- 30 trained coaches in place.
- Coaches will assist both successful and unsuccessful Talent Pool candidates.
- Joint Management Skills Workshops in place for Grey and Green Book Managers.
- Personal Qualities & Attributes (PQA) and Competency Framework introduced which sets the same behavioural standards for all Managers at a particular level.

Future Steps

- Three-stage Leadership Development Programme drafted covering developing potential. Supported by ILM Level 3 and 5, this will be introduced in Autumn 2017.

28 - Make promotion to managerial positions more transparent and involve the Expert Panel in overseeing all appointments for the next 24 months.

What We've Done So Far

- Director of Transformation appointment overseen by EAP.
- Director of Prevention, Protection and Response assessed and appointed to the role.
- ADC/Talent Pool process developed and subsequently reviewed by EAP.
- ADC process being independently evaluated.

29 - Ensure that leadership and coaching skills and qualifications are considered as much as technical competencies in all appraisals.

What We've Done So Far

- 30 trained coaches in place.
- Appraisals include review of PQAs/Competencies which encompass leadership skills.
- Talent Pool assessment and development centres to test both leadership and technical skills.

Future Steps

- People Strategy 2017 – 2020 in development and draft discussed at SLT.
- Implement the actions within the People Strategy to develop our Managers at every level.

30 - Set clear and consistent expectations that annual appraisals need to be completed by all managers across the Service and introduce an audit to ensure that the quality of the appraisal meetings and paperwork is actually delivering a satisfying process which will take the service forward.

What We've Done So Far

- Competency Framework and Appraisal Process reviewed and simplified for 2017.
- Completion rate of Appraisals reported to SLT.

Future Steps

- Keep Appraisal Process under review, monitoring completion rates but also quality of outputs.
- Look to test relevance of Appraisals for each Employee Work Group.

31 - Review of existing management and delivery mechanisms to provide implementation ability with clear oversight of progress in implementing change and most importantly, embedding change.

What We've Done So Far

- Management Review delivered in two stages. Management Review II providing new structure to deliver against IRMP and Service Strategy.
- Peoples Structure Project and Grey Book to Green Book review ongoing.
- Programme 2020 Project Management Process and Board (and previously Advisory Panel).
- New Performance Management Framework established and agreed with EFA.
- Rank to Role process undertaken and being implemented.
- Service Leadership Team established and Terms of Reference defined.
- ADC/Talent Pool process implemented for all Managerial levels.
- Service Change Board established (learning from the successful approach to managing change within Programme 2020).

Future Steps

- Change processes being reviewed with involvement from Change Experts, Service Programme and Project Managers.
- Continue to review the way in which our staff respond to change through our staff engagement surveys.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

32 - Engage the Communications team at Essex County Council to improve the range and credibility of the information communicated to stakeholders, and establish a staff reference group to better understand what messages are important to the Service as a whole.

What We've Done So Far

- New Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing appointed, working closely with Essex County Council Communications Team.
- Significantly amended Service approach to Communications.
- Identified the new Communications Channels which are now being used regularly.
- Developed a new range of Communications metrics to test reach and effectiveness.
- Implemented Manager and Staff Forums.
- Restructured the Communications Team.
- Intranet articles including A/CFO weekly blog, e-Brief and 60 second brief.

Future Steps

- Review our Communications activities to test effectiveness.

33 - Ensure that the agendas and papers of every meeting of the FRA and SMB are posted on the internet so staff can see what is being discussed. A summary of decisions should be published after each meeting.

What We've Done So Far

- EFA agendas and papers published prior to and after meetings.
- EFA meetings video-streamed live for all staff over last eighteen months.
- Recent move to audio streaming of EFA meetings.

Future Steps

- Assess implications of Governance change and how the decision making process can be shared with Staff.

34 - Develop a style guide for corporate communications to ensure consistency and protocols for sign off by at least one member of SMB and bring in some measurement to evaluate positive and negative coverage of the Service.

What We've Done So Far

- Style Guide reviewed and revised.
- Head of Corporate Communications having weekly meetings with A/CFO.
- Developed a new range of Communications metrics to test reach and effectiveness.

Future Steps

- Review our Communications activities to test effectiveness.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

35 - After six months carry out a short independent review on progress.

What We've Done So Far

- EFA proactive in their support for a mid-term review.
- Sir Ken Knight visited ECFRS for mid-term review in 2016, subsequently making 19 further recommendations.

Future Steps

- Sir Ken Knight to undertake an exit review on 3rd and 4th August 2017.

SIR KEN KNIGHT MID-TERM REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Sir Ken Knight visited ECFRS to undertake a mid-term review to assess and evaluate Service progress against the Cultural Review. Subsequently, 19 further recommendations were made and accepted in full by the Essex Fire Authority. The following highlights actions against each specific recommendation.

1 - A further visit should be made to the Service in Autumn 2016 in order to seek an update on the resolution of the outstanding historical employment issues.

- Complete.

2 - Consider how the lessons learned from the work that the Authority and the Service have undertaken to improve organisational culture, can be shared more widely with other Fire and Rescue Services.

- Visited Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) Cheltenham to share learning.
- Visited Gloucestershire and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and discussed with Culture Review Commission in Victoria, Australia to share learning.
- A/CFO presented to Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) colleagues.

3 - Dovetail the Lucas recommendations with those of the 2020 Programme implementation plan and develop the suite of performance indicators. However, the Lucas recommendations should continue to be reported as stand-alone recommendations to ensure oversight of their specific delivery.

- Complete.

4 - Continue to encourage engagement by Fire Authority Members, including the development of Members' roles, expertise and skill sets to improve their role in providing scrutiny and appropriate challenge and raise their profile with Staff.

- SOLACE workshops continued in the second phase however this work was overtaken by the PCC work on the Governance change under the PCC.
- Work undertaken to revise current Governance arrangements.
- Work underway to prepare Governance arrangements for the PFCC.

5 - Strengthen Members' assurance role in holding the Service to account to develop and embed a culture of effective scrutiny and ensure that Members are properly supported to undertake their assurance role.

- Undertaken through SOLACE workshops. However, any progress made will have limited impact due to significant change of membership of the EFA.
- The Governance change, if it goes ahead will offer potential for improvement.
- Presentation to AG&R by Performance Manager to gauge how the EFA want performance data presented.

6 - Establish a single point of contact for each of the recognised Trades Unions within the Service to improve consistency and to develop improved working relationships.

- In hand.

7 - Continue to engage with recognised Trades Unions via joint workshops to encourage an integrated workforce to ensure a joint approach to a positive organisational culture.

- Where possible joint workshops are held within Programme 2020 and subordinate projects.

8 - Seek to resume the Joint Negotiation Consultation Committee (JNCC) at the earliest opportunity.

- Complete. These recommenced in January 2017.

9 - Consider methods to improve networking for firefighters (both Wholetime and On-Call (Retained)) such as visits to/from other Fire and Rescue Services to improve exposure to notable practice.

- Presentations by Steve McGuirk EAP, and Ann Millington Kent FRS, to Managers' Forum.
- Discussions with Staffordshire FRS to share learning about cultural change.
- Multi-Agency Leadership and Management Development Programme established.
- Visits made to Staffordshire FRS to explore their approach to change.

10 - Continue to seek improved, internal, external and digital, communications on the workforce changes based on research and evaluation of the outcomes.

- Under consideration.

11 - Explore ways to increase the number of apprenticeships offered across the Service in different roles, with the potential to link this activity with its Fire Cadets, to create clear career paths.

- This is taking place at Clacton Fire Station for new On-Call Firefighters where former Fire Cadets have now been selected as On-call firefighters and will be initiated at Great Baddow and Dovercourt Fire Stations to assist in On-Call recruitment.
- This will be considered as part of the Service's approach to wholetime firefighter recruitment.

12 - Undertake a review of the recruitment, retention and training of On-Call (Retained) firefighters to encourage more applicants, lengthen the period of their retention and benefit from diversification of the workforce.

- Improvements have been made to marketing and recruitment activity appearing to be have a positive impact. Recruitment of On-Call Firefighters at Clacton was successful and

we are positive about the potential for similar success in other areas. Some areas continue to be difficult to achieve the same success in recruitment and we continually evaluate our activity and look for new opportunities. We had early success through direct business engagement with Tesco and will revisit work looking at Police Community Support Officers becoming On-Call Firefighters.

- Inclusion and Diversity Action Group are setting up a Steering Group to look at all recruitment activity, improve equality monitoring at all stages including attraction to determine any trends or disproportionate outcomes so that future positive action activity is evidenced based and doesn't inadvertently risk being positive discrimination. Utilising learning from various Police campaigns over the past 3 years as well as the recent London Fire Brigade Research, all advertising, engagement and written documentation will be revised.

13 - Continue to develop the potential for Fire Stations to become Community Hubs for a wider range of services to the Public.

- Our programme of Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods (DDiN) has already opened Fire Stations to the Public. Firefighters are engaging with new Community Groups and assisting the voluntary sector in establishing Community Hubs. This has happened in Grays, Southend, Harlow and Basildon. We are about to launch DDiN2 identifying six additional Fire Stations including On-Call to continue our role out of this Department for Communities and Local Government originally funded project.
- We are currently discussing how 14 Fire Stations in Essex will become blood donor locations used by NHS Blood. This has been agreed in principle; Fire Station assessments and suitability reviews have taken place.
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) are to start to use rural On-Call Fire Stations to be health drop in centres in the North East of the County. This has potential to be replicated and will be encouraged across the rest of the County.
- 4 Fire Stations in the South East of the County look set to be used by Voluntary Aid Services for elderly/vulnerable care sessions every two weeks with Public Health England. This will see Fire Stations used for the benefit of those that need instruction on healthier living, including cooking, health advice and signposting.
- Leigh Fire Station is working with Southend Borough Council and Leigh Town council as well as faith groups and Essex Police to provide a Safe and Well Hub to diverse and vulnerable communities in the Southend and Leigh areas. The hub aims to provide an environment where diverse groups and vulnerable people will be welcome to hold meetings and gain safe and well information in a safe space.

14 - Implement the flexibility of mixed crewing of whole-time and On-Call (retained) Firefighters, together with a review of operational duty systems to produce flexibility in the workforce.

- A clear statement on both Mixed Crewing and Additional Shift Working is contained in the Dispute Resolution. Agreement signed in March 2017.

15 - Broaden and diversify Firefighters' roles to include community fire safety objectives as well as support within the Blue Light Community safety collaboration agenda.

- This was a key element of the Dispute Resolution Agreement signed in March 2017.
- This is being explored through the DDiN and through the Emergency Services Collaboration Programme Board (ESCPB).
- On-Call Staff will soon be used to deliver Home Safety visits with Wholetime Staff to follow.

16 - Review the routine practice that Staff remain at one Fire Station and on one Watch as the norm in order to enhance competencies and encourage common values and behaviours.

- ADC/Talent Pools do not differentiate between shift patterns.
- Early Exit Options, followed up by ADC/Talent Pool process, will allow natural movements across the organisation.
- Simplified Appraisal Process will identify development needs.

17 - Continue to develop appropriate performance assessments to create a 'golden thread' that links individual performance with the newly refreshed Service Strategy.

- A revised approach to Fire Station plans implemented.
- SLT review of priorities – Making significant progress towards this at the Planning Days.
- Simplified Appraisal Process relaunched.
- Performance Management Framework approved by the EFA in April 2017.

18 - Review the current fitness criteria in order to increase applications from a diverse range of applicants, particularly women.

- This will be useful but we need to remember it is not a silver bullet. The bigger issue is generating both interest and applications in the first place.
- We have spoken to existing Firefighters that are women to better understand any perceived barriers they had prior to joining the Service. We have explored any actual barriers that the fitness tests presented on entry as well as any ongoing barriers. The

overwhelming view is that the fitness tests are achievable by women motivated to complete them. The tests are difficult for both men and women with high fall out rates for men also.

- Working with Inclusion and Diversity Officers within the Region and contributing to the Inclusive Fire Service Group's work in this area, we are keen to learn from the experience and views of those outside of Essex too.

19 - Implement annual targets in respect of the number of home risk assessments and community safety engagements and report to the Authority on performance against targets.

- We are mid-term through a review of Home Safety Visits (HSVs), which includes inclusion of Safe and Well; targeting those most vulnerable and producing a three tier approach to home safety. This will include: Stage 1 - Fire Stations involved in standard HSVs. Stage 2 - Specialist Safe and Well visits by a Technician. Stage 3 - Multi-Agency response including slips, trips and falls/fall prevention called ERIS (Essex Risk Intervention Service). All of this work will be evaluated by Essex University with performance and operating standards set (including our call centre procedures for our call team at South Woodham Ferrers).



Appendix A: An Insight into Departmental Perspectives

Evolving our Culture – Building on Firm Foundations

July 2017

VISION, VALUES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS OF ECFRS

ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE - TRACY KING, DEPUTY DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE & DATA

Where we are now

1. A review of how we approach Organisational performance management has been underway since September 2016. This led to the development of the Service's performance management framework which clearly defines roles and responsibilities in relation to performance. Historically our key performance indicators (KPI's) related purely to the response arm of the Service. A set of KPI's for the Organisation has now been developed to include non-operational areas to demonstrate that the Service is monitoring performance in areas that were identified through the Lucas review as requiring improvement and also ensuring that we have KPI's that relate to all key themes defined within our Strategy.
2. Work has also been carried out to improve access to performance data to Senior and Middle Managers to ensure they have timely access to the necessary performance data through our business intelligence reporting tool. Therefore, providing them with the opportunity to identify positive performance and areas requiring improvement in a timely way without having to wait for quarterly performance reports to be published. This has enabled performance management to be much more targeted in certain areas. It has also enabled performance data from across the Service to be viewed in one place instead of Managers needing to visit multiple systems therefore introducing efficiency into the process.
3. We have dissected the business planning process that the Service use to understand how we can use this process much more to understand how all areas of our Service are working towards delivering the Service Strategy and what local KPI's each Service area are using to illustrate performance in their core business areas.

What difference are we making?

4. Purely by having the conversations about performance management we have changed the way performance management is thought about. Rather than it being viewed as a 'big stick' we have increased understanding that performance information is our greatest opportunity to learn and develop. We have put a particular focus on framing targets as being performance enhancing rather than performance restricting. We have amended the timetable of performance reporting to allow the performance team more time to produce a meaningful and detailed report rather than striving to meet a tight deadline and producing a sub-standard report. A member of the performance team also attends

the Fire Authority meetings that performance reports are presented at, so the performance report can be presented in detail and key points can be talked through. We have worked hard to bring the reporting of performance information to life.

5. Historically business plans had been written in silos and no evaluation against the plan had been undertaken. Sharing the business plans with all members of the Service Leadership Team and using valuable corporate planning days to understand the content and identify duplications has been valuable. This process also enabled the Service Leadership Team to agree together a set of priorities that all members of the team could sign up to and agree to use to filter work during the financial years to help us avoid the over load of change that we are attempting and then no clear outcomes being achieved. As a Service Leadership Team we will be able to come back to the priorities before the start of the financial year and assess 'how did we do?' There has been a realisation that we have to collectively work towards agreed priorities to deliver outcomes and a real change in the organisation. This is opposed to doing large volumes of stuff, and due to the volume of work, not really achieving the required outcomes.

Post August plans and aspirations

6. Organisational targets (KPI's) to be agreed by Audit Governance and Review (AG&R) Committee on 12th July 2017.
7. Development of Local Performance Indicators (LPI's) throughout the Organisation.
8. Improved reporting on statutory responsibilities to the Service Leadership Team.
9. Introduction of regular corporate planning days to allow the Service Leadership Team to plan together and develop as a team. Agreeing shared priorities so all Service areas are not competing for the same resources.
10. Quarterly self-evaluation of performance by all business plan creators through the business planning process. If we are going to write plans we have to ensure we deliver what we set out to deliver or achieve the required improvement.
11. Prepare for inspection by the HMICFRS (data provided to the Home Office by ECFRS is already being used for inspection preparations).
12. Keep targets and areas being reported on through the performance report under continual review.
13. Improve the quality of performance data being published, explore social media channels to issue timely information about Service performance to our customers.
14. Further incorporate family group/benchmarking data into our performance management.
15. Prepare for a possible Governance change and understand how performance management approach may change as a result of this.
16. Improve access across the Service to performance data. Ensuring accurate data is available in a timely manner to those that need it to ensure there are not areas in the

performance reports that we are not able to report on purely due to lack of information. We have the systems in place to make the access to accurate data better; we need as a Service to exploit the opportunities that these systems present to the Service.

Any further comment

17. It is important to note that we are as a Service on a performance journey. We need to use opportunities to also learn from other Fire Services that are potentially a bit further down the road and have learning they can share with us.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP: HOW WELL LED IS THIS ORGANISATION?

GOVERNANCE - ROY CARTER, SERVICE SOLICITOR

Where we are now

18. The Essex Fire Authority (EFA) has this year approved a revised Constitution and Scheme of Delegations. It is hoped that the new documents provide greater clarity as to the Governance of its undertaking.
19. Member induction was provided to new Members however, only 3 of the new Members attended. Member development will be continued with the assistance of the previously provided guidance from Society Of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

What difference are we making?

20. It is somewhat difficult to determine with any accuracy, what, if any, difference has been achieved. There are a number of reasons for this such as a change to the make-up of the EFA post the local elections in May.
21. EFA meetings are now webcast allowing for greater transparency and employee awareness of the work of EFA.
22. Greater publicity via intranet is raising the profile of the EFA with employees providing greater understanding as to what the EFA is and how it operates.

Post August plans and aspirations

23. It appears highly likely that the EFA will be abolished and replaced by a new Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) either later this year or next year. Such a change will provide an opportunity to revisit Governance. It is likely that this work will be undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

MANAGEMENT REVIEW I & II – COLETTE BLACK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCES

Where we are now

24. Following on from Management Review I, the purpose was to review the Management Structure for the remaining tiers within the Service applying the principles designed in conjunction with SLT and the EAP. This has been taken forward with involvement from key stakeholders including SLT, Departmental Managers and Representative Bodies.
25. The design principles have been scoped out further with some detail added to each of the 13 design principles that were initially outlined by SLT & Natasha Edmunds EAP, as part of Management Review Phase I. The principles were designed as an aid to assist Managers when reviewing their department structure and writing corresponding business plans. Both the principles and the Organisational Strategy align to the department structures and business plans.

What difference are we making?

26. Changes to departmental structures have now been detailed in the business plans for 2017/2018 and support the achievement of our Service Strategy. Planned changes to department structures have been discussed and challenged constructively and are now being enacted. This information has been used to feed into a number of other workstreams and projects including Job Evaluation, Green/Grey Book and Rank to Role. Business Plans were presented to SLT in early April and the SLT then took part in Corporate Planning Days. The outcome was an agreement about our proposed priorities for the 17/18 financial year.
27. SLT attended a further Corporate Planning Day where the Service priorities were discussed. Business plans, budgets and structures were all scoped out further with our Department Heads and HR Business Partners. This day led to an agreed decrease to the requested establishment for Support Staff within the Service.

Post August plans and aspirations

28. The scope of Management Review II evolved into a full review of departmental structures. Our departmental structures need to be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit to deliver our priorities. We are putting in place ongoing mechanisms to support this. An independent review of Operations, Control, Staff Office, Central Resourcing Team and Technical Fire Safety Admin is underway.

RELATIONSHIPS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ADDITIONAL SHIFT WORKING & MIXED CREWING - DAVE BILL, DIRECTOR OF OPS

Where we are now

29. Additional Shift Working and Mixed Crewing is due to be implemented in July 2017 following agreement set out in the Dispute Resolution document. The agreement will ensure that, if there are no personnel available from the Fire Station requiring an individual, the opportunity will be offered to the next individual who has volunteered and is available, regardless of their shift pattern.

What difference are we making?

30. Mixed Crewing in particular has always been a challenge, but is now more positive as discussions very much focus on effective implementation in order to support more closer working across duty systems. The implementation of Mixed Crewing across the Service also aligns to Lucas' point on the duty systems like the (then) Great Dunmow model (appliance availability supported by both Wholtime and On-Call personnel).

Post August plans and aspirations

31. Additional Shift Working will be used to improve appliance availability across Essex and Mixed Crewing is vital to supporting the Service's 2020 plans to change Day-Crewed Fire stations to On-Call by April 2020. The Service has also completed work on 'Core-Hours', which is the time needed in order to train and maintain operational competence regardless of shift pattern. It is believed this, and the use of Mixed Crewing, will be vital in dispelling some of the current assumptions made by Firefighters of those working on different shift patterns. This will assist working closer together, understanding and respecting that regardless of the shift pattern worked, we all want to provide a professional and effective service to the communities of Essex.

Any further comment

32. Whilst it is acknowledged there is much work still to be done on building bridges between On-Call and Wholetime personnel, progressing Mixed Crewing with the support of all Representative Bodies represents a significant step in being able to challenge some assumptions made by colleagues. Knowing that there will be times when issues are raised, it will give the Service an opportunity to resolve underlying issues around the poor relationship between some On-Call and Wholetime personnel, as referenced in the Lucas review.

VALUING PEOPLE AND CHALLENGING POOR PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOUR

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS/DISCIPLINE & GRIEVANCE – MATT FURBER, DEPUTY-DIRECTOR OPS

Where we are now

33. The process of changing ECFRS's approach to Discipline and Grievance had started before the commencement of the Cultural Review. Encouragement was given by the East Area Commander and subsequently the Command Management Team, for a move away from a formal approach to all matters, where even the most basic of management conversations were documented. Our Cultural Review gave this work added impetus and whilst needing to be cognisant of the interim People Policy guidance, a great deal has been achieved.

What difference are we making?

34. Engagement with various stakeholders within the Service has led to a change in approach. The change is one where if a formal discipline investigation is thought necessary, this is now initiated at level 2 unless the nature and or severity of the situation dictates that a level 3 investigation is considered unavoidable. On more and more occasions and wherever practical, Managers are seeking to take an educational and development approach as an outcome, with a view to build trust and confidence. This is balanced with the need to ensure those individuals who bring matters to the attention of our Service feel that they are being treated seriously and fairly.
35. Our Human Resource Business Partners (HRBPs) now attend monthly management meetings within each Group. This provides an opportunity to consider matters of Discipline and Grievance within the Group, to discuss options with Station Managers and to facilitate a consistent approach. These meetings are further supported by the attendance of all four Group Managers and HRBPs at a weekly Combined Group Management Team meeting. At this meeting, more complex cases are considered, with

an appropriate level of sensitivity and confidentiality. This is helping to ensure a more consistent approach is taken across all four Groups. As each HRBP also has responsibility for other departments, consistency across the whole Service will almost certainly improve.

36. On those rare occasions when it is necessary to suspend an employee, the suspension is now reviewed within the first week to ensure it remains appropriate. Whilst there is still a lot to do, growing use of mediation is evident. It is acknowledged that the perception within areas of our organisation is one where managers move swiftly to formal investigation. However, the reality is somewhat different and it feels that a growing percentage of our workforce is becoming increasingly aware of this.

Post August plans and aspirations

37. As a senior team we will continue to ensure that our Managers are equipped to identify those occasions where early intervention will create understanding and avoid the need for disciplinary action. In this respect, we all acknowledge that we are on a journey and progress is being made.

VALUES & REWARD AND RECOGNITION – MARK STAGG, DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION

Where we are now

38. We have now established a new set of Values. These are clear within our Strategy and are forming part of our day-to-day conversations. We are in the process of launching a Reward and Recognition process that will both celebrate what good looks like but also link this to our Values. The proposal for this component will comprise a scheme that works on three levels with the benefits tied to the level of award.

- Level 1 - working title “Bronze” - fixed sum of £100 (voucher) + emblem + certificate signed by Chief Fire Officer (CFO) / Chief Executive Officer (CEO) stating awarded for “having made a significant contribution to the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) value of xxx and vision of making Essex a safer place to live, work and travel.”
- Level 2 - working title “Silver” - fixed sum of £250 (voucher) + emblem + certificate signed by CEO stating awarded for “having made an outstanding contribution to the ECFRS value of xxx and vision of making Essex a safer place to live, work and travel.”

- Level 3 - working title “Gold” - fixed sum of £500 (voucher) + emblem + certificate signed by CEO stating awarded for “having made the significant contribution of 2017 to the ECFRS value of xxx and vision of making Essex a safer place to live, work and travel.”

39. This last award also has a trophy, is only awarded once a year and, is selected from those silver awards given in the year. Thus, there will be 5 trophies, one for each of the Values. The Values are also supported by our commitment to the newly designed and launched Dignity at Work policy which was jointly authored by Management and the Trade Unions. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) considered this alongside the Dispute Resolution at Committee and it was supported at this level.

What difference are we making?

40. The above proposals and the design of the Value statements themselves represent direct engagement and input from Employees across the Service. Feedback within focus groups and forums is positive and the energy within these is both active and positive.
41. We are establishing a cadre of Dignity at Work Advisors who will be independent volunteers, have been fully trained and are ready to help all members of Staff who may be experiencing problems, or perhaps just need some advice. Uptake for this has been positive and includes staff from all disciplines and Trade Union representatives so once again this represents positive engagement which was not evident a year ago.

Post August plans and aspirations

42. The roll-out of wider Employee engagement, based on the Values, as a vehicle including developing our new Talent Pool members as cultural change agents and embedding Values-based behaviour in our new Management Development Programmes which will now include a Programme for those aspiring to management but not yet in a managerial position. The gathering of nominations for peer-to-peer awards and the celebrations of these on a monthly basis.

Any further comment

43. The future is dependent on trust and the joint expectation from Employees, Representative Bodies and Management that new ways of working and a healthier style of dialogue can be maintained. Whilst still embryonic, the values based approach to working is reducing the level of fragility commented on by the Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) in March.

INCLUSION & DIVERSITY – NIKKI GEAVES, INCLUSION & DIVERSITY LEAD

Where we are now

- 44. Colleagues' awareness of the fact that we have an Inclusion & Diversity role within the Service is increasing, resulting in more frequent contact and opportunities to provide advice and guidance.
- 45. We have a growing number of colleagues participating in the Inclusion & Diversity Action Group that represent a range of roles and protected characteristics from across the Service.
- 46. We are developing a new equality impact assessment process to support our Public Sector equality duty with an emphasis on identifying positive and adverse impact. The process is designed to be user-friendly, it utilises prompts to consider for each protected characteristic with a risk matrix to determine next steps. The process can be utilised to undertake a gap analysis in relation to positive impact to ensure that changes meet the needs of a wide range of people and that our services are accessible to all. The process is to support employee change as well as Service provision.
- 47. The Staff support networks within the Service are working more closely together and provide an update at the quarterly Inclusion and Diversity Action Group.
- 48. The development of the Dignity at Work Advisor role will further support this to ensure that the entire workforce have access to a range of support, advice and lived experience.

What difference are we making?

- 49. Conversations indicate that there is a genuine appetite for a positive workplace culture and there is a growing commitment from individuals to play a key role in creating it.
- 50. Facilitated sessions with Wholetime and On-Call Firefighters have identified the need to ensure that all interventions meet the needs of our entire workforce and this is helping to shape change.
- 51. We are experiencing an increase in the number of people coming forward regarding dyslexia within the Service. This is mostly because of the encouragement to do so within the Talent Pool process and by our Senior HR Advisors identifying potential performance related cases that may benefit from intervention. Creating an environment where everyone can be open about who they are in the workplace is key to inclusion and this is one of many steps that assist us to do so. Evidence suggests that approximately 10% of

our workforce are likely to experience dyslexia and it is important that we provide support where required as well as recognising the unique talents of a dyslexic brain.

52. The Senior HR Advisors and HR Business Partners are identifying cases or trends that may benefit from specific interventions. This is providing an opportunity to create bespoke training sessions where suitable whilst prioritising consistency of approach across the Service.

Post August plans and aspirations

53. We will have intranet pages dedicated to Inclusion and Diversity that are accessed from the main page of the intranet. The pages will provide a range of information, documents and guidance as well as keeping the workforce updated on work in this field. We will regularly signpost to the pages from a range of articles in the weekly e-Brief and Daily News as well as in emails via links to increase familiarity with the pages. This will further support a consistency of approach in this field.
54. Attracting diverse candidates to our roles within the Service is a priority over the coming months, a new applicant tracking system will support greater analysis of attrition allowing us to determine appropriate and proportionate positive action interventions that are evidence based. Greater focus on our adverts, social media content and website will help to make us more attractive and informative to potential candidates. We will utilise existing research and behavioural science to determine activity to trial closely monitoring the outcomes.

LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT/APPRASIAL PROCESS – CLAIRE BUDGEN L&D MANAGER

Where we are now

55. We continue to provide operational training across all disciplines. The majority of this is internally delivered with a minority of specialist courses, for example HAZMAT and Level 2 Fire Investigation, being commissioned externally. This means we have a high level of control over the provision of our core skills. In 2016, the Service introduced a Quality Assurance Framework for Training which has enabled the Service to accredit Incident Command training and Water training with Skills for Justice. At the same time, the framework has introduced a structured approach to reviewing the quality of programmes and delivery, including Trainer CPD.

56. Working with the East of England Local Government Association, we have developed a pool of 30 Coaches who are available to support people with individual development needs. Currently they are providing feedback to candidates, both successful and unsuccessful, who have undertaken the Assessment Centre process. As these debrief conversations have the potential to impact significantly on a person's self-esteem and motivation it was agreed that a coaching approach would best support individuals and the Service in making this a success. Coaching skills for Line Managers has also been established as a regular feature of our in-house training programme.
57. The Service's previous leadership and management development programme "Managing Today, Leading Tomorrow" has now concluded; the Service is currently commissioning a three stage Leadership and Management Development Programme covering Developing Management Potential, ILM Level 3 and 5 Award. This supports the ambition to offer accredited qualifications to employees where possible. The programme will be an element of training for people in a Talent Pool at the relevant level. The programme is being designed to recognise previous learning and confirm good practice that is already in place.
58. The Appraisal Process and Competency Framework were reviewed and relaunched in May 2017. The competencies are now modelled on PQAs to give commonality with other Fire and Rescue Services. Skills based training was offered to Managers to support the Appraisal cycle.

What difference are we making?

59. We have clarity and accountability built into the design of training. Our Trainers experience CPD and review on a regular basis to ensure their professional skills are maintained and that they practice in a way, which endorses Service Values.
60. We have built an expectation that, in the Learning and Development arena, people are treated with respect. More trainers are now able to use a coaching style, where appropriate, to engage learners. Line Managers are also gaining coaching skills. These skills have been transferred into the Assessment Centre work and so good practice is being normalised within the Service.

Post August Plans and Aspirations

61. The new Leadership and Management Development Programme will be implemented in the Autumn 2017. This will complement the Talent Pool process. Further training will be provided on the Appraisal process and using the Competencies in September 2017.

PROMOTIONS AND TALENT POOL – VICKI HOWELLS, HEAD OF TALENT

Where we are now

62. We launched our new end-to-end Talent Pool process in April that will be used for all colleagues. This is the first full process across all levels that has been used in over 6 years, resulting in the Service using interim processes and temporary promotions, leading to uncertainty and lack of transparency. The new process focuses not only on the actual application form and assessment centre but also on the quality of the feedback and ongoing development, regardless of the outcome.
63. Initially, we have focused on specific areas to address the historical issues regarding the volumes of temporary positions. With this in mind, we have delivered a process for Area Managers, Group Managers, Station Managers and Crew Managers (note: there was not a need to run an ADC process for Watch Managers as the Service has nationalised these and we have more Watch Managers than posts currently). The assessment centres have been supported by internal colleagues from across the Service who all received 2 full days training from an external specialist. By the end of August, we anticipate we would have filled over 30 positions using the new fair, open and transparent process.

What difference are we making?

64. We are receiving anecdotal feedback about these processes being the fairest and most supportive that candidates have experienced during their time in the Service. They have remarked on the professionalism, quality and consistency. We will be gathering anonymous feedback once the process has been completed to allow us to enhance it further. The quality and commitment of the assessors has been critical in our success so far. The training has enabled consistency, fairness and transparency and individuals have been professional, committed and great ambassadors, role modelling the right values and behaviours we want to see in all our leaders.
65. The support of the Service Leadership Team with regards to the process and the outcomes has also contributed to a feeling of fairness and transparency. In addition, we are using two external, independent experts to quality check our materials, observe the assessment centres and the critique the transparency of our process. They comment:
 - “You received fantastic feedback from those participating today who interestingly, not only remarked on the transparency and the briefings that have taken place, but also the feel of the process which they saw as much less formal and much more supportive. This does not mean it was in any way easier for them/the bar was in any way lower or that all of them nailed every module! But I think this subtle shift is an important one

– the leadership behaviours you have demonstrated match what you are wanting to see from them.”

Post August plans and aspirations

66. At the end of August the first stage of Assessment Centres will be complete. This will have resulted in a number of key posts being filled substantively and allowed us to start to build our Talent Pools for future vacancies. Our focus will then be in providing development and coaching to all colleagues with the support of our accredited internal coaches and the individual’s line Manager. We then plan to publish our Talent Pool schedule for the coming year, so everyone is aware of the timescales. This will then be opened up to all colleagues Grey/Green Book.

Any further comment

67. We will use these foundations to build a Talent Pool of individuals receiving development and ready for promotion when vacancies arise. We will also work in partnership with Learning and Development (L&D) and leaders across the Service to support and develop all colleagues to give everyone equal opportunities to fulfil their potential.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

CORPORATE COMMS/MARKETING – EMILY OSBORNE, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Where we are now

68. The Service has changed its approach to Communication and Marketing, moving from reactive to proactive. The team manages:-

- Brand.
- Social Media.
- Public Relations, Media Relations (engaging with the Press) and crisis/issues management.
- 24/7 Press Line.
- Internal Communications.
- Marketing and Campaigns.

Department objectives:-

- Build and maintain a strong brand.
- Improve and increase Employee Engagement and a culture of two-way communication.
- Enable Managers to self-lead.
- Develop and roll out initiatives to achieve Programme 2020.
- Help achieve our Service Strategic objectives of Prevention, Protection and Response.
- Engage effectively with our stakeholders during times of consultation.

What difference are we making?

Internal Communication

69. We developed new communication channels for our different Employee stakeholders and communication needs: Daily News, 60 second On-Call briefing, Manager Briefing sessions, Acting/CFO weekly blog. We monitor the statistics of usage and refine elements based on usage, key word search and feedback.
70. Our Manager briefings equip Managers with core Corporate messages, provide a platform for open discussion and questions and we provide them with presentations and message sheets to cascade the information to their teams. We received the Silver award for Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRide Awards East Anglia 2016: Public Relations category - Cultural Review Change Communications.
71. In 2016, we held a two week internal communication flash survey. 72% of responses indicated they are very and somewhat satisfied with our internal communications. One comment said: "I think the improvements in communications, particularly internal, over the past year has had a significant positive impact on the Organisation."

Public Consultation

72. Last year the Service delivered one of the most successful Public Consultation to date for a Fire Service, with nearly 18,000 responses received. The team led a fully integrated marketing communications plan. It was awarded Certificate of Best Practice by the Consultation Institute.

Collaborative Communications

73. We've developed relationships with other communication teams, particularly Essex Police, across Essex and joined up our message approach for a number of incidents including flooding and storms, the increased terror threat level and Grenfell Tower incident.

Response – Keeping our Public informed

74. Our 24/7 press team keeps public and journalists up-to-date with significant and high profile incidents. We support our Community Safety messages by using real life incident examples to highlight safety messages and calls to action. Following our communication activity regarding Grenfell Tower, home fire safety bookings increased by 75%.

Post August plans and aspirations

75. The team is focusing on developing a new intranet, a new website and new policies – including a Social Media policy. Our Social Media will become more video and animation led, and we'll continue to develop, train and work with our Fire Stations who have local corporate Social Media accounts. We're evolving and developing our On-Call marketing campaigns to ensure we reach all audiences and create an inclusive and diverse environment. We'll continue to develop our relationships with other Emergency Service Communication Teams; the Office of the PCC, Essex County Council and other Local Authorities, to create and support joined up marketing and communication campaigns.



Appendix B:

Building Strong and Sustainable Foundations

March 2017

Building Strong and Sustainable Foundations

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In 2015, following a number of significant events, Essex Fire Authority commissioned an independent cultural review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS). Conducted by Irene Lucas, CBE, former Acting Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government and Local Authority Chief Executive, the report of the findings of the review was presented to Essex Fire Authority (EFA) in September 2015. The findings were profound and described an organisational culture that was failing at every level.
- 1.2 At the same time as the review was commissioned, the Authority and ECFRS had commenced the process of preparing planned changes to the organisational structure and delivery model of the Service to deliver an enhanced prevention and protection strategy alongside its well-established and highly effective response model. In addition, this work would encompass the development of a revised Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), a new Strategy for the Service for the period 2016 to 2020 and to make cost efficiencies in order to deliver a balanced budget in 2020 against a backdrop of reductions in funding from Central Government.
- 1.3 The Lucas Report made 35 recommendations with the intent of improving the culture of ECFRS. Essex Fire Authority accepted all of these recommendations in October 2015 demonstrating an uncompromising and aligned commitment by the Political and Professional leadership of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to achieving fundamental transformation of the Service.
- 1.4 The first of a number of key recommendations was the appointment of an Expert Advisory Panel to assist the Fire Authority, senior officers and staff representatives by providing strategic advice on the leadership and change required.
- 1.5 We welcomed the review undertaken by Sir Ken Knight in July 2016 who recorded that the Authority and Service were making positive progress. However we appreciate that there is absolutely no room for complacency as a great deal of work is still to be done in the months and years ahead.
- 1.6 Following the progress review, which was reported in September, the Expert Advisory Panel took a step back allowing the organisation to continue to make progress against the plans that had already been established. Six months on, we welcome the return of the Expert Advisory Panel to undertake a progress review, which will help inform the next stage of our transformation journey.
- 1.7 In support of the progress review, this brief paper is a self-assessment, prepared for the Expert Advisory Panel, designed firstly to highlight the progress made to date against the recommendations of the independent review but also to capture any actions and outcomes more widely as they relate specifically to cultural change. More importantly however, this paper also seeks to capture those things that have yet to be achieved and

serve to frustrate our ability to deliver the scale of changes required, when they are required and at the pace that they are required.

1.8 The Lucas Report on the culture of the Service focused upon a number of themes, namely:

- The vision, values, strategies and plans of ECFRS.
- Governance and leadership: how well led is this organisation?
- Relationships, roles and responsibilities.
- Valuing people and challenging poor performance and behaviour.
- Learning, development and promotion.
- Communication and engagement.

