

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Monday, 22 January 2018

**Present:**

**Councillor**

**Representing**

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

Basildon Borough Council  
Braintree District Council  
Brentwood Borough Council  
Castle Point Borough Council  
Chelmsford City Council  
Colchester Borough Council  
Essex County Council (Chairman)  
Harlow District Council  
Maldon District Council  
Rochford District Council  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council  
Tendring District Council  
Thurrock Council  
Independent Member (via telephone link,  
items 1-4)  
Independent Member

**Apologies for Absence**

Sam Kane  
Tony Durcan

Epping Forest District Council  
Harlow District Council

**1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

The report of the Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and it was noted that

1. The membership of the committee was unchanged since the last meeting;
2. Councillor Sam Kane, Epping Forest District Council and Councillor Tony Durcan, Harlow District Council had sent their apologies. There were no substitutions;
3. Councillor's Ann Holland, John Jowers, Wendy Schmitt and Kerry Smith declared an interest as former members of the Essex Fire Authority. Councillor Ann Holland also declared an interest due to her son being a police officer; Councillor Lynda McWilliams declared this as an interest also. Councillor Penny Channer declared an interest as a Cabinet Member Deputy to the Children and Families portfolio holder at Essex County Council. Councillor Kerry Smith also declared an interest as the Chairman of the Housing and Community Committee of Basildon

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Borough Council.

**2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3 Questions to the Chairman from Members of the Public**

There were none.

**4 The Proposed Police Precept for 2018/19**

Roger Hirst, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner; Stephen Kavanagh, Chief Constable of Essex; Susannah Hancock, Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive of the Office of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Charles Garbett, Treasurer, OPFCC were in attendance for this item.

The Commissioner outlined the proposal to increase the precept by 7.6%, an increase of £11.97 per year on a Band D property. The increase, requested to increase local policing, will raise £7.5m and 75% of this will be invested in expanding the police officer base by 150 who will be deployed overwhelmingly locally.

The Chief Constable informed the Panel that £3.5m of efficiencies and productivity has been found for the 2018/19 budget and explained how these efficiencies are invested with the proposed precept rise in the agenda papers (Table B, 4.5). Investment in the front-line also means further investment in capacity, plus substantial investment in technology to deliver efficiencies. He confirmed that some of the technology spend is from the capital budget, and that fire collaboration has additional staffing costs that total £200,000.

With regard to the capital budget the Commissioner stated there is still work to progress in terms of disposals going forward into 2022/23.

The Commissioner stated that the PA Consulting study on policing demand, referred to at the last meeting of the Panel, was used as a key piece of evidence in the national submission to the Home Office with regard to the policing grant, with detail of where the stretch in policing is national data collected from forces showed a need for an additional 5,000 uniform front-line officers and 1,100 officer in police response units, nationwide. As a result of PCCs and CCs working with the Home Office through their submissions, with PFCC Roger Hirst acting as the APCC national lead on police finances, an additional £440m of funding has been granted this year- with £870m in 2019/20, although the year 2 funding is dependent on police efficiencies being delivered.

There is still an imbalance in the current police funding formula which means Essex is still one of the most poorly funded force in England and Wales. The challenges are huge but the increase in the precept would mean the public will start to see the difference through an additional 150

officers. Essex has a force that has ambitions for the future. The investment will give a sustainable policing model and there is a need to ensure there is rigour and an infrastructure to deliver that model to meet the changing face of crime. The investment will also need to be directed into recruitment, technology and vetting. The Commissioner stated there is a commitment from him and the Chief Constable that dedicate much of these additional resources into front-line policing. The force needs to become more reflective of our changing communities and this investment will enable that also.

In response to questions from the Panel the Commissioner, Chief Constable, Mr Garbett and Ms Hancock stated:

- It is vital that district communities, and third-sector organisations feed into the local policing plans as they are put together. The Commissioner committed to provide a breakdown by district to be presented at a future Panel meeting after the end of this financial year
- The additional officers will be working over 14 districts across five shifts in community teams and on crime prevention. There will be around 113 of the 150 additional officers deployed into local communities
- Borough/City/District Councils are integral in community safety partnerships so they will also be involved in discussions moving forward on the development of district policing plans. However, there will be no 'formal' consultation on this
- Profiling suggests that road teams and dog units are well resourced, but that more resources need to be directed into cyber-crime and digital capabilities
- Improvements in sickness absence by looking at shift patterns will continue to be prioritised
- The distribution of mobile police stations will be looked at – concern was raised by Councillor Redsell with regard to the withdrawal of the mobile station in Thurrock
- The imaginative work with schools on crime prevention shall continue
- Essex Police is investing in cloud technologies and modernising the infrastructure. Work is ongoing with the Home Office on this and this is reflected in the 10% of overall technology investment to Microsoft
- The consultation of the precept was used as a piece of evidence for the proposal to increase the precept. Essex is a net contributor to central government; therefore, for Essex residents to see the benefit of additional funding all the precept will be spent in the county
- The direction of travel is to ensure joint-partnership working between the police force, fire and rescue service and local authorities. Discussions will take place with local authorities regarding ongoing crime prevention work. It is recognised the great work the fire and rescue service has done on community safety in schools and a team has been established at Essex Police to undertake similar work – 160,000 schoolchildren have been seen in the last academic year

