

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Wednesday, 17 October 2018

Present:

| Councillor | Representing |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Anthony Hedley | Basildon Borough Council |
| Wendy Schmitt | Braintree District Council (Chairman) |
| Godfrey Isaacs | Castle Point Borough Council |
| Bob Shepherd | Chelmsford City Council |
| Sam Kane | Epping Forest District Council |
| Malcolm Maddocks | Essex County Council |
| Chris Vince | Harlow District Council |
| Penny Channer | Maldon District Council |
| Jo McPherson | Rochford District Council |
| Ann Holland | Southend-on-Sea Borough Council |
| Lynda McWilliams | Tendring District Council |
| Joy Redsell | Thurrock Council |
| Vic Ranger | Uttlesford District Council |
| John Gili-Ross | Independent Member |
| Kay Odysseos | Independent Member |

Apologies for Absence

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Chris Hossack | Brentwood Borough Council |
| Susan Barker | Uttlesford 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. Councillor Chris Hossack, Brentwood Borough Council, and Councillor Susan Barker, Uttlesford, had sent their apologies.
2. Councillor Vic Ranger, Uttlesford District Council substituted for Councillor Barker.
3. Councillors declared Code Interests as follows:

| Name | Nature of Interest |
|-------------|--|
| M Maddocks | In receipt of a Police Pension |
| W Schmitt | Chairman of local Community Safety Partnership |
| V Ranger | Chairman of local Community Safety Partnership |
| M Kane | Chairman of local Community Safety Partnership |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Lynda McWilliams | Chairman of local Community Safety Partnership |
| | Son is a Police Officer |
| G Isaacs | Vice-Chairman of local Community Safety Partnership |
| A Holland | Son is a Police Officer |

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Questions from the public

There were none.

4 Essex Police Performance Report

The Commissioner was joined by Jane Gardner, Deputy Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Jo Turton, Chief Fire Officer, and Pippa Brent-Isherwood, Chief Executive, Essex PFCC, for this and subsequent items.

Members had received the Essex Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020 Quarterly Update, dated September 2018. The Commissioner noted the emphasis on more local, visible and accessible policing and drew attention to a few points:

- Special Constables. The number now stands at 500, with a target of 600 by the end of the next two years. After that, it might be difficult to recruit more. Morale is generally good with the special constabulary, with many officers volunteering for longer hours. Not all areas were equally successful in attracting new officers – the Commissioner would provide a link giving a breakdown on special constables within the County
- Technology. 999 calls remained good. 101 is improving – the average resolution time has dropped from over ten minutes to under six; although the more complex calls were still above 18 minutes, whereas the good forces averaged less than 15 minutes. Online reporting – a single website for virtually the whole country should be launched within a few months. The proposal to create a separate app for this was noted and would be investigated
- Violence reduction – increased funding being obtained, to encourage diversionary activity for young people
- Southend – particularly positive reaction to the ongoing work there, and in other districts
- Hate Crime – this is National Hate Crime Awareness Week, which raises the profile. One particular area that Essex has been looking at is disability hate crime
- Road Safety – now returning to a declining trend in accidents after the higher figures during the winter.

The Commissioner responded to members' questions:

- Statistics demonstrate that most of those killed or seriously injured on the roads were pedestrians and cyclists hit by male drivers aged 18-27. The Police and other partners do a lot of work in educating young people about the dangers. Future reports to the Panel will include a greater statistical breakdown on this
- The Fire Service use a driving simulator, based in Waltham Abbey; but they also have developed an enhanced programme, using virtual reality headsets, which they take out to the public
- Uninsured Drivers. The Commissioner is unaware of any particular trend regarding uninsured drivers but will investigate this
- Accident reporting. The Police are not always involved, as many collisions involve just the drivers and their insurance companies; but all incidents reported are fed into the central figures
- TrueCam. The trials have been very successful and this scheme should be available across the county shortly. It was agreed that a presentation should be given to the December Panel meeting
- Education/Consultation. The intention was for joint Police and Fire Service visits to go into all schools in time, to educate and raise awareness in young people, with particular emphasis on those with special needs. Regarding consultation, the Commissioner asked members to inform him of any particular groups which may not have been reached by the recent consultation on hate crime.
- Recruitment. There has been a very successful campaign and there are now just short of 3000 officers. It was noted that public perception is important and greater efforts should be made to publicise such figures.
- The National Crime Agency (NCA) is a nationally funded organisation – and members joining from the Police Service must give up their warrant cards before joining
- The National Police Air Service is funded by Essex, which is billed after the closure of accounts at the end of the financial year. The latest cost was £450k.

5 Essex Fire and Rescue Service End of Year Performance Report and the August Performance Summary

It was agreed to defer consideration of this item to the December meeting.