1.9. While in part this self-assessment will focus on what the Authority and Service have done to seek to address the recommendations set out against each heading within the Lucas Review it is important to recognise there are a number of vehicles through which cultural change can actually be demonstrated which include:

- The development of Essex Fire Authority's 'Integrated Risk Management Plan'.
- The development of Essex Fire Authority's 'Options for Change'.
- The development of Essex Fire Authority's 'Strategy for the Service'.
- The development of proposals for a change in 'Governance of the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex'.
- The development of opportunities for collaboration with Essex Police and the East of England Ambulance Service.
- The approach taken by the Service to engage with Representative Bodies.
- The approach taken by the Service to engage with staff.
- The approach by the Service to address Diversity and Inclusion.

1.10. As a result this self-assessment also captures those activities that go beyond the 35 recommendations set out in the Lucas report. In this way, we are able to present a more rounded picture of what has changed and what is still to be done.

2. VISION, VALUES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS OF ECFRS

2.1. The recommendations contained within the Lucas Report in this area were:

R2	A cross section of staff should be involved and engaged in the development of the vision, values, strategies and plans to bring a whole organisation perspective to the processes and to engender a sense of ownership.
R3	Ensure that all staff understand their role in delivering the strategy by making the strategy simpler with a concise summary that can be prominently displayed.

What we have done

- 2.2. A new leadership team was created from the former strategic and tactical management teams (formerly Strategic Management Board and Strategic Delivery Board). This streamlined team, following the first phase of a management review based on guidance from the Expert Advisory Panel (EAP), considered the findings of the report and the change plan being driven from the wider public consultation. This Service Leadership Team agreed and committed to a first draft of a strategy describing:
- A Vision Statement
 - Priorities for the Service
 - A new set of headline Service values
 - Key delivery themes
 - A defining purpose
- 2.3. The draft strategy was then taken 'on the road' in workshops across a range of locations including Fire Stations (wholetime and On-Call). These were led by the Acting Chief Fire Officer and other members of the Service Leadership Team who were present at every event. Feedback from each event was captured, shared with all other workshops and the draft strategy developed accordingly.
- 2.4. At the conclusion of this work, the values were further developed by a cross-section of volunteers drawn from across ECFRS and EFA.
- 2.5. Essex Fire Authority formerly approved their Strategy for the Service 2016 to 2020 in September 2016. This has been published along with a 'Strategy at a Glance' document. A personal copy of both documents has been given to all Service managers and copies given to fire stations, watches and teams.
- 2.6. The Strategy has been used within the business planning process for the development of Departmental and team plans. In addition a new format and structure of fire station plans has been developed to ensure that the Authority's priorities for the Service are reflected locally.

Why we did it and outcomes expected

- 2.7. The intention was to involve and engage the expertise, experience and energy of all employees and the Authority in developing a document that defined the next four years of work for the Service. The outcome expected was that employees would see their involvement and contribution to the future of the Service from both a strategic and personal perspective.
- 2.8. The Strategy for the Service was designed as a document that provides a clear narrative on the operating context for our Service, the drivers for change, some clear priorities for the Service and a strategy and a plan to achieve those priorities. In this way, it provides a very clear picture of why we are planning to take the actions set out in our strategy and 'why' teams are being asked to do 'what' they have been asked to do.

What actually happened on the ground and any difference to that intended

- 2.9. In ECFRS, involvement of this nature is new, the historical management culture is one of 'Command and Control' and such an inclusive approach was seen as unusual. There was a degree of scepticism regarding the extent to which all could be involved. The building of trust remains work in progress. Because the changes to the operational delivery model formed part of this process, and reduction in front line resources is never popular, this tended to qualify and reduce the acceptance of the wider change agenda. One area that was successful in assuaging these doubts was the production of the statements underpinning the Values. This was carried out by a cross section of volunteers from across the Service (with no sub-set selection) and the output from this group became the underpinning statements, accepted in their entirety by management – written by our people, for our people. This work being completed without steer by either managers or representative bodies is a new concept and was well received by the workforce. In retrospect however, more effort should have been made to explain this rationale to the Representative Bodies.
- 2.10. The Strategy document was produced and in addition, the 'Strategy at a Glance' – in which so many were involved, has been printed and published. This summary document has been well received and is appearing on walls of workplaces across the Service.

What we intend to do now and why

- 2.11. Ongoing consultation and dialogue with all employees.
- 2.12. Manager briefings conducted centrally and across other sites and on fire stations on a regular basis. Representative Bodies engaged within the development of all change plans with consultation meetings being held weekly.

3. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

- 3.1. The recommendations contained within the Lucas Report in this area were:

R4	Ensure that the position in relation to the Chief Fire Officer is clarified as quickly as possible.
R5	The role of the elected members on the FRA must be more widely understood and more visible to staff, stakeholders and the public through publication of summary updates on the intranet and in Parade News.
R6	FRA meetings need to be focused on strategic solutions to ECFRS' most pressing challenges.
R7	Ensure that FRA reports address a wider range of cultural and industrial relations subjects and not just operational, financial and risk issues.

R8	Ensure that there are planned meetings with representatives of the FRA to meet around key issues with representatives of the workforce and trades union colleagues.
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What we have done

- 3.2. The Authority has been progressing the situation with the Chief Fire Officer since before the publication of the Lucas Report. This remains a confidential matter and as such little more can be reported in this self-assessment except to say that the Expert Advisory Panel are aware of the situation and that a resolution is expected shortly.
- 3.3. It would be fair to say that over the last 24 months the focus of Essex Fire Authority has indeed been strategic in nature with significant decisions taken in relation to the following:
- The review of the culture of the Service and approval of subsequent action plans for cultural transformation.
 - The revision of the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan.
 - The development and approval of the Authority's 'Options for Change' for the Service.
 - The revision of the Authority's Strategy for the Service.
 - Support for proposals for a change in the governance of the fire and rescue service in Essex.
- 3.4. All agendas and papers for meetings of the Essex Fire Authority are communicated internally ahead of each meeting and published on the Service's Intranet. Meetings of Essex Fire Authority have been video-streamed live for the last 18 months so that all staff can watch either live or via recording later. Updates are published via Acting Chief Fire Officer weekly blog plus, at Manager's briefings and using the On-Call 60 second briefings.
- 3.5. At each meeting of Essex Fire Authority, Members are provided with updates on cultural and workforce issues.
- 3.6. A cultural review Sub-Group of the Principal Officers Human Resources Committee was formed and meets, when necessary, to consider progress against the cultural review.
- 3.7. A programme of development delivered by SOLACE has been rolled out with a mixed uptake from EFA Members.
- 3.8. Working groups have been established for all change processes with a presence from Members of Essex Fire Authority.
- 3.9. Your Voice staff forum attended by Members of Essex Fire Authority.

- 3.10. The 2020 Transformation Programme has established an 'Advisory Panel' with representatives from the Essex Fire Authority and all Representative Bodies invited and attending. (This is however currently under review as it is not meeting the needs of all stakeholders).

Why we did it and outcomes expected

- 3.11. Our intention was to ensure that as many opportunities as possible were available for employees, their representatives and Members of Essex Fire authority to interact in order that better understanding of roles and responsibilities was made possible.
- 3.12. Given the challenges facing the fire service both locally and nationally there was a very clear intent to move the focus of Essex fire Authority to consider the strategic solutions to those challenges. In this way providing a very clear separation between the Political and managerial leadership of the service.

What actually happened on the ground and any difference to that intended

- 3.13. Other pressures have meant actual attendance by Members of Essex Fire Authority has been limited on occasion. However, value has been realised from these events in particular where attendance at non-HQ locations has been made possible.
- 3.14. Live video streaming of meetings of Essex Fire Authority has been well received with considerable uptake across workforce.

What we intend to do now and why

- 3.15. Management briefing will be attended by the Police and Crime Commissioner who will present on the potential change of governance. This is in follow-up to presentation at EFA meeting which was live streamed. This is intended to continue building the relationship with the existing governing body and potential new body.
- 3.16. Continue to support the Emergency Service Collaboration Strategic Governance Board to direct and shape the programme of collaboration between ECFRS and Essex Police. Furthermore to continue to support the work on the Police and Crime Commissioner's Local Business Case and if the case is made and accepted by the Home secretary, to support the transition in governance in line with the agreed timetable.

4. RELATIONSHIPS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1. The recommendations contained within the Lucas Report in this area were:

R13	The mixed crewing model that has now been implemented in Essex at Great Dunmow, with the station staffed by both wholetime and retained – this needs to be adopted across the county, sensitively and with the involvement of all trades unions.
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R14	Make it clear at every level that everyone is personally responsible for removing barriers between wholetime and retained.
R15	Do more to recruit leaders from other sectors, bringing fresh perspectives and learning from the wider public sector and beyond.
R16	Reserve the wearing of rank markings for operational staff, fire control incidents, public events, partnership meetings and ceremonial occasions only. Either adopt civilian attire in head office or, learning from Staffordshire FRS, introduce a new 'team strip' that is worn by both firefighters and support staff.
R17	The Expert Panel to invite a representative of the Essex Police to advise on the seriousness of any reported behaviours.
R18	Refer any intimidatory behaviour against individuals, equipment or property for immediate consideration by the Expert Panel who will consider criminal proceedings.

What we have done

- 4.2. As part of the Trade Dispute Resolution agreement, a way forward on 'Mixed Crewing' and Additional Shift Working has been reached with the Fire Brigade Union (FBU).
- 4.3. It has been challenging to arrange joint working parties due to both working hours and a national position from the FBU that they cannot negotiate jointly.
- 4.4. A Director of Transformation and Assistant Director of Human Resources have been recruited with wider public and commercial sector experience.
- 4.5. Staff working at headquarters have raised no issue with the wearing of uniform by Grey Book staff and it has been optional. Grey Book staff attend meetings both in civilian and uniform attire.
- 4.6. Since the publication of the Lucas Report, no current serious behavioural breaches have been reported.

Why we did it and outcomes expected

- 4.7. The dispute resolution represents a fresh approach in terms of both that which has been agreed, and the approach to discussions. With advice from the Expert Advisory Panel and Joint Secretaries, a phased introduction to Mixed Crewing has been agreed.
- 4.8. The new external appointees have brought a different perspective and different approaches to issues in particular the approach to industrial relations and grievance and discipline.

What actually happened on the ground and any difference to that intended

- 4.9. The new value of 'we work as one team' has been challenged by Representative Bodies other than the FBU due to the inability to currently jointly negotiate.
- 4.10. The constraining nature of how Grey Book and Green Book terms and conditions are interpreted and applied makes innovative practice challenging. The fact ECFRS is frequently out of step with the wider Fire and Rescue Service sector (e.g. Rank to Role) and the legacy of unresolved issues, case work and temporary placements/promotion has caused some areas of work, in particular around roles and responsibilities to move much more slowly than might normally have been expected.

What we intend to do now and why

- 4.11. With the Trade Dispute hopefully to be resolved shortly, with the Joint Negotiation and Consultations Committee now re-established, a spirit of 'no surprises' and continuous dialogue must be maintained. The role of the Expert Advisory Panel as critical friend needs to be sustained over the closing part of the 24 month period.
- 4.12. Foster a new relationship with the National Joint Council, Joint Secretaries, to support the maturing of the industrial relations environment in the post Expert Advisory Panel period.

5. VALUING PEOPLE AND CHALLENGING POOR PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOUR

- 5.1. The recommendations contained within the Lucas Report in this area were:

R19	To address the perceived inconsistency and unfairness all disciplinary action should be overseen by a sub group of the expert panel (subject to statutory constraints) over the next 24 months. Any intimidatory behaviour against individuals, equipment or property needs to be considered by the Expert Panel taking advice from representatives of Essex Police. The sub-group will have a specific role in ensuring elected members are aware of matters without cutting across the existing process. This approach to take effect in respect of all new cases.
R20	Create a clearing house for dealing with the unnecessary number of vexatious and low grade grievances that are submitted.
R21	Clarify and simplify arrangements for whistleblowing and the escalation of incidents of this nature directly to the independent Expert Panel.
R22	Consider the use of a rapid mediation service as has been adopted by Staffordshire FRS.
R23	Create more opportunities to recognise outstanding performance and actively promote nominations for an annual awards ceremony.

R24	Consult with BAME, LGBT, female and disabled colleagues regarding the reforming of appropriate groups to look at the ways in which the Service could proactively progress the issues raised and proactively use the different perspective that diversity can bring to the organisation.
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What we have done

- 5.2. The Advisory, Conciliation and Advisory Service (ACAS) have been carrying out a review of discipline and grievance procedures within ECFRS and are due to report to the Expert Advisory Panel. The Service Leadership Team met with ACAS to provide a strategic input to this work. ACAS have also met with all Representative Bodies collectively and separately.
- 5.3. Efforts are continuing to address the ongoing default to grievance behaviour that prevails. This has included the use of mediation by external services with some success. However, revision of some policies to alleviate seemingly groundless or vexatious grievance claims still needs further development.
- 5.4. Discussions with staff across the Service and work by the newly established Leadership Forum is progressing a range of reward and recognition processes that will enable the considerable excellent work being undertaken to be recognised. This will include an annual awards ceremony currently in outline planning for November this year.
- 5.5. The Service Leadership Team have agreed Terms of Reference and a Code of Conduct. These have been published and used to brief managers and the 'Leadership Forum'.
- 5.6. Review of all Support Staff (Green Book) roles including market benchmarking being completed.
- 5.7. Rank to Role is being completed for Operational (Grey Book) staff.
- 5.8. Assessment of Grey Book/Green Book roles underway.
- 5.9. A new Inclusion and Diversity lead has been appointed and is coordinating the Service approach to maximising the value of a diverse workforce and promoting inclusion.
- 5.10. The new work on assessment for promotion will incorporate unconscious bias training for assessors ahead of a wider rollout across the Service.

Why we did it and outcomes expected

- 5.11. It was recognised that more effort was needed to promote a diverse workforce and to celebrate the excellent work being carried out across the Service. The impact of the Lucas Review on employees, against a background of wider change, has affected morale across the workforce and a concerted effort to talk about "what good looks like" in ECFRS is needed.

What actually happened on the ground and any difference to that intended

- 5.12. The fact that a more balanced dialogue is underway, and with conversations **‘for’** the organisation rather than just **‘about it’** is a subtle change and is often not immediately appreciated as a positive change. The reduction in firefighters and fire engines, the associated moves and political flux have had a destabilising influence that deflect attention from the generally positive direction of travel. Substantial and sustained improvements to the working conditions of minority groups are required to provide meaningful evidence of change.
- 5.13. There is a concern that any reward and recognition process needs to be fair, equitable and meaningful.

What we intend to do now and why

- 5.14. The Inclusion and Diversity lead brings a wealth of experience from the Police Service who are a considerable way ahead of the Fire and Rescue Service in areas of inclusion and equality. There is universal accord across management, unions and staff for changes in this area. We will be progressing at pace on a variety of change processes including documentation, facilities, and positive action on recruitment and promotion.
- 5.15. The breakdown of results and analysis from the 2016 staff engagement survey will be available shortly (week commencing 27th March) and we will use the outputs to take positive and visible actions based on the inputs from employees.
- 5.16. The recently published Service Leadership Team Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference have been published on our Intranet and briefed to managers and the ‘Leadership Forum’. This demonstrates our commitment to leading by example and being prepared to be measured against our standards.

6. LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

- 6.1. The recommendations contained within the Lucas Report in this area were:

R25	Revise future training programmes to ensure that they are focused, and are limited to those showing talent, potential and have a desire to progress. It should focus on a smaller number of future leaders.
R26	Promotion should only be open to those who have completed and successfully graduated from the programme.
R27	Change the emphasis from operational to more inclusive leadership training, learning from Kent FRS that has introduced Level 5 coaching qualifications, including back-office staff, to improve the management skills of middle managers.
R28	Make promotion to managerial positions more transparent and involve the Expert Panel in overseeing all appointments for the next 24 months.

R29	Ensure that leadership and coaching skills and qualifications are considered as much as technical competencies in all appraisals.
R30	Set clear and consistent expectations that annual appraisals need to be completed by all managers across the Service and introduce an audit to ensure that the quality of the appraisal meetings and paperwork is actually delivering a satisfying process that will take the Service forward.
R31	Review of existing management and delivery mechanisms to provide implementation ability with clear oversight of progress in implementing change and, most importantly, embedding change.

What we have done

- 6.2. We have designed an assessment and development centre process that will serve to both act as a promotion mechanism and, provide a talent pool for future promotion processes.
- 6.3. Candidates will be provided with a range of mechanisms to join the talent pool, which are designed to enable individuals to demonstrate their abilities and potential across a range of skills and behaviours.
- 6.4. Once in the talent pool, members will have access to a portfolio of development opportunities including coaching, mentoring, secondments, temporary placements, project work, training courses and other development material. This will include accredited and marketable qualifications wherever possible and will serve to provide a source of capability for succession and business continuity.
- 6.5. Candidates from within the talent pool will be the principal source for promotion processes.
- 6.6. Clear expectations of managers at all levels are being defined as part of job descriptions work within the People Structure project.
- 6.7. ECFRS has developed and qualified a cadre of Institute of Leadership and Management Level 5 qualified coaches.
- 6.8. The Expert Advisory panel oversaw the appointment of the Director for Transformation.
- 6.9. The competency framework and appraisal process has been simplified to make it more applicable to all staff and provide a more workable and useful mechanism.

Why we did it and outcomes expected

- 6.10. The existing programme of development in leadership and management was comprehensive but had been applied using a blanket approach. The result was a culture of training compliance rather than competence. The new approach is based on providing a meritocracy that still provides opportunities rather than barriers.

- 6.11. The coaching cadre are already having a positive impact in delivering a more positive style of management – involving rather than directive.

What actually happened on the ground and any difference to that intended

- 6.12. The talent pool will pilot for the first time in May this year, initially connected to resolving the large number of temporary promotions in existence. In the autumn, it will run again for all staff as a mechanism for commencing a new approach to development of managers and leaders.
- 6.13. There is a degree of apprehension as well as some disappointment that those in long-term temporary positions have no advantage in process terms.

What we intend to do now and why

- 6.14. Promote the new appraisal process. Draft sample objectives for appraisals.
- 6.15. Run experience, taster events for the talent pool process to allow people time and information to prepare.

7. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1. The recommendations contained within the Lucas Report in this area were:

R32	Engage the Communications team at Essex County Council to improve the range and credibility of the information communicated to stakeholders, and establish a staff reference group to better understand what messages are important to the Service as a whole.
R33	Ensure that the agendas and papers of every meeting of the FRA and SMB are posted on the intranet so that staff can see what is being discussed. A summary of decisions should be published after each meeting.
R34	Develop a style guide for corporate communications to ensure consistency and protocols for sign off by at least one member of SMB and bring in some measurement to evaluate positive and negative coverage of the Service.

What we have done

- 7.2. Appointed a new Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing who works closely with the Essex County Council communications team.
- 7.3. Agendas and Papers for meetings of Essex Fire Authority and Service Leadership Team are published in accordance with recommendation. Also a working group has been established for the People Structures project involving all Representative Bodies.
- 7.4. A 2020 Programme planning advisory workshop and meetings established including all Representative Bodies and Members of Essex Fire Authority.

- 7.5. Corporate communications are all passed through the Communications Department with a Service Leadership Team approval process embedded.

Why we did it and outcomes expected

- 7.6. A commitment to our value of 'being open, honest and trustworthy' an expectation that we will be measures by what we do and not just what we say.

What actually happened on the ground and any difference to that intended

- 7.7. Early signs are promising but it is too soon to have evidence that our actions are seen as transparent and genuine. Internal Communications 2016 survey – 72% of responses indicated they are very and somewhat satisfied with our internal communications. Feedback comment from the survey: ““I think the improvements in communications, particularly internal, over the past year has had a significant positive impact on the organisation.”

What we intend to do now and why

- 7.8. Sustain the commitment; be prepared to be held to account. Accept that we cannot get it right all the time and be prepared to discuss and modify communication that is clumsy or misfires.
- 7.9. The Service Leadership Team needs to role model the values, make contributions that promote better engagement and sustain cultural change that is in its early stages.
- 7.10. Undertake a review of our Corporate Communication processes to ensure that they are achieving what we expect them to achieve.

8. BEYOND THE LUCAS REVIEW

- 8.1. This section refers to assessment of areas of work not highlighted directly by the Lucas Cultural Review recommendations but which have served to address underlying areas of concern from the report.

Governance

- 8.2. The Service has developed with the help of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) a comprehensive induction process for all incoming Fire Authority Members. This includes presentations for Officers and a comprehensive question and answer session. One returning Member of Essex Fire Authority commented that he had found this process illuminating, a “quantum step forward” from his previous experience with ECFRS and better than anything he encounters on other bodies in which he served.
- 8.3. The SOLACE training was well attended by some Members but not others. For those who have made time to attend it has been extremely beneficial.

- 8.4. Members have been involved in a range of initiatives and workshops that have promoted interaction with staff from across the Service and which have gained inputs to improve the quality and content of reporting by the Service.

Leadership

- 8.5. The Service Leadership Team has taken the monthly meeting 'on the road' with arranged opportunities to meet staff at those locations. Additionally members have individually been visiting fire stations in and out of normal office hours.
- 8.6. The ongoing absence of the Chief Fire Officer has continued to cause issues both in the form of uncertainty in staff and the inability (for legitimate reasons) to communicate effectively of progress. This undermines our ability to be open and transparent with our staff.
- 8.7. The continued presence of Service Leadership Team members at meetings with managers and other staff is creating more dialogue. One consequence is that as people feel empowered to speak up, more issues are uncovered, this is a positive in that what can be seen can be addressed.
- 8.8. In addition, more employees at various levels feel able to make contributions on how things can be reinforced, developed or improved and are able to see actions in its early stages.

Middle and front line management

- 8.9. The 'Leadership Forum', has been formed to build the alliance between middle and senior management. The aims of this forum have been to:
- Break down barriers between senior management and the wider organisation.
 - Provide a platform where this influential cadre can raise the topics that effect the Service from their perspective and challenge the issues of concern.
 - Unlock innovation and talent by including and involving in initiatives at both local and organisational level.
 - Provide development in a collegiate atmosphere building both knowledge and commonality of purpose.
 - Harness the cumulative knowledge of the group to work in partnership with senior management on specific topics deemed to have greatest impact, these have included:
 - Vision, Values and Strategy.
 - Tackling challenging behaviour.
 - Managing change.
 - Reward and recognition.
 - Develop a support network for both coaching and Peer-to-Peer.
 - Building acknowledgement and acceptance of accountability across all those who lead.

- 8.10. This is a developing forum and key challenges have been the perceived detachment of strategy from what is 'doable' in the workplace. This has led to challenge from managers over their concerns that they carry the burden of delivery without having had the benefits of sufficient input. The fear is that they become responsible for the success or failure of initiatives with an expectation that senior management will claim success and failure passed down.
- 8.11. Another significant challenge is the 'Command and Control' culture ingrained by both the hierarchical structure and decades of reinforcing behaviour. By their presence alone, senior managers exert considerable influence that can inhibit dialogue or create the impression of disengagement. When senior managers contribute, these are often interpreted as direction. This has been a learning process for all involved with modifying of style and building of trust critical components for all involved. This is taking time.

Human Resources Department

- 8.12. In the year following the publication of the Lucas Report, the Human Resources Department (HR) saw an 82% turnover in staff including the departure of the entire management team (the first three tiers) down to and including two of the four business partners. This has presented both challenges and opportunities.
- 8.13. Challenges - The loss of business knowledge was considerable as was the impact on a loyal and committed team of professionals. In addition, recruitment proved problematic and the workload such that the stress on the Human Resources department has been huge.
- 8.14. Opportunities - A new team is now in place bringing a sense of purpose as well as the introduction of a different ethos to that reported by Lucas. The move to a pull strategy rather than a push strategy has already reaped benefits in that the hostility towards the Human Resources department and, the apprehension of HR staff has greatly diminished. However much work is needed on establishing less directive and more supportive policies, this is underway in consultation with Representative Bodies.

Relationships Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.15. Relationships continue to be an area where the greatest challenge exists. The introduction of management briefings that are mixed and are more 'dialogue' and less lecture in style has progressively eroded traditional barriers. The uniform/non uniform divide is also receding with considerable effort by managers and others to spend time in other areas of work and build relationships. Examples are firefighters spending a day in Human Resources, or the Performance Management section, various HQ staff spending time on fire stations. The division between On-Call and wholtime firefighters is localised rather than general and the use of mediation and local development plans are being trialed in these areas.

Industrial Relations

- 8.16. There has been considerable progress in seeking to change 'Industrial Relations' but the benefits of this changing approach have not been universally successful. Some relationships have deteriorated. Regular Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee meetings have been reinstated and the considerable work conducted over the last nine months has brought the Service to the brink of resolution over a long running dispute with the Fire Brigades Union.
- 8.17. Also of significance is the work done to resolve historical behavioural cases which were a product of a culture prevalent in the past but from which the Service has moved on. Key to moving forward is the need to address residual challenges over what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, in a multi representative body working environment. National and local protocols have inhibited getting all parties into the same room at the same time. This continues to cause disharmony. Work on a new Dignity/Respect at Work policy is nearing some accord however and this will form the vehicle for addressing better behaviour.

People

- 8.18. A key component of changing behaviours is bringing the new Service values to life. These were designed and written with input from across the Service, in particular the value descriptor statements. These have met with wide approval but also legitimate challenge – the “how do these get turned from aspirational to reality?” question.
- 8.19. Within ECFRS, the innate hierarchical 'Command and Control' structure always pushes this question uphill – how will management make this work. The target for the coming months on this matter is continue the inclusion and involvement of all employees in recognising that this is the responsibility of everybody and can only be achieved through a supportive and joined up approach.

Engagement

- 8.20. The latest survey of ECFRS staff shows encouraging trends but also that considerable work lies ahead in working with all employees to make the Service an employer of choice.
- 8.21. The overall engagement score is up 5% to 68%.
- 8.22. There are many areas to address and full analysis has not yet taken place. However, change management, employee involvement and learning and development are priorities.

Reward and Value

- 8.23. There has been a wide dialogue on how to recognise and reward behaviours and work that adds value to the Service. The 'Leadership Forum' is engaged and initial arrangements have been put in place for an annual awards event in November.
- 8.24. There has been considerable input from fire stations and business units across the Service and a proposal on structure will form a component of the People Strategic

Plan in the next few weeks. An important component of this will be the capability for 'peer-to-peer' recognition.

Learning and Development

8.25. This is a critical area for success and one that is dominated by demand for safety critical training, rightly but sometimes excessively. In broader terms, the desire to develop management skills led to an implementation strategy that, with the intent of lifting the Service to a common platform, manifested itself (from a customer perspective) as a forced 'sheep dip' approach. In addition, there has historically been a failure to provide marketable qualifications except as part of ad-hoc individual procurement. The work in development is to replace this with a more structured approach that addresses the needs of all staff and which will have as key components:

- A Service wide technical training strategy which will provide training hubs that maximise the estate available for Learning and Development.
- Delivery of the Core Hours project which will address the 'safe to ride' principle of the Thomas review and facilitate a more flexible and inclusive approach to technical training.
- Assessment and Development Centres – designed to populate a talent pool for supervisory, middle and strategic managers. The development component of this will be aligned to the national agenda and will include access to external opportunities (training, secondments, coaching etc.) that are both broadening and collaborative in design.
- Management development that has a mandatory component for all new line managers and a development opportunity for all – both linked to a marketable qualification.
- Wider people skills development through a blended approach that will promote engagement and inclusion as priorities and specifically address issues such as unconscious bias.
- Specific campaigns to address improving the working environment.

8.26. The groundwork is in place to evaluate ECFRS against the criteria that provide evidence of, and support a Learning Organisation. This process will also engage all employees and seek to:

- Learn lessons effectively.
- Capture the knowledge and skills of our people (intellectual capital).
- Improve capability for proactive development to meet change as opposed to the current largely reactive mode.

People Structures

8.27. This project within the 2020 Programme will have a significant impact on our work to transform the Service's culture and will deliver a number of work streams that are listed in the next few paragraphs.

- 8.28. **Rank to Role** - Bringing ECFRS in to line with the rest of the UK. In addition, this will enable a flatter less hierarchical structure moving operational Grey Book staff to a seven role hierarchy.
- 8.29. **Management Review Phase 2** - Streamlining the management overhead and aligning management structure with the Authority's Strategy for the Service. ECFRS management structure is in the second phase of review with a rationalisation and reduction of the senior management structure having been carried out in Phase 1. This is already revealing that the expectations of managers are at times poorly defined and in many areas there is a lack of a useful job description available. The work to remedy this as well as a simplification of our appraisal system will serve to focus attention on the areas for improvement, where good work is under resourced and where we have delivery misaligned to the current strategy.
- 8.30. **Grey Book/Green Book** - Defining which jobs must be operational staff on Grey Book conditions and building rationale for how other roles are filled that address business need and equality.
- 8.31. **Green Book Pay Review** - To address pay equality issues and market pressures. Delivering on an outstanding commitment from the Fire Authority.
- 8.32. **Talent Pool** - As described above, the first iteration of this will also resolve long standing temporary promotions and vacancies. In the future, it will provide a cadre of talented staff from all disciplines delivering capability, resilience, continuity and succession capacity.
- 8.33. **Core Hours** – This will address the 'safe to ride' principle of the Thomas review and facilitate a more flexible and inclusive approach to technical training. It will also enable and contribute to mixed training and mixed crewing.
- 8.34. **Flexi Duty Rota** - Benchmarked against other Fire and Rescue Services with the aim to maintain operational cover in line with the Integrated Risk Management Plan and cost effectiveness.

Performance

- 8.35. ECFRS has in place an appraisal system which, while it reflects best practice, is complex, labour intensive, and as a result not embraced.
- 8.36. Work is being finalised that will deliver a simpler, practical solution that addresses development of people to maintain and improve performance as well as broadening knowledge, skills and behaviours. The competency framework for the Service has also been reconciled to align with national personal qualities and attributes thereby producing a common set of behavioural skills for all employees.
- 8.37. Work has been conducted with the Fire Authority to produce more sophisticated metrics and key performance indicators that better reflect the Authority's Strategy for the Service. The Authority has supported this although attendance at design workshops was disappointing.

Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

8.38. The appointment of an Inclusion and Diversity lead is greatly aiding the work to ensure that our people processes and work environment creates a place of employment that people:

- Want to work in.
- Enjoy working in.
- Are motivated.
- Are stimulated.
- Are accepted.
- Feel safe.

8.39. This will ensure that we have an evidence-based approach to guide our approach to recruitment, training, developing and managing as well as seeking to ensure that our infrastructure embraces and promotes our diverse workforce and reflects the communities we serve.

9. What do we believe are the things that are holding the Service back or the things that are frustrating progress?

9.1. In the previous sections we have set out the progress that has been made across a number of areas in recent months however there remain a number of things that we believe are holding the Service back or frustrating the progress that can or should be made in transforming the culture of the Service. This section will explore these in more detail.

Industrial Relations

9.2. The maturity of relationships with Representative Bodies in Essex remains a concern. While we believe that great strides have been made to change the nature of engagement with staff and their representatives in the process of change, more work is necessary to build more constructive and trusting relationships.

9.3. The relationship with the Fire Brigades Union is maturing but slowly. Significant progress has been made during 2016 and into 2017 in developing an open and honest dialogue however trust in the political and managerial leadership of the Service remains an issue.

9.4. Reaching agreement with the Fire Brigades Union on key issues can still take a long time. Work is required to understand why this is the case and whether Service management can do more to facilitate a speedier conclusion to matters of consultation and negotiation.

9.5. The relationship with the Fire Officers Association (FOA) has been a deteriorating one for some time. Trust in the political and managerial leadership of the Service

remains a real issue. In part, this is a direct result of a number of discipline cases which involve FOA members.

- 9.6. As a result of the concern for the deteriorating relationship the Acting Chief Fire Officer met with the Chief Executive of the Fire officers Association in November when an open and frank exchange of views was had.
- 9.7. The Fire Officers Association have recently reaffirmed their commitment to joint problem solving which is welcomed.
- 9.8. The Fire Officers Association are also currently restructuring their local representative to aid more effective local engagement which is also welcomed.
- 9.9. Within the membership of the Retained Firefighters Union there is a growing sense of frustration about the pace of change. The Retained Firefighters Union has, over many years, been both patient and supportive about the changes necessary in Essex however, that patience has run out. There is a growing sense of inequality and that little if anything has actually changed in the relationships on fire stations, in fact, in some areas they would describe a deteriorating relationship.
- 9.10. Arrangements for Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee meetings that do not include all Representative Bodies would be held up as an example where the management of the Service are not living the recently revised values of the Service, 'We work as one Team' and 'We value the contribution of all'.
- 9.11. The relationship with Unison is a reasonably stable and mature one.
- 9.12. The industrial relations environment and the maturity of relationships with all Representative Bodies in Essex does affect the speed with which decisions can be reached and subsequently implemented.

Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

- 9.13. The Service's approach to Inclusion, Equality and Diversity is an evolving one in which resources have been recently invested however it is too slow and too timid. We need to be bolder, while at the same time ensuring that we use evidence to support changes to our approach, particularly in recruitment.
- 9.14. The development of the Authority's Equality Statement and Dignity at Work Policy have taken too much time to develop and implement.
- 9.15. We remain concerned that not enough work has been done to ensure that the Service has workplaces that can be described as 'Inclusive'. If asked whether a female, Black or Asian, or an On-Call firefighter could work on any fire station in Essex, without the prospect of being treated inappropriately, the honest answer would have to be 'not yet'.
- 9.16. Another area of concern raised in the cultural review was the potential for certain, often long serving, team members to have a significant and detrimental influence on

the behaviours, and what are seen as acceptable behaviour, within their team. We have not yet fully identified and addressed this.

- 9.17. In both these respects, we would expect firefighters on fire stations to say that very little has changed since the publication of the Lucas Report.
- 9.18. The Local Government Association Memorandum of Understanding on “equality, diversity, behaviours and organisational culture in the Fire Service” will be a valuable tool in upholding and promoting inclusivity and cultural change in the next 12 months. To achieve this, however, all Representative Bodies in ECFRS have a very clear role not only in promoting the principles it contains but demonstrating clear leadership in both delivering on the commitment within it and taking specific actions within the agreed time table.
- 9.19. Of equal importance will be the need for Managers at all levels to understand that part of their role and responsibilities is to support the development of an inclusive culture within the teams that they manage.

Senior, Middle and front line management

- 9.19. The development of Service Leadership Team. The revised structure was implemented early in 2016. The time taken for the team to really start to perform as a team has been slow. Investment in team development has been patchy and not yet coherent.
- 9.20. It is still evidence that some managers, particularly supervisory, watch and team managers see their role as protecting their team from the managers above rather than delivering the priorities of the Service and Authority.
- 9.21. Managers of Supervisory and Middle management levels still do not recognise their role in building and maintaining inclusive workplaces. There remain far too many examples where team, watches and some fire stations seem to exclude those who are different whether on the basis of sex, race, sexuality, trade union membership or that they just don't fit their perception of team membership.
- 9.22. Management development – we need to be clear about the role of managers within ECFRS in the years ahead. This needs to progress now at pace.

Political Leadership and Engagement

- 9.23. This is a mixed picture where, on the one hand, there is very clear evidence of Essex Fire Authority setting direction for the Service and taking, where necessary, difficult but none the less important decisions about future priorities and options for change.
- 9.24. The support offered by SOLACE has highlighted some limitations and weaknesses in the current political leadership model. The views of SOLACE have been reported elsewhere, however we think it would be fair to say that a number of EFA Members invested heavily in the recent development of opportunities afforded to them by SOLACE however a more significant proportion did not.

- 9.25. There are a number of significant factors that contributed to this not least of which are; the proposed future change of governance under the Police and Crime Commissioner and the fact that a number of EFA Members from Essex County Council are not standing for re-election in May.
- 9.26. The appointment and induction of EFA Members in June will be the next key milestone in the development of the Political Leadership of the Fire Authority.
- 9.27. Looking slightly further ahead, October 2017 will be the next significant milestone in the development of the Political Leadership of the Service as this is the earliest opportunity for a change of governance to be affected. It is too early to predict the implications of this governance change on our work on culture change however; it has and will affect the pace of change.
- 9.28. As a result of all of the above, the full benefits of the EFA Member development programme through 2016 and into 2017 will not be fully realised.

Policy Environment

- 9.28. The pace at which old, outdated and anachronistic policies are updated, simplified or simply removed is frustratingly slow.
- 9.29. We need to be clearer about the policy environment that we need to support a more mature, open and inclusive culture and then just get on with the job of doing the work necessary to ensure that we remove unnecessary barriers that prevent people doing their job effectively.

The management of discipline cases

- 9.30. The time it takes to resolve cases of discipline. In our attempt to be demonstrably fair, we unnecessarily make the time from start to finish protracted. In addition, the work being conducted by ACAS on behalf of the Expert Advisory Panel has been slow to conclude.

Employee Engagement

- 9.31. We do not yet have a coherent plan of employee engagement. It is fair to say that our approach to corporate communications is improving and employee engagement is also improving but more work needs to be done.
- 9.32. Our face-to-face briefings with managers is a good start however, this type of face-to-face engagement with all of our teams has been slow to evolve. In the next 12 months, this needs formalising and embedding in our approach to employee engagement.

