

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held virtually on Thursday, 10 December 2020

Present:

Councillor	Representing
Aidan McGurran	Basildon Borough Council
Wendy Schmitt	Braintree District Council (Chairman)
Godfrey Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Adam Fox	Colchester Borough Council
Holly Whitbread	Epping Forest District Council
Mark Heard	Maldon District Council
Leslie Butcher	Rochford District Council
Ian Shead	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Lynda McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Joycelyn Redsell	Thurrock Council
Colin Day	Uttlesford District Council

Co-opted Independent Members

John Gili-Ross
Sheila Murphy

Also in attendance

Pippa Brent-Isherwood	Chief Executive, Office of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Julia Berry	Proposed PFCCs Head of Finance
Moiria Bruin	Director of Corporate Services, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
Neil Cross	Chief Finance Officer, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
Elizabeth Helm	Interim Head of Finance, Office of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Roger Hirst	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Rick Hylton	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
Victoria Freeman	Secretary to the Panel
Emma Tombs	Democratic Services Manager

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

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

1. Councillor Mark Heard, representing Maldon District Council, was welcomed to the meeting as a new Panel member.
2. The following apologies were noted:

Councillor Chris Hossack, Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor Jeremy Lager, Chelmsford City Council
Councillor Michael Lilley, Colchester Borough Council (substituted by
Councillor Adam Fox)
Councillor Malcolm Maddocks, Essex County Council
Councillor Michael Webb, Rochford District Council (substituted by
Councillor Lesley Butcher)

2 Urgent Business

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

3 Confirmation Hearing: Proposed appointment of the PFCC's Head of Finance

The Committee considered report EPFCP/29A/20 which set out the arrangements for the review of the proposed appointment of Julia Berry as the PFCC's Head of Finance before she could be confirmed in her post.

The Commissioner provided a brief outline of how the selection process had been carried out and reassured the Panel that the selection process had been rigorous throughout and he was happy to put forward Julia Berry to the Panel for confirmation to the post of the Head of Finance.

The hearing then focused on the issues of professional competence and personal independence of the candidate. Julia Berry briefly addressed the meeting summarising her technical and academic experience.

During questioning, Julia Berry stated that she appreciated the complexity of the decision making processes and the wide collaboration of work and that she believed that she could bring diversity of thought and experience to the role. In reassuring the Panel, Julia Berry highlighted her strong analytical ability to translate financial information into plain English; and that her primary challenge was to ensure that decisions were affordable and value for money for Essex businesses and residents.

It was proposed and **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the deliberation stage, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person).

4 Confirmation Hearing for the Appointment of the PFCC's Head of Finance

The Panel considered the proposed appointment and unanimously **RESOLVED** to recommend to the PFCC that he proceed in appointing Julia Berry to the position of PFCC's Head of Finance. The Chairman would write to the PFCC to confirm this, by way of a letter.

The meeting closed at 2.35 pm.

Chairman
4 February 2021