

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex on Thursday, 01 December 2016

Present:

Councillor

Alan Bennett
Wendy Schmitt
Bob Shepherd
Mike Lilley
John Jowers
Tony Durcan
Penny Channer
Trevor Byford
Joycelyn Redsell
John Gili-Ross

Representing

Basildon Borough Council
Braintree District Council (Vice-Chairman)
Chelmsford City Council
Colchester Borough Council
Essex County Council (Chairman)
Harlow District Council
Maldon District Council
Southend Borough Council
Thurrock Borough Council
Independent Member

Apologies for Absence

Gavin Callaghan with
Alan Bennett as his
substitute
Paul Barrell
Godfrey Isaacs and his
substitute Colin Riley
Gary Waller
June Lumley
Mark Flewitt with Trevor
Byford as his substitute
Carlo Guglielmi
Jim Gordon and his
substitute Susan Barker
Kay Odysseos

Basildon Borough Council

Brentwood Borough Council
Castle Point Borough Council

Epping Forest District Council
Rochford District Council
Southend Borough Council

Tendring District Council
Uttlesford District Council

Independent Member

The following Officers were in attendance throughout the meeting:

Anna Hook, Head of Commissioning Growing Essex

Colin Ismay, Council and Member Support Manager, Essex County Council, Secretary to the Panel

Fiona Lancaster, Committee Officer, Essex County Council

Roger Hirst, Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, was in attendance throughout and supported by Charles Garbett, Treasurer, and Greg Myddelton, Assistant Director for Commissioning.

Apologies for absence were received from Susannah Hancock, Chief Executive.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded Panel members to declare any specific interests as

appropriate throughout the meeting.

3 Questions to the Chairman from Members of the Public

There were no questions.

4 Budget scene-setting and Finance report

The Panel considered report EPCP/19/16 by the Treasurer which set out:

- i) the 2016/17 full year forecast as at October 2016; and
- ii) the current and anticipated budget issues that would inform the Panel's discussions on the 2017/18 budget and precept.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion.

- The Panel acknowledged the changes relating to the revenue and capital accounts as a result of the new Commissioner's first Police and Crime Plan for Essex.
- The Commissioner drew the Panel's attention to the low level of capital reserves and the likelihood that he would need to borrow in the future.
- Members noted that Essex Police expected to deliver a balanced budget for 2016/17.
- The Panel discussed the reasons for the underspend on employee costs being greater than expected at the end of October, and the plan to increase the recruitment of police officers in the fourth quarter of 2016/17. There were no plans to cut numbers any further.
- Members discussed the appointment of an Occupational Health Advisor and noted that this was essential to help tackle the high levels of sickness absence.
- The Commissioner highlighted the work being undertaken by the Rural Task Force and Essex Police's response to changing demands. He indicated that he intended to seek an increased level of funding for 2017/18 in order to achieve the delivery of the new Plan.
- The Panel questioned the amount allocated for gym equipment, its location and accessibility for staff, and whether gym memberships could be more cost effective. The Commissioner agreed to investigate the possibility of Essex Police sharing training facilities with the Essex Fire Authority.
- The Treasurer explained how additional funds were allocated for ill health retirements in line with statutory requirements.
- The Panel indicated that it would be helpful to see comparisons between previous allocations and what had been changed by the new Commissioner. In relation to budget in-year virements, the Panel felt that it would be helpful to have an appendix containing more detailed

explanations and acronyms. The Commissioner agreed to re-consider how some of the virements were grouped together, whilst retaining transparency in the report.

- The Panel noted the acceleration of the Estates Transformation programme which had led to additional contractor costs to dispose of sites promptly.
- The Panel discussed road safety and enforcement work and the use of cameras. The Commissioner reported that as a result of a recent SERP survey concluding that no more speed/ANPR cameras were needed he had asked for this rather surprising outcome to be reviewed.
- The Panel sought further clarification regarding the five year capital investment plan on the costs of renewing/replacing equipment and of developing mobile phone apps.

The Panel **noted** the report.