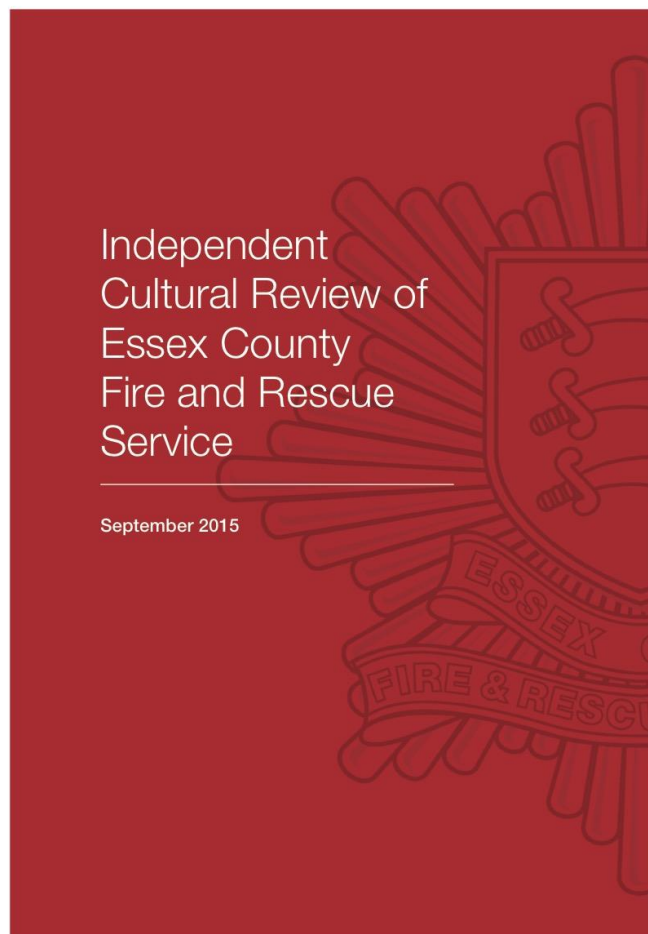
10. NEXT STEPS

10.1. The next few months must focus on the implementation of all the steps above but with a key driver to:

- Use the Dignity at Work policy and wider work on unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion to build workplaces where bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation cannot exist.
- In conjunction with the above, commit to a joint statement from Service management and all Representative Bodies on the completely unacceptable nature of such behaviour.
- Bring the Service values to life through meaningful and joined up dialogue with Representative Bodies and all staff.
- Implement a 'Reward and Recognition' Plan that both recognises performance and has a tangible link to contribution to the Service values.
- Continue the improving dialogue with Representative Bodies with a focus on collaborating and the building of sustainable relationships and developing work on the themes of Prevention, Protection and Response.
- Empower leadership in managers at all levels and build a development and support network.
- Involve employees in innovation and change.
- Build the Talent Pool and support this with a clear and focused learning and development strategy including the assurance of operational skills and integrity.
- Implement a revised, simplified and practical appraisal system with a review in 12 months to ensure validity and effectiveness.
- Support the change of governance for the fire and rescue service in Essex if the case is made and supported by the Home Secretary.
- Re-evaluate the Service's approach to the management of discipline cases to ensure that we reduce the time taken to resolve them.
- Develop a cogent plan to complete the revision of the Service's policy framework.
- Work with the National Joint Council, Joint Secretaries to support a maturing of the industrial relations environment in Essex.

EXIT REVIEW

INDEPENDENT CULTURE REPORT – 2015



SIR KEN KNIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with the Final Report of the Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) and the final commentary of the Chief Fire Officer, both of which are presented with this paper to this final meeting of Essex Fire Authority, and accompany this appendix.
- 1.2 Taken together, the three reports provide a comprehensive consideration of the culture change activity that has taken place in Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (Essex FRS) since the Lucas Report in 2015.
- 1.3 The EAP Report, especially, provides a far-reaching evaluation of the broader context and issues, as well as explaining the importance of organisational climate and culture; and, alongside this, it offers an excellent and comprehensive analysis of fire service culture.
- 1.4 The importance of this depth of understanding about the cultural challenge should not be underestimated.
- 1.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is shortly to take over the governance responsibility for the fire service in Essex and, for all there are opportunities presented by this major shift in governance responsibility (the first of its kind in the UK), there are also several risks identified in the Business Case submission.
- 1.6 These include risks around failing to appreciate the differences between Police Culture and Fire Service Culture and the potential impact, either of stalling the fire change programme, or trying to wedge fire culture into police culture during a transition period. Put simply, there is an opportunity for the governance change to assist the cultural change task, however there is also a risk of aggravating the issues. It would be disappointing if the benefits of governance change become a perceived stalling of the cultural change journey that Essex Fire Authority have embarked on.
- 1.7 This matter is returned to, for wider consideration, later in my report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The objective of this Exit Review is to support the efforts of the EAP, appointed following the outcome of the 2015 Independent Cultural Review by Irene Lucas CBE - referred to as the Lucas Report.
- 2.2 This Review has sought to consider the views of stakeholders and relevant interested parties and appraise the extent to which Essex Fire Authority and Essex FRS have delivered against the report and its corresponding recommendations.

- 2.3 Additionally, I have sought to build on my previous mid-term review - one year ago - and to reflect on the additional recommendations I made at that time¹.
- 2.4 It should be stressed that this Review does not purport to be another cultural review or a rerun of the Lucas work in any way, nor was it intended to assess the efficacy of the EAP. It has not been the role of the EAP to operationalise any dimension of the Cultural Review, its role is wholly advisory and facilitative. The EAP has been there to provide advice and constructive critical support².
- 2.5 I offer my perspective, at the end of this report, on the value that has been added by the role of the EAP.
- 2.6 The ambition here, accordingly, is to provide some triangulation and assurance that the actions taken by Essex Fire Authority and Essex FRS have been suitable and balanced in seeking to resolve the fundamental issues. At the same time, they have maintained a positive direction of travel, alongside business as usual, in the rapidly evolving situation facing the whole fire and rescue sector. This is in addition to the specific culture change challenge in Essex FRS.

3. THE LUCAS REPORT

- 3.1 Whilst the Lucas Report and its contents will be well known to Members of Essex Fire Authority and is extensively discussed elsewhere in the Final Report of the EAP, it is worth summarising the background to that work here, for the sake of completeness and for the benefit of any wider audience reading this report in isolation.
- 3.2 In 2015, Essex Fire Authority requested Irene Lucas CBE to undertake an independent review of organisational culture within Essex FRS. This followed a series of significant events that occurred during 2013 onwards.
- 3.3 The Lucas Report was extremely critical of the culture of Essex FRS and resulted in 35 recommendations which were accepted in full by Essex Fire Authority. This resulted in a programme of change to improve behavioural culture.
- 3.4 The Report's first recommendation related to the necessary apparatus to enable change and resulted in the formation of an **Expert Advisory Panel, 'comprising of senior people, experienced in addressing challenging organisations who will provide strategic advice... on the leadership and change now needed'**.

¹ Full report to Essex Fire Authority: [Sir Ken Knight Report to Essex Fire Authority](#)

² A comprehensive governance document was produced as an early activity of the EAP and has been helpful in establishing clear roles, responsibilities and boundaries.

- 3.5 A Chair for the Panel, Steve McGuirk CBE QFSM, and an organisational development expert, Natasha Edmunds, were recommended and subsequently appointed. Their role was to provide support and guidance to Members and Principal Officers. The initial Panel membership was supplemented with two other members; Prof. Linda Dickens, an acknowledged expert in the field of industrial relations and the independent Chair of the National Joint Council, together with Jim Barbour, a former, senior trade union official and member of the Northern Ireland Fire Board. In addition to these core members, Jim Owen, a former Deputy Chief Fire Officer, was appointed to support the work of the Panel, and a small secretariat established for the first year of the programme.
- 3.6 The Lucas Report recommended that the duration of the role of the Panel should be two years due to the significant cultural change that was identified.
- 3.7 As the EAP Final Report identifies, two years was recognised as a point at which the Panel would have completed its task, rather than demonstrating the conclusion of a programme of change.
- 3.8 The Lucas Report additionally recommended a need for some form of independent progress review (at around six months) by way of triangulation and reassurance and I was subsequently invited by Essex Fire Authority to fulfil this assurance dimension.

4. MID-TERM REVIEW 2016

- 4.1 As part of this approach, in July 2016, I was commissioned to undertake a two-day, mid-term, independent review of progress.
- 4.2 My objective for that activity was to provide some confidence, firstly that actions had been taken against the Lucas recommendations and secondly that these were suitable and proportionate; and hopefully that improvements were being made.
- 4.3 In undertaking this work however, I felt it necessary to acknowledge the difficulty associated, not just with the challenge of culture change itself, but also that the change required was being made against a demanding set of longstanding local issues. These comprised the conclusion of the *Operation Neaton* situation, the ongoing investigation into the conduct of the former Chief Fire Officer, the consultation on Programme 2020 (to address further, budgetary issues) and the emerging change of governance proposal to shift responsibility to the Police and Crime Commissioner. It was also necessary to appreciate the implications of a rapidly changing fire and rescue and public sector landscape, by then including a general election and a change of government, as well as several ministerial and other changes that impacted on the sector.
- 4.4 This wider difficulty and the multiple factors associated are not always appreciated by every stakeholder involved in circumstances like those in Essex

FRS who, understandably, can be inclined to look at the world through their own specific and maybe narrow lens.

- 4.5 It is highly relevant to being realistic about the ability of Essex Fire Authority and Essex FRS to bring about strategic change, as it is often a failure to take proper account of a wider scenario that produces unrealistic plans, naive approaches and overly optimistic expectations.
- 4.6 During the 2016 visit, I met with a variety of key stakeholders and discussed relevant and fundamental issues, assessing whether the organisation was on track to deliver against the action plan in a timely and effective manner.
- 4.7 I consider that this was meaningful dialogue and it enabled me to get a good appreciation of progress. It also enabled me to support EAP colleagues who had identified further areas of work in addition to the Lucas Report.
- 4.8 In consequence, my review resulted in an additional 19 recommendations and I made these to Essex Fire Authority in September 2016¹.
- 4.9 The outcome of my 2016 work correspondingly resulted in the EAP taking a small, step back and applying a lighter touch to their role than had hitherto been the case.
- 4.10 The purpose here was to enable Essex FRS to make progress in a realistic timescale, but without overly burdensome and detailed examination/scrutiny by well-intentioned advisers. I should stress that the need for this was identified by the EAP itself and linked to their facilitation role, and so was something that I was pleased to support.
- 4.11 Consequently, both the Chair of the EAP and I presented the findings of the mid-term review to a meeting of the full Essex Fire Authority. Questions by Members at the meeting were conducted in an open and transparent manner, incorporating a live webcast to the whole organisation and a wider public audience³.

5. EXIT REVIEW 2017

- 5.1 Following this mid-term assessment and prior to reaching the 24 month milestone set by the originating work, I was again commissioned to undertake a final, independent exit review.
- 5.2 The purpose on this occasion was to evaluate whether change had been sufficiently embedded to the extent that the EAP's support, as well as their critical friend and monitoring role, was no longer required.

¹ Full report to Essex Fire Authority: [Sir Ken Knight's Report to Essex Fire Authority](#)

³ The webcast is available online: [Sir Ken Knight Mid-term Review](#)

- 5.3 It is important to underline that my review is not to suggest a programme of change is complete or that all the problems had been solved, more that the situation had been normalised, relative to other fire and rescue services.

6. EXIT REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 6.1 The following terms of reference for the Exit Review were therefore agreed by Essex Fire Authority on 12 April 2017:

- ***To undertake an exit review to assess the progress made by key stakeholders against the recommendations contained in the Lucas Report;***
- ***To provide assurance that the actions taken by key stakeholders against the Lucas Review recommendations are suitable and proportionate;***
- ***To provide assurance that due and proper consideration is being given to the fundamental issues by key stakeholders;***
- ***To provide assurance that the organisation has delivered against the recommendations in a timely manner;***
- ***To identify areas where further work may be required and make recommendations as appropriate;***
- ***To communicate the findings of the review to the Fire Authority.***

7. EXIT REVIEW APPROACH AND INFORMATION GATHERED

- 7.1 Prior to my visit, I was provided with the draft final report of the Chair of the EAP, which included the EAP Self Reflection from the Mid-Term Review as an appendix. The intention was to provide an understanding of the view of the EAP in relation to the progress made and measured⁴ against the benchmark of the situation a year earlier.
- 7.2 Before undertaking the fieldwork, I was also able to consider a range of key documents - a literature review - and these papers have been compiled into a single compendium of information. The compendium has been maintained throughout the work for audit purposes (the full content list is included at Appendix B) and provides a useful reference point.

⁴ 'Measured' is qualified by the reality that the measurement has, of necessity, been qualitative and based upon experience, impression and dialogue, rather than deploying organisational development tools such as staff surveys however staff surveys and focus groups have already been used extensively by Essex FRS and the EAP.

- 7.3 My visit to Essex FRS took place on 3 and 4 August 2017⁵, where I met with a range of key stakeholders. This has helped me to consider different opinions and perspectives and discuss the organisational progress against the Lucas Report as well as consider this against my previous reflection (details of these discussions are noted in Appendix A).
- 7.4 It will be noted from the programme that, although I had a limited amount of time, I did engage with a cross section of the Essex stakeholder community encompassing:
- ***Police and Crime Commissioner***
 - ***Principal Management***
 - ***Service Leadership Team***
 - ***Fire Authority Members***
 - ***Representative Bodies – FBU, RFU, FOA, UNISON***
- 7.5 I acknowledge that my time was spent at Service Headquarters and focused exclusively on meeting Members, Principal Managers and Representative Bodies, rather than visiting stations and/or meeting large groups of personnel. I make no apologies for this and I accept the potential criticism of a narrowness of point of view and incomplete feedback. As I have been clear already, my role in this respect has not been to rerun the Lucas Review, to check on the EAP or to fulfil any of the functions associated with the responsibilities either of Essex Fire Authority or the Management of the Service, nor am I an inspector and, I have been determined to ensure there is no confusion or ambiguity.
- 7.6 What I believe I have been able to acquire is a good insight and understanding around important issues that require a combined approach and a shared endeavour to continue the progress with Essex FRS.

8. LEADERSHIP AND THE LEVERS FOR CHANGE

- 8.1 Essex Fire Authority should be credited for its political leadership in having initiated the Lucas Report with its very challenging findings, it unanimously accepted the recommendations and took decisive action in setting up the EAP and agreeing the action plan.
- 8.2 There have been other examples of fire authorities being subject to inspection and externally imposed Improvement Boards, however Essex Fire Authority's initiative was very different and demonstrates a model worthy of consideration in the future by other Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- 8.3 The recognition of the need for cultural change was vital. However, the programme was also required to reflect the challenges of the external

⁵ I did arrange to meet the PCC separately due to necessary changes to the timetable.

environment of a clear transformational agenda, set for all fire and rescue services by a new Government Department, together with ongoing budgetary pressures.

- 8.4 This state of significant change promoted the political and professional leadership to pursue a strategic, medium term, Option for Change to address these real world financial issues. It is noticeable, in this context, that the whole change agenda was taken up and advanced in a greater spirit of workforce co-operation and consideration than appears to have been the case for many years in Essex FRS.
- 8.5 There have been mixed views expressed to me about the importance of the Dispute Resolution Agreement that followed the decision of Essex Fire Authority around the Options for Change, which brought the long running dispute highlighted in the Lucas Report, to an end.
- 8.6 I recognise that some stakeholders see compromise where others see capitulation in such difficult dispute resolution. However, it has been important to develop a better industrial relations framework, as there has been a very significant, and negative impact on culture, brought about by the constant state of dispute/industrial action.
- 8.7 The dispute/industrial action issue also lies at the heart of some (though not all) of the bullying and harassment cultural behaviours described in the Lucas Report. This is explained more fully in the EAP Final Report.
- 8.8 Having read the Dispute Agreement and met all parties, I believe how the agreement is taken forward to meet the underlying objectives, is as important as the detail.
- 8.9 There is now the potential for many of the longstanding issues that have aggravated the situation in Essex FRS to be resolved. The opportunity for success and delivering these long outstanding changes are good, but it is not guaranteed.
- 8.10 It is vital that the changes are driven forward and the Dispute Resolution Agreement honoured, in spirit as much as in the letter, and not cherry picked by any party.
- 8.11 This will now be a significant issue for the Police and Crime Commissioner to consider as part of the transition planning to the new governance arrangements.
- 8.12 In terms of professional leadership, like EAP colleagues, I have found the length of time taken to resolve the situation of the former Chief Fire Officer – described as urgent two years ago – to be a source of frustration and concern. It is an important organisational milestone that the matter has been concluded, and I

would endorse the EAP recommendation that the lessons learned are shared with the Home Office.

- 8.13 I also share the view that it has been important for Essex Fire Authority to have demonstrated due diligence and to ensure those at the top of an organisation are held to account in a fair and equitable manner, in the same way as everyone else.
- 8.14 I have observed at first hand the conduct and constructive approach to positive change by the recently appointed Chief Fire Officer, and I have received positive feedback from several key stakeholders.
- 8.15 Most telling, in this respect, was my meeting with the family of a firefighter who had taken his own life (in part due to reported bullying and harassment in the workplace). In their conversation with me they described a transformational change in attitude and transparency which, given the emotional sensitivity involved, is extremely encouraging and laudable. It is a case study worthy of sharing more widely in fire and rescue services.
- 8.16 The Management Review undertaken by the EAP that enabled and supported the Acting Chief Fire Officer to bring about significant changes to the Service Leadership Team is further evidence of positive change. As well as the new Directors, this has opened the management of Essex FRS to a more diverse group of people and I have been impressed by their determination in continuing to make change.
- 8.17 I was disappointed to encounter some stakeholders that did not fully acknowledge the diversity of senior managers as important or that they didn't relate to non-operational Directors as Principal Officers.
- 8.18 This is a matter that the Police and Crime Commissioner should be made aware of, in order to maintain the experience of mixed professional leaders. In doing so, it is important that all the managerial leaders remain influential and visible throughout the organisation.
- 8.19 The EAP Final Report covers the issues of equality and diversity very well, and I do not propose to duplicate that commentary here. However, I would strongly endorse the recommendation to advance the equality and diversity agenda at pace. Fairness and transparency is central to culture change in an organisation that embraces equality and diversity at its heart.

9. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

- 9.1 I would wish to comment on the opportunity and risk associated with the transfer of governance to the PCC.

- 9.2 I have considered the Business Case and spoken to the PCC directly, and I have been impressed with the desire to make a success of the change and to enhance public safety for the Essex community.
- 9.3 The PCC will take responsibility for Essex FRS as it emerges from a low ebb of a longstanding poor industrial relations landscape and the evidence of culture issues that are entirely unacceptable and demonstrated by the Lucas Report.
- 9.4 However, the current Essex Fire Authority has shown clear political leadership in taking the steps it has and, in doing so, set out a positive way forward as it transfers its responsibility.
- 9.5 As the EAP report demonstrates, whilst much has been achieved, Essex FRS is only at the start of its journey of recovery to embed an acceptable organisational culture for the future. It would therefore be remiss of me not to register concerns expressed about the risks associated with the change, as much as the opportunities it presents.
- 9.6 The Business Case, for example, recognises the benefits of collaboration and sharing resources through a single political lead, with a democratic mandate, for both Police and Fire and Rescue Services. However, there is a risk of seeing the two blue light services as being more alike than they are. In reality, there are significant differences that are worth considering, as they will undoubtedly affect the ability to continue progress with the necessary culture change.
- 9.7 As an example, currently, the legal responsibilities and operational duties for the Police Service remain the domain of the Chief Constable and the role of the PCC is focused on strategy, community safety and public accountability/scrutiny. Whilst the transfer of fire responsibilities may look similar, it is very distinctive.
- 9.8 In the case of Essex FRS, it is Essex Fire Authority – shortly to rest with the PCC – that is the body corporate. In other words, the Chief Fire Officer (which is not a statutory position) is not ascribed clear, legal responsibility, rather that he/she is delegated to fulfil operational roles and other responsibilities. The duties of providing for a holistic strategy to address the prevention, protection and response roles of Essex FRS, therefore, remain with Essex Fire Authority/PCC.
- 9.9 This is not purely a theoretical distinction, as the fire at Grenfell Tower illustrates. There is a significant obligation for the regulation and enforcement of the built environment, together with emergency response, and this can bring attendant complexity, the results of which become apparent when tragedies occur.
- 9.10 In addition, there is a very different historic governance context for the fire and rescue sector, which is borne out of local governance and from where

organisational cultures derive. There are now seven governance models of fire and rescue authorities in England, the majority of which are aligned to local government.

- 9.11 There are also very different terms and conditions arrangements involving a National Joint Council (a Whitley Body) as opposed to a national pay review body, and a significantly different industrial relations context. It is unlawful for police officers, for example, to take industrial action, where there has been a very significant industrial action dimension to the fire sector, as the EAP Report identifies. It therefore follows that industrial relations is a greater significant aspect of the fire landscape than it is for the police.
- 9.12 This is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive commentary; it is to illustrate a point. Further, I consider that none of these issues need provide a barrier and the governance change brings with it as much opportunity as it does risk. The importance here is in highlighting the importance of recognising the differences between the services, as much as similarities, and to stress the need to view fire issues on an equal footing to police issues.
- 9.13 In this context, it is important to ensure the right level and seniority of management capability and capacity to support the period of transition and maintain the behavioural cultural change that has been embarked upon by a highly motivated, and refreshed, service leadership team. Put simply, it is important that the succession planning arrangements being developed should take account of this risk and recognition taken of the journey so far - and yet to be travelled - to embed the required cultural norms.
- 9.14 In this regard, it is encouraging to see the recent formation of a joint Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). I am confident that HMICFRS will already be aware of the issues that emerged from the Lucas Report. I hope that the Inspectorate can now take a keen interest in supporting the momentum for change that has been started in Essex FRS, together with the organisational governance change to the PCC. The EAP Report makes recommendations in support of this.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND ROLE OF EAP

- 10.1 I would like to express my appreciation to Essex Fire Authority for the opportunity to assist in progressing this important work.
- 10.2 I deem that there are important lessons learned from the work in Essex FRS that are applicable to many other fire and rescue services.
- 10.3 As indicated, I would therefore support the recommendations to share the work and the EAP Report more widely including with the Home Office, HMICFRS,

NFCC and the LGA⁶. The EAP Report touches upon recent announcements around the Inspection of Avon Fire and Rescue, as well as the Thematic Review around Culture and Diversity being proposed by the new Fire Inspectorate, and I think the work done here has much to offer the sector, thus, and as part of that change.

- 10.4 I acknowledge that much work remains to be done in Essex FRS, it is only at the stage of foundations having been built and the EAP Report does not seek to paint a roseate picture in this regard. I agree with that position.
- 10.5 I would also be remiss if I failed to comment here on the wider role of the EAP.
- 10.6 The model of an EAP, as deployed in Essex FRS, had not been utilised before in the fire and rescue sector and had only been used in limited circumstances in wider local government.
- 10.7 Initially, relationships were understandably tense, and the role of EAP was confusing to many stakeholders. The discussion document assembled was excellent and helped reduce ambiguity to a degree, but there was also a need for excellent interpersonal relationship management, as well as professional relationship building, as there were tough issues to be addressed and taken forward. It was necessary for the EAP to apply pressure, scrutinise and challenge the seriousness of the intent of the organisation to make change, and they fulfilled that role well.
- 10.8 In consequence of the need to strike a chord somewhere between scrutiny and support, the perspective of different stakeholders towards the role and the efficacy of the EAP has been - and remains - mixed.
- 10.9 There are some stakeholders who acknowledge the personal credibility of the expert advisers and consider their contribution helpful, so in that respect, they do not hold a negative view. By the same token, they had hoped that the EAP would bring about more extensive and faster change than they currently observe or feel, given the strength of the language in the Lucas Report. In that sense, they retain a degree of disappointment.
- 10.10 Whilst this is an entirely legitimate point of view, and should be acknowledged in the spirit of openness, it is a minority perspective. The clear majority of the feedback I have received about the EAP has been overwhelmingly positive.
- 10.11 Most stakeholders agree that little would have changed had the EAP not been involved, pushed where required and supported where necessary. It also added breadth and expertise to a stretched management team. The positive impact the EAP has been able to achieve is impressive, given the tension and difficulty

⁶ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association.

in the immediate aftermath of the publication of the Lucas Report, and the complexity of the background and context of the issues that have also needed to be addressed.

10.12 Although I have acknowledged considerable work remains to be done, I welcome and commend the excellent contribution, and the enormously important role played by the EAP collectively, but also the expertise of individual members of the team.

10.13 I can only concur with the view expressed that little would have happened without the EAP, and any initiatives commenced would likely have quickly run out of steam.

10.14 In the EAP Chair's Report, he comments on the costs of the EAP and openly questions the issue of value for money. In my assessment, Essex Fire Authority has had extremely good value from the work of the EAP.

10.15 In the introduction to this report, I outlined my purpose being to evaluate whether the time had come to stand down the EAP.

10.16 My view is that the change of governance in October and the associated transition arrangements, alongside the assessment of a more normalised organisation, represent a milestone.

10.17 The EAP Report summarises the view well and is worth restating:

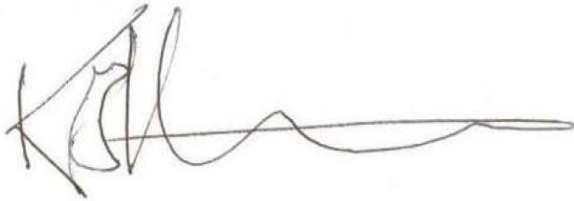
- ***Members of the EAP have never tried to suggest that, at the end of their period associated with Essex there would be industrial harmony, or that all the sensitive issues that have bedevilled Essex (and others) for many years would be resolved.***
- ***Quite the opposite and there is little doubt, as we have conceded all along, that some people will have negative feelings that change isn't happening quick enough – or at all. So, an optimistic view will not be universally shared or likely to be unanimously endorsed.***
- ***On the other hand, it also feels to many people that the manner of the way in which difficult issues can now be dealt with in Essex, is much more like any other fire and rescue service, rather than being different or extreme. The future may still involve industrial action and/or dispute, as this is the reality of the world we live in. The difference is that our hope would be that now, in Essex, this more antagonistic approach would be a last resort, instead of a first step.***

11. **CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 As mentioned in the introduction above, this document should be read in conjunction with the EAP Chair's Final Report and the overview of the Chief Fire Officer. I do not propose to repeat the commentary in either of those documents here.
- 11.2 I consider that the Final Report of the EAP, and to a large degree the report of the Chief Fire Officer, both provide extensive commentary on the activity that has occurred in Essex FRS to develop culture change over the last two years. Although each document provides a slightly different perspective, when considered together they provide a wide-ranging and far-reaching picture and overview.
- 11.3 I would stress that I consider the analysis and commentary offered in the EAP Final Report around Organisational Climate, Organisational Culture and Fire Service Culture is particularly useful in providing vital context for the new leadership of the PCC. It is imperative that this is given serious consideration, not just through the transition process, but also during the many years that will follow under the new governance arrangements.
- 11.4 Instead of duplication, I have restricted my comments here to a consideration of the feedback I received and my interaction with key stakeholders during my time in Essex FRS, as well as my review of the documentation and reports referred to.
- 11.5 It is apparent that this has been an enormously complex situation unfolding over several years. While there were several catalysts for the Lucas Report, the circumstances encountered did not occur overnight. The events that initiated the review were more the symptoms of a deeper problem than they were the cause.
- 11.6 As the Adrian Thomas Review⁷ identifies, there is a culture issue across the whole fire and rescue sector, as well as in Essex FRS, that has similarly unfolded over many years. However, the issues have been patently worse and have come to a head in Essex FRS for several reasons. These reasons must include the situation around the professional leadership of the organisation over the last few years, exacerbated by the troubled and turbulent character of the industrial relations setting in Essex FRS.
- 11.7 My conclusion is that now is the right time for the EAP to withdraw from their official role in Essex FRS.

⁷ [Independent review of conditions of service for fire and rescue staff in England. February 2015. Adrian Thomas](#)

- 11.8 Moreover, I would add the caveat and a recommendation, considering the difficult issues touched upon, that the PCC considers the use of any or all the experts to support his transition programme.
- 11.9 I conclude by again thanking Essex Fire Authority and Essex FRS for the privilege and opportunity to contribute and may I wish elected Members, the PCC and members of Essex FRS every success in their future endeavours.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Ken Knight', followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that extends to the right.

Sir Ken Knight CBE QFSM DL FIFireE

LIST OF MEETINGS AND ATTENDEES

1 August 2017 - meeting with Roger Hirst - Police and Crime Commissioner

1 August 2017 - meeting with Susannah Hancock - Chief Executive; Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

3 August 2017 - meeting with Senior Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Officers:

Chief Fire Officer Adam Eckley
Assistant Chief Fire Officer Dave Bill
Director of Transformation Mark Stagg

3 August 2017 - meeting with Essex Fire Authority Vice Chairman - Councillor Ann Holland

3 August 2017 - meeting with Service Leadership Team:

Chief Fire Officer Adam Eckley
Assistant Chief Fire Officer Dave Bill
Director of Transformation Mark Stagg
Finance Director and Treasurer Mike Clayton
Service Solicitor Roy Carter
Head of Corporate Communications Emily Osborne
Head of Information & Communications Technology Jan Swanwick
Assistant Director HR Colette Black
Deputy Finance Director Glenn McGuinness
Assistant Director Operations Matt Furber
Assistant Director Performance & Data Management Tracy King

4 August 2017 - meeting with Essex Fire Authority Chairman - Councillor Anthony Hedley

4 August 2017 - meeting with recognised Staff Representatives:

Alastair Castle, James Collins and Tristan Ashby - Retained Firefighters' Union
Alan Chinn-Shaw and Gary Critch - Fire Brigades' Union
Peter Suarez and Craig Thomson - Fire Officers' Association
Sharon White - Unison

4 August 2017 - meeting with XXX Family (Family of a firefighter who had taken his own life)

LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. Essex Fire Authority and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Change Narrative for consideration by the Sir Ken Knight Progress Review
2. Expert Advisory Panel Self-Reflection for consideration by the Sir Ken Knight Progress Review
3. 11 February 2015: Essex Fire Authority - Essex Fire Authority Cultural Review Report
4. 17 February 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
5. 17 March 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
6. 18 March 2015: Policy and Strategy - Programme 2020 report
7. 18 March 2015: Policy and Strategy - minutes of the meeting
8. 15 April 2015: Essex Fire Authority - Programme 2020 report
9. 15 April 2015: Essex Fire Authority - Employee Engagement Survey update report and presentation
10. Make some Noise (First Employee Engagement Survey) next steps guidance
11. 15 April 2015: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
12. 21 April 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
13. 11 May 2015: Members Workshop - Programme 2020 agenda and presentations
14. 19 May 2015: Programme 2020 Board – agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
15. 10 June 2015: Essex Fire Authority - Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation document report
16. Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation Document 2015 - 2020
17. 10 June 2015: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
18. 16 June 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting

19. 21 July 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
20. 11 August 2015: Programme 2020 Trade Union Workshop - minutes of the meeting
21. 18 August 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
22. 2 September 2015: Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service report by Irene Lucas CBE
23. 2 September 2015: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
24. 15 September 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
25. 21 September 2015: Programme 2020 Trade Union Workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
26. 7 October 2015: Essex Fire Authority Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service report
27. 7 October 2015: Essex Fire Authority Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Initial Response report
28. 7 October 2015: Essex Fire Authority - results of first stage Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation report
29. 7 October 2015: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
30. 21 October 2015: Managers Conversation agenda and presentation
31. 21 October 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
32. 27 October 2015: Programme 2020 Trade Union Workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
33. November 2015: Programme 2020 the story so far
34. 13 November 2015: Programme 2020 Trade Union Workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
35. 17 November 2015: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - establishing a sub group of the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee to provide the governance oversight and scrutiny to the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service report

36. 17 November 2015: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - the appointment of nominated 'experts in their field' and a 'project officer' to support the work of the Expert Advisory Panel report
37. 17 November 2015: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
38. 17 November 2015: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - minutes of the meeting
39. 17 November 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
40. 18 November 2015: Programme 2020 Trade Union Workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
41. 19 November 2015: letter to all Essex MP's regarding the future of the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex, Southend and Thurrock and update on Integrated Risk Management Plan development
42. 2 December 2015: Essex Fire Authority - progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
43. 2 December 2015: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
44. December 2015: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum terms of reference
45. 4 December 2015: Programme 2020 Trade Union Workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
46. 7 December 2015: Inaugural Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum
47. 10 December 2015: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - proposed governance arrangements to be adopted for Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's Cultural Change Programme report
48. 10 December 2015: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - minutes of the meeting
49. 15 December 2015: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
50. 18 December 2015: Members workshop - Programme 2020 agenda and managing organisational change presentation
51. 18 December 2015: Members workshop - Programme 2020 presentation

52. January 2016: Expert Advisory Panel newsletter
53. January 2016: Management review report
54. January 2016: Expert Advisory Panel terms of reference for reviewing disciplinary and grievance cases
55. January 2016: Expert Advisory Panel review of discipline and grievance draft report
56. 7 January 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee Cultural Review Sub-Group - progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
57. 7 January 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - minutes of the meeting
58. 13 January 2016: Essex Fire Authority - approval of proposals for the Authority's second public consultation in respect of changes to the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex, Southend and Thurrock report
59. Consultation document for Essex Fire Authority - Options for Change 2016 - 2020
60. 13 January 2016: Essex Fire Authority - progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
61. 13 January 2016: Essex Fire Authority - Independent Review Action Plan report
62. 13 January 2016: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
63. January 2016: Managers briefing
64. 19 January 2016: Expert Advisory Panel minutes of the meeting
65. 19 January 2016: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
66. January 2016: Cultural review action plan highlight report
67. 25 January 2016: Programme 2020 Trade Union workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
68. 25 January 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum
69. February 2016: Managers briefing presentation

70. 10 February 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee Cultural Review Sub-Group - progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
71. 10 February 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - minutes of the meeting
72. 16 February 2016: Expert Advisory Panel minutes of the meeting
73. 16 February 2016: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
74. 17 February 2016: Essex Fire Authority - progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
75. 17 February 2016: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
76. 22 February 2016: Employee engagement survey results presentation
77. 23 February 2016: Letter to Essex MPs regarding the options for change to Essex County Fire and Rescue Service 2016-2020
78. 29 February 2016: Programme 2020 Trade Union workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
79. March 2016: Expert Advisory Panel newsletter
80. March 2016: Expert Advisory Panel improving industrial relations report
81. Consultation and Negotiation Framework Agreement
82. March 2016: Cultural Review Action Plan Highlight Report
83. 10 March 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - Senior Management Review report
84. 10 March 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - minutes of the meeting
85. 10 March 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum
86. 15 March 2016: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
87. 15 March 2016: Expert Advisory Panel minutes of the meeting
88. 16 March 2016: Members workshop - Options for Change 2016-2020 presentation
89. 16 March 2016: Policy and Strategy Committee – Blue light collaboration report

90. 16 March 2016: Policy and Strategy Committee - minutes of the meeting
91. 31 March 2016: Expert Advisory Panel report regarding 31 March 2016 workshop
92. April 2016: Expert Advisory Panel newsletter
93. April 2016: Service Strategy Employee Engagement and Internal Communication plan
94. April 2016: Cultural Review Action Plan highlight report
95. 4 April 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - appointment of the Director of Transformation - minutes of the meeting
96. 5 April 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee Cultural Review Sub-Group - progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
97. 5 April 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee Cultural Review Sub-Group - minutes of the meeting
98. 13 April 2016: Essex Fire Authority - progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
99. 13 April 2016: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
100. 15 April 2016: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
101. 15 April 2016: Expert Advisory Panel - minutes of the meeting
102. 18 April 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum
103. 27 April 2016: Members workshop - Programme 2020 agenda and presentations
104. 18 May 2016: Programme 2020 Trade Union workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
105. 20 May 2016: Programme 2020 Board - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
106. 20 May 2016: Expert Advisory Panel minutes of the meeting
107. May 2016: Expert Advisory Panel newsletter
108. May 2016: Cultural Review Action Plan highlight report

109. May 2016: Essex County Fire and Rescue Service report on uniform considered at the May 2016 Expert Advisory Panel formal meeting
110. 26 May 2016: Leadership Forum session 1 (session re-run on 1 July 2016)
111. 26 May 2016: Letter to all Essex MPs regarding Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Options for Change 2016-2020
112. 31 May 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum
113. June 2016: Expert Advisory Panel updated improving industrial relations report first presented in March 2016 (see item 80)
114. 8 June 2016: Essex Fire Authority - presentation by Acting Chief Fire Officer and Acting Chief Executive
115. 8 June 2016: Essex Fire Authority - Corporate Strategy 2016-2020 report
116. 8 June 2016: Essex Fire Authority - Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016-2020 report
117. 8 June 2016: Essex Fire Authority - Options for Change 2016-2020 consultation results report
118. 8 June 2016: Essex Fire Authority - Options for Change 2016-2020 change programme report
119. 8 June 2016: Essex Fire Authority - minutes of the meeting
120. 9 June 2016: Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee - appointment of Director for Prevention, Protection and Response - minutes of the meeting
121. 9 June 2016: Letter to all Essex MPs and Chief Executives regarding Programme 2020 options and details of the outcome of the 8 June Essex Fire Authority meeting
122. 22 June 2016: Programme 2020 Trade Union workshop - agenda, related documents and minutes of the meeting
123. 22 June 2016: Policy and Strategy Committee - progressing the Lucas review recommendations for Essex Fire Authority Members; specifically, in relation to the outcomes of facilitated workshops held February-March 2016 report
124. 22 June 2016: Policy and Strategy Committee – proposed approach for the independent review of progress made against the Lucas Review recommendations
125. 22 June 2016: Policy and Strategy Committee - minutes of the meeting
126. July 2016: Current version of the Independent Cultural Review Action Plan

127. July 2016: Expert Advisory Panel - Succession Pooling and Leadership and Management Development report
128. July 2016: Essex County Fire and Rescue Service - Succession Pooling and Leadership Management Development report
129. Essex Fire Authority and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Change Narrative for consideration by the Expert Advisory Panel 30-31st March 2016
130. 1 July 2016: Leadership Forum – Agenda
131. 6 July 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum – Agenda and feedback from meeting
132. 13 July 2016: Audit, Governance & Review - Agenda, documents and meeting minutes
133. 18 July 2016: Values Workshop – from this meeting a Values Statement was created. Essex Fire Authority Strategy 2016-2020 attached
134. 17 August 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum - Agenda
135. 31 August 2016: Manager Briefing – Toolkit and presentation
136. September – November 2016: List of 2020 Fire Station Visits
137. 6 September 2016: Leadership Forum – Presentation and feedback from the forum
138. 7 September 2016: Essex Fire Authority Committee - Agenda, document and minutes from meeting
139. 19 September 2016: Manager Briefing – Toolkit and presentation
140. 21 September 2016: Programme 2020 Board - Agenda, document and minutes from meeting
141. 21 September 2016: Policy and Strategy Committee - Agenda, document and minutes from meeting
142. 27 September 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum - Agenda
143. September 2016: Highlight report where People Structures Project including Management Review II and Talent Pool/Promotion Process

