

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held virtually on Thursday, 4 June 2020

Present:

Councillor

Representing

Wendy Schmitt (Chairman)	Braintree District Council
Maria Pearson	Brentwood Borough Council
Aidan McGurran	Basildon Borough Council
Godfrey Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Jeremy Lager	Chelmsford City Council
Mike Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
Malcolm Maddocks	Essex County Council
Frances Mason	Harlow District Council
Mike Webb	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

Kay Odysseos
John Gili-Ross

Also in attendance

Gemma Bint	Democratic Services Officer
Pippa Brent-Isherwood	Chief Executive, Office of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Moir Bruin	Director of Operations
Jane Gardner	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Deputy Commissioner
Victoria Freeman	Secretary to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel
Roger Hirst	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
BJ Harrington	Chief Constable
Darren Horsman	Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement
Jo Turton	Chief Fire Officer

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

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

1. The following apologies were noted:

- Councillor Chris Hossack, Brentwood Borough Council (substituted by Councillor Maria Pearson)
- Councillor Nigel Bedford, Epping Forest District Council
- Councillor Michael Helm, Maldon District Council

Due to technical issues, Councillor Joycelyn Redsell joined the meeting at Agenda Item 9.

2. The following declarations were made by Members:

- Councillor Lynda McWilliams declared a Code Interest in that her son is a police officer. Councillor McWilliams participated fully in the meeting.
- Councillor Frances Mason declared a Code Interest in that she was a director of Harlow Occupational Health Services. Councillor Mason participated fully in the meeting.
- John Gili-Ross declared a Code Interest in Agenda Item 10 as his appointment as an Independent Member on the Panel would be under consideration and he would leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 6 February 2020 and 13 February 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman, subject to an amendment with regards to John Gili-Ross's attendance.

3 Questions from members of the public

There were none.

4 Essex Police Performance Report - Quarter 4 2019/20

The Panel received report EPFCP/08/20, which provided an overview of Essex Police's progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan 2016-20, based on data and other information to March 2020.

Introducing the item, the Commissioner highlighted that the Thurrock Town team had been expanded during Quarter 4 and was grateful for the support and funding provided by Thurrock Council.

Domestic abuse continued to be a headline and a difficult area to tackle with preventative work continuing to be at the forefront. Following a successful pilot, Operation Encompass would be rolled out across the county, allowing Essex Police to inform schools if a child had been present, or resided, at an address where a medium risk domestic abuse incident had occurred.

Numerous successful operations were executed during the quarter, including Operation Topaz, an investigation into money laundering over a six-year period linked to the supply of Class A drugs worth over £2 million.

There had been a reduction in the number of people seriously injured in road accidents, however the number of deaths had risen compared to the same period the previous year. The Commissioner agreed that the work by local community safety volunteers should be reported and their work recognised.

Members asked questions about the report, relating to a number of issues, including the reporting of Female Genital Mutilation, the countywide increase in problems caused by motorcycles, future performance reporting and the availability of comparative data due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

The report was noted.

5 Extension of the Police and Crime Plan 2016-20

The Panel received report EPFCP/09/20, which provided the Panel with an opportunity to review the additional commitments and performance measures added to the Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020 as a result of the postponement of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Commissioner highlighted the key aspects to the extended Plan. Concern was expressed that during the current climate, training and recruitment of analysts may be delayed and further concern was expressed regarding investment in this area. It was explained that in terms of generating work, the purpose of analysts was to assist prevention planning and reassurance was given that targeted policing in close partnership with local authorities and the public sector had proved successful in reducing crime. In response to questioning, the Commissioner explained that the resources of Essex Police needed to be balanced based on evidence in relation to crime, prevention work and visible policing.

Following consideration of the report, the Panel voted unanimously to accept the recommendations contained within the report. It was noted that Councillor Lynda McWilliams refrained from voting as she was not present for the duration of the item due to technical issues.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Panel reviewed the revisions and made recommendations to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) as appropriate, and
- ii) The Panel considered nominating members to work with the Commissioner's office to prepare a public document setting out these changes.

6 Response to CoVID-19 Pandemic

The Panel received report EPFCP/10/20, which provided an overview of the response to the CoVID-19 pandemic by the PFCC, Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

The Commissioner introduced the report during which he took the opportunity to commend and thank both services for their outstanding work and for bringing together a county response.

During questioning, the Commissioner explained that virtual technology was being used for public engagements and that remote working had proved successful in ensuring effective delivery and continued productivity.

The Panel took the opportunity to thank the County's emergency services and other organisations for going above and beyond during the pandemic. In recognition of the work provided by both services during the pandemic, the Chair would write formally to the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to show her appreciation on behalf of the Panel.

The report was noted.

7 PFCC Decisions

The Panel received report EPFCP/11/20, which provided the Panel with information about financial and strategic decisions made by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The Panel reviewed the information and requested an update on the appointment of the PFCC Section 151 Officer in relation to policing and crime matters. It was noted that a formal offer had been made and accepted and that a Confirmation Hearing would be required in due course.

In response to questioning, it was explained that the restructure of the PFCC's office was a result of the number of temporary roles. Following a review of job descriptions, the restructure had been implemented.

The report was noted.

8 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on any ongoing issues

The Commissioner explained that the restructuring of the Fire and Rescue Leadership Team was being progressed and that Rick Hylton had been appointed Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Moira Bruin, Director of Operations.

There were currently 3,293 police officers serving in Essex and the force were on target to achieve 3,369 by March 2021.

Confirmation had been received that the government had allocated £1.1m to fund the Violence and Vulnerability Unit, in addition to the £500,000 funding from Essex County Council.

9 National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panel Update

The Panel received a verbal report from John Gili-Ross which provided an update on the activities of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels.

The Panel noted the report.

10 Appointment of Independent Members to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel

The Panel received report EPFCP/12/20, which asked the Panel to approve the recommendations of the Appointments Sub-Committee and appoint two Independent Members to the Panel.

Members took the opportunity to thank Kay Odysseos for her service as an Independent member on the Panel.

The Chair proposed the recommendation as contained in the report. The proposal was duly seconded by Cllr Redsell and unanimously agreed.

Resolved:

That John Gili-Ross and Sheila Murphy be appointed as Independent Members of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel from 1 August 2020 for a term of four years.

11 Forward Look

The Panel received report EPFCP/13/20, setting out the business proposed to be taken to meetings up to December 2020.

It was noted that the Integrated Risk Management Plan had been out for consultation and would be presented to the Panel in July.

The Panel noted the report.

12 Dates of Future Meetings

The Panel received report EPFCP/15420, setting out the proposed Panel meeting dates for 2020.

The Panel noted the report.

13 Dates of the next meetings

The Panel will next meet at 2.00pm on Thursday, 23 July 2020. There will be a pre-meeting for Panel Members only, commencing at 12.30pm.

14 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.

15 Appointment of Independent Members to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel (Confidential Appendix to Agenda item 10)

The Panel considered the Confidential Appendix to Agenda Item 10, which contained information relating to an individual and was therefore exempt from publication.

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The meeting closed at 4.20 pm.

**Chairman
23 July 2020**