with joint police and fire and rescue service teams

- The complexity of crime has increased and there is a need to use the precept increase to invest in public protection. The public will see more visible policing by focussing resources where the highest harm is. The increase in online crime has seen a shift away from localities in recent years
- There have been representations to the Home Office to improve the funding formula
- It is fully expected, with the additional resource, that more calls will be responded to and more quickly
- Special police officers are key and there is now greater recruitment of them. In addition, as Essex Police recruit more regular officers, there is a move from specials to regular officers. The Graduate Now recruitment is going to be a model moving forward to enable quicker uplift into local policing arrangements
- Once operational decisions have been made on the deployment of the additional officers, the Commissioner will publicise the plans
- Essex Police Social media utilisation, which is the second highest in the country across all police forces, will continue – with more local issues highlighted and messages shared about the new ways crime is being combatted
- The majority of the Athena costs are on the revenue account; however, this may change as the invest programme goes through
- There will be significant investment in IT including the improvement of IT utilised in forensics; and technology, offered by Uber, to locate all of the forces' police cars
- The move out of the current Essex Police Headquarters is not in the estates strategy for 2018/19. It is anticipated this will not happen before 2022/23. The priority on estates currently is to get the operating locations and custody suites where they should be
- If there were to be no increase in the precept, reported crime would continue to rise and as a resultant the impact and relevance of policing would reduce. New types of crime, for example internet-crime, would also flourish

The Chairman stated the precept is a social contract and Essex is the lowest funded police force in England and Wales with 1.7m residents. He congratulated the Commissioner on the work he is doing, but stated the community will want to see how the additional monies from the precept are being spent and would wish to see communications improve. Given this he proposed the precept increase of 7.6% being approved; this was seconded by Councillor Isaacs. The Panel voted 13 for with one against the precept increase. There was one abstention.

#### **DECIDED:**

That the Commissioner's proposal for a precept increase of 7.6% be accepted.

5

**The Proposed Fire and Rescue Service Precept for 2018/19**

Roger Hirst and Charles Garbett were joined by Adam Eckley, Chief Fire Officer for the item.

The Commissioner outlined the proposal to increase the precept by 1.95%, an increase of £1.35 per year on a Band D property.

In response to questions from the Panel the Commissioner stated:

- He would study the Hackett Report into the Grenfell Tower incident on detail. The budget set for 2018/19 is in line with previous budgets with any changes only in delivery. There have been no changes in the light of the Hackett Report. However, if necessary, a longer-term strategy will be developed. The Fire and Rescue budget is robust and has reserves to cover medium-term need
- He committed to work with relevant Cabinet Members in all Essex Local Authorities with regard to the Hackett Report
- Contact has already been made with Chief Executives, which will be repeated, because, as yet, the offer of matched-funding has not been universally taken up – this contact will also be sent to the Leaders of each Authority. An assessment has been made on all high-rise properties in the county

Charles Garbett informed the Panel that all service plans will be looked at, and a presentation to the Panel at a future meeting will be given, to enable the Panel to have a greater appreciation of the dynamics involved in establishing the budget. He reiterated that the Fire and Rescue Service budget is robust but that there are challenges due to the reduction in the central government grant.

Adam Eckley stated the budget reflects the work done since 2014/15 and the 18,000 respondents to the public consultation in 2015/16 which suggested a 2% increase in the precept.

Councillor Redsell, whilst supporting the precept increase, reminded the Panel of the COMAH sites in Castle Point and Thurrock. In response Adam Eckley reminded the Panel that there has been a 45% fall in operational activity with community safety work increasing, which has been recognised nationwide as an exemplar – leading to the Service being the national awarding body for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards for national Fire and Rescue Services. COMAH sites emergencies are planned for and there is an assurance that the Service will get to every call-out with arrival at 90% of call-outs within 15 minutes; with life-threatening call-out arrivals being within 10 minutes.

The Chairman proposed to the Panel that the increase in the precept by 1.95% be approved; this was seconded by Councillor Isaacs. This proposal was unanimously carried.

The Commissioner thanked the Panel and paid tribute to Adam Eckley for his service within Essex Fire and Rescue.

**DECIDED:**

That the Commissioner's proposal for a precept increase of 1.95% be accepted.