144. 5 October 2016: Audit, Governance & Review: Agenda, documents and meeting minutes
145. 19 October 2016: 2020 Programme 2020 Board - Agenda, document and minutes from meeting
146. 24 October 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum – Agenda
147. 1 November 2016: Leadership Forum – Session plan and presentation
148. 2 November 2016: Policy and Strategy Committee – Agenda, documents and meeting minutes
149. 3 November 2016: 2020 Programme Planning Advisory Workshop – Agenda
150. 10 November 2016: Programme 2020 Board - Agenda, document and minutes from meeting
151. 21 November 2016: Manager Briefing – Toolkit and presentation
152. 28 November 2016: Letter from the Fire Brigades Union Essex and email correspondence regarding Dispute Resolution
153. 30 November 2016: Solace Workshop Part 1 – Agenda and documents from meeting
154. 1 December 2016: Leadership Forum – Agenda, session plan and feedback from the forum
155. 6 December 2016: Your Voice Employee Engagement Forum - Agenda
156. 7 December 2016: Essex Fire Authority Committee – Agenda, document and minutes from meeting
157. 14 December 2016: 2020 Programme Planning Advisory Workshop – Agenda and documents
158. 14 December 2016: The People Project Structure Workshop – Presentation and feedback
159. 19 December 2016: Solace Workshop Part 2 – Agenda and documents
160. January 2016: Highlight report where People Structures Project shown as starting January 2017

161. 4 January 2017: Representative Body Project Updates – Projects agreed and in progress
162. 10 January 2017: Service Leadership Team Weekly Meeting – meeting minutes talking about future recruitment and the affect this has on the 2020 plans
163. 11 January 2017: Essex Fire Policy & Strategy Committee - Agenda, document and minutes from meeting
164. 12 January 2017: People Structure Project Workshop – Agenda
165. 16 January 2017: Manager Briefing – Toolkit and presentation
166. 18 January 2017: Audit, Governance & Review - Agenda, documents and meeting minutes
167. 18 January 2017: Programme 2020 Board - Agenda, document and minutes from meeting
168. 26 January 2017: Solace Workshop Part 3 – Agenda, documents and review of all Solace workshops
169. January 2017: Staff Survey
170. 1 February 2017: Representative Body Project Updates – Projects agreed and in progress
171. 2 February 2017: People Structures Project Working Group – Agenda and action points discussed
172. 2 February 2017: Dispute Resolution Proposal – Letters, Version 3 of proposal
173. 9 February 2017: People Structure project – Management Review Phase 2
174. 13 and 17 February 2017: People Structures Project Manager Session – Presentation
175. 15 February 2017: Essex Fire Authority Committee – Agenda, documents and minutes from meeting
176. 15 February 2017: Programme 2020 Board – Agenda, documents and minutes from meeting
177. 15 February 2017: Management Review II Working Group – Agenda

178. 16 February 2017: People Structures Project Group – Agenda, presentation and action points
179. 28 February 2017: Leadership Forum – Agenda and feedback from all sessions from July 2016 to February 2017
180. 13 March 2017: Cultural Review Sub-Group of the Principal Officers Human Resources Committee – Agenda and documents
181. March 2017: Fire Station Plan
182. March 2017: Staff Survey Results
183. March 2017: Dispute Resolution Agreement
184. 1 March 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FBU and Unison) – Agenda and Meeting Notes
185. 2 March 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FOA) – Agenda and Meeting Notes
186. 9 March 2017: Grey/Green Book Workstream Meeting – Agenda and Meeting Notes
187. 13 March 2017: Cultural Review Sub-Group of the Principal Officers Human Resources Committee – Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes
188. 14 March 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FBU) – Agenda, Action Points and Meeting Notes
189. 14 March 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FOA) – Agenda and Meeting Notes
190. 15 March 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (Unison) – Agenda and Meeting Notes
191. 15 March 2017: Policy and Strategy Committee – Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes
192. 15 March 2017: Programme 2020 Board – Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes
193. 15 March 2017: Management Review II Meeting - Meeting Notes

194. 16 March 2017: People Structure Project Monthly Workstream Meeting – Agenda, Action Points and Meeting Notes
195. 20 March 2017: Managers Briefing – Presentation
196. 20 March 2017: Diversity Action Group – Agenda and Action Points
197. 21 March 2017: Rank to Role Workstream Meeting – Agenda and Meeting Notes
198. 22 March 2017: Flexi Duty Rota Workshop – Agenda, Presentation and Meeting Notes
199. 28 March 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FBU) – Agenda and Meeting Notes
200. 28 March 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (Unison) – Agenda and Document
201. 30 March 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FOA) – Agenda
202. 3 April 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FOA) – Agenda
203. 4 April 2017: Rank to Role Workstream Meeting – Agenda and Meeting Notes
204. 5 April 2017: Leadership Forum – Feedback from the forum
205. 11 April 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FBU) – Agenda and Meeting Notes
206. 12 April 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (Unison) – Agenda and Meeting Notes
207. 12 April 2017: Essex Fire Authority Committee – Agenda, documents and minutes from meeting
208. 12 April 2017: Managers Briefing – Presentation
209. 18 April 2017: Rank to Role Workstream Meeting – Agenda and Meeting Notes
210. 19 April 2017: Programme 2020 Board – Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes

211. 20 April 2017: People Structure Project Monthly Workstream Meeting – Agenda and Meeting Notes
212. 20 April 2017: Grey/Green Book Workstream Meeting – Agenda and Meeting Notes
213. 25 April 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (FBU) – Agenda and Meeting Notes
214. 26 April 2017: Formal Consultation Meetings held with Rep Bodies for all People Structure Projects (Unison) – Action Points
215. 27 April 2017: Flexi Duty Rota Workshop – Presentation and Meeting Notes
216. 2 May 2017: People Structure Project Development Evenings – Agenda, Action points and Meeting Notes
217. 2 May 2017: Corporate Planning Day Agenda
218. 8 May 2017: Managers Briefing – Presentation
219. 10 and 11 May 2017: Flexi Duty Rota Consultation Meeting with Rep Bodies (FBU & FOA) – Meeting Notes
220. 17 May 2017: Programme 2020 Board – Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes
221. 18 May 2017: People Structure Project Monthly Workstream Meeting - Agenda, Action Points and Meeting Notes
222. 14 June 2017: Essex Fire Authority Committee – Agenda and Meeting Minutes
223. 19 June 2017: Diversity Action Group – Agenda, Action Points and Meeting Minutes
224. 21 June 2017: Programme 2020 Board – Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes
225. 21 June 2017: Policy and Strategy Committee – Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes
226. 12 July 2017: Audit, Governance & Review: Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes
227. 17 July 2017: Managers Briefing – Presentation

- 228. 20 July 2017: People Structure Project Monthly Workstream Meeting
- 229. 27 July 2017: Programme 2020 Board – Agenda, Documents and Meeting Minutes
- 230. July 2017: Staff Survey Results
- 231. People Strategy 2017 – 2020
- 232. Evolving our Culture – Building on Firm Foundations and Appendices
- 233. July 2017: EAP Closure Report

FINAL REPORT of the Expert Advisory Panel to Essex Fire Authority and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service



September 2017

Steve McGuirk CBE, DL, QFSM, MA,
BA(Hons), BSc, F.I.Fire.E.

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SECTION 1

1.1 Remit of the Report

This report is presented to Essex Fire Authority in my capacity as Chair of the Expert Advisory Panel (EAP). Although, it does not purport to represent the unequivocal opinion, or perspective of each member of the Panel.

Members of the EAP all bring specific expertise and could have written their own final report, and each version may well have placed a stress or an emphasis on slightly different aspects than this version. Alongside this, the process of brokering agreement around all the detail and precise wording of a document such as this could have consumed considerable time and effort, with only marginal benefit for the key stakeholders involved.

Accordingly, I have accepted the responsibility for assembling our final thoughts and comments.

Notwithstanding this small qualification, there is wide agreement amongst all members of the Panel around the content and there is also clear agreement around the conclusions and next steps.

Steve McGuirk

CBE, DL, QFSM, MA, BA (Hons), BSc, F.I.Fire.E.

1.2 Introduction

Since starting to draft this report, several weeks ago, the situation facing the country, and especially our emergency services, changed dramatically and decisively.

The snap General Election was called, with the stated purpose of delivering a big parliamentary majority and was intended to be focussed around Brexit. In the event, however, the election centred on many other issues and resulted, effectively, in a minority government.

But, more pertinently, the process and nature of the campaign and associated events fundamentally changed the landscape. Not just politically, and what that will mean to public policy going forward but, because of the terrorist atrocities in Manchester and London during the campaign itself, immediately followed by the Grenfell Tower tragedy and a further terror attack within days of a new government being formed; the specific issue of the fire and rescue sector.

These events have served to highlight and underscore the risks we now face as a society – all too tragically illustrating new risks as much as the old ones – risks for which the fire and rescue service is very much on the front line. But they have also served to adjust the standing and expectations of the emergency services in the eyes of the public, as well as shift the view of government.

It is too early to say what the impact of this conflation of events and politics will be for Essex Fire and Rescue Service, but it is impossible, by the same token, to countenance the idea that there will be minimal impact.

This report endeavours to say more about the issues, possibilities and potential consequences that may arise from this situation later. But the comments must have a measure of conditionality and caution, and to a degree be time stamped, as much is still unfolding.

In the first instance, however, the report should rightly focus on the more specific issues associated with the 2015 Cultural Review.

1.3 Independent Review of Culture

Several factors and difficult, even tragic, situations coalesced in early to mid-2015 leading to a decision being taken to invite an Independent Review into the Culture of the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex. These matters included the suicide of two serving firefighters, serious allegations of bullying and harassment resulting in an extensive police investigation (Operation Neaton), ongoing and protracted industrial disputes and, finally, the long-term absence/ suspension of the Chief Fire Officer.

Subsequently, **Irene Lucas CBE**, a former Acting Permanent Secretary and local authority CEO with extensive experience, was asked to undertake the Review. She reported her findings early in September 2015.

The terms of reference for the Review were:

To address the long-standing challenges within Essex FRS to ensure that it is in the best possible position to deliver for the communities of Essex in the future.

To undertake an independent root and branch review of the organisation relating to its culture and relationships and the impact they have on the successful operation of the service.

Given the origin of the work, her report was never going to be positive and, indeed, it contained extensive negative observations, describing the culture as ‘toxic...with pervasive bullying...’ It led to thirty-five recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Fire Authority in October 2015.

The report itself talks more about the nature of the circumstances culminating in this decision to hold an Enquiry/ Review, and so it is not proposed to expand on that history here, as it has been well rehearsed.

The Lucas Report acknowledged that everything in Essex was far from bad, and some good things were happening. However, the tone and content of the Report surprised many in terms of the depth of concern and criticism she expressed. It is inevitable, consequently, and it is a natural reaction when reading comments of this nature that different stakeholders will view and interpret the situation through their own prism, and almost inevitably seek to be more critical of others than themselves.

There will also be an inclination to attribute responsibility, even apportion blame, for the circumstances encountered.

But any objective evaluation of the report reveals that all parties were seen to be at fault, though criticism was reserved more especially for those in leadership positions. Whether that was the professional leadership, the political leadership or, indeed, the leadership of staff as representatives. Everyone needed to accept some responsibility for the situation that Irene Lucas related.

Lucas went on to articulate a need for a *radical overhaul* but, in doing so, expressed concern at the apparent absence of a congruent guiding mind, able to navigate a course forward. This concern was of such an order of magnitude that, within her recommendations, she therefore included the idea of appointing an **Expert Advisory Panel (EAP)**. In fact, it was the first of her key recommendations.

(It's worth mentioning that the original report deliberately did not expand too much on the wider context of the fire and rescue sector, and the wider cultural history of the service, as this had the potential for the key stakeholders to deflect their local responsibility for acting. However, that wider context is important, as was touched upon at the outset, and it will remain so going forward in a rapidly changing and highly politicised world.

Accordingly, context will be considered later in this report as part of considering the situation in Essex now, the role of the EAP and the implications of some of the issues going forward.)

1.4 Expert Advisory Panel (EAP)

It is fair to say that there is not too much detail in the Report in relation to what was foreseen when making the recommendation for an Expert Panel. There was no role map or job description. Rather, as intimated, it appears as much an anxiety about the shortfall of confidence in the collective leadership to make progress, as it was a clearly expressed role.

It was seen to be more about the critical friendship of expert advisers to steward the future direction and future change. It was also seen to be active in relation to supporting the development of a turnaround action plan and overseeing the implementation of the other recommendations; with some specific roles identified for the Panel in superintending better discipline and grievance procedures.

It is understood that this was, and remains, the first time such a Panel has been recommended and deployed in a Fire Authority. Thus, there was no ready-made solution or model to lift off the shelf, with clear parameters, boundaries or a way of working already identified and established. In fact, there is no precedent for an Authority even to invite a review of the nature of the Lucas work. Elsewhere, it would likely have been imposed. Subsequent to this review, external imposition has happened in the Fire and Rescue Sector in Avon Fire and Rescue Service and the report around that inspection has recently been published¹.

As there was no precedent for what *turnaround oversight* might look like in such circumstances, there was no governance arrangement. This is plainly an important consideration and, so, is described more below.

To be clear from the outset, the Panel had no legal powers or legal authority, and was never intended to expropriate the role of the Authority or Management in any way.

Irene Lucas subsequently recommended myself as Chair of the Panel and an Organisational Development (OD) Expert, **Natasha Edmunds**, recommendations accepted by the Fire Authority. She also supported the idea of giving latitude to the Panel to expand its work with the Authority to shape a workable solution.

¹ In exercise of the Secretary of State's powers under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999 (the "1999 Act"), the Government has appointed an inspector to conduct an inspection of the compliance of the Avon Fire Authority in relation to the Authority's governance functions, including, but not limited to, the Authority's duties of accountability and assurance under the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

The Panel was established in early October 2015.

Further Panel Members and their roles, as well as support for the Panel and the Committee - and the role of **Sir Ken Knight** – were proposed and agreed. The Panel expanded to include **Jim Barbour** a former senior, trade union official and now a member of the Northern Ireland Fire Board, and **Professor Linda Dickens** the independent Chair of the National Joint Council, who is also a recognised academic and expert in the field of industrial relations.

It is worth saying that getting the best fit, in terms of panel members, involved considerable work and consideration to ensure the right skills and knowledge match, but also to ensure the right cultural fit (and to recognise that this was/is a culture change programme rather than an intervention per se). In other words, change had to be done with the Service and the Authority, not to the Service and the Authority.

The suggested involvement of Sir Ken Knight was intended to provide an added check and balance to the concept of independence, and enable some triangulation of the work of the EAP at regular intervals (see comments below on progress reviews).

1.5 Governance

It was vital for good governance, as well as assurance around the Authority's powers and duties, that the role and boundaries of the Panel were deliberated and agreed. An extensive discussion document was assembled as an early activity of the Panel and this laid out three, distinct roles:

*to provide governance and reassurance in relation to the delivery of the Independent Review Action Plan (IRAP);
to provide expertise and guidance and;
to fulfil a coaching and mentoring role for key officers.*

This document was a key part of the foundation of the EAP, and has proved to be an effective and helpful touchstone to establish appropriate boundaries for all parties since².

It is considered that the approach taken here could provide a helpful blueprint or methodology for any similar activities undertaken elsewhere in the fire and rescue sector. Indeed, it is transferrable to other public bodies where appropriate.

1.6 Timescale

The original report suggested that the Panel would need to sit for a period of two years, in recognition that culture change has no short-term fix.

This was never to suggest that, at the end of that period, everything would have been resolved and the Service in Essex would have transformed itself and its culture. The two-year suggestion was more arbitrary than exact, and an endeavour to provide a realistic evaluation of how difficult and how challenging it was likely to be to start to bring about the change required.

It is further worth noting that, at the time of writing the original report, it was not possible to foresee the scale and extent of the environmental and contextual challenges that have occurred. These have had a major impact on the activity of the EAP throughout the period. It is also certain that these environmental matters will continue to have a major impact on change going forward, as alluded to earlier, and more will be said later in the report.

² The discussion document is available for consideration –both the document and terms of reference were agreed by the fire authority.

1.7 Approach

Initially, regular monthly meetings³ were scheduled for the EAP to meet with key Officers and (EFA) Elected Members. This was to discuss progress and provide advice and guidance in relation to delivery of the Independent Review Action Plan (IRAP) and the process of culture change.

The EAP also met, informally, with EFA Members upon the conclusion of the main meetings and, in the early days, EAP also met with Members of the full Authority to establish relationships and clarity of purpose. The Authority set up a specific committee to oversee the work, the Principal Officers Human Resource Committee.

Members of the EAP also met, and have communicated frequently (at times daily), with key officers, elected members, staff and staff representatives, as well as the Clerk to the Authority.

This communication has extended to other key local and national stakeholders which, as circumstances have changed, have also encompassed Ministers and Officials of DCLG as well as the Home Office, as national responsibility for fire shifted in 2016. Communication has also been maintained with the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

(NOTE: Nick Hurd MP is now the fourth Minister with responsibility for Fire since the Lucas Review was published in September 2015.)

EAP members attended each of the Authority's Programme 2020 Strategic Change Board meetings for six months as the public consultation took place. The EAP supported the final Option that was agreed by the Fire Authority and has now moved into the implementation phase.

Accordingly, Programme 2020 has become part of the business as usual work of the Service.

In July 2016, Sir Ken Knight visited ECFRS, accompanied by the EAP Chair and members of the Panel, to undertake a Progress Review against the Independent Review Action Plan (IRAP). In the original report, it was recommended that an independent progress review be undertaken after six months. For a variety of reasons this recommendation was adapted, and an approach was developed that entailed two progress appraisals – a mid-term review and an exit review. This was felt to be a more helpful way of ensuring the effort to change was sustained. Sir Ken provided feedback on that first 2016 visit, as well as making further recommendations to elected members, in September 2016.

Following that feedback, the work of the EAP moved to a phase of lighter touch as agreed at that meeting.

³ See Documents 64, 72, 87, 101 and 106 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

The purpose of this modification to the role of EAP, a small step back if you like, was to allow the Service to make progress in practical terms and on the ground with several key issues. It was also to allow the new team of Directors and the Acting Chief the opportunity to implement plans/ actions agreed within the Programme 2020 consultation.

It also sought to take account of important environmental factors changing the landscape – most significantly the development of the Business Case for the PCC, as well as changes to Fire and Rescue Governance and policy oversight at the national level. Importantly, though, it was to allow the disciplinary processes concerning the (now) former Chief Fire Officer to make more progress. (This matter is considered more fully in Section 3.4 of the report).

There has continued to be regular contact and engagement, however, throughout the period, through the Chair of EAP and involving very regular dialogue and communication as well as visits to the Service.

Additionally, members of the Panel have held their own strategic workshop days and maintain regular email and telephone contact with each other.

Sir Ken's Exit Review is mentioned below.

In March 2017, the EAP also undertook its own progress evaluation, spanning two days and involving a semi-structured self-assessment by officers of the Service. Feedback was provided in April 2017.

Regardless of the fact the Panel has had only soft power, and acted in an advisory capacity, there has clearly been extensive engagement and commitment over a sustained period. This endeavour and approach has enabled the EAP to develop constructive, yet challenging relationships with all parties.

1.8 Costs/Value for Money (VFM)

It is important, in the interests of openness and transparency, to be upfront about the costs of this work.

In saying this, it is also important to place the costs of the EAP, supporting the Authority and Service to improve, against the costs of crisis; the legal and other costs associated with processes such as discipline and the costs of the dysfunctionality described in the Lucas Review.

In establishing a cost baseline, the Service adopted models used elsewhere in local government and analogous to this approach, for example Tower Hamlets, Birmingham and Rotherham. They undertook a projection against the number and seniority of the team members required, and the prospective number of days necessary over the two-year period, to assess potential costs. At the time, the need to provide secretariat and governance support to the Panel was not costed, but

proved to be a necessary and invaluable assistance to the work. The costs of this (circa £70k) were subsequently encompassed within the notional/headline budget established at the outset.

The estimated and projected costs of the Panel, therefore, were in the region of £400k over the two-year period, a figure widely reported in the public domain at the time.

The Authority's Treasurer has monitored the spend, as have I, as the Chair of the Panel; and the Audit Committee of the Authority has scrutinised the expenditure.

Notwithstanding that the budget also absorbed the costs of the support/secretariat/administration mentioned above, it is pleasing to record that we still predict to conclude our work in September with a saving from the original £400k budget.

All Panel members throughout this exercise have been extremely conscious of the need to ensure value for money, and the need to avoid adding any further, unnecessary burden to the difficult financial situation facing the Fire Authority in Essex.

Ultimately, it will be for others to make a judgement about VFM, however the explanation of what has happened, the approach taken and the difficulties facilitated by the work of the EAP, described in the body of this report, provides good evidence in support of a positive VFM judgement.

But, as indicated, it will be for the key stakeholders to exercise their own judgement.

1.9 Concluding Introductory Comment

The purpose of this document and final report, then, is to suggest what progress has been achieved since the Culture Review and, in doing so, to inform the final progress/exit review to be undertaken by Sir Ken Knight in early August 2017. This will be a precursor to concluding the work of the EAP – proposed to be presented at the Fire Authority in September 2017 – and to mark the two-year anniversary since the publication of the Lucas Review.

It is also relevant, at this juncture, to reflect on what has changed in the twelve months since Sir Ken's first progress review.

For this reason, the self-reflective commentary of the EAP undertaken for that first review exercise is included as an appendix to this report, a benchmark if you will, against which to consider this final document. (Sir Ken's Report to the Authority, provided on conclusion of his review, is also available on line).

The paper seeks to articulate a narrative of what has been achieved but, for the sake of completeness, to contextualise those achievements by observing more than the original report on ***fire service culture***, and the culture of Essex CFRS.

It is arranged to be clear that, whilst a lot has happened, work still needs to be done, in accordance with the view expressed at the outset of the whole exercise, and reinforced throughout the activity of the EAP.

It is worth re-emphasising that the two-year anniversary is simply a point in time for the role of the Panel to conclude.

That said, the timing is helpful, fortuitously, as, from 1st October 2017, there will be a shift of governance responsibility for the Service to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

This report, therefore, alongside the consideration of Sir Ken Knight, is intended to be helpful in relation to setting a clear agenda going forward, and against the backdrop of the new government and whatever emerges from ongoing national, strategic issues such as Grenfell Tower and the impact of shifting government fire policy.

As briefly mentioned already, it is felt important firstly to say more about the context of culture change in the fire and rescue sector as it has – and inevitably – will - impact on the pace and nature of change.

SECTION 2

2.1 Context and Background

The Lucas Review report took time to submit some of the reasons that culture is important to an organisation, and the section of the report that covers this is reproduced below:

Why Culture is Important

38. It is well understood that organisational culture is critically important both to achieving the aims of an organisation and the well-being of staff. Culture encompasses everything from an organisation's customary language, behaviours and attitudes to hierarchy, to the forms of dress, ceremonies and rituals.³ These all help to define an organisation's beliefs, values and assumptions and can be best understood as 'the way we do things around here', forming the context within which people judge the appropriateness of their behaviour.⁴
39. Questions of culture are important because they affect the performance of organisations – not just in innovative private sector businesses like Google and Facebook who invest heavily in creating a positive and productive employee culture, but for public services too, where the evidence shows that effective organisational culture helps to manage change and deliver significant public service improvement.⁵ Furthermore, an organisation's culture 'encapsulates what it has been good at and what has worked in the past, and can often be accepted without question by long-serving members'.⁶
40. If culture is to change then senior leadership is absolutely critical, in terms of both modelling behaviour and giving permissions to subordinate staff to innovate and appropriately challenge poor performance – including that of management. A significant function of leaders is to create and manage culture and successful leaders create an environment where positive teamwork, contribution and behaviours are valued and negative culture and behaviour is challenged.
41. 'One of the most interesting aspects of culture as a concept is that it helps to reveal phenomena that are below the surface, powerful in their impact but invisible and to a large degree unconscious'. It can be argued that that 'culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual' and that just as these attributes guide and constrain personal behaviour, so does organisational culture guide and constrain the behaviour of members of a group through the norms they hold.⁷
42. This Review has endeavoured to address what is called the 'cultural iceberg'⁸ that comprises the visible and invisible levels of corporate culture - from observable symbols, such as dress, ceremonies, physical settings and behaviours, to the 'invisible level' that comprises the underlying values, behaviours, assumptions and beliefs of an organisation. Therefore, the findings of this Cultural Review will attempt to surface the underlying beliefs and values of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, and their role in creating an organisational culture that urgently needs to change.

Figure 1: Lucas Report Summary of Importance of Culture (Page 14)

The wider report itself, however, did not expand too much more beyond these broad points in to describing what ‘*fire service culture*’ is, or the extent to which the culture in the fire and rescue service in Essex was/ is different to the wider sector, and the significance of that relationship.

Further, it did not refer to the concept of organisational climate in the context of culture.

This is not to be critical of the report, or to ameliorate any of the behaviours portrayed and exposed by the report, or to improve the criticism of the situation encountered during the review; quite the contrary.

But, if a programme of culture change is truly to be successful and durable, then there needs to be clarity about definitions. The difference between key concepts needs to be understood to be realistic and pragmatic in relation to what must be done to enact change in the specific organisation concerned.

It is also important to help understand why, over the last eighteen month or so, the Panel, has tried to prioritise and privilege some areas of effort over others. And tried to assist the fire service to focus on putting in place the necessary foundations to ensure that future, core culture change has the best possible chance of success.

But it is worth adding just a few notes of care and caution.

Many, many pages could be filled talking about culture generally, as well as talking about fire and rescue service culture specifically, and the purpose of this document is not to be an academic treatise. Additionally, it should be acknowledged that talking about the behaviours of people, purely in the domain of ‘culture’, is, admittedly, too narrow a point of view. The reasons that lie behind the way people act and behave at work owe as much to neuroscience and psychology, as they do to organisational culture.

It is accepted, consequently, that the best that is possible is to provide a pen picture to inform thinking and a consideration of the way forward, rather than a comprehensive or extensive analysis of culture for its own sake.

It is also accepted, accordingly, there is a risk in seeking to be as brief as possible, that any commentary does not do justice to the richness and complexity of the issue; in fact, this is a likely criticism. Nevertheless, it is felt that the exercise of added explanation remains worth the undertaking.

2.2 Reference Work

In drawing out some of the discourse on fire service culture, this report draws upon several sources, including work done by serving personnel as part of Doctoral/Academic studies, as well as work done by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire Services in the late 1990s. This is intended to be a way of providing some insight to assist the understanding of the work and activity of the EAP, rather than, again, seeking to be definitive in its own right ⁴⁵⁶⁷.

Audits and surveys done nationally and locally, subsequently (notably the Adrian Thomas Review⁸), would indicate that, despite the time that has elapsed since some of the work was done, much remains salient. Interestingly, there is now to be a return to an Inspectorate for the Fire and Rescue Sector⁹, and there have already been Ministerial announcements to indicate that one of the first actions of a new Inspectorate will be to undertake a **Cultural Review around Equality and Diversity**.

2.3 Culture and Climate – What is the Difference and Does It Matter?

Organisational culture and organisational climate both focus on how people in an organisation observe, experience, and make sense of their work environment. They are fundamental building blocks for describing and analysing organisational phenomena, though it is important to differentiate between these ideas, and to grasp what they mean in practical terms and in relation to change in ECFRS.

Although culture and climate have been approached from different scholarly traditions, and have their roots in different disciplines, they are both about understanding psychological phenomena in organisations. They are both, similarly, interpretations that rest upon the assumption of shared meanings — and shared understandings of some aspect of the organisational context.

⁴ *The significance of Fire Service Culture as an impediment to effective leadership in the Homeland Security Environment*, Cox, Alan Thomas – Dudley Knox Library, Naval Post Grad School, Monterey, California.

⁵ "Fitting In – One more working class hero" - a cultural audit (Dr Dave Baigent)

⁶ *Equality and Fairness in the Fire Service – a Thematic Review for HM Fire Service Inspectorate*, "Founding a Cultural Equality" (1999).

⁷ *Culture, Identity and Change in the Fire and Rescue Service; leadership lessons for the 21st Century*. (IFE, 2011) Dr Brian Allaway (former Firemaster/Chief Fire Officer Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service).

⁸ *Conditions of service for fire and rescue staff undertaken by Adrian Thomas (2015)*.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562972/Thomas_Review_-_for_publication_in_97-2003_format.pdf

⁹ *HM Fire Inspectorate was replaced by a Chief Fire Adviser and Advisory Team in 2007 by the then Fire Minister Angela Smith. In July 2017, HMI Constabulary was given responsibility for inspecting fire and rescue services.*

Much attention has been devoted to the question of whether the constructs are different, the same, or interrelated, primarily highlighting the similarities and differences between them. Recently, observers have taken this a step further, focusing on how and why the two constructs can be linked to provide a more comprehensive view of the higher order, social structure of an organisation.

Along those lines, it is probably helpful to view culture and climate as two complementary concepts that reveal overlapping, yet distinguishable nuances in the psychological life of organisations.

Each is deserving of attention as a separate idea or concept, as well as attention to the relationship between the two.

Further, a slightly more detailed consideration of culture and climate is important, because these notions provide a context for studying and understanding – then hopefully changing positively – organisational behaviour. That is, to change, it is first necessary to understand how the social and symbolic processes associated with organisational culture and climate influence both individual as well as group behaviours. These include turnover, job satisfaction, job performance, citizenship, safety, service quality, etc. – in short, the matters identified in the Lucas report.

2.4 Climate

Climate is an *experience-based* description of what people “see”, and what they report happening to them in an organisational situation. It involves employees’ perceptions of what the organisation is like in terms of practices, policies, procedures, routines and rewards. Hence, the focus is on the “situation” and its link to perceptions, feelings and behaviour. It can be viewed as temporal, subjective and possibly vulnerable to manipulation by people in positions of authority. Something drawn out in the Essex Culture Review’s criticism of leadership.

Climate is more “immediate” than culture, and can be sensed upon entering an organisation, through things such as the physical look of the place, the approach, the outlook and the attitudes exhibited by employees. To a degree, it can be measured and evaluated ‘objectively’ through HR/ OD tools such as staff surveys, focus groups and so on.

Climate resides within individuals in their personal perceptions of the organisational context, and so, despite the appearance of objectivity and rationality, it can vary hugely within the same organisation and, indeed, within the same sub unit.

Put in ECFRS terms, one Watch on a fire station can feel very differently about their work to another Watch at the same fire station. A wholetime firefighter can feel very differently about the Service to an On-call firefighter, and a uniformed member of staff

can feel very differently to a non-uniformed member of staff. Although, these personal perceptions can be shared and communicated in different ways across individuals, then to form more of a shared perspective which can further shape perceptions about the organisation. This phenomenon of the accretion of perception, to arrive at a *new truth*, is increasingly being influenced and shaped by social media.

2.5 Culture

Culture, on the other hand, pertains more to the fundamental beliefs, ideologies and tacit assumptions of an organisation, and is influenced by symbolic interpretations of organisational events and organisational artifacts. Culture represents an evolved context that is anchored and embedded in rituals and systems; it is much more stable than climate, has strong roots in history and is collectively held, which means it is durable and resistant to manipulation. It is much more subjective and intangible than objective, yet still shapes the behavioral norms of a group – in other words ***‘how we do things around here’***.

Culture is the mutual property of a collective (though of course there will also be many sub-cultures, as there will be many shapes and sizes of collectives). It reflects deeper phenomena, below the surface and based on emblematic meanings, a shared sense of core values and beliefs of the group(s). Although, these may not necessarily be the same as the espoused and expressed values of the organisation.

If culture explains the “why” of organisational behaviour, climate develops from that deeper core of culture, and is the observed and experienced description of “what.”

This is important, and not just of academic curiosity, because side by side with this theoretical application runs a practical application.

It is evident, from the brief explanations above, that much of what was covered in the original Essex Culture Review Report (and indeed much of the HMI Report in 1999 referred to, as well as the more recent report of Adrian Thomas) was describing the climate of the Fire Service (and Essex). It was recounting the experiences and perceptions of individuals and groups, rather than providing an analysis of the culture itself.

This viewpoint (as with the earlier comment highlighted), it should be stressed, is not to be critical of that original review work in any way. The factors that led to commissioning the independent review may well be climatic, in terms of definition; but they were nevertheless very serious and damaging to people, and they demanded proper and immediate attention.

The positive aspect of this, however, is that because climate is more transitory or ephemeral, changes in leadership style and changes in approach can – and have, to a degree – made it possible to start to realise a difference already.

During the EAP progress review in March, for example, many people described how the organisation ‘felt’ a lot better, and the staff surveys over the last two years indicate an improving picture. This sense of it feeling better is also supported by the soft intelligence and feedback to members of the Panel.

Although, as we have said many times, there is still much about the climate in Essex that can be improved, and we should state for the avoidance of ambiguity that it is vital that people work in a positive and constructive work climate for the future. The work started on values, staff engagement and better policies and procedures around matters such as discipline and performance management must therefore continue.

But, starting to change the climate is not necessarily the same thing as being able to start to influence a change to the culture of the Service at its core.

Because, that core of fire service culture is of a higher order than one organisation, and deeper than Essex, and will require a programme of change that is larger and more extensive than is possible in one Service. It is a long way from being a linear or straightforward comparison, and there are different and distinguishable dimensions of complexity (not least around governance); but it is a useful comparison to consider that the culture of the Royal Navy was not changed on one ship, or the Army by one Regiment.

This bigger change, therefore, will require deeper thought and greater intellectual consideration about what a fire and rescue service is, or should be, in the next twenty/thirty years, as much as the next two/three years. Events in recent weeks have underscored the impression that there is a deficiency of public policy thinking for the fire and rescue sector, against a backdrop of a changing and much riskier world.

There is a risk of ambiguity of purpose, therefore, and, in that uncertainty, a risk of greater fragmentation around governance. This may, ironically, result in a reinforcement of the existing culture, where staff feel safe and secure, rather than leading to reform. Moreover, from a public perspective, there is also a risk that continued ambiguity and inconsistency may fail to deliver a fire and rescue service that is suited to the challenges of this century, rather than the designed for the last.

So, in this context it is worth saying more about fire service culture specifically, and what that means for Essex.

2.6 Fire Service Culture

The fire service is often characterised by the saying, “*one hundred years of tradition unhindered by progress.*” In many ways, this is a firefighting truism. It has resulted in an organisational history, tradition and a set of practices and behaviours that have contributed to norms, values, symbols and rituals. And, it has created an identity that is deeply embedded in the service.

In 1997 – twenty years ago now – the government commissioned a review of culture in the fire and rescue service, with a focus on equality and diversity (the work briefly referred to earlier).

Some of the comments from that report are outlined more below as, once more, they resonate with the Lucas Report descriptions (as well as the more recent Thomas Report, also referred to previously) and, so, retain their relevance:

‘6.2 The service, since its modern inception in 1947 has developed a powerful internal identity. This has grown out of its early connections with the Royal Navy which resulted in a military style supported by a strong discipline code, and enforced by formal discipline regulations. This is accompanied by an almost ‘regimental’ pride, and a spirit of team working, which is essential to the operational role of the service. This ethos, and a strong spirit of service, pervades the fire service at both local and national levels.

Externally, the service's image is very much an ‘action orientated’ one. Exceptionally high levels of satisfaction and support are reported from the public at large although the broader role of members of the service is often not appreciated. The day to day mission of the service in protection of the community requires skill, courage and tenacity of the highest order. These attributes are all recognised by the public.

6.3 The internal management of the service, however, is in sharp contrast to its external image. The reaction and discipline essential to front line operations, which occupy only a small part of the service's time overall, has scant application to the routine day to day working. Yet it is retained as an element of ‘command’ power across activities that require leadership and management, rather than automatic obedience to orders.

6.4 At fire station level staff are very closely knit. There, a closed group on a ‘watch’ (shift) takes on the character of a family rather than a team. The watch duty system applied to achieve the maintenance of 24-hour availability, currently contains long periods of ‘stand-by’, so that watch members live together as much as they work together. The members of these ‘families’ stay as an entity, to the extent that in some cases, individuals may serve on the same station, on the same watch, for their whole career. As in families, the

relationships between members of watches have tensions involving power, precedence, and unwritten rules¹⁰.

6.5 Entry to the service is single tier¹¹, with all officers joining initially as firefighters. All have therefore been part of the watch culture, which they have to leave in order to achieve advancement. This advancement is as much based on experience as on qualifications.

6.6 The strength of the watch culture is such that those who are promoted onto a new watch or those who leave their own watch for further promotion are unlikely to challenge the culture. This has developed a whole-time service that appears to operate in different 'streams' with fire-fighters who decide not to pursue advancement continuing to serve at that level, and with experienced watch members often taking a lead which may be detrimental to the role of junior officers. Others achieve promotion to leadership roles, on the watch or in specialist references. A number of other 'streams' apply to those seeking advancement to more senior positions. The divisions and differences are reinforced by varying duty systems and the different conditions of service under which they serve.

6.7 These inherently hierarchical characteristics are divisive and conspire to divorce the officers from their firefighters. They also discourage personal 'investment' by these developing officers towards achieving change, so reinforcing the negative aspects of the closed watch culture.

6.8 The culture can encourage an 'us and them' mentality. This is most evident in the relationships between members of the service who wear uniform and those who do not. It also exists between specialist departments within the uniformed service. The relationship between wholetime staff and their retained colleagues are often particularly strained. This closed organisation effect is exaggerated by a 'macho' culture that requires 'laddish' behaviour and male bonding, characterised by a requirement to 'fit in'.

6.9 There is little doubt that the majority of the members of the service are comfortable with its culture, seeing most of the characteristics as strengths. The implications of this are serious, since the continuation of this sort of image to the outside world is unlikely to attract a diverse workforce, or enable the closer relationships that will be necessary in all communities, to advance

¹⁰ It should be added here that this refers largely to whole-time personnel, rather than on-call personnel (retained) who now comprise a much larger proportion of the workforce than they did in 1999 when this report was produced.

¹¹ Whilst this is no longer technically the case and there have been a small number of good examples of very senior managers whose background is not that of a firefighter, most Chief Fire Officers have still come through the single tier entry route.

community fire safety. It will also become increasingly unacceptable to the public within the community at large.'

As suggested, a comparison between these historical observations and those of the more contemporary Lucas report suggests a lot of resemblance, implying that, from a cultural perspective, little appears to have evolved over the intervening twenty years between the two assessments.

