

**Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel:
Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee, held in Committee Room 5 County
Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on 18 April 2019 at 10.00 a.m.**

Present	Representing
Pippa Brent-Isherwood	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Cllr Penny Channer	Maldon District Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member
Cllr Tony Hedley	Essex County Council
Roger Hirst	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Geoffrey Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Cllr Malcolm Maddocks	Essex County Council
Kay Odysseos	Independent Member
Wendy Schmitt (Chairman)	Braintree District Council
Jo Turton	Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Essex Fire and Rescue Service

Also present

Andy Gribben Senior Democratic Services Officer and Clerk to the meeting

1 Apologies for Absence and Notices of Substitution

There were no apologies for absence

2 Standards within Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Roger Hirst, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, introduced Jo Turton Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, who would, he suggested, advise members of the Sub-Committee on the defined values of the service and report on what had been already achieved, the foundations that had been laid and processes being adopted to allow the development of improved behaviours and a better culture within the service.

Ms Turton advised members of the Sub-Committee that the progress made so far included:

- A near completion of the 'rank to role' programme that would lead to a more flexible structure.
- A resolution of all but one of the outstanding and historic cases.
- A review of the Senior Leadership team which has included the appointment of Rick Hilton (Cambs) as Deputy and Carl Edwards from the Ambulance Services.

- A review of how to promote talent from within in 'developmental roles' to encourage internal motivation and also review the gender-balance on the Service Leadership Team.
- Positive encouragement for external challenge so that key stakeholders and the public see that priorities for continuous improvement are considered seriously.
- LGA Peer Review to be used as a means to prepare for inspections.

It was also noted that there had not been any employee or industrial relations dispute for two years, as well as a significant drop in disciplinaries coupled with a desire to identify at an early stage, possible areas of grievance. It was considered that early informal intervention led to better outcomes.

Ms Turton also advised members of the Sub-Committee that the Leadership Team had adopted a 'You Said – We Did' approach to be seen to be providing swift feedback to issues raised by staff. It had been identified that that this was more than simply the implementation of a staff suggestion scheme. Such schemes had failed in the past as there had not been a functioning mechanism to drive improvements. Whilst there had been no shortage of ideas, Management had often been unable to respond. There was the need to embrace a cultural change across the whole service.

In response to questions from members Ms Turton advised the Sub-Committee that:

- There was currently a promising number of applicants to vacancies. There had been recently 600 applicants for 50 advertised positions which, she suggested, was a reflection that, notwithstanding the difficulties that had been facing the service in recent years, the public still held the service in high regard. She noted that the recruitment had positively targeted diverse and under-represented demographic groups through the use of social media. This had proved successful.
- There was a need for new recruits to be assured that they were being employed in a 'safe place' where confidential conversations could take place and where their health and well-being was assured. Initiatives to bring this about included the setting up of telephone lines, one-to-one conversations with senior management, positive inclusivity and importance being laid upon the development of a professional environment. Such initiatives also seem to have re-energised longer-serving firefighters.
- It was early days for the Fire Standards Board which will be looking at subjects such as leadership, diversity and conduct. Whilst there was as yet no representation from the National Association on the Standards Boards it was generally considered that such representation would provide balance and help forge a better relationship for the future with Fire Services Management. Mr Hirst, The Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, stated that he would support such a move.
- The National initiative to permit graduate entry and fast-tracking into management was seen as a key way to improve the culture of the organisation.

- There was an encouraging use of the practice of permitting 'day-duty officer riding' i.e. those officers who were working in technical fields maintaining their operational capabilities and skills by deploying them into on-call fire stations where there is an identified need.
- Appraisals continued to be undertaken with 75% now complete. However, such appraisals also contributed to the required cultural change and the quality of appraisal was considered to be more important than the quantity completed.
- Operational training was a risk-critical issue as the safety of fire-fighters and the public was paramount. To this end, £1million has been transferred from financial reserves into the budget for operational training. There has also been finance made available to refurbish local training facilities that allows training to take place more locally and thereby reduces the need to take firefighters off-watch. Station Managers are also being trained to train.
- There were also improvements being made in the area of Community Safety, Fire Prevention and Protection – being undertaken with knowledge of local priorities and risks for better deployment of resources.

3 Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Ethics and Integrity Update.

Mr Roger Hirst, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, advised the members of the Sub-Committee that, in addition to that which they had already heard from Ms Turton the Fire Brigade's Union were in discussions concerning their terms and conditions of employment. He stressed that it was important that the public were confident that they were getting value for money.

Ongoing discussions for local agreements included plans for more holistic work with the police and ambulance service, involving searching for missing persons, trapped persons, prevention of, not just fire, but also trips and falls.

4 Future Items for the Sub-Committee

There should be a report at the next meeting (probably in about six-months' time) on the future work of the Sub-Committee which was to include:

- The Strategic Guidance in the Constitution that needs to be refreshed in the Policies.
- Induction,
- Consultation,
- Standing Orders and
- Succession Planning.

5 Date of Next Meeting

To be arranged.

6 Any Other Business

There being no further business the meeting closed.

18 April 2019

Chairman