**6****Confirmatory Hearing for the Post of Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service**

Roger Hirst was joined by Jane Gardiner, Deputy Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Joanne Turton, designate for the role, for this item.

The Chairman outlined the procedure for the confirmation hearing which was understood by the candidate.

The Commissioner informed the Panel that he was pleased to present Joanne Turton for the post and thanked Adam Eckley for continuing in his role to take through the change in governance at the Essex Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Commissioner stated the appointment followed an open, transparent and competitive process with a wide range of strong applicants after the selected agency had advertised the post. A Panel was convened and a rigorous process was followed from which Joanne Turton emerged as the successful candidate having finished first overall across all the exercises.

Questions were asked why two members of the selection panel came from Thurrock? Councillor Holland stated the Leader of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council does not recall being approached to provide a selection panel representative and, she wished for it to be put on record that she was disappointed with the process. The Commissioner stated the selection panel was established after casting the net wide and was made up of those that had volunteered.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Commissioner stated:

- He would contact the Leader of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to build a relationship and apologise for any disappointment
- There were applicants currently or previously employed by the fire service, including many current high-ranking individuals. The final short-list had three such individuals
- The skills needed in the post for the next part of the development of the Service are primarily those of change management, culture change and handling industrial relations appropriately – building upon the work already undertaken. There is already a great deal of expertise within the Service in terms of fire safety, protection and response – and the senior team is well represented by these skill-sets. The top team will be in post shortly after any agreed appointment

The Panel agreed it was satisfied with the rigour of the selection process.

Joanne Turton introduced herself to the Panel and informed the Panel of her 30 years of public service, latterly as Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council. She had been privileged to have been in roles where the key focus has been on change management and transformation, as well as delivering services in new ways with greater efficiency. She explained that while she had no direct experience of environment factors prior to being appointed Director of Environment at Lancashire County Council, nevertheless, even though she wasn't a technical expert, she was able to demonstrate clear leadership skills in relation to change and transformation and she was a success in the role. Once appointed as Chief Executive of Lancashire, she brought together what was a disparate organisation into one that came together and worked with a wide range of partners and the political leadership to turn things around. She made tough decisions on budgets and resources. She stated these experiences would be brought with her to the Essex Fire and Rescue Service.

In response to questions from the Panel Joanne Turton stated:

- She would deliver a vision for the Service that is tangible and would allow individuals to see their role within that vision; working with all staff to develop this through engagement
- She would listen to the ideas of those delivering the service on how there might be improvements and how this would benefit them
- She was genuinely excited by the challenge of the role when she saw it advertised as change and transformation are her passion and she was attracted by the complete public respect the fire service has and thought the role would be immensely satisfying
- She recognised she would have to balance the priorities of working with restricted budgets whilst still delivering services using a different model and options. She would be bringing a different network than those who traditionally work for the fire service with a wider public service view, as well as a political dimension from her public service experience
- With regard to the independent reviews of the Service (Lucas Report), Joanne stated the reports were clear in what needed to change and she was, therefore, delighted to see the work that has already been done in response to the reports. The proactive response to the reports was one of the things that had attracted her to the role
- She has been impressed by the *Essex Vision* and the buy-in to it and how it provides a great opportunity for joint partnership working
- In relation to the Trade Unions, she recognised that there are significant issues in working effectively with the trade unions. In the past, she has dealt with the unions with respect and in a positive way with trust and honesty. She wished to pay tribute to Adam Eckley and the Office of the PFCC for the way they have worked closely with the unions within the Service which has seen an improved relationship – and gives a great platform to build upon. It is important to have open dialogue and she would have conversations early if she were to be confirmed in the role to build upon the trust and respect

With no further clarification of questions needed, and during a recess in which all bar the Panel and Secretary to the Panel were excluded, the Chairman proposed the confirmation of Joanne Turton into the post of Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service which was agreed by 13 votes for, to one against.

**DECIDED:**

On the resumption of the meeting the Panel confirmed the appointment and that Joanne Turton be appointed to the post of Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

**7 Forward Look**

The Committee considered and noted the report EPCP/04/18. It was agreed that the February meeting would no longer be required as the precept proposals had been accepted.

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

The Commissioner informed the Panel that Susannah Hancock would be leaving the post of Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive of the OPFCC in April to take up a position as the Chief Executive of the National Association of PCCs. The Commissioner paid tribute to the work and support he had received from Susannah and wished her well in her new position.

The Panel congratulated Susannah on her new role and wished her well for the future.

**15 Date of Next Meeting**

With the acceptance of the proposed precepts the Panel would now not be required to meet on Thursday, 15 February at 2.00 p.m.. It was agreed to hold this date and time for the next meeting of the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

Therefore, it was proposed to bring forward the planned May meeting to a date in mid-April. A date would be circulated for agreement.

With no urgent business or exempt urgent business the meeting closed at 4.40 p.m.

**Chairman**