But, before jumping to be too critical of this apparent inertia, it's important to understand more about why the speed of evolution has, seemingly, been so slow.

Partly, it is because of the disruption and upheaval leading up to, and arising from, the Independent Review in 2002¹². Partly, it is because of the political discontinuity and distraction created by the failed endeavour to regionalise fire and rescue services in the early 2000s, and the associated Regional Control Centre Project. This consumed most of the available policy resources and political energy at the centre for the best part of a decade. But, partly, it is also because, to a significant degree and despite the negative rhetoric, many of the customs and beliefs that have prevailed and withstood attempts to change have emerged from the way yesteryear's firefighters fought fire. Many traditions, in fact, arose out of necessity and survival.

If we were to need reminding that, notwithstanding all the progress made with community safety, some of this need remains applicable, then the Grenfell Tower incident provides that reminder in the starkest, possible terms.

Hence, to the people in the service, following tradition remains important.

It speaks to their sense of identity - and the values get reinforced by ritualisation, as well as regular and consistent 'story-telling' at fire station level (these days often fuelled also by social media). Thus, firefighters are frequently reminded of their purpose, their responsibilities, and their proud heritage from colleagues long past. Furthermore, this consciousness of heritage also generates a sense of duty and obligation, just as much as it gives meaning to what they stand for today.

There is a quote in the Culture Report that illustrates the point extremely well:

'ECFRS is fortunate that many of its staff remain proud to work here and are totally dedicated to keeping the residents of Essex safe. 'We are a collection of people who really care about what we do' was a typical remark encountered in the course of this Cultural Review; 'We have a brand that is built on strength, honour, trust and heroes. If we are not careful we will lose all that has been earned by generations of firefighters'. This is a precious inheritance that must not be squandered.'

¹² 'The future of the fire and rescue service – reducing risk, saving lives' (Bain Report, 2002).

Key words and phrases stand out from this quote, and reinforce the importance of collective thought, pride and the idea of tradition:

- **A ‘collection of people’...**
- **Brand built on...**
- **Strength**
- **Honour**
- **Trust**
- **Heroes....and...**
- **A precious inheritance**

But, as has already been submitted, this isn’t just about Essex.

In the Second World War, Winston Churchill described firefighters as **‘heroes with grimy faces’** and, most recently (in the last few weeks) it has been interesting to observe that the reporting of the Grenfell Tower firefighting actions has deployed similar expressions to portray today’s firefighters. Sixty years on, there are many more iconic images of firefighters with smoke blackened faces, waiting to return to their life saving role at the fire. And, as indicated already, there is now the added phenomenon of social media coverage to spread those images virally and globally.

What has been striking and important from these images, however, has been the diversity of the people in the pictures – including the Commissioner of the London Fire Brigade who has rapidly, and deservedly, become a role model for women (and not just in the fire service).

So, there can be little doubt that there is much about the values and fire service culture to be celebrated and cherished and, to a degree, even nurtured; the safety of the community relies upon it.

Unfortunately, though, the situation is not without its contradictions and paradoxes.

Because, on other occasions, the behaviours that arise from how some people can interpret the sense of tradition, and the importance of their values, can have very different underpinnings. Especially when those interpretations and perceptions emerge from a relatively narrow sector of society. For all that the images of the London Fire Brigade at Grenfell have been much more diverse and positive than would have been seen in the past, it is also fair and reasonable to point out that diversity is a long way from being consistent across the sector (including in Essex).

Put simply, whilst there has been some progress, the sector/service remains not just statistically white and male; but masculine in its ethos.

In fact, if anything, recent published figures indicate that the service has reverted in relation to the diversity of the workforce over the last few years.

The reasons for this are many, but include the fact that have been thousands of posts lost because of budget reductions, there has been little to no recruitment and there have been significant terms and conditions changes, such as pension changes, that have created anger and frustration, with associated industrial action. So, they have had a brand and negative public perception impact, as much as they have had a workforce diversity impact.

The comments made above are not to be controversial, critical or political. It is acknowledged that the financial crisis has impacted on all parts of the public sector, and the need to deal with difficult and testing change is not unique to the fire and rescue community. The comments seek to explain, in part at least, the bearing of some of these bigger and real world phenomena to the culture change issue, locally, in Essex Fire.

But some of this background explains why some people's interpretation of core, fire service values can have implications for culture that can result in a very negative climate, and can produce the type of impacts and behaviours, characterised as bullying and harassment, witnessed in Essex and other FRS'.

2.7 Modernisation

Often, there is a twee expression used by commentators that the fire service needs to modernise, but the reality is that it's not at all straightforward to do so.

In truth, it is not easy for the key stakeholders even to agree on what modern looks like.

To exemplify the point, in 1960, the Fire Brigades Union launched a progressive, even bold document called, ***A Service for the Sixties***, in which they outlined a need to modernise the service.

Their vision, in fact, embraced a broadening and professionalising of the role of firefighters to include fire prevention and fire safety, using the expression transformation on several occasions within the document. So, in many respects, it was a document ahead of its time.

In unveiling the work, at the Rothesay AGM, the Gen Sec, John Horner made a powerful speech, a part of which is quoted below:

“...the 48-hour week, of course, must come and come quickly¹³. You cannot have in the sort of service that we are seeking to build the relics of a past age. You must break this tradition of long hours in the fire service. Members say, “What does this mean? What shift system? Does it mean we’re going to lose the beds? I will say this – really sticking my neck out – you are not going to make a modern fire service of it until you get rid of the beds! (Hear, hear and applause).

Nearly, sixty years on, and despite the reduction from 56 to 48 and, since 1979, now to a 42-hour week, there are only a handful of fire and rescue services that, in fact, no longer have beds and dormitories at work. The clear majority remain.

The point is not being made to be superficial, or posture about something renowned for its controversy. There are many other organisations where rest periods and rest facilities are provided in the work place, because of the nature of the role and the requirements for 24/7 availability. And so, justifications for retention can be made. But, the fact that the Gen Sec of the Fire Brigades Union sought to use the image of beds at work to embody relics of a past age, so many decades ago, demonstrates the depth of some of the symbolism and tradition associated with cultural artefacts that endure.

Many national reviews have occurred before and since the 1997 Thematic Review on culture, the most conspicuous being the national, Independent Review in 2003 that led to new, Primary Legislation affecting all aspects of the sector (including the regulatory dimension).

In addition, there have been several local reviews, expressing commentary along the lines of the Lucas Report, and there have been numerous endeavours to try to bring about culture change in the service¹⁴¹⁵.

Despite these efforts, it is evident that the prevailing culture can transcend changes to the form and structure of the service – and, most certainly, it can prevail through changes of governance.

(This is important to understand as Essex embarks upon a governance change, and where some of the business case for doing so is linked to the Cultural Review. There are already multiple governance models/ arrangements across the sector, yet still the core culture remains intact and a common thread.)

¹³ At the time firefighters worked a 56-hour week – since 1979 they have worked a 42-hour week.

¹⁴ For example, ‘Managing a Modernised Fire Service – Bridging the Gap’ was an extensive report arising from the 1997 Review published by the HM Fire Inspector in 2001. It laid out an extensive reform and transformation programme. However, because of the turbulence and change arising from the 2002/3 industrial action, then the 2003/4 White Paper and FRS Act 2004 and subsequent change programme, much of the approach and actions just dissipated.

¹⁵ CFA submitted a document entitled, ‘Are We Serious - A Strategic Approach to long term Equality and Diversity in the Fire Service’ (McGuirk 2002) to the Select Committee Enquiry into the impact of the Independent Review of the Fire Service (referenced shortly).

Significantly, it is often the culture of the service, an abstract concept, rather than individuals themselves that are blamed for bad behaviour in the fire service, meaning that rarely are individuals held to account for their behaviour – a situation once more described well in the Lucas Report and encountered by the EAP.

Part of culture change, therefore, must incorporate the need to accept and welcome difference, and develop OD/ HR approaches and systems that engender a sense of greater personal responsibility and accountability as public servants. In saying this, though, we should also acknowledge that being different can be hard, and the conditions under which firefighters make their personal and individual choices can be restrictive and limited by the formal and informal structures around them. Undoubtedly, it is influenced and, to a substantial degree, determined by the prevailing culture.

2.8 The Real Job Now and for the Future

There is an undercurrent in the commentary of the Lucas report (the quote earlier is a good example) that reflects a sense of blame around the idea or the belief that the leaders of today are careless about the precious inheritance of past generations. That many of the other matters firefighters’ – and leaders – are now being asked to pay attention to, are distracting from the *real job*.

For many personnel, their perception of what the real job is hasn’t changed, as it’s frequently reinforced by the story telling and rituals mentioned. The real job is getting ‘stuck-in’ at incidents, and training, as realistically as possible, to be prepared to do so.

Once again, the Grenfell Tower incident illustrates that there remains legitimacy in the importance of this belief or idea, and there remains a valid need.

But, it is also relevant to identify that there has been enormous social and technological change over the last few years. This has fundamentally changed the nature of risk and demand, and resulted in a wide variety of impressive and progressive community safety work, social cohesion work and prevention activity. And, the fact is, this has resulted in a substantially lower level of operational activity for fire and rescue services¹⁶ – in stark contrast to other blue light services, where demand has soared.

This is not to say that there are no fires anymore – of course, that is palpably untrue from recent events, but there are many fewer. That said, those that do occur are often more complex and challenging because of modern building methods and materials. There is still a significant cost to the Economy from the fire problem, for insurance

¹⁶ The original Lucas Report examines the reduction in incidents specifically in the Essex context and subsequent work around Programme 2020 has reinforced the data.

losses over the last few years, from these big events and commercial fires, have not seen the same reductions as losses from domestic or housing stock.

Nor does the old idea of the centrality of firefighting truly acknowledge the broader range of incidents, emergencies, risks and resilience challenges firefighters must now face in a different world – as we have all too tragically come to appreciate from the Manchester Concert and London Bridge Terrorist atrocities.

Furthermore, we should add in to this mix of emerging risks, the consequences of climate change and the events that arise from this, such as the risk of major flooding (with the East Coast and parts of Essex being especially vulnerable).

And, for all there is now a political debate about the future of austerity, there has been, and probably will remain, significant political and public expectations to secure value for money across public services. Fire will not be exempted from these expectations.

However, this is still not the end of the problem about understanding fire service culture.

Because each, specific Fire and Rescue Service – through the figurehead of the local Chief Fire Officer - can adopt a different approach to setting the formal rules, meaning that the formal culture (values) in one fire service can differ from another. There has also been an approach to local standard setting and risk assessment, arising from the 2002 Independent Review of the Fire Service, that has resulted in much more local difference between fire and rescue services. This is encompassed within the approach to integrated risk management planning (IRMPs), and the application of a loose, national framework in place of national standards. Yet, this increasing localism contrasts sharply with the backdrop of national terms and conditions, national pay bargaining and national bodies that support and advise the sector such as the Local Government Association, the Chief Fire Officers Association and the respective trade unions. Crucially, it also contrasts with a national identity of The Fire Service.

Within each local service, though, it is the Officers lower down the hierarchy who are then responsible for implementing values but, without any attempt at conspiracy or malevolence, each officer can put into practice their organisation (but often seen to be their Chief Fire Officer's) values, in a slightly different way.

Add to this possibility, the probability that at fire stations themselves (where the emphasis is still on waiting for a fire to occur and then reacting to it 'efficiently' and undertaking the operational training associated) each watch can put into practice their own (informal) understandings and values, in the shadow of the official view.

The scale of the effort of getting to the heart of something called fire service culture, which at first glance could appear straightforward, starts to become clear.

Self-evidently, this all makes for a complex, interwoven and intricate state of a national culture and deeply held, core values, alongside a local culture sharing the same or similar values (though confusingly they may be expressed differently); and many sub cultures associated with the collective service, as well as many sub cultures within each individual organisation.

Finally, to bring this description in to an even sharper focus, it's also worth pointing out that none of the discourse above has even touched upon the industrial relations history, environment and phenomenon in fire and rescue; and the massive impact this has on individuals within the service, as much as the organisation/ sector.

2.9 Industrial Relations

As with Irene Lucas' original report, this final report does not propose to go in to the industrial relations situation of the fire and rescue service in any detail.

From the EAP perspective, it is not at the root of the issue, although we recognise that the aspect of industrial relations is an immensely important part of the landscape and architecture of the sector, and has played an important part in the evolution of the service of today.

Allowing for this, it is not our function to pass a value-based commentary or judgement on whether the significance of industrial relations in fire, and how that is different to other parts of the public sector, represents a good or a bad thing. Rather, our responsibility has been to acknowledge the reality of the situation for the sector, and seek to support the means for all parties to develop the best industrial relations possible.

The point that is being stressed here, though, is that it is impossible to talk seriously about the notion of fire service culture, without recognising the juxtaposition of industrial relations.

There is a need to ensure that progress must encompass an appreciation of the legitimacy of the role of the trade unions, and acknowledge and understand the significance of the history (and legacy) of industrial relations in the fire service on the people of today.

2.10 Concluding Comment on Culture

It is contended that this reflection on some of the aspects of climate, organisational culture generally, and fire service culture specifically, is not merely an interesting or abstract set of observations, or an enhanced commentary to the Lucas Report. It is much more an applied and fundamental element to the consideration of the task that remains not just in Essex, but in the fire and rescue sector.

At its worst, the changing world of risk, demand and governance arrangements described, presents an existential crisis for the fire service as it was. It also presents something very negative to the people who believe that the current expectations and demands to change the firefighters' role are a passing phase. The past can somehow be restored (or to use the language of the general election campaigning, 'the cuts reversed').

Conversely, at its best, the constellation of factors outlined presents an almost unrivalled opportunity to re-set what a fire, rescue and public safety service of the future could be, and engage the commitment of the staff within the Service to shape and design the future, with a sense of enterprise.

The forgoing discussion has sought to identify that there is value and there is a necessity to understand the difference between key concepts of climate and culture, and has sought to describe the implications for Essex over the duration of the EAP role, and for the future.

The Lucas Review, and the update against the action plan and the key activities outlined below, largely focus on matters that change and influence the organisational climate, rather than the core culture.

As has been stressed already, this question of climate is not to be dismissed as subordinate or inconsequential; quite the reverse, it is a vital part of the change process.

It will be apparent from just the brief overview in this report that a large amount of activity has taken place to change the climate in Essex, which is both pleasing for the Panel and commendable for the Service. But the discussion above has also sought to illustrate that culture is much deeper and more embedded and, thus, much more difficult to transform; this is as much about the entrenched, core beliefs of the service and the sector, as it is about the situation in one fire and rescue service/organisation.

Culture change, self-evidently, is a complex and immensely demanding initiative, which is why most putative, culture change programmes falter.

It is more than a sense of wilful optimism or a series of nostrums, or a strung together set of actions or initiatives/ projects. And, though it can often appear that there are fulcrum moments that change the course of a situation - and the Lucas Report may be considered such a fulcrum moment - that appearance can be misleading.

The belief that even a massive change of governance will provide the answer is, similarly, uncertain.

It might.

But, then again, as has been expressed, there are many different forms of governance already and, consequently, whilst it will be a major change in one respect, it is unlikely - of itself - to be the catalyst for such fundamental culture change as may be hoped.

Prospective fulcrum moments can deceive people in to believing that there is a straightforwardness to culture change. When, the reality is much more of a long, hard slog, requiring effort and endurance, than it is an epiphany moment or a clear tipping point from one state to another.

What this all means, then, is that there are no easy answers and no action plan - or project plan - for this more ethereal aspect of the future.

Instead, it is about a focus on influencing and determining clarity for future public policy about what the fire and rescue service is and does (in other words a compelling vision); it is about developing a new narrative about what the culture should be within a more diverse and inclusive agenda (but this can only be done in partnership with the staff and the wider community); and it is about developing a style of leadership at all levels (including the governance level) that is engaging and empowered – rather than rule driven, directing and authoritative (but still within the context of an operational role, where command and control is vital).

The next section provides a broad overview of some the key changes of the last few months that have been brought about by the catalyst of the Lucas Review and the work of the EAP. These are described under the headings of *bullying and harassment, governance, management arrangements, discipline/ grievances etc., leadership and strategy and direction*.

What then follows are some conclusions, some final observations and some final recommendations of the EAP next steps.

A more expanded overview of progress against the Independent Review Action Plan has been provided by the Service and available in papers on the Fire Authority's Web site and in the public domain.

SECTION 3

EAP OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

3.1 Bullying and Harassment

The major theme, and the key message that emerged from the Lucas work reflected a sense that, not only had there been a historical culture of bullying and harassment in ECFRS, but that culture of bullying prevailed.

It would be wrong, therefore, if we did not address this important issue as the first phase of our consideration of progress.

Before saying a little more about what progress has entailed, it is probably most instructive to offer a practical instance by way of illustration.

In Section 1.3 of this paper, it was cited that one of the catalysts for the Culture Review involved the tragic deaths of two firefighters, both of which were suicides. While the specific matters were not expressly referred to in the Lucas Report in detail, for obvious reasons, the situation was unquestionably part of the landscape that led to the intense concern expressed.

There was a subsequent investigation by the Service that came to several conclusions, but only referred, obliquely, to bullying and harassment. So, it was still felt to fall short of assuring one of the families concerned that the organisation was facing up to the reality of the situation, and serious about dealing with culture change and bullying.

Understandably, this heightened their sense of frustration, rather than assisting a sense of closure or inspiring confidence that things were changing.

The role of the Panel, then, was to facilitate a fundamental shift in approach with this investigation, as leverage to a wider shift of approach.

Recently, and in preparation for the end of the work of EAP, the family concerned were contacted again, and asked if they would be prepared to offer a comment of reflection on their experience of the last few months. The quote below is part of their response:

‘... I would like it to be mentioned that, post Lucas, the original report in to xxx’s death was reviewed (as mentioned). But, the culture had to change to get a decent investigation. I think that this is a credit the service should use as a marker of introspection and willingness to receive bad news and not steer clear of it...’

It is an encouraging sign of change, that the way the investigation has been revisited, and the Service has sought to address the concerns of the family, have resulted in a more constructive outcome than was previously considered possible.

Of course, the openness of the modified approach to investigation and the need for sensitivity is welcome, but, more important, is what then happens and how the work is progressed to eradicate bullying from ECFRS. Something the family concerned, naturally, want to be stressed in this final report.

BULLYING IS NOT UNIQUE TO FIRE BUT...THERE IS STILL AN ISSUE

It should be acknowledged that bullying is not a problem exclusive to this sector. Indeed, it is a problem growing in significance in society generally, and is taking on worrying new forms, such as cyber bullying¹⁷. And, as with so many of the aspects of culture change that have been touched on, the issue is much more difficult to tackle than it is to condemn or to express a desire for change.

Perceptions of bullying or harassment may arise from the style or approach of, and nature of support for, line management; including the way in which discipline and grievance issues are handled, as well as from the treatment of those deemed to be ‘different’. The EAP has encouraged attention to these areas in the various ways outlined in this Report.

There is also a consideration that the situation in Essex Fire has an added level of complexity, in that some bullying behaviour – even intimidation - has been intertwined with the extensive level of industrial action over many years, and discussed in Section 2.9.

Some of the examples recounted to the EAP related to periods of industrial/ strike action, and speak to the antipathy between those who took strike action and those who worked, or provided resilience arrangements. Whilst it should be stressed for the avoidance of doubt that this is no justification or excuse for unacceptable bad behaviour, it does offer a fractional element of explanation for some of the phenomena described in the context of the organisational climate.

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that at the time of drafting this closure document UK Sport published a review British Cycling and the terms of reference for what now needs to be done in relation to culture, chime a lot with the terms of reference for the Lucas Review; culture change is not just an issue for the fire sector: <http://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2017/06/14/british-cycling>

It's also worth identifying that bitterness and acrimony lingers long after the end of the specific dispute or action taken (particularly if the 'return to peace' is not well managed); and the story telling, already described in the section of this report on fire service culture, perpetuates a sense of hostility.

Further, the need for the Authority to retain resilience plans and arrangements and the approach it takes to this, to fulfil its statutory obligations, preserves something of a vicious circle in this regard. As does the perception or sense that industrial action is always looming.

It becomes self-evident, therefore, that the virtue of better industrial relations is likely to be a positive impact on levels of bullying and, consequently, is in the interests of all parties; though this must encompass a commitment from all parties, as good industrial relations cannot be bought at any price.

Of course, the industrial action, legacy aspect is far from being the whole picture of bullying and harassment.

As alluded to above, there have also been other examples reported to EAP of wholly unacceptable, bullying and harassment and equally unacceptable behaviour.

Dignity at Work

The approach of the EAP, consequently, has been to encourage and facilitate the key stakeholders in the service, management and staff representatives, to look at the issue and themselves in a different way. This has now produced a co-owned, ***Dignity at Work Policy***, to provide an overarching framework and a vehicle to enable change.

It has taken time, but it was felt important that all parties bought in to the approach, willingly accepting it as the right thing to do.

Central to this, is a need for the change to be seen to be led from the top, both in management terms and staff representative terms.

Central to this, also, will be a new People Strategy (currently in draft) and new systems of performance management against the organisation's values, that establish unequivocal standards of acceptable behaviour that everyone has agreed, and committed to. Additionally, the framework needs to be clear and consistently applied to ensure that action - proportionate action - is taken in the event it is necessary.

Without mincing words, unacceptable behaviour must be dealt with quickly and even-handedly, but robustly. The work done on discipline and grievance, considered shortly, is linked and complimentary to this.

But, at the same time as it is important to have this overarching and clear framework, it is also necessary to understand that the idea of fairness, and the spirit of inclusion and equality, cannot be involuntarily forced on to people.

So, equally essential is the need to take forward a training and development approach to compliment the policy direction, which is now starting to happen.

An important step here, has been the recruitment of a new Inclusion and Diversity officer, and the awareness of this role within the Service is increasing. Dignity at Work Advisor roles are also currently being developed, which will further support the education process to ensure that the entire workforce has access to a range of support, and advice.

Recruitment, Selection and Promotion

Returning to some of the architecture of fairness, it is also vital that all recruitment, promotion and development processes are seen to be fair and open, and free of any idea of patronage or partiality.

This has led to the introduction of the rank to role assimilation process, and to the development of several, new HR/ OD process changes, including a new talent pool approach, and a new process of selection for managers, utilising assessment centre approaches.

Diversity Action Group

Finally, a growing number of staff are now participating in a new Inclusion & Diversity Action Group that meets quarterly, and represents a range of roles across the organisation.

The brief outline of some of the activity of the last few months, provided above, should not be considered comprehensive or exhaustive. There has been a significant amount of other work undertaken, seeking to promote diversity and eradicate bullying.

It has been explained that, to a degree, the issue of bullying and harassment in the fire sector is complex which, it should be re-emphasised, is not an excuse or a justification.

The national Thomas Review, though, underlines the point that the issue of bullying is part of the context of the fire services' cultural challenge nationally - as well as part of Essex' challenge.

There is little doubt that the work described here, and covered more comprehensively in background papers, has genuine intention behind it.

But there will still be people on the ground for whom the issue remains very real, and who may feel little has changed, and this remains a likely response to this EAP final report.

Accordingly, there is no scope at all for complacency.

What we have tried to do, though, is put in place a framework, an approach and some capacity and capability to stand the best chance of tackling the issues, and continuing progress. But that journey has only just started, and has a long way to go. So, we include several recommendations at the end of this report to try to ensure the journey continues and, if anything, now picks up pace now the foundations have been laid.

3.2 Governance

As established and explained in Section 1, the Authority quickly accepted and agreed the Lucas Review Report, and all the Review Recommendations. They quickly supported the introduction of the Expert Panel - as well as the necessary resources to enable it to work effectively; and they quickly agreed terms of reference and governance around roles and responsibilities.

The Fire Authority also rapidly established a subcommittee (the Cultural Review Sub-Group formed of Members from the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee) to be able to engage more in the detail of the work of the Expert Panel.

The EAP worked closely with senior managers to develop a comprehensive action plan against all the Culture Review recommendations, the so-called Independent Review Action Plan (IRAP). This happened within a few weeks.

Of course, merely having a plan does not of itself achieve anything. Further, a plan developed simply to address the Lucas Review recommendations was always going to be too well-defined to integrate fully with the many other activities and arrangements that make up a complex, cultural landscape.

On the other hand, it was a very positive start, and it is also certain that the absence of a plan means little will happen.

The IRAP, therefore, formed a large body of the work of the Panel in the first few months of our work. It was monitored and progress chased at monthly meetings and been supported by regular progress reports to the Full Authority from the Chair of the EAP. The whole approach has been supported by extensive and well-organised Project Management arrangements, and resourced accordingly.

Taking Back Responsibility

In 2016, the Director of Transformation was appointed (discussed below under *management arrangements*), and quickly accepted responsibility for day-to-day management of the IRAP. This was to facilitate the EAP to step back from this more tactical dimension of their role. The 'offer' to do so was viewed as a positive sign of a growing level of maturity, and an acceptance of increasing leadership responsibility within the organisation. (See also comments below on the significance of this Director role and, as mentioned, the expanded assessment of progress against the IRAP is included as another appendix to the accompanying Authority paper).

Good progress continues to be made, with a large proportion of the plan complete, though the recommendations at the end of the report also encompass a need for the PFCC to review the IRAP, and then to sign off the plan when he is satisfied it has been completed.

3.3 Management Arrangements

The Lucas Review threw a spotlight on a need to review the management structure of the Service and especially the top tiers, and made this a specific task of the EAP.

Interestingly, in the recently published Inspection Report in to the governance and stewardship of Avon Fire Authority, reference is also made to the need to undertake an urgent review of the top management levels of that organisation, with a view to delayering and improvement.

EAP Members, thus, advised and supported the A/CFO in completing the Essex Management Review in December 2015.

This was the biggest review of these levels of management undertaken in many years, and resulted in a new and much slimmer structure, with several recommendations around streamlining the top of the organisation.

The Authority agreed a new structure on 13 January 2016.

The next layers of the organisation still need reviewing by the Service to align to this new senior management structure, as well as aligning to the outcomes of Programme 2020 and addressing the diversity agenda (see comments on this below).

However, the situation has been complicated by the extended discipline investigation around the Chief Fire Officer, as well as other investigations that affected senior personnel. Further, the announcement of the potential shift of governance to the PCC was made in late 2015/ early 2016, indicating that, whilst it was important to make progress, it would not help any new, political leadership to make embedded changes to key, senior positions at this stage.

As a result, an interim structure was agreed.

As part of this, an interim **Director of Transformation** was appointed on a two-year contract. We anticipated that this role would be a key and important part of changing the dynamic of the professional leadership of the Service, and this has proved to be the case.

Additionally, a new, substantive **Director of Service Delivery** was also appointed, again, a key leadership role for the Service; as well additional structural changes around the Treasurer and other, Senior Leadership Roles.

The role of the Chief Fire Officer has continued to be undertaken on an acting up basis, and filled by the substantive Deputy Chief (see comments on discipline below). It is understood that there is a clear intent to resolve this situation in the longer term, now the outcome of the PFCC Business Case is determined¹⁸.

The transition from the old structure to the new (but in the first instance interim), and the reconfiguration of the senior management arrangements, inevitably involved personnel changes that, in the immediate aftermath of the Lucas Review, could have been extremely difficult. Understandably, there was a heightened level of sensitivity, and people at risk of displacement.

In fact, the transition occurred in a positive way, and the HR implications of people changing their job roles and/or leaving the organisation through a variety of HR mechanisms was managed well. Although, of course, there were difficult decisions for the Service and difficult personal decisions for those involved.

3.4 Discipline/Grievances etc

The EAP quickly initiated a Discipline and Grievance Sub-Group (as recommended in the Lucas Review) led by the Chair of EAP, which reviewed the extant discipline and grievance cases, as well as meeting Trade Unions and staff to understand the cultural issues that lay behind the Lucas Review comments in this area.

The overall conclusion was that the issues were less about procedures and more about points of principle, and a concern for how these issues were handled in practice, linked to building trust and mutual respect.

There were also significant questions around outstanding, disciplinary cases emerging from the Police Investigation, *Operation Neaton*.

Several people were charged, and court cases were started because of the Neaton circumstances, but these all either fell, or were withdrawn. The consequence was a need to develop and agree a practical mechanism that would deal with the

¹⁸ It is understood that this issue has now been resolved and the A/ CFO has been substantiated, though with a short term set of goals around the strategy to manage the transition to a PFCC.

seriousness of the historical situations concerned. But, also enable proportionate discipline action to be taken and a sense of closure and fairness to be applied in the current world, against a more contemporary backdrop.

EAP was requested by the relevant parties to assist, and a new approach was agreed which went some considerable way towards striking this difficult balance.

Panel members also facilitated the involvement of ACAS, to assist all parties to identify key issues and potential solutions around discipline and grievance matters. In addition, ACAS sought to assist in developing a more meaningful, workable and proportionate set of procedures and protocols to deal with these key HR issues, as well as tackling the bullying and harassment concerns debated earlier.

The ACAS vehicle should help foster the development of a more trusting approach to enacting discipline and grievance, but, as will be noted again from the recommendations in the next section, this remains work in progress.

Chief Fire Officer Investigation

On the question of discipline, it would be wrong if we did not comment here, on the situation that was originally identified as both urgent and significant - and has remained so for the bulk of the EAP engagement.

And that has been the difficulty in bringing to a resolution the situation of the Chief Fire Officer.

There have been many factors associated with the length of time taken, and there has been significant complexity involved, which we have acknowledged and, to a degree, been sympathetic to, over the course of our work.

Further, it was important that due diligence and due process were not only exercised, but seen to be exercised, and the way different parties – not the Authority it should be emphasised – regularly put matters in to the public domain and the media, did not assist the ability to make headway.

In many respects, this situation was beyond our control, as our remit was no more than that which was outlined by the original report. This was signalling concern about the effect on staff, and the impact on building momentum for cultural change.

The Panel played no direct role but, throughout our work, we sought to apply appropriate pressure in the public and staff interest. We regularly recorded the fact that, from the EAP perspective, this issue remained hugely significant in terms of impact on culture change.

In the event, the Authority resolved the situation, and dismissed the Chief Fire Officer for gross misconduct in April 2017.

Much of this has subsequently been played out in the media, and there remains the possibility of further legal proceedings. It would be inappropriate, therefore, to expand too far on this matter and it is not proposed to say overmuch more in this final report.

But, it is important to express a view, in the context of culture change, that the Authority had to demonstrate even handed fairness and public accountability in the way it discharged its obligations. This applies from the top of the organisation to the bottom, and against the spirit of the Nolan Principles of Public Life. So, in this context, and for all that it took a long time, the act of dismissing the Chief Fire Officer, rather than seeking an obtuse arrangement, opaque to the Service and the wider public, must represent an important and commendable step by the Authority, and should be acknowledged as such.

3.5 Leadership

The Acting Chief Fire Officer quickly assimilated the implications of the Lucas Review and, over the months since, has 'stepped up to the plate' extremely well. He has responded to the Lucas findings in an open and honest manner, willingly accepting the advice and counsel of the Panel and its members. He has also opened himself up to the challenge of key stakeholders in a constructive way.

It was pleasing that the Officer concerned was recognised for his service and awarded the Queens Fire Service Medal in the Birthday Honours 2017.

Other leaders have started to move in a similar direction though, here too, there remains some distance to travel.

The appointment of a Director of Transformation and Director of Service Delivery, mentioned already, have also been important steps in the context of leadership.

Additionally, the recruitment and appointment of a much more diverse group of people, and a more diverse range of skills to add value to the reformed Service Leadership Team (SLT) have been a welcome and significant step forward.

Elected Members have also responded positively though, as a collective, have found the leadership challenge more difficult.

In fairness, this is understandable to a degree, as they were quickly (and for many of them surprisingly) put under a public microscope for criticism, when much of their previous experience of the Service was at odds with the view that emerged from the Lucas Review. (For example, the tone of the Peer Review conducted a couple of years previously is markedly different to the tone of the Lucas Review).

Moreover, Politicians are not a 'collective or homogeneous group', united with one common sense of purpose. Rather, they are pulled in many, different political directions, either through Party politics or local politics.

So, political unity is difficult.

Furthermore, throughout the bulk of the period of the EAP work the realisation has been growing that the governance role of the Fire Authority was likely to shift to the PCC. Unsurprisingly, this has resulted in some tension, as well as concern and ambiguity about the future, especially for Members who have a long-standing association with the Authority.

Elected Members therefore, should not be unfairly judged for the reality that they face different leadership challenges to Officers.

Nevertheless, Members have responded, and a number have actively engaged with SOLACE (commissioned to support elected member development) to build their leadership capability and their awareness of their leadership role - and that work has progressed reasonably well.

3.6 Strategy and Direction

Whilst the Lucas Review was taking place during 2015, Officers and Members were already contemplating the future strategy of the Service, under the heading of Programme 2020. A key driver for this was the impending General Election in May 2015, and an anticipation that further austerity would follow. An anticipation that, in the event, was well founded with the Autumn Statement of 2015 outlining significant budget reductions that have started to materialise.

Programme 2020 was consulted on extensively, both internally and externally to develop options that were agreed by the Authority in December 2015, and then went out to further extensive public consultation in early 2016.

The Programme conflated notions of change, alongside the need for a sustainable financial plan, alongside the need for an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). And, whilst the work also sought to embrace the outcomes of the Lucas Review, the need to address these other statutory requirements, and for them to be highly visible meant, to a degree, that culture change appeared to take something of a back seat for a short period.

Thus, it was easy for key stakeholders, such as staff representatives, to portray the Programme 2020 approach as being about developing a new wave of 'cuts', and distracting from the need for culture change. Indeed, acting against culture change and reinforcing a top down approach to decision making.

It is felt that the Panel intervened positively during this period, and provided a helpful brokerage role to turn the situation around.

Firstly, by assisting the Service/Authority to modify its approach to consultation, giving more options for genuine consideration than might otherwise have been the case. And approaching consultation with staff and their representatives in an authentic way, leaving the way open for debate around the options - but still set against the reality of having to deal with austerity.

In return, the Panel actively encouraged staff and their representatives to engage in the consultation in a manner not previously experienced (which would more likely have entailed industrial action).

It should be emphasised that none of this is to detract from the excellence of the work of the Service, in respect of the Programme 2020 consultation. This should be considered best practice. But it is to propose that the role of the EAP was also subtly significant.

In the end, the consultation exercise enabled the Authority to select an Option for Change that not only enjoyed the greatest public support but was also acknowledged by staff as the best that is possible – though it was described by some as the ‘least bad’ option.

The adage used here illustrates the point that it will still be very tough to deliver the programme. Nevertheless, constructive conversations about implementation, and how to achieve that in a spirit of partnership, have happened and Authority has agreed an implementation plan that is now unfolding.

Overall, therefore, the consultation process for the Programme 2020 changes were supported and has been widely recognised as a major success. It achieved massive public engagement and attained much better engagement from staff and their representatives in real conversations about change, the like of which had not happened before in Essex. And, whilst culture change is not writ large or branded explicitly within that work - all of it nevertheless represented major steps on a more positive culture journey. The Service, the Authority and Staff Representatives should be given credit for this.

It is also important to ensure that the support for change this process has generated amongst staff is retained and nurtured as the PFCC will seek to increase collaboration with partners in other blue light services; and inevitably seek to revisit the Vision and the strategy of ECFRS.

SECTION 4

4.1 Conclusions

Overall, the view of the Panel is that, despite the complexity, illustrated by the account of the situation and the environment, and despite the rapidly shifting and continually evolving circumstances of the fire and rescue sector, as well as in ECFRS specifically, **good progress has been made.**

There must be some apprehension around expressing this view too forcibly. Several caveats have already been provided, and a number more are explained below.

Moreover, there are ongoing and difficult, national, pay negotiations that challenge the policy of a public sector pay cap; and may well lead to tension and impact on industrial relations at the local level.

That said, it remains important to create a positive direction of travel and give credit where it is due.

If the general election and the politics of the last year or so have taught us anything, it must be that hope and optimism about the future are much more appealing for people to relate to, than fear and pessimism.

It would also be hugely unfair to the many people who have worked exceptionally hard to bring about change to dismiss or reduce the significance of their efforts in any way.

As illustrated and sketched out in the previous section, and outlined more fully in papers to the Authority over the last two years, an enormous amount of work and activity has been undertaken, and significant changes have taken place. Sincere and authentic endeavours have been made to construct, then deliver, an Independent Review Action Plan (in discernible contrast to other authorities in similar situations, more reticent to grasp the need to act).

Change is starting to happen on the ground and key relationships - including industrial relations – are moving on to a more constructive and realistic footing.

The joint invitation to the NJC Joint Secretaries to facilitate discussions around an industrial relations protocol, as suggested by EAP, indicates a shared desire to move

forward in this way. The signing of the dispute resolution agreement, which laid the foundations for significant change, must be hailed a major success in this respect.

To reinforce the point about the importance of this, in March 2017, the EAP were debating industrial relations with a focus group during their progress review visit. One firefighter noted that this was the longest period he had been in the Service and had not taken industrial action, and he had recently been awarded his long service and good conduct medal for twenty years' service.

Members of the EAP have never tried to suggest that, at the end of their period associated with Essex there would be industrial harmony, or that all the sensitive issues that have bedevilled Essex (and others) for many years would be resolved.

Quite the opposite.

There is little doubt, as we have conceded all along, that some people will have negative feelings that change isn't happening quick enough – or at all. So, an optimistic view will not be universally shared, or likely to be unanimously endorsed.

Then again, it also feels to many people that the manner of the way in which difficult issues can now be dealt with in Essex, is much more like any other fire and rescue service, rather than being different or extreme. The future may still involve industrial action and/or dispute, as this is the reality of the world we live in. The difference is that our hope would be that now, in Essex, this more antagonistic approach would be a last resort, instead of a first step.

Hope and optimism, as attributes, are important, but there is a risk that they can translate in to planning based purely on 'hopeful optimism' (wishful thinking). Thus, there must still be a clear and intelligent strategy and approach to convert the aspiration of the service and its stakeholders, and the welcome (positive) statements of intent, in to action on the ground.

Moreover, the rapidly changing political climate and context, and all the other factors arising from the general election and Grenfell Tower incident etc., described previously, amplify what was already a big challenge going forward for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Accordingly, the whole fire and rescue sector (but Essex, in particular) must continue to meet the cultural challenges that are faced, and to create confidence that it is possible to start to turn things around. But as has been seen in Essex, it will require skill and leadership, as well as clarity of purpose, resilience and tenacity; and, of course, time.

