

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Thursday, 5 December 2019

**Present:**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Aidan McGurran	Basildon Borough Council
Wendy Schmitt	Braintree District Council (Chairman)
Maria Pearson	Brentwood Borough Council
Godfrey Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Jeremy Lager	Chelmsford City Council
Malcolm Maddocks	Essex County Council (Vice Chairman)
Frances Mason	Harlow District Council
Michael Helm	Maldon District Council
Ian Shead	Southend Borough Council
Lynda McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Joycelyn Redsell	Thurrock Council
Colin Day	Uttlesford District Council

**Co-opted Independent Member**

John Gili-Ross  
Kay Odysseos

**Also in attendance**

Pippa Brent-Isherwood	Chief Executive, Office of the Essex PFCC
Neil Cross	Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, Essex CFRS
Karl Edwards	Director of Corporate Services, Essex CFRS
Roger Hirst	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Paul Turner	Director, Legal and Assurance
Victoria Freeman	Secretary to the Panel

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

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

- The following apologies were noted:  
Councillor Nigel Bedford, Epping Forest District Council  
Councillor Michael Lilley, Colchester Borough Council  
Councillor Chris Hossack, Brentwood Borough Council (substituted by Councillor Pearson)
- Councillors asked for it to be noted, as follows, and all members participated fully in the meeting:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Colin Day	In receipt of a Metropolitan Police Pension and Chairman of the Uttlesford Community Safety Partnership

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Godfrey Isaacs	Chairman of the Castle Point and Rochford Community Safety Partnership
Malcolm Maddocks	In receipt of an Essex Police Pension
Frances Mason	Member of the Harlow Community Safety Partnership and in receipt of a National Probation Service Pension
Lynda McWilliams	Chairman of the Tendring District Council Community Safety Partnership and her son is a police officer
Joycelyn Redsell	Member of Thurrock Community Safety Partnership
Wendy Schmitt	Chairman of the Braintree Community Safety Partnership
Ian Shead	In receipt of an Essex Police Pension

## 2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 3 Questions from members of the public

There were none.

## 4 Confirmation Hearing: ECFRS Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer

The Committee considered report EPFCP/33/19 which set out the arrangements for the review of the proposed appointment of Neil Cross as the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer before he could be confirmed in his post.

The Commissioner provided a brief outline of how the selection process had been carried out and reassured the Panel that the selection process had been rigorous throughout and he was happy to put forward Neil Cross to the Panel for confirmation to the post of ECFRS Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer.

During questioning, the Panel were advised that the salary band advertised during the recruitment process was a guideline, however in order to secure the best candidate with the required knowledge and experience in the particular field, it was felt that a higher salary within the salary band structure was justifiable.

The hearing then focused on the issues of professional competence and personal independence of the candidate. Neil Cross briefly addressed the meeting summarising his career in private sector finance and his leadership style and responded to a series of questions by the Panel which related to his professional judgement.

It was proposed and **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the deliberation stage, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A

of the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person).

Following deliberations, the meeting returned to public session, upon which the Panel **RESOLVED** to report to the Commissioner that they endorsed the selection of Neil Cross as ECFRS Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer. The Chairman congratulated Neil Cross and on behalf of the Panel wished him well in his appointment.

The Panel also took the opportunity to thank Glenn McGuinness for his service and wished him well in his retirement.

## **5 PFCC Decisions Report**

The Panel received report EPFCP/34/19 providing information on financial and strategic decisions made by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner since the last PFCC Panel meeting submission deadline.

The Panel reviewed the information provided and raised a number of points for clarification or comment in respect of a number of the decisions taken. These included the Community Safety Development Fund, Health Watch evaluation on Sexual Abuse, the sale of Police Estates and its impact on an increasing number of officers, the Taser STO uplift, the PFCCFRA Fleet Workshop Outline Business Case and the Virement Section 31 Pensions Grant. The Panel posed questions relating to the Essex Centre for Data Analytics and suggested that they receive a briefing on the subject.

The Panel noted the report.

## **6 The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on any ongoing issues**

The Commissioner gave a brief verbal update on some ongoing issues.

**Budget setting:** The proposed precept was due to be presented to the Panel at its meeting on the 22 January 2020, however due to the forthcoming Election, the process may be delayed, in which case the proposed precept may be presented on the 6 February 2020.

**Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VUU):** The VUU was set up across Southend, Essex and Thurrock to deliver on the objectives set out in the Safer Essex, 'Violence and Vulnerability Framework' which was put together after multi-agency consultation by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. 3,000 individuals had been part of active interventions since inception, 200 of whom were considered high risk. The Violence and Vulnerability Conference would be held on the 13 March 2020.

**Integrated Risk Management Plan:** 800 responses to the consultation had been received. The consultation period would close on the 13 December 2019.

Essex Independent Custody Visiting Scheme 2018/19 Annual Report: Members were recommended to view the annual report that had recently been published.

Essex Fire and Rescue Service Inspection: An inspection was carried out in July 2019, which focused on fire safety. The publication of the report of the inspectors findings had been delayed due to the Election.

## **7 National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels (NAPFCP) update**

Mr Gili-Ross provided an update on the activities of the NAPFCP.

The Association met on the 19 November 2019 and unanimously agreed to move to a subscription free membership for Panels. The Panel received feedback from the National Police, Crime and Fire Panel Annual Conference.

The Panel congratulated John Gili-Ross on his reappointment as Chair of the NAPFCP.

## **8 Forward Look**

The Panel considered report EPFCP/35/19 by the Secretary to the Panel, setting out the business proposed to be taken to meetings up to December 2020. It was suggested that consideration be given to deferring the IT Implementation Projects and the Home Office Complaints Procedures to a future meeting.

The Panel noted the report.

## **9 Future Meeting Dates**

The Panel received report EPFCP/36/19, setting out the Panel meeting dates for 2020.

The Panel noted the report.

## **10 Date of Next Meeting**

The Panel noted that the next meeting would take place at 2.00pm on Monday, 13 January 2019 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, and that this would be preceded by a private pre-meeting for Panel Members only, commencing at 1.00pm.

With no urgent business, the meeting closed at 4.23 pm.

**Chairman**  
5 December 2019