

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel: Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee, held in Committee Room 4 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on 31 October 2019 at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Pippa Brent-Isherwood

Karl Edwards

Jane Gardner

Cllr Geoffrey Isaacs

Cllr Malcolm Maddocks

Cllr Wendy Schmitt
(Chairman)

Representing

Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer,
Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

Director of Corporate Services, Office of the Police, Fire and
Crime Commissioner for Essex

Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

Castle Point Borough Council

Essex County Council

Braintree District Council

Also present

Victoria Freeman

Senior Democratic Services Officer and Clerk to the meeting

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Roger Hirst, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Kay Odysseos, Independent Member.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 April 2019 were approved as an accurate record by those present.

3. Continuous Culture Change Strategy

Karl Edwards, Director of Corporate Service, presented a report on the Culture Change Strategy of the Fire Service, which highlighted the progress already made on the Strategy and agreed plans.

The Essex Fire Service was embarking on a journey of cultural change, with the heart of the change programme focused on the recognition of valuing and investing in the workforce. It was recognised that in order to meet the diverse needs of communities, there was a need to create a diverse and inclusive workforce and one which was engaged and valued. The Culture Change Strategy was being developed, with staff views being sought to assist with its development. There was a focus on an investment in management and leadership, with best practice across England being explored, to ensure that middle management were in a position to support their teams and equipped to have difficult conversations. It was noted that Occupational Health were equipped to offer a comprehensive package to employees and that the organisation promoted TRiM (Trauma Incident Management system), a trauma-focused peer support system designed to help

those who have experienced a traumatic, or potentially traumatic, event and this system was engrained within the Service.

During discussion, it was explained that there were some employees who did not support the values of the organisation, however, poor behaviour was not tolerated amongst the workforce, and those employees who supported the organisation's values were recognised and rewarded. Management were mindful of where there had been issues in the past, and new recruits were given support and the opportunity to raise concerns. The Freedom to Speak Up, which complimented the Whistleblowing Policy, provided for a softer approach to allow the workforce to speak up.

The organisation was seeking to improve its talent pool and develop employees internally, recognising an employee's demonstration of the preferred attributes, knowledge and skills. The rank structure was not as prescriptive as previously, with potential opportunity for promotion due to talent. A reward and recognition programme was being developed to provide all employees with the ability to be recognised for going above and beyond.

During discussion regarding workforce gender and ethnic minorities, it was recognised that some areas were underrepresented, however active measures had been taken to improve the recruitment process. It was felt that although the physical element continued to be an appropriate element for entry for the modern day fire service, that this was being over tested and questioned whether the test was still current and appropriate for recruits or should consideration be given to redesigning the test.

A pulse survey, commissioned through Real World HR had identified that the workforce welcomed the visibility of the senior leadership team and the organisation was committed to its delivery.

3 Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Ethics and Integrity Update.

There was no update provided.

4 Ethnicity and Integrity Framework

The Sub-Committee received a report from Pippa Brent-Isherwood, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, which provided detailed information about the arrangements of the Ethnicity and Integrity Framework within the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's office. The Panel was invited to note the contents of the report, identifying any areas that required further clarification or comment.

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner had adopted Constitutions governing his activities relating to both policing and crime, and fire and rescue services. The framework for both constitutions were underpinned by the Nolan principles and had been consulted upon by the Panel. In addition, the Commissioner and his Deputy had actively chosen to adopt the Police Code of Ethics, which included the principles of fairness and respect.

The organisation had a clear complaints process, which the Commissioner had oversight of.

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report.

5 Date of Next Meeting

The date and time of the next meeting to be arranged.

6 Any Other Business

The Sub-Committee agreed that the following items be included on the agenda for the next meeting:

- i) The development of the National Fire Standards Board
- ii) Operation Maple Debrief (Confidential Item)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.50pm.

Chairman