4.2 Next Steps and final recommendations

Hopefully, the forgoing commentary is helpful to inform the Authority, and the PFCC of the work we have done and the underlying issues that remain, and the challenge that still lies ahead for the political, professional and staff leadership of the Service.

Outlined below are several recommendations and proposed next steps:

1. It is important to establish clarity around the future leadership and governance model of the PFCC as soon as possible. As it is breaking new ground, there will be several aspects of governance that may be clear to those who have been close to the work around the Business Case, but still confusing to many.
2. The date for the handover has been agreed and communicated, October 1, 2017. The PFCC, therefore, should ensure that the contents of this report are assimilated into the thinking around transition work, and that the progress started to change continues. Although, we accept that there is a high degree of contingency on national matters out with the control of the PFCC (see later recommendation).
3. It should be stressed that the staff of ECFRS have lived with uncertainty and lived in the public spotlight for a long time, and now need more assurance, confidence and clarity about their future; and time to get on with their work.
4. There needs to be a clear strategy to put in place a management team to take the Service forward over the next few years, under the new governance arrangements, and taking in to account risks identified in the submitted Business Case.
5. The Authority/PFCC should continue to support the Chief Fire Officer to continue the progress of addressing the culture change agenda, and deliver the outstanding aspects of the Independent Review Action Plan; as well as implement any recommendations arising from Sir Ken Knight's second (and final) Progress Review.
6. The Service should now seek to embrace the need for greater diversity and difference as a **high priority**.

This has started, but the fire sector is very much behind the pace of other, similar parts of the public sector – the Police Service, the Ambulance Service, the Prison Service and the Military – and Essex Fire is behind other parts of this sector. Put simply, Essex is a long way behind on the equality and diversity agenda, and there is a real need to pick up pace on reform in this respect.

7. The Authority/ PFCC should continue to support the joint work involving ACAS and seek to build a better industrial relations framework, following on from the dispute resolution agreement;
8. Equally, staff representatives and trade union leaders should acknowledge and accept joint responsibility for better industrial relations recognising the equivalent legitimacy of the Authority/PFCC and the senior management to advance change, and their responsibilities and legal duties to secure value for money for tax payers.
9. There has been a joint approach to developing new values and behaviours, and there is intended to be a joint roll out programme/campaign between management and staff representatives to eradicate bullying and harassment; it is vital that this is seen to be a shared agenda and progressed at speed.
10. The PFCC should continue to engage with Service/Staff Representatives to pursue the implementation agreement to deliver Programme 2020, propagate a sense of continuity, and use this to engender greater partnership and avoid further industrial disquiet.
11. The PFCC should support the ongoing development of the competencies framework, the appraisal scheme and a programme of leadership coaching and development to complement the new management structure.
12. The PFCC will need to review but, overall, should continue to support the ongoing development of Service Strategy making changes as appropriate, but in a balanced and measured way to achieve stability as far as possible.
13. The PFCC should continue to support Officer development through the outcomes of the SOLACE work as necessary, and seek to encompass any transitional and new political management arrangements associated with the governance shift to PFCC. It should be recognised that this shift, to a directly accountable individual responsible for fire, is breaking new ground, and will bring unforeseen challenges from a political management perspective.
14. To maximise the learning opportunities for others from the Essex experience it is also recommended that this report is made widely available and shared with:
 - a. Key local stakeholders – including the constituent authority leaders and CEOs and the PCC;**
 - b. The Minister with responsibility for fire, as well as associated officials and advisers**
 - c. The new Inspectorate for Fire (Sir Thomas Windsor):**

d. Political and professional leaders of other Fire and Rescue Services and Fire Authorities (including County Councils);

e. The National Fire Chiefs Council Chair;

f. Local Government Association fire sector leaders – also to include the devolved administrations as well as the Association of PCCs.

g. The National Joint Council Secretariat.

15. The purpose of sharing this report with Ministers, Officials and Inspectors is to encourage a greater level of reflection, and deeper thought about public policy and the long-term future of this important public service; especially considering the Grenfell tragedy and the changing world described.

The Organisational Climate has been improved, but it can be improved further.

However, that improvement must be sustained. This is vitally important for the welfare and well-being of the dedicated staff of ECFRS. We would also be doing the public of Essex, and the wider community, a disservice to suggest that the wherewithal to change the culture of the Fire Service lies within the gift or control of one service. Even with a fulcrum moment and fundamental change of governance. So, there does also need to be further action and activity at the national level to complement the impressive work undertaken in Essex. And central to this will be the role of the new HMI of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue.

NOTE: Notwithstanding the recommendation above to share the report widely, I consider I have an obligation, even a duty, as Chair of the EAP to write to the Fire Minister to make him aware of the contents of the report and the implications for other fire and rescue services. I also propose to do the same in relation to the Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue.

16. The PFCC should review the approach to the disciplinary situation around the Chief Fire Officer and share any lessons learned from the process and outcomes of the investigation to ensure that similar investigations in other public authorities can be achieved more quickly and effectively. Of course, this must be done without risking due process, or compromising the employment rights of the individual(s) concerned. This is consistent with the Nolan Principles of Public Life for senior officers.

4.3 Acknowledgements

It is important to conclude the work of the EAP with acknowledgements and votes of thanks.

There was great sensitivity and tension around the time that this work started, which is not at all surprising given the commentary of the Culture Review, and this was manifestly a difficult period.

But, over time, there has built a mutual respect between the members of the EAP and the stakeholders involved.

Some of the role of the EAP has entailed holding a mirror up to the organisation and being a critical friend and, on occasions, applying pressure to act, which has been challenging. But the relationships have been underpinned by a recognition and an anchor point that all parties are seeking to achieve the best outcomes for the people of Essex.

Could I, therefore, express genuine thanks and appreciation on behalf of the EAP for the way everyone in Essex has engaged, and for the privilege of unfettered access to the organisation. It is highly commendable. This is especially true of the leadership – political, professional and staff representation.

Every one of these was criticised, but all have moved to change.

From my perspective, as Chair of the EAP, could I also extend my sincere gratitude to my colleagues for their endeavour, hard work and support; and for their wise counsel, not just to the stakeholders involved, but to me in my capacity as the Chair of the Panel.

Could I conclude, also, by thanking Sir Ken Knight for his role in triangulating and assuring the work of the Panel.

Could I wish every success to the PFCC for Essex, who has already been extremely supportive of the work of EAP, in undertaking his new role. And, could I also express our hope that he uses the positive foundations built, and the deep understanding of culture change facilitated by this work, to build and develop the modern, relevant and outstanding fire, rescue and community safety service the people of Essex deserve.

Steve McGuirk

CBE, DL, QFSM, MA, BA (Hons), BSc, F.I.Fire.E.

APPENDIX

**EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL
SELF REFLECTION
FOR
SIR KEN KNIGHT PROGRESS REVIEW IN
RESPECT OF THE LUCAS REVIEW OF ESSEX
COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER 2015**

DATE OF REVIEW: JULY 27 - 28 2016

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SETTING THE SCENE

1. INTRODUCTION

The independent Lucas Review was conducted in late 2015 to evaluate the culture of Essex Fire and Rescue Service, and followed several emerging factors that coalesced around that period to suggest that there were significant underlying issues in the Service. Whilst the subsequent account did contain some positive commentary that should be acknowledged, the overwhelming impression formed was highly critical, and thus had a major impact in terms of public relations.

The final report¹⁹ contained over thirty recommendations, one of which was to introduce an Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) to assist the Essex Fire Authority and Service in dealing with the cultural challenges it faced; but also to provide appropriate critical friend challenge.

Another was that a short independent review into the progress made should be undertaken after six months, in order to provide some reassurance to key stakeholders - as well as the Essex community and relevant Ministers - that the Authority was taking its responsibility seriously.

The recommendation²⁰ to introduce an EAP was immediately enacted by the Authority; with the Panel Chair and HR and OD Expert quickly appointed (the rest of the team following shortly after) and the Panel has been working since.

As part of our work, consequently, we have developed and recommended a proposed approach²¹ for the other recommendations highlighted here - the Progress Review. The potential approach was discussed with all parties, including the proposed reviewer, and presented to the Fire Authority for agreement on 22 June 2016.

Although the exercise to design the Progress Review has taken a little longer than the envisaged six months, there are a number of sound reasons for this and the complexity surrounding these is explained below. Nevertheless, the date has now been set for 27 to 28 July 2016.

The main purpose of this paper is to inform the Progress Review by offering a self-reflective outlook on behalf of the EAP about the progress made, both by the Fire Authority and the Service, in relation to advancing cultural changes and addressing the criticisms arising from Irene Lucas' work.

¹⁹ See Document 22 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

²⁰ See Document 27 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

²¹ See Document 124 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

The paper seeks to be as succinct as possible whilst still providing a sufficiently detailed commentary and a strong foundation to underpin the Progress Review and enable a proportionate level of enquiry.

The Review itself is supported further by an Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information that provides an evidence base and audit trail to support the narrative of change; this report should be read in conjunction with this Compendium which details all the background papers and reports referenced throughout.

This paper on behalf of the EAP will be accompanied by a separate change narrative from the Authority and the Service in order support and triangulate the key perspectives involved.

We must be honest and upfront, however, that much of the ‘evidence’ at this stage will be qualitative rather than quantitative, and subjective rather than objective. The change process here is not pure mathematics and there is no formula to follow; so, to an extent, any judgement about progress or lack of it will rely exclusively upon the experience and insight of the Reviewer to ensure there is an impartial evaluation as possible.

A final comment on culture itself also needs to be added by way of context and to reflect the Essex ‘experience’. The challenge of cultural change is not unique to Essex, nor indeed to the Fire Brigade nationally. It would also be fair to say that changing culture in any sector is difficult. Credit should be given to the Authority and Service for recognising the need for the Lucas Review and acting upon its recommendations so swiftly²², but it should also be recognised that a culture that has built up over a period of twenty to thirty years will not be changed in a period of six to twelve months.

Culture is influenced in many ways and manifests itself in a complex web of symbols, rituals, and behaviours. These in turn are influenced not just by the example set by leaders as role models, but also in how we design processes, how we use technology, the stories we tell, the language we use. The work of the EAP over the last few months has been to lay the foundations for the service leadership to now take forward as it progresses is vision for the future (and redefines the operating model to do so). These foundations will be critical to achieving the cultural transformation aspirations of the Authority, particularly in view of the complex and uncertain times ahead as described further on in this report.

²² See Documents 3, 23, 26 and 27 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

1.1 RELATIONSHIP TO THE LUCAS REVIEW

It is important to manage expectations around this progress evaluation from the outset. The original Culture Review created huge public interest and media attention and, understandably, made a significant impact. This, in turn, raised expectations that change would or could happen quickly. Of course, everyone would ‘hope’ that positive change could materialise speedily given the state of affairs that was drawn attention to in the Review. But, as Irene Lucas pointed out in her report, the reality is that change of this nature will always be measured in years, not months.

Hence, the recommendation that the Expert Advisory Panel should be in place for a period of two years.

It must be stressed, then, that this approach is **not** a re-run of the original Review and will not lead to a report for publication.

It is (and was only ever intended to be) a snapshot a ‘few months’ after the publication of the first Report to ensure that the concerns expressed had properly landed, and that action was being taken.

Correspondingly, the Progress Review is deliberately not engaging directly with employees to any significant degree, although staff representatives will of course be involved. Rather, it’s about establishing the approach and action taken by the body corporate, the Fire Authority, to inform the consideration of other stakeholders²³.

And, crucially, it’s about supporting an escalation of action if the Reviewer considers necessary because insufficient progress has been, or will be made; which is why the integrity and professional standing of the Reviewer must be incontestable.

²³ It should also be noted that since the creation of the EAP responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service has shifted from CLG to the Home Office, which now brings the Service under the purview of HMIC – though at this stage it is unclear what that will entail going forward. Nevertheless, it’s likely that HMIC will be a key stakeholder.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE EAP, MEMBERSHIP, RISKS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

As mentioned in the introduction, following the publication of the Lucas Report in September 2015, the EFA quickly agreed to the appointment of an EAP. It became active from late 2015, taking a few weeks to get the full Panel team established and agreed.

In assembling the Panel, it was important to ensure the right blend of knowledge, skills and experience, as well as professional 'standing', for the team to be considered experts in the respective fields required and thus to be listened to by all parties (see comments around panel design below).

CVs of the Panel Members are available if required.

The four members of the EAP now are:

Steve McGuirk

Jim Barbour

Linda Dickens

Natasha Edmunds

Jim Owen was also appointed to provide project support to the EAP and Hannah Cleary and Emma Tombs were appointed late in 2015 as Members' Officers to support the Fire Authority.

1.3 EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL DESIGN

There was no precedent for a Panel of this nature in Fire and Rescue Authorities/Services. And, although there are approximations in other local authorities, there was considerable confusion, initially, about the precise role of the EAP and how it could function in a practical sense. Clearly, the Panel has no formal or hard power only soft power, so managing and building the right relationships has been as important - if not more important - than practical activity. At times, for the Panel to be effective, they must deliver a tough message to all parties – none of whom are under legal obligation to listen or act.

There was also ambiguity in terms of where the EAP legal authorities and boundaries should be drawn in its early days, meaning that there were clearly a number of risks associated with designing the work of the Panel.

Because they remain relevant a number of months on, and for the sake of completeness and ease of reference, it's considered helpful to reproduce those risks below:

- *A risk of ambiguity around the legal mandate to act and who holds the legal authority to take decisions (against the requirements of the FRS Act, the National Framework and the Civil Contingencies Act, as well as a plethora of other, relevant legislation);*
- *A risk of ambiguity in terms of whose role it is to set the strategy of the Service and develop the policies of the Fire Authority. In other words, from where does the Authority - legally - take its professional advice (given there are already a number of statutory officers);*
- *A risk of the actions arising from the Culture Review being seen as pre-eminent and treated in isolation - at the expense of the programme of work already in train in support of Vision 2020;*
- *Consequently, a risk of delay in delivering key actions necessary to provide for setting a legal, balanced budget;*
- *A risk of seeing the Culture Review recommendations in isolation, and subsequently failing to weave culture change as a thread through the wider change programme;*
- *A risk of seeing all the recommendations in the Report as being permanent or embedded, without some form of independent and assured process to modify any recommendations in light of a changing world. It needs to be recognised that rarely is every recommendation from a report of this nature implemented without any modification or adaptation. It is vital, though, that any changes made are governed and overseen independently, so the thrust and body of the original report and recommendations is not lost;*
- *A risk of both external and internal stakeholders enlisting the support of the Panel - “hijacking” the approach to pursue single issues or special or vested interests – either unintentionally or, on occasions, intentionally;*
- *A risk of past culture re-establishing itself, and “this” culture change programme running out of energy and pace - and so there is a need for continued, external independent challenge and scrutiny;*
- *A risk of the Expert Panel overstepping the latitude they have been given by the adoption of the Culture Review recommendations in totality and straying in to executive decision-making;*
- *Following on from this, and conversely, a risk of the Panel being utilised too heavily creating both an unmanageable workload, but also shifting perspective and introducing the risk of too much micromanagement by the Panel.*

Accordingly, and in order to address these risks, a number of discussion documents were drawn up to inform the dialogue between key stakeholders, from which a clear purpose and terms of reference were then agreed.

This appears to have worked well, as will be identified in the discussion on progress below.

Thus, the agreed purpose of the EAP has three components:

- ***to provide governance and reassurance in relation to the delivery of the Lucas Review action plan;***
- ***to provide expertise and guidance and;***
- ***to fulfil a coaching and mentoring role for key officers.***

The Terms of Reference²⁴ in support of this were agreed with the Authority in January 2016.

1.4 EAP MEETINGS

Regular monthly meetings²⁵ are scheduled for the EAP to meet with key Officers and EFA Members to discuss progress and provide advice and guidance in relation to delivery of the IRAP and culture change. The EAP also meets informally with EFA Members upon the conclusion of the main meeting and, in the early days, EAP also met with Members of the full Authority to establish relationships and clarity of purpose.

Members of the EAP also meet and communicate frequently (at times daily) with key officers, staff and staff representatives, the Clerk to the Authority, and have undertaken visits to fire stations. Additionally, members of the Panel have held strategic 'away days', and are in regular email and telephone contact with each other.

Finally, EAP members have attended each of the Authority's Programme 2020 Board meetings for the last six months as the public consultation has been taking place. The work around Programme 2020 and its relationship to the Culture review will be considered more below, but the final Option has now been agreed by the Fire Authority and is moving towards the implementation phase.

Accordingly, Programme 2020 has become part of the 'business as usual' work of the Service and the EAP will now modify its approach and relationship to the Programme Board.

²⁴ See Documents 35, 36 and 47 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant information

²⁵ See Documents 64, 72, 87, 101 and 106 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

POSITION STATEMENT

2. PROGRESS

Overall, the view of the Panel is that, despite the complexity of the situation and the environment (and this will also be considered further below) good progress has been made.

And, whilst there must be a lot of conditionality around expressing this view, it is also important to create a positive direction of travel. The whole fire and rescue sector (but Essex in particular) must continue to meet the cultural challenges that are faced, and to create confidence that it is possible to turn things around, but as has been seen in Essex, will require skill and leadership, as well as clarity of purpose, resilience and tenacity.

As outlined below, a huge amount of work and activity has been undertaken and significant changes have taken place. And, whilst much of this activity may be expressed as being at a high level or in the background, some 'green shoots' are starting to emerge in Essex suggesting that change is starting to happen on the ground and key relationships - including industrial relations – are moving on to a more positive footing. In saying this, we should still include a strong note of caution so as not to tempt fate, and to identify that the green shoots are fragile, may not yet be visible everywhere, will need nurturing and still have a very long way to grow.

Indeed, the second all-staff survey provides evidence of this fragility.

But despite that snapshot data, it is also the case that staff at all levels have provided feedback and 'soft intelligence' to a more positive effect of the work of the Panel and progress of the Service in a number of ways. This includes through accredited staff representatives and trade unions but also through the 'Your Voice' Forum – a communication group comprised of a cross section of staff from different roles and locations.

We therefore take some comfort that we are not looking at the situation through a roseate prism of hopeful optimism - but of course the Progress Review will test this.

We are nevertheless pleased to be able to record that there has been a lot of activity by the Service and the Authority and it would be disappointing to feel that this has had little impact. So, we have set out a number of the highlights of the progress made and the activity undertaken in association with this in the following sections to assist the Progress Review's considerations:

2.1 GOVERNANCE

- *The Authority quickly accepted and agreed the Lucas Review Report, and all the Review Recommendations; and quickly supported the introduction of the Expert Panel - as well as the necessary resources to enable it to work effectively²⁶;*
- *Terms of Reference and governance around roles and responsibilities were quickly developed and agreed;*
- *The Authority quickly established a subcommittee²⁷ (the Cultural Review Sub-Group formed of Members from the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee) to be able to engage more in the detail of the work of the Expert Panel;*
- *The EAP worked closely with senior managers to develop a comprehensive action plan against all the Culture Review recommendations, the so-called Independent Review Action Plan²⁸ (IRAP). This happened within a few weeks, which is in contrast to the experience in other authorities where the development of a plan to advance a report of this nature has taken considerably longer.*

Of course, merely having a plan does not of itself achieve anything. Further, the specific nature of a plan developed simply to address the Lucas Review recommendations is too narrow to integrate the many other activities and arrangements that make up a complex cultural landscape. On the other hand, it is also certain that the absence of any plan means little will happen!

The IRAP was therefore agreed by the Authority some months ago, and has formed a large body of the work of the Panel in the last few months (and has been monitored and progress chased at our monthly meetings). This monitoring also involves regular progress reports to the Full Authority in public.

The whole approach has been supported by extensive and well-organised Project Management arrangements, and resourced accordingly. Recently, the newly appointed Director of Transformation²⁹(see comments about this role below) has accepted responsibility for day-to-day management of the IRAP - a positive sign of a growing level of maturity and acceptance of leadership responsibility within the organisation).

²⁶ The costs associated with this are in the public domain and will be considered by the Authority's Audit Committee, most likely in October 2016

²⁷ See Document 47 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

²⁸ See Documents 60 and 61 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

²⁹ See Document 95 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

2.2 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- *The Lucas Review drew attention to a need to review the management³⁰ structure of the Service and in particular the top tiers – and made this a specific task of the EAP;*
- *EAP Members completed the Management Review of the top tiers of the organisation in December 2015 – the Authority agreed the new structure on 13 January 2016;*
- *It is the biggest review of these levels of management undertaken in many years, and results in a new and much slimmer structure. The next layers of the organisation still need reviewing by the Service to align to this new senior management structure, as well as aligning to the outcomes of Programme 2020 (see below) in the coming months;*
- *The new (interim) structure is now starting to roll out although that brings significant, attendant anxieties for the people concerned and will not be without potential challenges for industrial relations;*
- *An interim Director of Transformation (Mark Stagg)³¹ has been appointed on a two-year contract as part of this. We see this role as key, and an important part of changing the dynamic of the professional leadership of the Service;*
- *A new, substantive Director of Service Delivery (Dave Bill)³² has also been appointed, again, a key leadership role for the Service;*
- *The transition from the old structure to the new - and the reconfiguration of the senior management arrangements - inevitably involved personnel changes that, in the immediate aftermath of the Lucas Review, could have been very difficult. There was certainly - and understandably - a heightened level of sensitivity;*
- *In fact, the transition occurred in a positive way - and the HR implications of people changing their job roles and/or leaving the organisation through a variety of mechanisms was managed well. (Although, of course, there were difficult decisions for the Service and difficult personal decisions for those involved.)*

³⁰ See Documents 56, 57, 60, 70, 71, 72, 83, 84 and 87 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

³¹ See Document 95 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

³² See Document 120 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

2.3 DISCIPLINE/GRIEVANCES ETC

- *The EAP quickly established a Discipline and Grievance Sub-Group³³ (recommended in the Lucas Review) which reviewed the extant discipline and grievance cases, as well as meeting Trade Unions and staff to understand the cultural issues that lay behind the Lucas Review comments in this area;*
- *The overall conclusion was that the issues were more ethereal and about points of principle and concerned how these issues were handled in practice– and therefore more linked to building trust and mutual respect than introducing new procedures;*
- *Panel members have now facilitated the involvement of ACAS³⁴ to assist all parties to identify key issues and potential solutions which will assist in developing a more meaningful, workable and proportionate set of procedures and protocols to deal with these key HR issues. This vehicle should also help foster the development of a more trusting approach to enacting discipline and grievance built upon shared values and common goals agreed in advance.*

2.4 LEADERSHIP

- *The Acting Chief Fire Officer quickly acknowledged the implications of the Lucas Review and, over the last few months, has ‘stepped up to the plate’ extremely well, and responded to the Lucas findings in an open and honest manner - willingly accepting the advice and counsel of the Panel;*
- *The recent appointment of a Director of Transformation and Director of Service Delivery, mentioned already, are also encouraging steps in the context of leadership;*
- *Elected Members have also responded positively though, as a collective, have found the leadership challenge more difficult. In other words, some have grasped the issues quicker than others;*
- *In fairness to them, and to a degree this is understandable as they were quickly (and for many of them surprisingly) put under a public microscope for criticism, when much of their previous experience and perceptions of the Service were at odds with the view that emerged from the Lucas Review. (For example, the tone*

³³ See Documents 54 and 55 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

³⁴ See Documents 80 and 113 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

of the Peer Review conducted a couple of years previously is markedly different to the tone of the Lucas Review - in fact poles apart);

- *Additionally, Members are not a 'collective or homogeneous group', united with one common sense of purpose. Rather, they are pulled in a number of different political directions either through Party politics or local politics. So, political unity is difficult (as we have seen to such dramatic effect during the recent Referendum process). Elected Members therefore shouldn't be unfairly judged for the reality that they face different leadership challenges to Officers. (As an aside, a number of Authority Members also faced election in May 2016 and a number were either not elected or were not subsequently reappointed to the Fire Authority);*
- *Nevertheless, Members have responded, and a number have actively engaged with SOLACE³⁵ (commissioned to support elected member development) to build their leadership capability and their awareness of their leadership role - and that work has progressed reasonably well;*
- *Similar comments about the challenge of elected leadership can also be made about staff representatives and their approach to leadership in the aftermath of the Lucas Review;*
- *When the Lucas Review was published, it was reasonable that it took some time for all parties to absorb not just the contents but also the meaning behind the contents;*
- *It would have been easy for Irene Lucas in her Review to point to the difficult industrial relations background of Essex over an extended period, and to suggest that this phenomenon alone lay behind the culture problem. Irene Lucas does comment on the poor state of industrial relations and skewed relationships/perspectives; but also clear that all leaders involved – Members, Officers and Trade Unions - should accept part of the responsibility for the problem and, similarly, their co-responsibility for shaping the solution;*
- *Here too, though, its pleasing progress has been made and positive signs are emerging - the section on industrial relations says more about this.*

³⁵ See Document 123 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

2.5 STRATEGY AND DIRECTION

- *Whilst the Lucas Review was taking place during 2015, Officers and Members were already contemplating the future strategy of the Service under the heading of Programme 2020³⁶. A key driver for this was the impending General Election in May 2015 and an anticipation that further austerity would follow (an anticipation that, in the event, was well founded with the Autumn Statement of 2015 outlining significant budget reductions – something now virtually certain in light of the outcome of the Referendum);*
- *Programme 2020 was consulted on extensively, both internally and externally to develop options that were agreed by the Authority in December 2015 and then went out to further extensive public consultation in early 2016;*
- *Programme 2020 conflated notions of change, alongside the need for a sustainable financial plan, alongside the need for an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). And, whilst the Programme 2020 work also sought to embrace the outcomes of the Lucas Review, the need to address these other statutory requirements, and for them to be highly visible meant, to a degree, that culture change appeared to take something of a back seat;*
- *Thus, it was easy for key stakeholders, such as staff representatives, to portray the Programme 2020 approach as being about developing a new wave of ‘cuts’, and distracting from the need for culture change. Indeed, acting against culture change and reinforcing a ‘top down’ approach to decision making;*
- *It’s felt that the Panel was able to intervene positively and to provide a helpful brokerage role to turn the situation around somewhat;*
- *Firstly, by assisting the Service/Authority to modify its approach to consultation, giving more ‘options’ for genuine consideration than might otherwise have been the case. In particular, approaching consultation with staff and their representatives in an authentic way, leaving ‘the door open’ for debate around the options - but still set against the reality of having to deal with austerity;*
- *In return, the Panel actively encouraged staff and their representatives to engage in the consultation in a manner not previously experienced (which would more likely have entailed industrial action);*

³⁶ See Documents 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 39, 40, 41, 45, 49, 50, 51, 59, 63, 65, 67, 73, 77, 78, 86, 88, 100, 103, 104, 105, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121 and 122 within the Independent Cultural Progress Review Compendium of Relevant Information

- *Additionally, the Panel was also able to add perspectives around the design of the public consultation that were considered helpful;*
- *It should be emphasised that none of this is to detract from the excellence of the work of the Service in respect of the Programme 2020 consultation. This should be considered best practice having had a previously unheard of response in excess of 17,000 people;*
- *But it is to propose that the role of the EAP was also subtly significant;*
- *Notwithstanding, the consultation exercise has now enabled the Authority to select an Option for Change that not only enjoys the greatest public support, but is also acknowledged by staff as the best that is possible - described as the 'least worst' option;*
- *This aphorism, though, illustrates that it will still be very tough to deliver and it still results in very significant staffing reductions and changes – and it may yet result in a worsening of industrial relations. Nevertheless, constructive conversations about implementation and how to achieve that in a spirit of partnership, are taking place and the Authority will consider an implementation plan at its September Authority meeting;*
- *In support of Programme 2020 the Service/Authority has also developed a new Vision and Purpose, and are currently formulating a strategy to support that, and have engaged staff through the 'Your Voice' Forum to participate in this (again, enjoying a level of active participation not seen before);*
- *Overall, therefore, the consultation process for the Programme 2020 changes have been supported and been widely recognised as a major success. It has achieved massive public engagement and attained much better engagement from staff and their representatives in real conversations about change, the like of which has not happened before in Essex. And, whilst culture change is not writ large or branded explicitly within this work - all of this nevertheless represents major steps on a more positive culture journey. The Service and the Authority should be given credit for this.*
- *It is also important to ensure that the support for change this process has generated amongst staff is retained and nurtured as the Service and Authority seek to increase collaboration with partners in other blue light services.*

2.6 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

- *Despite being ‘on the edge’ a number of times, despite the challenge of the major reductions brought about through the Programme 2020 consultation described and despite the continuing trade dispute that has been in place for over two years, there has been no industrial action in the last 12 months. This should be considered a real success in the context of the industrial relations situation encountered by the EAP. That said, the effort and energy expended by Panel members to avoid a deterioration that would seriously impede cultural progress - both formally and informally - has been very significant and cannot be over stated;*
- *Measures to help improve industrial relations have also started to make progress and will continue. For example following a suggestion from the EAP there has been a joint submission to the National Joint Council Joint Secretaries for assistance to develop improved industrial relations arrangements - and the first of a series of meetings has already taken place. This is very positive and it is hoped this may provide the foundations for constructive engagement - not least to enable the roll out of Programme 2020 over the next few years*
- *But, at the risk of repetition, it should be stressed that this progress has been slow and remains fragile, on occasions taking three steps forward and two back.*

2.7 OVERALL COMMENT ON PROGRESS

The forgoing commentary about progress and activity is offered to illustrate a lot has happened and a lot of progress has been made - though we must continually emphasise there is no place for complacency.

We must also acknowledge that there will be very different and mixed ‘feelings’ from people on the ground; there are undoubtedly some who will argue nothing has changed and maybe even that things have got worse. To a degree, this is an inevitable phenomenon of the aftermath of a report as high profile and critical as the Lucas Review. But it is also indicative of Fire Service culture more generally, where the question of ‘morale’ has always been difficult to evaluate.

In the spirit of candour, however, and in order to remain true to the intent and spirit of the original review we should also highlight complexities, uncertainties and the areas that remain difficult with progress still to be made.

MOVING FOWARD

3. COMPLEXITIES AND UNCERTAINTIES

In her Report, Irene Lucas made reference to the length of time that the substantive Chief Fire Officer had been suspended and the length of time the investigation was taking. Her comments were not seeking to be prejudicial in any way; rather they were highlighting the effect this uncertainty was having on the ability of the Service to make progress.

As a reminder, this is what Irene Lucas said in September 2015 and the recommendation she made:

- *The continued absence of the Chief Fire Officer needs to be resolved urgently.*

It's fair to say, however, that the Authority and members of the Service share the frustration.

The difficulty the Authority, and in particular the Clerk to the Authority, has faced is that the pace of the investigation is set by the external, independent investigator. And, although the Authority has sought to apply as much pressure as possible to get the investigation expedited, there is also a need for them to be cautious as they may risk cutting across due process (in the eyes of the investigator).

In some respects this matter is also outside the work and remit of the Panel, as there are clear legal processes that bind and overarch the situation.

On the other hand, there is a legitimate interest for the Panel here, in terms of our attention on making progress as quickly as possible, and against the backdrop of the original review recommendation referred to above.

Further, we would also contend that there is a legitimate public interest, as recent and frequent media activity about the costs of the situation illustrates.

But more specifically, the public interest also arises from the fact that the continued absence of the Chief creates an unresolved, uncertain state of affairs and continues to have an enormous impact on the ability to make progress with Service changes in Essex; and it continues to impact on the health and wellbeing of people in the organisation.

Whilst it may be stating the obvious - and whilst hesitating to appear hyperbolic or to exaggerate reality - we still do need to draw attention to the fact that there are real, potential consequences of ambiguity in who provides a 'guiding mind' for a Service whose core purpose is the management of risk.

As it stands, the Chair of EAP has been kept informed of the overall progress and situation - whilst for obvious reasons not made privy to the detail - and it is understood that the investigation is anticipated to reach a conclusion by the end of July (or shortly after). The next steps will then be determined by the outcome of the

investigation but, for the avoidance of doubt, we should be clear that we continue to support the view that this matter needs urgent resolution.

But, it is important, also, to recognise that there are a number of other, on-going complexities and uncertainties impacting on the organisation and work of the EAP, some of which are likely to remain unclear for a considerable time. These include:

- i) The recent outcome of the EU Referendum – Essex has a particularly complex political landscape and the European question is particularly significant here;
- ii) The potential for the Police and Crime Commissioner to take responsibility for Fire Services in addition to the police (Essex PCC has declared his intent to seek to do so, and work is ongoing to build a supporting Business Case);
- iii) The uncertain political landscape both locally and nationally including the County Council elections due in May 2017. This also links to difficulties around the demands placed on the time of Elected Members as well as the capacity and capability of Members to lead change;
- iv) Ongoing management review/consultation and other staffing matters;
- v) Delivery of Programme 2020 and the accepted Option for Change that is now being developed for implementation;
- vi) Bringing to a conclusion the Service outcomes of Operation Neaton;

[Operation Neaton was an extensive Police investigation into historical allegations of bullying and harassment that were considered - potentially – criminal. Not directly linked (but often talked about in the same way) is an investigation into the suicide of a Leading Firefighter, where, again, allegations of bullying and harassment within the Service were surfaced at the Inquest. Many members of the Service, past and present, were interviewed and a number remain suspended with links to the Neaton investigation, though the police investigation and court proceedings concluded last year with no convictions. Nevertheless, this has resulted in a very complex legacy situation - and an understandably highly emotionally charged situation - within the Service. There remains the possibility of further claims and counter claims and there is a real possibility of the situation holding back culture change opportunities for many years to come.

There is an effort, therefore, to try to develop a way forward that draws a line under the past but, in doing so, doesn't 'write off' wholly inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours. Equally, it's vital that there is clarity and a shared agreement between all those with an interest in the Service around the values that are acceptable going forward and against which all behaviour can be judged and measured.]

vii) Trade dispute/ industrial action.

There is an extant trade dispute with a failure to agree over a number of years now – though steps are now being taken to re-energise the means to bring this to a conclusion. But there also remain underlying issues and tensions around industrial action that were not really surfaced in the original report but remain relevant, and so are worth saying more about.

Because of the long-standing nature of industrial relation difficulties and industrial action in Essex there is a very comprehensive approach to resilience planning and resilience arrangements. Sadly, these have been tested and enacted on many occasions. In simple terms, how it works on the ground is that a number of staff have been engaged on ‘resilience contracts’ to provide extra cover in the event of industrial action. Many of these people are on-call personnel but a number are whole time firefighters. So, in simple terms, ‘strikers’ and ‘non-strikers’ work side by side during business as usual, when not on industrial action, but in a business continuity situation some are ‘on the picket lines’ whilst their ‘colleagues’ continue to provide emergency cover. Of course, this lends itself to an enduring sense of tension between colleagues and may manifest itself in action experienced as ‘bullying and harassment’ or ‘intimidation’. The longer there is between periods of industrial action the less likely are such occurrences.

The genesis of some of the difficult personnel interactions identified in the Lucas Review is much deeper than just relationships in the work place - for many it's seen to be about a point of principle about ‘striking’ and solidarity, for which there is no simple or quick solution.

Of course, the Authority has a statutory duty to have in place effective business continuity and resilience arrangements - and the means to do so is entirely a matter for local determination. Public Safety is paramount. But this really reinforces the need to improve industrial relations generally and, if possible, avoid industrial action as it's in no party's interests, and in light of the duty to secure public safety will always leave a bitter and difficult legacy.

4. NEXT STEPS AND FUTURE PLANS

Hopefully, the forgoing commentary is helpful to inform the Progress review. In the next few months the EAP intend to:

- Continue to meet regularly with key Officers and EFA Members to review progress and provide advice and support (but also see comment below on conclusion);
- Support the Acting Chief Fire Officer to continue his progress in addressing the culture change agenda and, in particular, delivering the Independent Review Action Plan;
- Support the new Director of Transformation and Director of Service Support to fulfil their roles and priorities effectively;
- Continue to support key officers particularly during the consultation and subsequent implementation of the transitional structure;
- Support the development of improvements in communications across and between all stakeholders;
- Support the organisation to develop and use internal and external levers for change;
- Continue to support the joint working party chaired by ACAS;
- Facilitate, if necessary, the work with the National Joint Secretaries;
- Continue to support staff representatives through dialogue;
- Facilitate agreement around the closure of the activity associated with Operation Neaton;
- Seek to enable the creation of a joint approach to developing new values and behaviours and a joint roll out programme/campaign between management and staff representatives to eradicate bullying and harassment;
- Support the Service/Staff Representatives to assemble an implementation agreement to deliver Programme 2020 to engender greater partnership and avoid further industrial disquiet ;
- Support the ongoing development of the competencies framework, the appraisal scheme and a programme of leadership coaching and development to complement the new management structure;
- Support the ongoing development of Service Strategy;

- Facilitate any outcomes arising from the conclusion of the CFO Investigation (whenever that is);
- Engage with any outcomes and recommendations of the Progress Review;
- Continue to support Member and Officer development through the outcomes of the SOLACE work;
- If necessary, support any activity associated with the development of the Business Case behind the PCC issue (in so far as it's germane to the Lucas review).

In addition, and following the Progress Review the Panel will also use the Autumn Anniversary of the Lucas review to take stock of its governance, and the composition and skills makeup of the Panel – and determine any changes going forward (again, see also comment below on conclusion).

5. CONCLUSION

As outlined, this self-evaluation is an endeavour to assist the Progress Review in getting a real sense of the progress that has been made over the last few months but also, crucially, to test and triangulate that and arrive at recommendations for the next steps.

We would summarise in the following way:

‘The progress since the publication of the Lucas Review has been good, much still remains to be done.

The EAP has spent the first few months supporting the Authority and Service to make sense of the report, then to make progress with a lot of activity and foundation building.

Of necessity (not least arising from the consequences of the Management Review) there has been a need for Panel Members to fill gaps and to be more directive and ‘hands on’ than maybe would have been the case in an ideal world. But this is the real world and we would contend that had we not done so, then there would have been little progress.

But we acknowledge, to a degree, that much of what we have done may fairly be labelled ‘organisational housekeeping’ – because there was a lot of housekeeping to be done.

We have regularly taken stock as a Panel to test ourselves around whether we were being too tactical and transactional - and we have been satisfied that where this was the case it was because we needed to do so.

The consequence of this, however, is twofold.