6 PFCC Annual Report 2017-18

The Chairman suggested that, given the length of the Report, Panel members would benefit from having more time to consider and respond to it. It was noted that the Commissioner's Office would only publish the Report following the Panel's input.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that Members should send their comments to Darren Horsman at the Commissioner's Office (darren.horsman@essex.pnn.police.uk). Once these were collated, an updated version of the document would be sent to Cllr Wendy Schmitt and Cllr Malcolm Maddocks as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel

respectively. The Panel agreed to delegate power to Cllr Schmitt to approve the document for publication or, if Members' comments were extensive, to request that a further draft be submitted for the Panel's consideration at its December meeting. The deadline for submission of comments to Mr Horsman was close of business on Friday 26 October 2018.

7 ECFRS Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement

The Panel agreed to adopt the same approach as they had with the PFCC Annual Report, under item 6, above.

For convenience, Darren Horsman would act as the sole contact point and would forward the relevant suggestions as appropriate.

It was agreed that, in future years, a sub-committee should be set up to consider these reports before they were submitted to the full Panel.

8 The Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Decisions Report

Members having received the report, the Commissioner drew their intention to one decision in particular, 131/18, regarding the restructuring of the Senior Leadership Team of the Fire and Rescue Service, to increase capacity at the senior level. The Chief Fire Officer added that maintaining a strong operational background at the top level was seen as an important element, given that she was the first Chief Fire Officer without direct experience of the service. The Service needs to be able to deal with the opportunities and challenges confronting as they appear, in a pro-active rather than reactive manner.

Regarding the prospect of working with the Health Service, it was noted that there was an acceptance that it needed to be progressed but only at the appropriate skill level of fire and rescue crew. It operated on a voluntary basis, by station, so was not consistent across the county.

In response to feedback received, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that she considered good representation at CSP meetings to be important, so the service would in future be represented by officers at station commander level. Steps had already been taken to increase firefighters' involvement in local liaison work.

In response to a query on decision 101/18, regarding the Basildon mental health hub, the Commissioner pointed out that one third of response work by the Police Service resulted from mental health issues, so it was in the Service's interest to improve the situation. A huge improvement had been in reducing the number of cases of individuals with mental health issues having to spend time in Police cells (down to about a dozen cases in the past year, compared to about 600 in previous years).

9 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on any on-going issues

The Commissioner informed the Panel that Ben-Julian Harrington had started as Chief Constable on 4 October 2018 and he believed that the

County now had one of the best management teams in the country. He believed that the team could provide elements of both fresh thinking and continuity.

The Commissioner's Office itself was now fully staffed and in a good position to take forward its work in terms of driving change.

The Commissioner himself was now a member of the LGA Fire Commission and also the Fire Services Committee. Several issues were on the table: changes in regulations and practices post Grenfell; Finance post 2020, when the residual support grant is likely to be withdrawn; ongoing workforce reform – there was cross-party support for these changes and there were ongoing negotiations between the Fire Service and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

The Commissioner had been invited by the FBU to a memorial service in Southwark Cathedral, for the 2000 firefighters who had died while carrying out their duties. He had felt particularly privileged to be a part of this moving event, which begun with a wreath-laying ceremony at St Paul's Cathedral.

10 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel: Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee

Councillor Isaacs updated the Panel on the most recent meeting, which had been very fruitful. Councillor Schmitt had been elected as Chairman. Both the (then) Chief Constable Elect and the Commissioner had given presentations. The Sub-Committee hoped that the new Chief Fire Officer would also give a similar presentation at a meeting in April/May 2019.

11 National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels

Mr John Gili-Ross gave a brief update:

- So far, 24 out of a possible 40 Panels have joined
- An executive board, with delegated powers, has been set up and has met three times to date. This currently numbers 9 members but this may go up to 10. It is exploring options for videoconferencing
- Expenditure of £600 has been agreed to establish an independent web presence
- A constitution has been drafted
- The LGA has invited the Association to work on updating good practice documents for panels. The Board is in favour in principle, as this documentation needs to be refreshed, but this would be subject to finances available
- A three-way meeting has been arranged with the Home Office regarding complaints procedures
- There will be a conference in Warwick on 12 November, which will be attended by representatives of every Panel. An individual is needed to give a presentation on leading a workshop on integration of police and fire panels, and, given the position of Essex as the first authority to combine the two, Councillor Gili-Ross invited members to consider volunteering.

12 Forward Look

It was noted that the two performance reports were to be considered in December. The Commissioner suggested that consideration of the complaints procedures be pushed back to the January meeting. This was agreed.

The Commissioner requested that he bring a paper relating to amendments to the two constitutions, one for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority, and the second for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. It was agreed this should come to the December meeting.

It was noted that the budget-setting paper would probably be heavy, as there were numerous significant financial changes unfolding, in different areas.

It was agreed that the progress of the Public Engagement strategy should be considered at the March Panel meeting.

13 Date of Next Meeting

The Panel will next meet on Thursday, 6 December at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 1, County Hall. The substantive item will be the proposed Fire and Rescue Plan for Essex.

14 Urgent Business

With no urgent business the meeting closed at 4.00 pm.

Chairman

6 December 2018