

AGENDA ITEM 6

Essex Police and Crime Panel	EPCP/02/15
Date: 29 January 2015	

Membership

Report by the Secretary to the Panel

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Purpose of report and background

At the last meeting it was agreed that the Panel should receive a report on its membership following the resignation of Ann Haigh as a co-opted member.

Each local authority in England is required to appoint a member to their force-area police and crime panel. In Essex this means that the County Council, the two unitary authorities and each of the 12 district councils appoint a member to the Essex Panel, which must also include two independent members. The maximum panel size is 20 members. The current membership is as set out on the face of the Agenda.

The Home Office has made it clear that as far as possible, panels should satisfy the balanced appointment objective; which is to ensure the geographic, political and demographic make-up of the police force area is reflected in the membership of a panel. In appointing panel members, local authorities must, as far as is practicable, consider the make-up of the force area in terms of geography, politics and the requisite skills, knowledge and experience for the panel to function effectively.

Councillor membership of the panel should reflect the geography and population size of the force area. In the first instance, the legislation seeks to achieve this by having every local authority in the area represented on a panel.

The total number of Essex Councillors is 737 (including two vacancies) in the following proportions:

Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Other	UKIP
410 (55.8%)	97 (13.2%)	82 (11.1%)	102 (13.9%)	44 (6%)

The most recent appointees to the Panel are 10 Conservative, three Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Independent against proportions of 8:2:2:2:1.

In terms of Council Administrations, there are 10 Conservative, 2 Labour and 3 joint administrations, 2 with Liberal Democrat Leaders and 1 with an Independent Leader.

In July 2012 when looking at its political make-up the Panel decided that, subject to the Home Secretary's approval, in order to reflect better the political balance across the Police Force area, the Chairman approach the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group on the County Council to nominate a Liberal Democrat representative to be co-opted on to the Panel who should not be a member of any of the 15 local authorities in the Essex Police Force area who nominate to the Panel. Home Secretary approval was given and Ann Haigh was co-opted on to the Committee as a result. At the last meeting the Panel accepted her resignation because other commitments were preventing her from attending meetings and agreed to look again at the question of membership at this meeting.

Should the Panel wish to make use of any co-opted places to achieve a better political balance, the Home Secretary would need to approve any changes to the co-options. The Panel now has a Liberal Democrat Member, Councillor John Newberry from Brentwood, and elections are due in May which affect all constituent authorities except the County Council. On this basis it is proposed that the Panel take no further action at this stage as it will have to review its membership at the next meeting after the May elections.

The Panel also agreed at its last meeting that the Secretary contact Thurrock Borough Council concerning its non-representation at recent meetings. The Secretary has emphasised the need for the Council to be represented and reminded it that it can appoint a named substitute, which it has not done since the elections in May last year.