One, our impact on the wider organisation has been less than might have otherwise been the case; and, two, we do not feel that, as yet, we have really got in to the heart of the change required. This is changing the attitudes and behaviours of people across the Service, tackling the watch culture where necessary and really addressing the bullying and harassment culture of the Service.

Essex Fire, like many similar organisations, is very process and procedurally driven and of course, for good governance procedure is important and for efficiency reasons good process management is also important.

But we consider that these are now in place under the custodianship of the new leadership team who, rightly, should take greater managerial responsibility for driving those forward.

Our view now is that the Panel should move more in to the critical friend/NED mode - resulting in less formal meetings and less overseeing of process; and much more engagement and challenge to managers and the Authority to really get in to the heart of culture on the ground.

Without the leg work undertaken in the last few months this would not have been possible - the view we would like the Progress Review to test whether this is now possible.

The final thing I must do is to say a very sincere thank you to my colleagues on the EAP and supporting the EAP.

It's been mentioned already that there is no precedent for this approach and so there has had to be considerable innovation and flexibility in approach. The outline of progress is impressive and that is, in large measure, attributable to the work of the Panel.

Steve McGuirk

CBE, DL, QFSM, MA, BA (Hons), BSc, F.I.Fire.E

Our employee engagement survey runs from 6 February to 5 March

Are you ready to Make Some Noise?

Results of the Employee Engagement Survey for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, March 2017

Produced by People Insight in March 2017

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About the survey

An external company, People Insight Ltd, was commissioned to undertake the survey. The questionnaire was designed to measure people's attitudes and beliefs concerning key employee engagement issues.

Each section of the survey contained a series of statements to which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement from a five point likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree).







Survey response rates

The survey was completed in March 2017 and achieved an overall response rate of 42%. 1393 staff were invited to take part in the survey and 582 responses were received.








This is a good response rate giving confidence in the survey results. The appendices show response rates broken down by selected groups of staff.

Symbols used in this report

A traffic light system is used to indicate:

-  areas of **strength**
-  areas for **development**
-  areas of **weakness**
-  indicates what percentage of the total answers for this question were **positive**
-  indicates what percentage of the total answers for this question were **negative**
-  Indicates where we are unable to comment due to lack of data or to maintain confidentiality of respondents

A series of arrows are used to indicate relative performance against the Benchmark:

-  indicates a performance at least 10% better than the Benchmark average
-  indicates a performance at least 5% and less than 10% better than the Benchmark average
-  indicates a performance at least 3% and less than 5% better than the Benchmark average
-  indicates a performance within 3% of the Benchmark average
-  indicates a performance at least 3% and less than 5% worse than the Benchmark average
-  indicates a performance at least 5% and less than 10% worse than the Benchmark average
-  indicates a performance at least 10% worse than the Benchmark average

A series of datatables accompany this report outlining the results by survey section broken down by variable. As can be seen, there are variations in results across the organisation which ought to be considered as part of the interpretation and action planning process.

Numbers: Please note that all numbers in this report have been rounded to the closest whole number.

Your Engagement Score

Why measure engagement?

Employee engagement has been proven to positively impact on organisation results, across all sectors. In particular, a high level of employee engagement has been shown to lead to improved productivity, quality and customer satisfaction (and of course for commercial organisations increased profit), whilst reduced absence and lower staff turnover are amongst many of the other benefits.

Your survey has been designed to measure the extent to which your people are engaged and alongside this to measure the drivers of employee engagement (i.e. the things that when done well tend to engage employees). We have analysed these below and compared your results with other organisations in our benchmarking group.

Your benchmarked engagement score: 68%

Your benchmarked engagement score is the headline result for your survey and is presented as a single measure of employee engagement. For the purpose of calculating this score we only include questions where a sufficient number of comparable surveys have used the same question.

Your engagement score compared with our benchmark group is shown below:

Your Score	Variance Arrow	Variance Actual	Benchmark Score
68%	↓↓↓	-11%	79%

PEARL™ Model of Engagement®

5 Global Factors

- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Enablement
- ▶ Autonomy
- ▶ Reward
- ▶ Leadership

5 Engagement Indicators

- ▶ Pride in the organisation
- ▶ Commitment to long term career
- ▶ High levels of discretionary effort
- ▶ Willingness to recommend and advocate the organisation
- ▶ Care about the future of the organisation

Business Outcomes

- ▶ Better quality products and services
- ▶ Reduced waste and cost
- ▶ Increased productivity per employee
- ▶ Increased profitability
- ▶ High levels of customer satisfaction
- ▶ Organisation strategies and plans delivered

Engagement score key questions

The questions below are used to derive your engagement score. Benchmarking results for these are also shown.	Your Score	Variance Arrow	Variance Actual	Benchmark Score
I am proud to say I work for ECFRS	69%	↓↓	-8%	77%
Working here makes me want to do the best work I can	73%	↓↓	-5%	78%
If asked, I would recommend to friends and family that ECFRS is a good place to work	40%	↓↓↓	-29%	69%
I care about the future of ECFRS	91%	—	1%	90%

Scores by engagement theme

Your overall engagement score is the result of a number of factors, many of which can be directly influenced or controlled by management. These are often called engagement drivers, and are the things that when done well tend to motivate, inspire and engage employees. Your survey measured a wide range of engagement drivers and these have been grouped into themes depending upon where they appeared in your survey. These themes are often useful as the focus for action planning.

Your benchmarking results for each theme are summarised below. These scores have been calculated as the average score for all engagement driver questions within each theme. Please note that for benchmarking purposes we only include questions in this analysis where a sufficient number of comparable surveys have used the same question.

Engagement Theme	Your Score	Variance Arrow	Variance Actual	Benchmark Score
Goal Clarity	64%	↓↓↓	-14%	78%
My Job	66%	↓↓	-6%	72%
Employee Involvement	42%	↓↓↓	-18%	60%
Teamwork	42%	↓↓↓	-16%	58%
Learning & Development	52%	↓↓↓	-13%	65%
Recognition and Reward	48%	↓↓	-8%	56%
Management Effectiveness	55%	↓↓	-8%	63%
Culture & Values	46%	↓↓↓	-19%	65%
Change Management	27%	↓↓↓	-15%	42%
Employee Support	65%	—	-2%	67%
Engagement Outcomes	61%	↓↓↓	-13%	74%

Considerations for action planning

Many clients use the overall engagement score as the starting point for action planning. Your score is currently 68%, which is below (-10% or more) our benchmarking norms. The questions to consider as part of action planning can include:

- Are we happy with this score? What would we like it to be in 12 months' time?
- What do the driver scores tell us in terms of why our overall engagement score is 68%?
 - What are we doing particularly well?
 - What themes are showing up as weaknesses?
 - What would we like the scores to be for each theme in 12 months' time?
 - What actions do we need to take to get there?

As you will see from the more detailed datatable analyses, results may vary quite considerably from one employee group to another, and so these questions often need to be discussed at both the overall organisation level and also further down, within individual teams and departments.

It is often useful to generate action plans at each of these levels to reflect the different priorities and needs that exist. Involving a range of staff in the action planning process often helps in ensuring not only that the right actions are taken, but also that people understand why they are being taken and are inclined to support them.

Highs and Lows

This section highlights the ten questions that received the most positive responses from respondents, and the ten questions that received the most negative responses. This may help you to identify the things that you are doing well, and should celebrate, and the things that, when compared to your other results, may need attention.

Top 10 results

Questions with the most positive responses



1.	I care about the future of ECFRS	91%	3%
2.	I understand that reporting safety events is important to ECFRS	88%	3%
3.	I am clear about what I am expected to achieve in my job	82%	8%
4.	My immediate manager treats people fairly and with respect	81%	7%
5.	My immediate manager makes time for me	81%	8%
6.	I have the knowledge and skills I need to do my job	80%	7%
7.	I understand the need for changes at ECFRS given the challenges faced by the Authority	80%	8%
8.	My immediate manager (team or watch) communicates regularly about issues that affect my work	80%	10%
9.	I enjoy my work	74%	10%
10.	I am satisfied with the physical environment in which I work	73%	10%

Bottom 10 results

Questions with the most negative responses



1.	Fire Authority Members engage well with staff at ECFRS	9%	63%
2.	I feel that ECFRS consider the impact on me and other people when making decisions	19%	54%
3.	I believe action will be taken as a result of this survey	20%	51%
4.	A lot is done to help staff prepare for and cope with change	18%	49%
5.	Different parts of the Service work well together	25%	49%
6.	I trust the Service Leadership Team (SLT)	19%	48%
7.	I have confidence in the future of ECFRS	24%	48%
8.	I have seen action being taken as a result of the previous staff engagement survey	18%	48%
9.	I feel valued and recognised for the work that I do by senior managers	29%	47%
10.	Change here is well managed overall	24%	47%

Results by survey section

This section of the report shows you the percentage responses to each of the survey questions, by survey section. An algorithm is used to identify strengths, areas for development, and weaknesses. This takes into account all responses to each question, whether positive, negative, or neutral. The number to the left of each question represents the number of respondents answering that question.

Goal Clarity

<div>G</div>	Strengths	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I am clear about what I am expected to achieve in my job	29%	53%	10%	5%	3%
582	I understand how the work I do helps ECFRS to achieve its strategy and objectives	19%	53%	17%	7%	3%
582	I understand that reporting safety events is important to ECFRS	38%	50%	9%	2%	1%
<div>A</div>	Areas for development	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I understand the Service strategy and objectives of Essex County Fire and Rescue Services (ECFRS)	15%	55%	19%	7%	4%
<div>R</div>	Weaknesses	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	Members of the Service Leadership Team (SLT) provide a clear vision of the overall direction of ECFRS	5%	25%	32%	24%	14%
<div>A</div>	Section Average	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	(% based on all replies (2910) to all questions (5) in the Section)	21%	47%	17%	9%	5%

My Job

		Strongly agree				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
G	Strengths					
	582 I enjoy my work	27%	47%	15%	8%	2%
A	Areas for development					
	582 I get a sense of personal accomplishment from my work	23%	47%	16%	10%	4%
R	Weaknesses					
	582 My job makes the best use of the skills and abilities that I have	14%	42%	19%	19%	7%
	582 I feel supported in my role	12%	33%	24%	18%	13%
A	Section Average					
	(% based on all replies (2328) to all questions (4) in the Section)	19%	42%	18%	14%	7%

Employee Involvement

		Strengths				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I am able to use my own initiative at work to do my job	22%	50%	16%	9%	3%

		Weaknesses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I am encouraged to suggest new ideas for improvements	17%	38%	21%	18%	7%
582	I am comfortable to speak up and constructively challenge how things are done	16%	35%	19%	19%	11%
582	People communicate openly here regardless of position or level	9%	28%	21%	24%	18%
575	I believe action will be taken as a result of this survey	5%	15%	29%	24%	27%
582	I have seen action being taken as a result of the previous staff engagement survey	5%	13%	34%	24%	24%

		Section Average				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	(% based on all replies (3485) to all questions (6) in the Section)	12%	30%	23%	20%	15%

Teamwork

		Areas for development				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	We are good at sharing ideas to make things work better	14%	44%	20%	14%	7%
		Weaknesses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	Morale in my immediate team/watch is generally high	12%	32%	16%	22%	18%
582	Different parts of the Service work well together	3%	22%	26%	31%	18%
		Section Average				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	(% based on all replies (1746) to all questions (3) in the Section)	10%	32%	21%	22%	14%

Learning & Development

G	Strengths					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I have the knowledge and skills I need to do my job	18%	62%	13%	5%	1%
A	Areas for development					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I have received the training and development I need to do my job well and safely	11%	48%	18%	15%	8%
582	I use the training I have received to do my job well	15%	54%	21%	6%	3%
R	Weaknesses					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I have the right opportunities to learn and grow at work	7%	28%	30%	23%	12%
582	My last appraisal meeting was useful in helping me improve how I do my job and show where I'm performing well	7%	27%	32%	18%	16%
582	I have received adequate training in using OSHENS to report a hazard / near miss / accident	6%	32%	23%	23%	17%
582	I have received the right development to perform my management role well	5%	26%	41%	16%	13%
R	Section Average					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	(% based on all replies (4074) to all questions (7) in the Section)	10%	40%	25%	15%	10%

Recognition and Reward

G	Strengths					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I feel valued and recognised for the work that I do by other team members	19%	52%	18%	6%	5%
A	Areas for development					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I feel valued and recognised for the work that I do by my line manager	25%	45%	14%	8%	8%
R	Weaknesses					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	In the last week, I have received thanks or praise for doing good work	13%	36%	20%	17%	14%
582	I feel valued and recognised for the work that I do by senior managers	8%	21%	24%	22%	25%
582	I receive feedback on my work	9%	36%	26%	17%	12%
R	Section Average					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	(% based on all replies (2910) to all questions (5) in the Section)	15%	38%	20%	14%	13%

Management Effectiveness

<div><div>G</div></div>	Strengths	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	My immediate manager (team or watch) communicates regularly about issues that affect my work	31%	48%	11%	6%	4%
582	My immediate manager makes time for me	36%	45%	11%	4%	3%
582	My immediate manager treats people fairly and with respect	37%	44%	11%	4%	4%
<div><div>A</div></div>	Areas for development	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	My immediate manager gives my regular feedback on how I am doing	27%	39%	21%	9%	4%
<div><div>R</div></div>	Weaknesses	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	Senior managers do what they say they are going to do	5%	14%	35%	25%	21%
582	Employees at my level are able to communicate their concerns to higher management	9%	27%	24%	21%	19%
582	Fire Authority Members engage well with staff at ECFRS	3%	6%	27%	26%	38%
582	I have confidence in the future of ECFRS	7%	18%	28%	26%	22%
582	I trust the Service Leadership Team (SLT)	5%	14%	33%	22%	26%
582	I trust my local management	13%	36%	30%	11%	11%
<div><div>R</div></div>	Section Average	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	(% based on all replies (5820) to all questions (10) in the Section)	17%	29%	23%	15%	15%

Culture & Values

G	Strengths					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I have a good understanding of ECFRS core values	19%	52%	20%	6%	4%
582	I see evidence of my line management adhering to ECFRS core values	20%	50%	20%	5%	4%
A	Areas for development					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I do not feel I have been bullied, harassed or discriminated against at work in the last 12 months	28%	34%	15%	12%	11%
R	Weaknesses					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	Bullying, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated at ECFRS	20%	36%	17%	17%	10%
582	I feel able to make decisions without fear of being blamed if things go wrong	11%	32%	22%	24%	11%
582	Generally we resolve any differences of opinion amicably	11%	44%	26%	12%	6%
582	ECFRS promotes a culture of openness and transparency	7%	25%	29%	23%	16%
582	I see evidence of the SLT adhering to ECFRS core values	6%	16%	36%	23%	18%
582	I feel ECFRS treats people fairly, regardless of ethnic background, gender (including transgender), religion, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or age	16%	37%	27%	11%	9%
582	I see evidence that ECFRS staff are not risk averse	7%	27%	48%	14%	4%
582	I feel valued	9%	26%	25%	22%	18%
R	Section Average					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	(% based on all replies (6402) to all questions (11) in the Section)	14%	35%	26%	15%	10%

Change Management

		Strongly agree				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
G	Strengths					
	582 I understand the need for changes at ECFRS given the challenges faced by the Authority	25%	55%	11%	5%	3%
R	Weaknesses					
	582 I am communicated with about change that affects me in good time	9%	30%	28%	22%	11%
582	Change here is well managed overall	5%	19%	29%	29%	18%
582	Change within my team is well managed	11%	46%	23%	13%	7%
582	I feel that ECFRS consider the impact on me and other people when making decisions	4%	15%	27%	26%	28%
582	A lot is done to help staff prepare for and cope with change	4%	14%	32%	28%	22%
R	Section Average					
	(% based on all replies (3492) to all questions (6) in the Section)	10%	30%	25%	20%	15%

Employee Support

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<div><div>G</div></div>	Strengths					
582	I am satisfied with the physical environment in which I work	19%	54%	18%	5%	4%
<div><div>A</div></div>	Areas for development	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life	13%	47%	17%	16%	7%
582	I have the equipment and resources I need to do my work properly	14%	53%	16%	12%	5%
582	My workload is reasonable	8%	52%	22%	13%	5%
582	If I report a significant hazard I trust ECFRS to rectify it in a timely manner	13%	49%	24%	9%	5%
<div><div>R</div></div>	Weaknesses	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
582	I have acceptable stress and anxiety levels at work	8%	41%	25%	17%	10%
<div><div>A</div></div>	Section Average	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	(% based on all replies (3492) to all questions (6) in the Section)	12%	49%	20%	12%	6%

Engagement Outcomes

		Strongly agree				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
G	Strengths					
	582 Working here makes me want to do the best work I can	28%	44%	18%	6%	3%
582	I care about the future of ECFRS	53%	38%	6%	1%	2%
A	Areas for development					
	582 I am proud to say I work for ECFRS	32%	37%	17%	9%	5%
R	Weaknesses					
	582 If asked, I would recommend to friends and family that ECFRS is a good place to work	15%	25%	27%	20%	13%
582	I have a good sense of job security	7%	24%	23%	28%	18%
A	Section Average					
	(% based on all replies (2910) to all questions (5) in the Section)	27%	34%	18%	13%	8%

Breakdown of survey respondents

Role Category	Total	Response rate
Uniformed - whole time	229	36%
Uniformed- on call	155	32%
Enabling Staff	175	69%
Control Staff	19	58%
No Role Category stated	4	
Total	582	
Uniformed Role Category	Total	
Firefighter	187	
Leading Firefighter	65	
Sub Officer	59	
Station Officer	35	
Assistant Divisional Officer (ADO)	24	
Divisional Officer (DO)	10	
Senior Divisional Officer (SDO)	1	
Principal Officer (URC)	3	
No Uniformed Role Category stated	198	
Total	582	
Support Staff Role	Total	
Team Member (Scale 1-4)	46	
Supervisory Manager (Scale 5-SO2)	63	
Middle Manager (PO1-M3)	48	
Senior Management (SMG1-SMG5)	14	
Principal Officer (Support Staff)	4	
No Support Staff Role stated	407	
Total	582	
Control Role	Total	
Control Operator	12	

Leading Control Operator	2
Senior Control Operator	1
Fire Control Officer and above	4
No Control Role stated	563
Total	582
Length of Service	Total
Less than 2 years	74
2 to less than 5 years	59
5 to less than 10 years	83
10 to less than 20 years	214
20+ years	152
Total	582
Function	Total
Control	21
Essex Civil Protection Emergency Management	15
Finance	13
Fleet and Equipment	21
Health and Safety	7
HR & OD	28
ICT	23
Learning and Development	25
Operations (incl EAC/WAC)	303
Performance and Data	7
Property Services/Water	12
Safer and Resilient Communities	58
Risk and Business Continuity	3
Other (Function)	20
Executive Support	4
Corporate Communications	7
Business Development	2
Programme 2020	5
Emergency Planning and Strategic Assurance	6

No Function stated	2
Total	582
Flexible Working Arrangement	Total
Full Time	421
Part Time	135
Job Share	5
Other Arrangement	21
Total	582
Place of Work A-H	Total
Basildon	10
Billericay	1
Braintree	11
Brentwood	4
Brightlingsea	3
Burnham-on-Crouch	2
Canvey	4
Chelmsford	24
Clacton	14
Coggeshall	3
Colchester	31
Corringham	10
Dovercourt	7
Dunmow	3
Epping	4
Frinton	7
Grays	9
Great Baddow	6
Halstead	7
Harlow Central	19
Hawkeell	10
No Place of Work A-H stated	393
Total	582
Place of Work I-Z	Total
Kelvedon Park	185

Leadon Roding	4
Leigh	7
Lexden	14
Loughton	5
Maldon	11
Manningtree	1
Newport	3
Old Harlow	4
Ongar	4
Orsett	11
Rayleigh Weir	5
Rochford	9
Saffron Walden	5
Shoeburyness	3
South Woodham Ferrers	9
Southend	26
Stansted	4
Thaxted	3
Tillingham	1
Tiptree	4
Tollesbury	4
USAR	5
Waltham Abbey	6
Weeley	6
West Mersea	6
Wethersfield	9
Wickford	7
Witham	3
Wivenhoe	6
Other	23
No Place of Work I-Z stated	189
Total	582
Age Range	Total
16-24	28
25-35	108
36-45	157




46-55	199
56-65	55
66+	4
Prefer not to say	31
Total	582
Gender	Total
Gender - Male	427
Gender - Female	112
Prefer not to say	43
Total	582
Sexual Orientation	Total
Bisexual	10
Lesbian/Gay	9
Straight	486
Other	1
Prefer not to say	76
Total	582
Marital Status	Total
Civil Partnership	16
Divorced	30
Married	317
Separated	11
Single	126
Widowed	1
Prefer not to say	81
Total	582
Ethnic Origin	Total
White - English	464
White - Welsh	5
White - Scottish	1
White - Northern Irish	1
White - British	46
White - Irish	4

White - Gypsy / Traveller	0
Any other White background	7
Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	1
Asian / Asian British - Indian	1
Asian / Asian British - Pakistani	0
Any other Asian background	0
Black or Black British - African	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	0
Mixed / Multiple - White & Asian	3
Mixed / Multiple - White & Black African	0
Mixed / Multiple - White & Black Caribbean	1
Any other Mixed background	2
Other Ethnic Group - Arab	1
Other Ethnic Group - Chinese	0
Any other ethnic group	0
Prefer not to say	44
Total	582
Religion or Faith	Total
Agnostic	34
Atheist	56
Baha i Faith	0
Buddhist	3
Christian	248
Hindu	2
Jain	0
Jewish	1
Muslim	2
Sikh	0
Zoroastrianism	0
Humanist	6
Pagan	0
No religion	135
Prefer not to say (Religion)	81
Other (please specify)	14
Total	582

Disability Status	Total
Carer	3
Disability or long term health condition	39
No Disability or long term health condition	469
Prefer not to say	71
Total	582
Pregnancy Status	Total
Yes Pregnant status	3
No Pregnancy status	105
Prefer not to say	4
No Pregnancy Status stated	470
Total	582
Command Areas	Total
East	215
West	145
HQ	185
Fleet workshops	14
Non-HQ Training Location (CA)	0
Other (CA)	23
Total	582
Birth gender	Total
Yes - gender	533
No - gender	1
Prefer not to say (birth gender)	48
Total	582

Traffic light system - explanation

Throughout our reports, a traffic light system is used to indicate:

-  areas of **strength**
-  areas for **development**
-  areas of **weakness**

The traffic lights are calculated by an algorithm that takes into account all responses to each question, and performs the following functions:

- Reviews the percentage of respondents that 'neither agree nor disagree' with a given question (where this option exists)
- Then reviews the ratio of respondents that agree/disagree with the question
- Then applies a traffic light based on a stepped scale. Within this scale, the higher the percentage of respondents that 'neither agree nor disagree' with a question the higher the ratio of respondents agreeing/disagreeing needs to be to move the result from a red, to an amber, to a green.
- Where the option 'neither agree nor disagree' is not present, the algorithm reviews the ratio of agree/disagree responses, and again uses a stepped scale to determine whether to apply a red, amber or green traffic light.

AGENDA ITEM 9

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	EPCP/28/17
Date: 7 December 2017	

PFCP Meeting 7 December 2017: PFCC Decisions

Report by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to the Panel

Enquiries to: Susannah Hancock (Chief Executive)

Telephone: 01245 291613

Email: susannah.hancock@essex.pnn.police.uk

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Panel with information about financial and strategic decisions made by the PFCC. This report contains information on decisions made from the last submission date for the previous PFCP Meeting of 19 October 2017, up to and including 28 November 2017 – the final submission date ahead of the PFCP Meeting on 7 December 2017.

The Panel is invited to note the content of the report, identifying any areas that require further clarification or comment.

Attachments:

Appendix 1: PFCP Meeting 7 December 2017: PFCC Decisions

PFCC Meeting 7th December 2017: PFCC Decisions *

Ref	Organisation	Decision On	Date approved
82/17	Police	Anti-Corruption Software	03/11/2017
86/17	Police	SAP Hardware Refresh	03/11/2017
87/17	Police	CSI Tablets	03/11/2017
89/17	Police	National ANPR Business Case (NAS)	03/11/2017
97/17	Police	Community Safety Development Fund 2017/18 – Additional Round 1 Approval	24/10/2017
98/17	Police	Essex CRC – Service User Council	24/10/2017
99/17	Police	Tendring District Council – Gangs Officer	24/10/2017
100/17	Fire	Appointment of Monitoring Officer	24/10/2017
101/17	Fire	Essex Fire Constitution	24/10/2017
102/17	Police	Sale of Shrub End Police Station	03/11/2017
103/17	Police	Day of Action	31/10/2017
105/17	Fire	Essex County Fire and Rescue Funding for Sprinklers Project	17/11/2017
106/17	Police	Sale of 36 St Margaret's Road Police House	03/11/2017
108/17	Police	Crime stoppers Rural Campaign	13/11/2017
115/17	Police	Colchester United Kicks Project	27/11/2017
116/17	Police	Complaint against the Chief Constable – Decision	27/11/2017
117/17	Police	Airwaves Contingency Stage 2 Business Case Essex	27/11/2017

For detailed information on each decision, go to the OPFCC website at:

<http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/finance-reporting/boards/decision-making-crime-policing/decisions-5/>

Please note: *This report contains PFCC Decisions made following the last PFCP Meeting of 19 October 2017, up to and including 28 November 2017 (ahead of submission for the PFCP Meeting of 7 December 2017).

AGENDA ITEM 11

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	EPCP/29/17
Date: 7 th Dec 2017	

Report title: PCC Annual Report 2016-2017

Report by: Darren Horsman (Assistant Director Communications and Engagement OPFCC)

Enquiries to: Darren Horsman
Telephone: 07967 821067
Email: Darren.Horsman@essex.pnn.police.uk

1. Purpose of report

This report provides the panel with the final version of the PCC Annual Report for 2016-2017. This reflects amendments proposed by the panel at their last meeting. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Recommendation

That panel members note the report.

3. Overview

This 2016/2017 draft Annual Report marks the first full year since Roger Hirst was elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex. It covers the development of the Police and Crime Plan 2016 – 2020 and the establishment of work related to the 7 new priorities. The report marks the increased focus on local, visible and accessible policing and provides examples of initiatives that have been put in place to deliver on the strategic priorities.

It should be noted that because of the reporting period covered by the report (2016/17) there are a number of significant, more recent developments that are not fully covered by the report, including the recent move to joint governance of the Fire and Rescue service.

Following feedback from the Panel a number of changes have been incorporated into the report including changes to the performance table, new photos and some changes in the tone.

4. Next steps:

The report will now be shared with stakeholders and published on the PFCC website.

**“Safe and Secure
communities are the bedrock
on which we build success
and well-being for all.”**

**- Roger Hirst
Police and Crime Commissioner**

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Essex is a vibrant and diverse county and it was a privilege to be elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2016. I stood for the position promising to deliver stronger crime prevention, greater public participation and volunteering in policing, getting more local, visible and accessible policing across our county and increasing collaboration across our emergency services teams.

As I visited and spoke to people across the county, these priorities continued to resonate and, as such, they have informed the seven priorities outlined in my Police and Crime Plan.

This plan was developed following significant public and partner engagement and has set the course for policing and crime prevention in Essex over the next four years. This Annual Report covers my first year as Police and Crime Commissioner (2016-2017) and includes the transition from the 2012 -2016 Police and Crime Plan to our current Plan.

Within the Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020 are seven very clear priorities which will be discussed at more length later in this report -

- **More local, visible and accessible policing**
- **Crack down on antisocial behaviour**
- **Breaking the cycle of domestic violence**
- **Reversing the trend in serious violence**
- **Tackling gangs and organised crime**
- **Protecting children and vulnerable people from harm**
- **Improving safety on our roads**

While Essex is a safe place to live and work, it is important to recognise that changes in criminal behaviour, the types of crimes being committed and crime levels generally have a significant impact on what happens here, in our county.

While crime has fallen dramatically since 1995, over the last few years we have started to see an increase in crime levels; over the 12 months covered in this report, overall crime has increased by 8.7 per cent in Essex. This is compared to an increase of 11.0 per cent nationally. This increase has not been across all types of crime. Rather, we have seen significant increases in crimes such as possession of weapons, public order and drug offences.

We also see a continuing shift in the types of crimes being committed, with more serious crimes such as domestic abuse and online crime more apparent. These present new challenges for policing, as does the ongoing national terrorism threat. The Chief Constable and I are continuing to focus resources to ensure that these new and emerging crime trends are effectively tackled, to help keep the communities of Essex safe.

In this context, it is pleasing that in Essex we have effectively tackled antisocial behaviour, which has seen reductions of 1.1%, and also homicide, which has reduced by 55.9%. However, crime is still too high and more must be done. While we continue to face some significant challenges, I am confident that we are well placed to deliver a good service for the people of Essex.



“While crime has fallen dramatically since 1995, over the last few years we have started to see an increase in crime level.”



With the Chief Constable, we have continued to invest and support the modernisation of Essex Police through an ambitious transformation programme. Over the 12 months covered in this report, we have made significant progress - in particular, the investment in more than 2,000 Samsung Galaxy handheld devices has enabled officers to stay out in their communities for longer, releasing them from their desks and saving, on average, about half an hour per officer per shift. This evolution to more mobile working will develop further as we continue to modernise, increasing the functionality available and supporting our officers in doing more with the time they have.



Underlying the success of our police force is the public’s willingness to participate and support our officers. As such, I have committed to growing the involvement of the public in policing and one way of doing this is through doubling the number of Special Constables, supporting members of our community to take an active role as warranted officers within the force. Over the period of this report, Essex Police have reshaped the Special Constabulary, creating a stronger link between the Special Constabulary and regular officers, providing more opportunities for Specials to police their own communities and giving them a stronger say in where they want to volunteer. As a result, the Special Constabulary has worked 115,610 hours during the year, the equivalent of 64 full-time officers and a contribution of £3,211,389 in work time. It is also pleasing that 42 Specials decided to become Police Officers even though this meant the overall number of Specials reduced slightly.

In what has continued to be a tight financial situation, Essex Police have made good progress in using their assets more efficiently. The Estates Programme has started to show significant benefits as old, outdated and operationally less valuable

stations are released and capital is reinvested in modern facilities and enabling technology. This has supported a wider transformation within Essex Police, including the Mobile First programme, which helps officers to become more mobile. These changes can be difficult and, at times, controversial. However, I am yet to meet anybody who would rather see officers hidden away behind a desk than out visible in their communities.

While efficiencies have continued to be sought, in January 2017, following detailed discussions with the Chief Constable and his team, I proposed an increase of 3.25 per cent in the police element of the council precept. This is an additional £4.95 per household per year for an average band D property. These decisions are never taken lightly, however, the mood of the public as I was out and about continued to demonstrate a strong desire for increased investment in policing and, in particular, an improvement in the 101 service and more visible policing. It was reassuring that I was able to show this additional investment would be directed to more staff in the 101 control room, more frontline officers and an increased investment in technology.

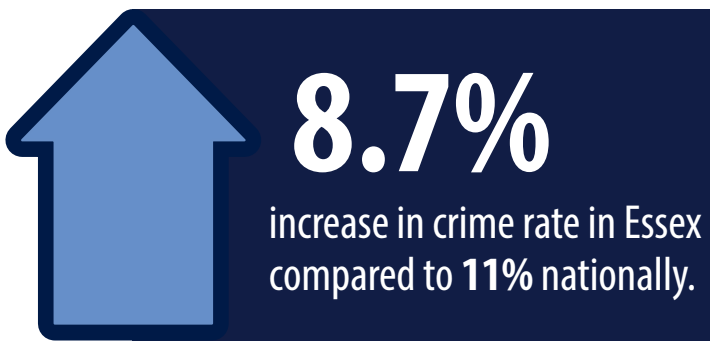
“The Special Constabulary has worked 115,610 hours during the year, the equivalent of 64 officers.”

In the context of these changes, it was pleasing to receive the Her Majesty’s Inspection of Constabulary report which provided independent reassurance of the positive progress Essex Police is making and continues to make. In particular, it is worth noting the significant improvement in how the most vulnerable in our society are treated and protected. I would like to recognise the huge effort made by Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh and his team in supporting the most vulnerable in our society. I was particularly pleased in May this year to be able to extend the Chief Constable’s contract by a further four years. This will enable him to continue to build on and develop the transformation programme now under way in Essex Police and provide stability and sustainability moving forward.

Victims remain at the heart of what we do. We have continued to focus on supporting Essex Police in improving the way they support the victims of crime and provide a range of general and specialist support services to help victims to cope and recover. In addition, my office is responsible for commissioning support services for victims of crime across the county and this past year we spent over £2 million supporting victims of all crime types, including some of the most vulnerable victims of serious violent and sexual crimes.

A key theme running through my Police and Crime Plan is partnership. I place great importance and value on our work with partners across Essex, both in the public, business and voluntary sectors. Partnerships such as the Essex Criminal Justice Board, which I chair, which works to improve services right across the criminal justice system, and the Essex Domestic Abuse Board, which seeks to tackle the huge challenge of domestic abuse across our county, are examples of agencies coming together to make a positive difference. Locally, regionally and nationally we are now connected and collaborating in ways which would not have been possible only a few years ago. These partnerships are driven through a shared commitment to improve the lives of the public, to make a difference in our communities and a strong contribution to our county.

A significant project this year has been the work on joint governance of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) and Essex Police. Since the end of



this reporting period, my Local Business Case for the governance of ECFRS received Home Office approval, making Essex the first county in the country to combine the governance of both police and fire services under the PCC (now Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner).

The change in governance of fire, enabling greater collaboration with police, is estimated to generate up to £30 million in efficiency savings which can then be reinvested back into improving the service received by the public. The success of this proposal has demonstrated again the ability of partners across Essex to work well together, to focus on what is in the best interests of the public and to be confident in making positive changes.

This has been a busy and productive year which has helped to lay the foundations for delivering on the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan and in helping to achieve the step change in service that the people of Essex so clearly want. However, there is much more to do and the year ahead will see me continue to focus on important improvements such as increased investment in local policing, improvements to the 101 public contact service and a fairer funding position for policing in the county.

I would like to thank the Chief Constable, the officers and staff in Essex Police, my office and wider partners who continue to work tirelessly together to deliver on the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan.

I would also like to thank the public whose ongoing commitment and willingness to participate underpins the form of the policing we enjoy in this country.




This is the first priority in the Police and Crime Plan and marks a significant shift back to a renewed focus on local policing, recognising the desire from the people of Essex to have a police service that is both visible and accessible.

Essex is one of the most efficient police forces in the country, according to HMIC Value for Money profiles. However, it is also one of the most poorly funded as a result of the national funding formula and, in the past, low levels of investment.

41

extra officers following a 3.25% rise in police precept.



Over the last few years, there has been a significant reduction in the number of officers, particularly PCSOs, and I have now committed to maintaining our current level of officers at 2,850 and have been able to fund a further 41 officers from the increase in the policing precept. While we may see changes to how our officers are deployed as we look at opportunities to combine with other forces and share resources, I am committed to ensuring that the overall number of officers will not be reduced any further.

“Essex is one of the most efficient police forces in the country according to HMIC Value for Money profiles.”

“I have set out an ambitious goal to double the number of Special Constables from 350 to 700 by 2019”

However, we also know we need to do more if we want to make a real and positive impact on local communities. . To achieve this, I have set out an ambitious goal to double the number of Special Constables from 350 to 700 by 2019. During the first year of this programme, we have strengthened the current Special Constabulary, changing the relationship between these volunteers and the regular force. We have appointed a Superintendent as Head of the Special Constabulary to oversee the programme, ensured all of the people involved in the programme are committed and launched a significant recruitment campaign. During the year, we have seen a 10% increase in the number of hours worked. This has created a strong base from which we can continue to grow in the next few years.

As well as a clear and ambitious commitment around the number of Specials, we have also increased the variety of ways members of the public can contribute to policing in their communities. The Active Citizen programme offers a range of roles from being out

on patrol to supporting officers’ engagement with the wider community. We have seen many people in these roles go on to become Specials and full-time officers. Since March 2016, we have seen this programme grow from 38 to reach 105 at the time of writing this report. Our Police Cadet programme has also shown significant development, with more than 200 young people now involved in the programme.



over

200

young people now involved in our Police Cadet Programme.

We have also made changes to support our officers to be more visible in their communities and have invested in better technology to help them to do more with their time. As part of the Mobile First programme, we have been able to issue 2,000 Samsung handheld devices which are allowing officers to complete administrative tasks while remaining visible in their communities. This will save about 20 minutes per shift for each officer which can be released back to frontline policing.



Public engagement

Over the reporting period, Essex Police have made significant strides in their use of social media to connect their officers directly with their communities. More officers are using this approach to complement existing channels, such as Essex Community Messaging and the traditional media, to provide ongoing regular updates and to hear back from their communities.

My deputy, Jane Gardner, and I have an extensive public engagement programme and aim to hold well over 100 visits per year across the county. These regular face-to-face visits are invaluable in getting direct feedback from different communities about how they feel about policing and community safety, but also what is working for them and where we can do more. Over the course of my first year in office, we delivered more than 70 public engagement events, meeting with about 2,000 people.



Rural crime

Over this reporting period, we have continued to work hard with our rural community through the Rural Crime Forum to build understanding and effective prevent programmes together. Operation Buzzard, which has formed a significant part of Essex Police's approach to rural crime, has proven to be a successful and collaborative programme which has successfully involved communities in crime prevention.

Working with landowners, this operation utilises new drone technology, but is mainly based around greater co-ordination and involvement of the community themselves. Through the growth of programmes such as Farm Watch and Neighbourhood Watch, sharing information through Essex Community Messaging and bringing in other operational units such as the dog team, the Active Citizen scheme is able to target activity and support communities in preventing crime in the first place.



15 police staff have been added to the Force Control Room to improve accessibility and the 101 contact service.



Precept

In January , I recommended increasing the police precept for 2017-2018 by 3.25 per cent or £4.95 for an average Band D property. This additional £3.1 million funded a number of programmes all specifically focused on this priority, including:

- The first phase of a programme to double the number of Special Constables to 700 by 2019.
- Increasing the number of police officers to 2,850, an increase of 41 officers for regular frontline policing, for the Serious Crime Directorate and for additional firearm officers.
- Improving accessibility by adding 15 police staff to the Force Control Room to manage additional demand and improve the 101 contact service.
- Investment in dealing with digital and cybercrime and online fraud, to help tackle gangs and organised crime.
- Investment in the technology that supports the Mobile First programme, increasing what officers can do via their smartphones on patrol, freeing up time to offer additional support to communities and improving performance management.