5 Tackling Gangs in Essex

The Panel considered report EPCP/20/16 by Chief Superintendent Paul Wells and Greg Myddleton, Assistant Director of Commissioning, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), which provided the Panel with:

- i) an overview of the approach to dealing with gangs within Essex;
- ii) the activity by Essex Police and partners to tackle gangs, including the development of a Violence Prevention Strategy; and
- iii) a programme of commissioning undertaken by the OPCC to commission services to divert young people away from gang involvement.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion.

- The Panel noted that gang-related activity within Essex was increasing, and that it was more difficult to divert people away from gangs in urban areas.
- Essex Police had adopted the six key priorities listed in the Home Office 'Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (2016)'.
- The involvement of the Institute of Community Safety (ICS) in helping to develop a strategic framework for the commissioning and delivery of community safety services in Essex.
- There would be further collaboration with Kent Police and other external partners, details of which would be provided to the Panel in due course.
- The anticipated launch in January 2017 of a mentoring programme aimed at young people identified as being at risk to prevent them being exploited by gangs.

- The use of intelligence from the health service to help identify and tackle crime 'hot spots'.
- The Panel noted that the St Giles Trust had produced a film on gangs which showed the consequences beyond those directly involved, and which was being offered to schools. Panel members indicated their support for more crime prevention education in schools.
- The Panel would be provided with regular updates on Seed Funding regarding diversionary activity, and the detailed delivery targets and outcomes in connection with this activity.
- The Panel emphasised the need for the Commissioner to work closely with councils and the local community safety partnerships to share intelligence and help new police initiatives succeed.
- The Panel welcomed the new gang initiative and shared their concerns regarding the increased gang related crime across the County.

The Panel **noted** the report.

6 Annual Report 2015-16

The Panel considered EPCP/21/16 presented by the Treasurer which provided the Annual Report 2015-16 that covered the final year of Office of the previous Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Nick Alston.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion.

- The Panel expressed some concern regarding the reduction in the numbers of crimes solved. In response, the Commissioner explained that in his view there had been insufficient focus on prevention in previous years and across the UK there had been an increase in crime since 2015. More victims of abuse were coming forward to report crimes which had contributed to the increase.
- The Commissioner indicated that he would be seeking the Panel's support for additional resources in 2017/18 to help Essex Police tackle both high and low level crimes.
- In response to a question regarding the number of public meetings held in 2015/16, the Commissioner reported that the public engagement programme was currently under review. He mentioned that he had recently attended some local meetings and was keen to give the public the opportunity to raise matters of concern. The Commissioner noted the request to involve local councils with public meeting arrangements.

DECIDED:

That the Annual Report 2015-16 be endorsed, prior to its publication.

7 A National Association of Police and Crime Panels

The Panel considered EPCP/22/16 by the Secretary to the Panel which sought the Panel's views on the possibility of establishing a national association of Police and Crime Panels.

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to work with other panels and acknowledged the number of benefits which could be available from having a national association. The Panel members also indicated their support for more local contact between panels, for instance with Kent to share information and knowledge.

The Commissioner supported the initiative for a national association and commented that the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners had proved a useful forum in which to discuss innovative ideas.

DECIDED:

The Panel supported Essex's involvement with the further investigation of the possibility of creating a national association of Police and Crime Panels.

8 Forward Look

The Panel considered report EPCP/23/16 by the Secretary to the Panel concerning the planning of the Panel's business.

The Secretary to the Panel confirmed that regular reports on the Estates programme, Athena, and the new initiatives for Tackling Gangs in Essex would be included in the content of the Forward Look. An update on the 101 telephone service would be provided as part of the report on Public Contact and Communication at the February 2017 meeting.

The Panel otherwise **agreed** the content of the Forward Look.

9 The Police and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on On-going Issues (if any)

The Commissioner provided the Panel with a brief update on the following:

- The draft initial Local Business Case prepared by the Commissioner for the joint governance of Police and Fire & Rescue services in Essex would be available on 2 December 2016.
- The levels of crime in Basildon, Harlow and Southend were a concern.
- His wish to establish a separate Ethics and Integrity Sub-Group.
- The Commissioner confirmed that Essex Police would be involved with the Football Association's inquiry into sexual abuse.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The Panel **noted** that the next meeting would take place at 2.30 pm on Thursday 26 January 2017, in Committee Room 1, County Hall, and that this would be preceded by a private pre-meeting starting at 1.45 pm.

Chairman