Community safety hubs

The introduction of these shared spaces to co-locate community safety and policing services together has further strengthened the link between agencies and brought policing and communities closer together. Building on the work of local Community Safety Partnerships, the public now have a way to identify the priorities in their communities and, once identified, these are fed directly to the Community Safety Hubs and local policing teams for action.

However, while we have made significant progress over the last year, we still have some way to go. We continue to work hard to improve our engagement with the public, our 101 service through the Contact Management Review Project Board and supporting our officers to take up opportunities offered by technology to connect with their communities more regularly and more visibly. Over the next year, the Chief Constable and I will focus hard on delivering improvements to the 101 service to ensure the public get the speed and quality of response they need.



Antisocial behaviour can have a corrosive impact on communities with repeat offenders impacting on the quality of life for large sections of their communities. While we continue to focus on cracking down on antisocial behaviour, it is positive that across Essex antisocial behaviour incidents reduced by 562 or 1.1 per cent over the 12 months covered by this report. While this is a small reduction and there is significant variation between communities, it is still a reduction and shows a positive start in the first year of the new Police and Crime Plan.

At a county level, Safer Essex Partnership Board brings together local authorities, Community Safety Partnerships, Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, National Probation Service, Essex Community Rehabilitation Company, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Public Health and a wide range of third sector organisations represented through the Essex CVS. The Partnership has the aim of making Essex a safer place to live, work and learn. As an active member of this partnership, we work hard to share best practice between partners in different communities across the county.

Community Safety Hubs, where agencies are located together to tackle local crime and ASB, are being rolled out across the county. While this implementation is still in the early stages, it is showing positive signs of being a powerful approach to tackling crime and preventing it from happening in the first place. In particular, these hubs are effective at promoting information sharing and joint working between community safety organisations. This, in turn, is starting to make a positive difference to the impact these agencies can have in their communities. The model is flexible to reflect local needs so hubs look different in each area in Essex, but generally involve Community Policing Teams co-locating with other partners including Community Safety Partnerships, district councils, Neighbourhood Watch groups, Youth Offending Teams and Citizens Advice etc.

Where these hubs are now operational, we can see the positive impact of our investment with greater collaboration and information sharing leading to a much stronger multi-agency response to a wide range of local issues, ranging from parking and antisocial behaviour to organised crime and gangs.

We have also continued to invest in and support Community Safety Partnerships with £321,827 invested across Essex in 2016-17.



These Partnerships offer local communities the opportunity to identify and prioritise the issues that matter to them. The Community Safety Development Fund has provided £300,000 to fund local programmes of up to £20,000 each. This funding has been used successfully by CSP throughout the county.

These partnerships offer local communities the opportunity to identify and prioritise the issues which matter to them. The PCC Community Safety Development Fund has provided £300,000 to fund local programmes of up to £20,000 each. This funding has been used successfully by CSPs and local community groups throughout the county.

In Southend, the PCC funded Achievement Through Football (ATF), a football coaching programme. The project engaged young people who may otherwise have been involved in antisocial behaviour or low-level criminal activity. One client was referred from the Probation Service after receiving a custodial sentence for ABH. The individual struggled with anger issues and benefited from counselling through the ATF programme to address this. He now volunteers with ATF, supporting a younger cohort by providing coaching to them.

We recognise that persistent antisocial behaviour, which often leads on to low level crime, can have a significant impact on communities and victims. That is why we have commissioned the charity Victim Support to deliver services to support victims of ASB as well as an enhanced service for victims of persistent forms of crime or those most vulnerable. This ensures partners provide a faster and stronger response.

However, ultimately, we believe that prevention of crime and ASB is the most effective approach in the long term. That is why one of the services we have invested in is the **Essex Restorative and Mediation Service**. This is a well-used and successful programme which seeks to support victims as well as reduce the level of reoffending by offenders through the use of restorative approaches, such as mediation, reparation and restorative conferences. 100 per cent of agencies who have referred to the service say they would refer again and 94 per cent of those who have used the service say they received a positive outcome. About 62 per cent of referrals to the service involve antisocial behaviour. The Essex Restorative and Mediation Service successfully achieved the Restorative Service Quality Mark (RSQM) in 2016-17 –the industry accreditation which demonstrates the good quality of the services provided.



Case Study

Southchurch Park

The work of my Restorative Justice Team has a direct impact on the community.

The team were called in to help with a situation which had developed at Southchurch Hall Gardens in Southend. These picturesque gardens are a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument and house a medieval moated manor house.

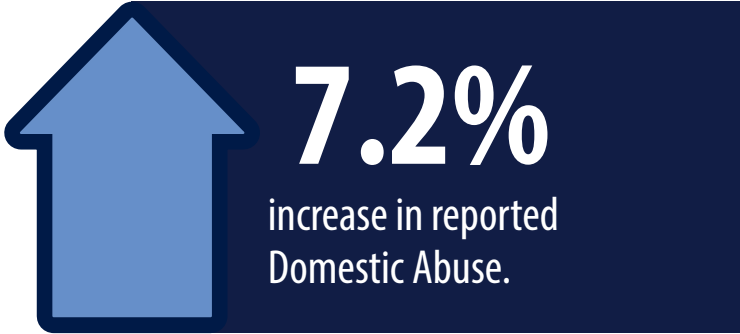
Unfortunately, the park was being used by street drinkers, drug users and prostitutes. This was causing problems for residents whose gardens backed on to the grounds. Also, staff reported having to pick up needles and condoms before starting their work in the morning.

A mediation programme began involving police and council professionals, local businesses, residents and people who regularly drank in the area. It was agreed that everyone wanted the drugs and prostitution to stop and those who wished to drink during the day wanted somewhere safe to go that did not cause a problem for local residents.

A successful community meeting was held between residents, a local off-licence owner, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council staff, police officers and representatives from all of the park’s users. A number of outcomes were agreed with ideas taken forward to improve the gardens and encourage more residents to use it more.

Domestic abuse is a persistent blight in our communities with devastating consequences to victims and their families. It is an area where a substantial amount of partnership work has been undertaken in the last few years with a significant and sustained effort being made to increase awareness and reporting, provide specialist support and champion the rights of victims.

As a result of this awareness raising work, there is now a greater willingness from victims to come forward and report crime. While this is a positive consequence of the action undertaken, it does mean we have seen an increase in reporting and an increase in crimes recorded. **Over the 12 months covered in this report, the number of reported domestic abuse offences has continued to increase and went up by 7.2 per cent (918 offences). However, at the same time, we have also seen a reduction in the number of high risk and medium risk domestic abuse offences of 30.1 per cent (11231 offences) and 15.8 per cent (1102 offences) respectively, which is an encouraging trend showing the support offered to victims is having an impact.**



I remain committed to ensuring a strong focus on this important issue, working closely with the Chief Constable and wider partners through the DA Strategic Board to make sure victims are kept safe and perpetrators are brought to justice. The Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse was developed in 2015 and provides joined-up and tailored approaches in Southend, Essex and Thurrock. Progress against this strategy is monitored by the Joint Domestic Abuse Board.

“As a result of awareness campaigns there is now a greater willingness from victims to come forward and report crime.”



A good example of how this can work in practice is the **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Team (MARAT) which operates in Essex and a similar arrangement that operates in Southend.** This is a multi-disciplinary team consisting of social care professionals, police, Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service workers and others who look into specific cases and develop safety plans for victims and strategies for dealing with individual cases. In Thurrock, a multi-agency safeguarding hub provides a similar service. These models have been recognised nationally as good practice and scrutiny over them is maintained through the Domestic Abuse Board.

As well as investing in better ways to tackle and manage existing behaviour, we also, in line with our approach to other forms of crime, continue to invest heavily in prevention and making it easier to report offences. In the 2016-2017 year, Essex Police ran the successful and award-winning Reflect campaigns which used highly targeted media campaigns to challenge and tackle the behaviour of potential offenders.

We also continue to focus on more targeted programmes, such as J9 and Risk Avert. Working with professionals, the J9 programme provides training in how to spot the signs of abuse and information on how and where to refer people, while Risk Avert is a programme delivered free of charge in Essex schools. Risk Avert involves anonymously surveying all students with a range of questions intended to assess their understanding of risk and to flag those young people who are demonstrating or displaying risky behaviours. Where at-risk individuals are identified, they are given targeted interventions to help them to better understand risk and to help them to make better decisions.

“The embedding of Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors within A&Es which started with 3 A&Es in Essex will be expanded to 5 hospitals in the coming year.”

The Drive project aims to reduce the number of child and adult victims of domestic abuse and focuses on ex/partners of victims. The Drive project combines intensive case management with perpetrators and local multi-agency work to create change.

Other innovative arrangements, such as embedding Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors within A&E department, offer new ways for those affected by domestic abuse to come forward and report crime. This project, which started with three A&E departments in Essex, will be expanded to five hospitals in the coming year.

However, while the approach continues to show strong partnership working and innovative thinking, the solve rate for domestic violence has fallen over the reporting period by 4.5 per cent to 26.2 per cent. This is of concern and we will continue to work closely with partners and hold the Chief Constable to account to better understand the factors impacting this and what needs to be done to see significant improvement.



Serious violence

While Essex remains a safe county, serious crime continues to be of concern, with the number of violence with injury offences increasing by 7.7 per cent (897 offences) over the reporting period. 32 per cent of these were domestic abuse related.

Even though this increase is reflected across the country, the situation in Essex is of concern and more needs to be done to identify and divert those most at risk of committing serious crime. Included in Operation Raptor, which is discussed in more detail within the gangs and organised crime section, there is a focus on tackling hotspots and patterns of knife crime within the county.



positive trend, given the low numbers involved we need to be cautious about becoming complacent.

Reducing reoffending - A significant achievement this year has been the development of The Essex Partnership Reducing Reoffending Strategy. This sets out how agencies across the Southend, Essex and Thurrock areas will work together to reduce reoffending by adults and young people. This approach focuses on early intervention to prevent people from getting involved in offending in the first place and working to reduce reoffending among those who do offend. This work builds on recent successes, including:



7.7%

increase in violence with injury.

Sexual abuse

This is an extremely serious and deeply impactful harm, especially when the victims are among the most vulnerable members of society. Working with local criminal justice and safeguarding partners, I have made commitments to increase awareness and understanding of these crimes and to improve the response to victims and perpetrators. I have commissioned the Essex Rape Crisis Partnership (ERCP) to deliver specialist support services for all victims of sexual abuse across Essex, including recent and historic cases of rape and sexual assault. This service commenced in April 2016 and is delivering excellent outcomes for victims, with more than 90 per cent of victims reporting that they received the support they needed.



of victims reported that they received the support they needed from the Essex Rape Crisis Partnership.

Essex Rape Crisis Partnership provides advocacy services through Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) who help individuals through the criminal justice service. They also provide therapy, counselling and other longer-term support, including advice or referral and signposting to other support services which enable victims to cope and recover from the harm they have experienced. I am proud to have been able to provide a more stable and consistent support service for victims of sexual abuse. But, we know that challenges remain in this area as demand for this type of support is increasing rapidly due, in part, to some high profile national cases and improving referral and signposting mechanisms as a result of improved awareness.

Over this same period, the number of rapes reported increased by 8.6 per cent for offences against victims under the age of 16 and 9.7 per cent for offences against victims over the age of 16. 44.8 per cent of those offences committed on people over the age of 16 were domestic-abuse related. As part of the response to this data, I recommended a rape scrutiny panel be established to understand and review the evidence, practice and performance to help support significant improvements in this area.



Local activity is co-ordinated to coincide with the national Operation Sceptre, which allows Essex Police to keep the dangers of carrying knives on the public agenda. During this reporting period, there were more than 40 Operation Sceptre related arrests and significant amounts of publicity and public engagement.

During the year, I continued to support the work undertaken by organisations such as Only Cowards Carry where I funded six amnesty bins. At a total cost of £25,000, this investment helped to get 15,000 knives off the streets. I also provide annual grant funding to the three upper tier local authorities to support the work of their drug and alcohol teams. This money is used to fund treatment and recovery services, establishing referral pathways such as drug testing on arrest and support programmes such as peer mentoring.

In contrast to the increase in violence with injury offences, the number of homicides over the same period has reduced from 34 in 2016 to 15 in 2017, a significant 55.9 per cent reduction. While this is a

Gang and organised criminal behaviour is a key driver for other forms of criminality and my commitment is to make sure crime doesn't pay, to tackle these forms of crime and to prevent the exploitation of vulnerable people.

Gang and organised criminal behaviour is a key driver for other forms of criminality and my commitment is to make sure crime doesn't pay, to tackle these forms of crime and to prevent the exploitation of vulnerable people.

These results have led to more than £500,000 being allocated to crime prevention programmes in 2016-2017 from proceeds of crime and helping to make sure crime doesn't pay.

On the ground, our fight against gangs is lead through Operation Raptor. This is a significant operation which aims to target offenders, support victims, increase the intelligence received from the community, identify and address knife crime hotspots, work with schools to identify those most vulnerable to exploitation and work with other partners to stop the supply of drugs through "county lines".

Between January and July 2017, Operation Raptor teams across the county arrested 279 people, charged 130 people, submitted 484 intelligence reports, seized about £100,000.00 in cash and seized 31 vehicles.

279 arrests

130 charged

484 intelligence reports

£500,000 seized in criminal assets.

£200,000

invested in 2 year Gangsline Pilot funding.



As well as tackling those gangs and organised criminals driving this criminal behaviour, we are also investing in preventative programmes and better collaboration to help partners through the county to tackle gang behaviour in their own communities. My office is working with partners to develop a multi-agency Gangs and Vulnerability Strategic Framework, where all agencies can sign up to common approaches to tackling gangs and keep vulnerable people and communities safe.

In terms of gang members, we have invested £200,000 in a series of pilots run by the voluntary sector organisation Gangsline in some of the highest risk areas in the county. These pilots will train more than 1,000 people from secondary schools, pupil referral units and community safety partnerships to identify young people at risk of being exploited by gangs. Once identified, those at risk of being exploited are supported by a network of highly skilled specialists, including some ex-gang members who work with young people at risk to tackle the issues affecting them and help them to turn their lives around.

Gangsline has a proven track record of effectively addressing the root causes of why young people get caught in gang membership. Issues such as family breakdowns, anger, the consequences of societal rejection, emotional hurt, unresolved conflict, a (missing) sense of belonging, the dangers of the disillusioned and the despair of struggling parents and absent fathers have all had a massive contribution to the choices made by many of our

socially excluded young people. Gangsline focuses on notions of responsibility, morality, positive thinking, anger management, self- belief, leadership, success and purpose to help support these young people.

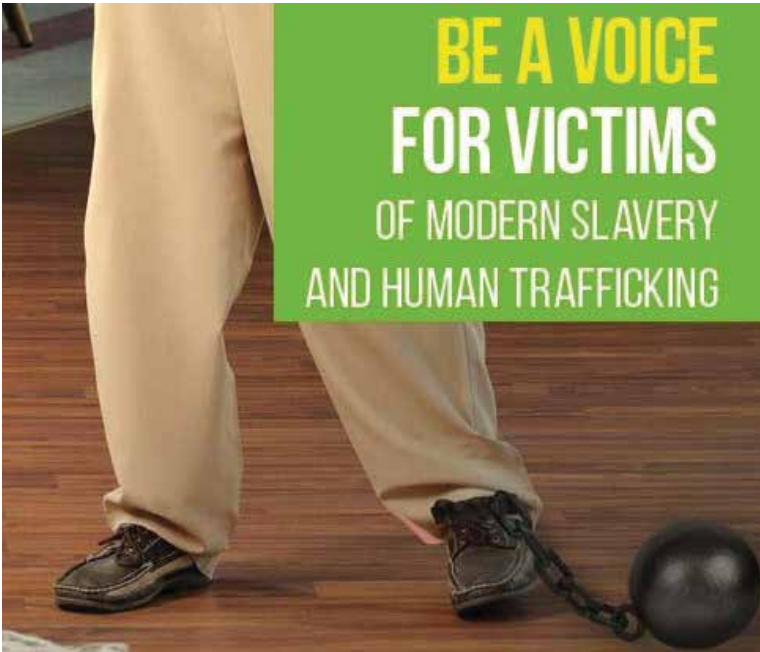
Drugs remain as the most common commodity associated with organised criminal gangs with consequences for the wider community. The joint efforts of Essex Police and Kent Police through the Serious Crime Directorate are focussed on this threat which is regularly monitored by the PCC through the Essex and Kent PCC Collaboration Board.

Modern slavery is a growing area of concern, with significant anticipated under-reporting and some of the most vulnerable victims in our community. We have partnered with the Kent PCC to fund a new anti-

slavery partnership co-ordinator. This role brings partners together, has successfully developed an action plan and delivered initiatives and interventions such as our modern slavery safe house.

In September 2016, Essex Police implemented a Tactical Anti-Slavery Group which facilitates partnership working and sharing good practice and promotes data and intelligence sharing between partners.

"Ex-gang members... work with young people at risk to tackle the issues affecting them and help them turn their lives around."



Ensuring children and vulnerable people are appropriately safeguarded and receive the help and support they need is an important priority within the Police and Crime Plan. It is also an area where the public rightly expect the police to offer a high level of service.

The 2015 PEEL Vulnerability report, where Essex Police’s response to children in need of help and protection was judged to be “inadequate”, made it clear there was a lot of work to be done in this area. My predecessor as Police and Crime Commissioner, who was in office at the time, along with the Chief Constable put significant effort into improving this area. It was very positive that these efforts were recognised by HMIC during their 2017 re-inspection report. In this report, HMIC found the force had “acted decisively on these findings and is making improvements and addressing shortcomings”. While it was noted it is too early to know if these changes are having an effect on the frontline, the early indications are positive.

However, given the level of improvement required and the clear importance of this area, we have continued to maintain close scrutiny in this area and work with Essex Police to ensure these actions are embedded effectively.

At a strategic level, we work actively on the Safeguarding Boards for Essex, Southend and Thurrock. Under Section 13 of the Children Act 2004, these boards hold the statutory responsibility to act as the lead organisation for adult safeguarding and oversee and co-ordinate the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of its member and partner agencies.

This shared approach has significant potential and, while there is some variation in how the boards operate, having all responsible agencies working closely together presents significant opportunities and positive outcomes in keeping children safe.

The office for the PCC and Essex Police are active members of the safeguarding boards, which provide training and deliver targeted communications campaigns to up-skill and raise awareness of key

issues, such as the recent “I didn’t know” campaign focusing on raising awareness of child sexual exploitation.

Over the last 18 months, one area which has developed significantly is around the treatment of individuals experiencing mental health crises. In collaboration with the Essex Health Economy and Essex Police, I have facilitated new legislation in relation to Section 136 of the Mental Health Act which will ensure individuals in mental health crisis are no longer arrested, but receive appropriate assessment and intervention within a health based place of safety. This, in effect, means only individuals displaying extreme violence will be detained in custody.

At a local level, we have developed the Crisis Care Concordat, a new arrangement signed by key partners which sets out how relevant organisations should work together effectively to help people when they are having a mental health crisis. We have also invested further in Street Triage, a joint service

between Essex Police and local NHS providers. This has significantly reduced the pressure on Essex Police and partner resources and, more importantly, has provided a more responsive and more appropriate intervention to those in mental health crisis.

Following the success of this arrangement, Essex Police are aligning their police custody healthcare service with Street Triage and liaison and diversion to deliver an integrated health and justice model for Essex – this new service will commence in April 2018.

Essex Police and my office also work closely with communities through independent advisory groups which provide feedback to Essex Police regarding policies, procedures and incidents.

“We have invested further in the Street Triage service which has provided a more responsive and more appropriate intervention to those in mental health crisis”



“Ensuring children and young people are appropriately safeguarded ... is an area where the public rightly expect the police to offer a high level of service.”

Firebreaks

The PCC has used the Community Safety Development Fund to contribute to Essex County Fire and Rescue Service’s Firebreak programme. Firebreak is a week-long programme which works with young people to break the cycle of negativity, aiming to reduce reoffending and ASB. During the intensive week-long fire station-based course, students gain confidence and develop vital life skills, while experiencing the techniques used by firefighters in their working lives. The PCC has funded a range of Firebreak courses, including some specifically focused on a cohort of young people known to be involved in ASB. Each course is evaluated, with positive results of young people not representing following involvement in the programme.

Hate crime reporting

Stop Hate UK reporting line is funded through the PCC’s office and supports victims and professionals as well as facilitating reports to police. This is further supported by our hate crime partnership co-ordinator who promotes the work of the hate crime partnership and ensures the effectiveness of our local arrangements.



More people are injured on our roads than in any other form of crime put together so I am committed to improving safety on our roads and reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured. The work myself and Essex Police do in this area is through the strong working relationship we have with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP).

During 2016-2017, Essex moved to a new reporting system which provided an easier and more consistent reporting process across the county. This new system has led to a significant increase in the number of recorded offences and made it hard to see a true year-on-year comparison. As we have been using the system for a number of years, we can now see in 2017-2018 a clear downwards trend in the number of offences on the roads, however, this is not reflected in this year's statistics.

A key part of reducing the number of offences on our roads is the promotion and uptake of safe driving programmes. These have been shown to have a positive effect on driver behaviour. In 2016-2017, 60,734 courses were delivered compared to 47,116 in 2014-2015. These courses can be either theory based or practical and are designed to tackle the specific

dangerous behaviour shown by the driver, whether speeding or careless driving.

Essex Police have also continued to run successful awareness campaigns to encourage the reporting of driving related offences. In 2015 under Operation VALE, a specialist email address was introduced to

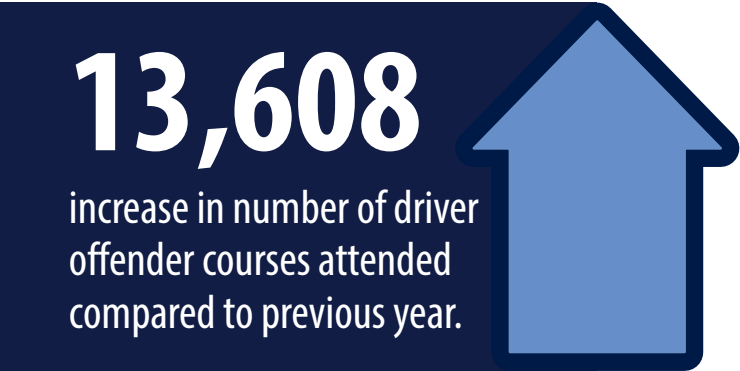
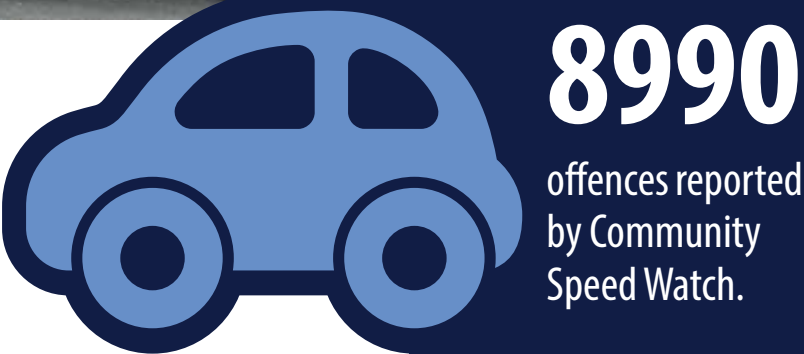
encourage road users to report incidents of poor driving. More than 2,500 messages were received, providing valuable intelligence and resulting in a range of measures, including more than 120 warning letters being issued. More than 103 messages also provided footage from dash cams or go-pro cameras. This concept has now been picked up nationally and

Safer Essex Road Partnership will offer an enhanced service in 2017 under the Extra Eyes campaign.

“More people are injured on our roads than any other form of crime put together”



With the increase in drug-driving, Essex Police have continued to train specific frontline officers in the use of roadside drug wipes, including all road policing officers and Special Constables plus proactive teams focused on disrupting drug gangs. Essex Police have been recognised by the Department for Transport for this approach.



The force have also been recognised for their recent move into online reporting. This has improved recording and investigations leading to a better level of service to the public and a more timely receipt of collision data. This is used by statutory agencies, including the Department for Transport and Highway Authorities, in directing measures to improve road safety through education, enforcement and engineering.

Community Speed Watch also continues to offer a valuable service and another way for members of the public to participate, with 370 trained volunteers within 76 active groups. From January 2017 through to the end of July 2017, Community Speed Watch carried out 752 sessions, recording 8,990 offences. More than 40 new sites have been evaluated and put forward for approval and there are a number still awaiting approval. CSW groups have actively supported Surround a Town events and national road safety days.

Summary of accounts

What the money was spent on in 2016/17

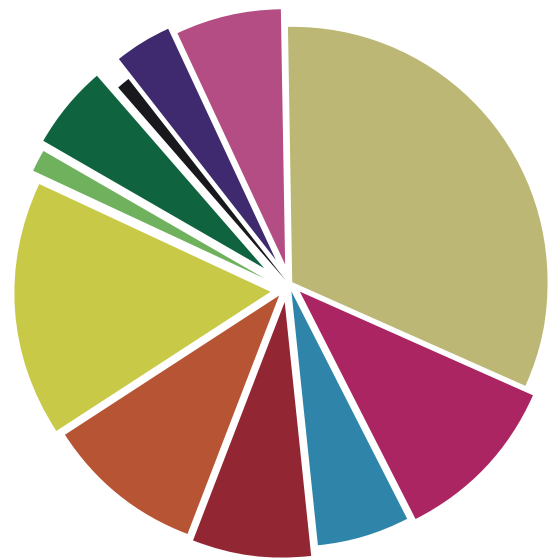
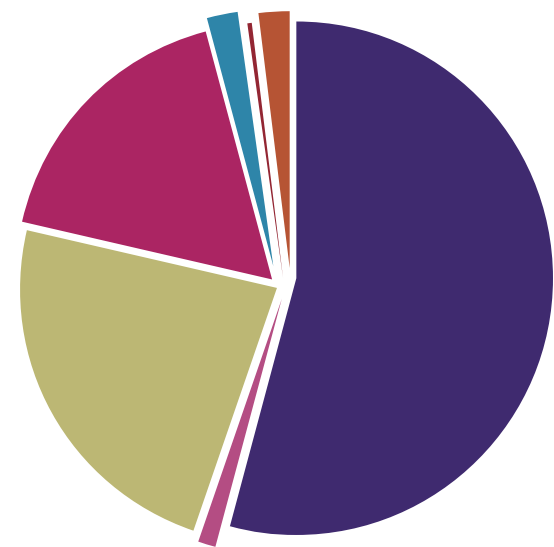
Revenue Expenditure	2016/17
Police officer pay & allowances	159,556
Police community support officers	3,431
Police staff pay and allowances	68,988
Premises, Transport, Supplies and Services, Third Party and transfer to earmarked reserve	50,151
Income	-27,920
Operational Expenditure	254,206
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	1,230
Police and Crime Commissioner grants	5,292
Contribution (from) / to general reserve	-
Net Revenue Expenditure	260,728
Transfer to Earmarked Reserve	5,551
Total	266,279

Funding Sources	2016/17
Police Grant	102,783
DCLG Grant	55,933
Council tax precept	92,644
Council tax freeze scheme	2,133
Council tax support grant	10,992
Collection fund surplus	1,794
Total	266,279

Amount spent on different policing services in 2015/16

Force Executive and Corporate Centre	10,249
Control Room and Incident Management	17,507
Local Policing	85,069
Crime and Public Protection Command	28,438
Custody and Criminal Justice	15,561
Operational Policing Command	20,456
Serious Crime Directorate	26,271
Support Services Directorate	42,763
Police & Crime Commissioner	4,384
Central Costs	13,770
National / Misc. Costs	1,811
Total expenditure	266,279

Police Officer Pay and Allowances
Police community support officers
Police staff pay and allowances
Premises, Transport, Supplies and Services, Third Party
Transfer to earmarked reserve
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Police and Crime Commissioner grants



Performance Data

Police and Crime Plan Priorities	Police Priority Indicators	12 months to Mar 2016	12 months to Mar 2017	Number Difference	% Difference	Further Info
Priority 1 - More local, visible and accessible policing	Percentage of people who have confidence in policing in Essex ^{1 2}	58.8	51.6	-7.2	-	pages 6 - 9
	Number of all crime offences	111,022	120,665	9,643	8.7	
Priority 2 - Crack down on anti-social behaviour	Number of anti-social behaviour incidents	52,732	52,170	-562	-1.1	pages 10-11
	Percentage of people who have confidence that the policing response to ASB is improving ¹	Data are not currently available				
Priority 3 - Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse	Number of incidents of domestic abuse	30,719	32,009	1,290	4.2	pages 12-13
	Number of repeat incidents of domestic abuse ³	n/a	13,489	-	-	
	Percentage of domestic abuse offences solved	30.7	26.2	-4.5	-	
Priority 4 - Reverse the trend in serious violence	Number of homicides	34	15	-19	-55.9	pages 14-15
	Number of violence with injury offences	11,680	12,577	897	7.7	
Priority 5 - Tackle gangs and organised crime	Number of Organised Criminal Group disruptions ⁴	n/a	n/a	-	-	pages 16-17
	Number of drug offences in relation to Trafficking of Drugs	582	606	24	4.1	
Priority 6 - Protecting children & vulnerable people	Number of child abuse outcomes ⁵	381	330	-5.1	-13.4	pages 18-19
Priority 7 - Improve safety on our roads	Number of driving related mobile phone crime on Essex roads	5,648	4,417	-1,231	-21.8	pages 20-21
	Number of driving under the influence of drink and/or drugs on Essex roads	1,757	1,719	-38	-2.2	

¹ This question has been included in the survey that has been commissioner by the PCC and Essex Police, with the results being available quarterly from the end of 2017.

² Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) - 12 months to March 2017 vs. 12 months to March 2016.

³ The number of repeat incidents of domestic abuse is for the 12 months to March 2017. The previous period cannot be produced due to a change in how this measure is captured.

⁴ The number of Organised Criminal Group disruptions can not be produced this month due to a recent change in the definition (January 2017). Data will be available from April 2017.

⁵ Solved outcomes are crimes that result in: charge or summons, caution, crimes taken into consideration, fixed penalty notice, cannabis warning or community resolution (it should be noted that not all of these are applicable to child abuse outcomes).

Moving forward

During this reporting period, we have established a strong foundation on which to build over the next three years. In particular, our work with partners and the public to develop the Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020 has established a clear set of priorities and focus.

As well as refocusing our efforts on increased local, visible and accessible policing, we have successfully redirected the resources we have. By moving out of a number of old and out-dated police stations, we have been able to reinvest these resources into the modernisation of Essex Police through programmes such as Mobile First. While this is still in the early stages, it has already started to make a difference in our communities with officers saving about 20 minutes per shift due to the availability of Samsung handheld devices. As further investment is made, this saving should increase with communities starting to feel a tangible difference.

While we have established a strong foundation there is still much to do. Over the next three years:

- We will continue to **refocus** our resources away from operationally outdated police stations and into modernisation programmes.
- We will **support** our officers to have the technology they need to be mobile, increasing their visibility within their communities.
- We will continue to **build** the capability and capacity of the Special Constabulary.
- We will **champion** public participation in policing including a strong emphasis on volunteering.
- We believe victims should **be at the heart** of the Criminal Justice system and will continue to place a **special emphasis** on their needs.
- We will work in **close partnership** with agencies and organisations across Essex including health, local authorities, voluntary organisations, community safety partnerships, criminal justice agencies and business, rural and local communities.
- Through **joint governance** of police and fire services, we will invest more in community safety and prevention activity in local communities, while at the same time enabling our police officers and fire officers to deliver further improvements at a local level.
- We will **reduce the risk** of re-offending by getting offenders out of crime and into employment and training, accommodation and healthy relationships.
- We will continue to **stay in touch with the people of Essex**, undertaking a robust public engagement programme, welcoming challenge and debate and ensuring the public have access to the information they need to understand and review the work that we do.

Beyond this, we will continue to be accountable to the people of Essex, we will be open and transparent and deliver on our priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020.



Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police and Crime Panels' Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee, held in Committee Room 5 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on 9 November 2017 at 1.30 p.m.

Present:

Present	Representing
Cllr Penny Channer	Maldon District Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member
Cllr John Jowers	Essex County Council
Bob Shepherd	Chelmsford City Council
Roger Hirst	Essex Police and Crime Commissioner
Susannah Hancock	Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)

The following officer was in attendance throughout the meeting:

Robert Fox Scrutiny Officer, Essex County Council

1 Apologies for Absence and Notices of Substitution

Councillor Godfrey Isaacs, Castle Point Borough Council and Kay Odysseos presented their apologies.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 6 July 2017 were approved as an accurate record by those present. It was confirmed a verbal report of the last meeting was given to the full Panel on 20 July 2017.

3 Spit Guards

The Sub-Committee was joined for this item by Superintendent Clare Dixon, Tom Johnson and Ryan Whitear from Essex Police.

The officers demonstrated the spit guard and explained that clear conditions must be in place prior to application with the assailant hand-cuffed to the rear. The individual will have had to have spat or look as if they are about to spit and a verbal warning issued in advance of application. Officers' body cams mean thought has to go into the application of the guard. Apprehended individuals who spit are likely to be intoxicated with alcohol or have taken drugs and the risk of infection for police officers is increased. The guard provides another layer of personal protection for officers as well as being another issue to use in a proportionate and appropriate way. An audit trail will be kept of when and why the guards have been deployed.

Essex Police will be one of the last forces in the country to introduce the guards; and all officers trained in the use of them will carry them attached to their stab vests or belts inside a small pack with easy release. When receiving spit guard training officers will also receive personal safety and first-aid training. No officers will be provided with a guard until they have received the training programme. The Police Federation has been keen on the use of spit guards for many years;

and Kent Police have recently introduced them. The Chief Constable of Essex has looked at the implementation elsewhere prior to the Essex roll-out. There was some debate over which type of spit guard would be used in Essex before a decision was made. The guards have been tested and have the safety standard kitemark and CE marking.

A national decision model is used for risk, threat and harm; with the utilisation of the guard at the discretion of the police officer. Only in exceptional circumstances would a guard be deployed on an individual with learning disabilities or with a mental health problem. In the main it will be used on non-compliant and aggressive people. The more restraint that is used the more care and attention is needed. Once the guard is in place the individual is able to talk.

Officers who are spat at tend to consider individual circumstances prior to any Accident and Emergency visit. However, where blood is involved an A&E visit is undertaken, as it is with all bites. Officers also take advice from Occupational Health following the incidents. Hepatitis B jabs are no longer routinely given due to low stocks of the vaccine worldwide. The spit guards will be a preventative measure to block out potential infection.

The cost of the guards is around £2-£3 per unit; and every custody location will have a supply. It is anticipated the use of the guards will be occasional. Use of force data will capture deployment of the guards and this data is publicly published.

4 Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Ethics and Integrity update

Roger Hirst updated the Sub-Committee on police and then fire and rescue ethics and integrity issues. With regard to police activity Operation Servator is being rolled-out into Colchester town centre whereby there will be an armed police presence with officers carrying long-arms. Operation Servator has been in place at Stansted and Southend Airports as well as the Lakeside Shopping Centre for some time. Other major towns will see the roll-out in further course, as part of the escalation of the terrorism threat levels. Mr Hirst stated he did expect to receive feedback from the public on the ethics of British Police Officers carrying firearms. There has been a press release informing residents of the roll-out in Colchester.

With regard to the fire and rescue service the Lucas Report, which was commissioned by the Fire Authority two years ago, identified a 'toxic culture' and dysfunctionality within the Essex Fire and Rescue Service. A change programme was implemented following the publication of the Lucas report with an independent Expert Advisory Panel established which included an former Chief Fire Officer from another Fire and Rescue Service; a senior FBU member from Northern Ireland; a senior ACAS member; and a university professor. The Panel has helped design an implementation programme which ECFRS are now delivering. This has recently been reviewed by Sir Ken Knight who found progress made, but still more work to do. .

Mr Hirst stated he had undertaken announced visits to 20 fire stations in the county and the feedback from the front-line was that whilst the atmosphere in the service is improving, things are not yet 'good'; and there is still some concern

about whistleblowing and raising concerns without consequence.

The cultural change programme is moving forward and in the first stages of implementation, but this has to happen as soon as practicable. There has been nine years of low recruitment for fire officers and there are still diversity issues – Mr Hirst has had conversations with the current chief Fire Officer to ‘widen the net’ in terms of recruitment.

A performance, learning and development, and review process is being put in place that will include behaviours as well as fire-related work issues. There must be a promotion process based upon merit. Discipline and grievance procedures are currently conducted through direct management and this will change also. Recruitment for a new Chief Fire Officer is underway with a job advertisement.

5 Future Items for the Sub-Committee

It was agreed that the next meeting will receive revised Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee to take into account the fire service.

It was agreed the next meeting of the Sub-Committee concentrate on the culture change within the Fire & Rescue service following the Lucas and Knight reviews.

6 Date of Next Meeting

Dates for potential meetings in the latter part of February 2018 will be circulated to establish the next meeting.

Action: Robert Fox

With no further business identified the meeting closed at 3.25 p.m.

Chairman

AGENDA ITEM 13

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	EPCP/30/17
Date: 7 December 2017	

Forward Look

Report by the Secretary to the Panel

Enquiries to: Robert Fox: 033301 34585 robert.fox@essex.gov.uk

Purpose of report and background

To plan the business of the Panel.

The next Meeting of the Panel is to be scheduled for 25 January 2018.

Business proposed to be taken to the meetings is as follows:

Date	Performance for period up to	Other business
22 January 2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Police Precept 2018/19 • The Proposed Fire Precept 2018/19 • PFCC Decisions Report • Confirmation hearing new Chief Fire Officer (subject to recruitment)
15 February 2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Precept (p2 – if required) • Fire Precept (p2 – if required) • Police and Crime Plan: quarterly performance report • Fire and Rescue Service: Quarterly performance report • PFCC Decisions Report
24 May 2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures • Fire Service Performance Measures • Report from the February meeting of the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee • PFCC Decisions Report
19 July 2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from the May/June meeting of the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee • PFCC Decisions Report
17 October 2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Service Performance Measures • PFCC Decisions Report • Annual report – Policing and Crime • Annual Fire and Rescue Statement
6 December 2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Scene Setting • PFCC Decisions Report • Fire and Rescue Plan (draft)

The Panel is asked to identify any other business it would like to consider.