

Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Monday, 22 January 2018

Present:

Councillor

Representing

Kerry Smith	Basildon Borough Council
Wendy Schmitt	Braintree District Council
Chris Hossack	Brentwood Borough Council
Godfrey Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Bob Shepherd	Chelmsford City Council
Mike Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
John Jowers	Essex County Council (Chairman)
Tony Durcan	Harlow District Council
Penny Channer	Maldon District Council
Mike Webb	Rochford District Council
Ann Holland	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Lynda McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Joycelyn Redsell	Thurrock Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member (via telephone link, items 1-4)
Kay Odysseos	Independent Member

Apologies for Absence

Sam Kane	Epping Forest District Council
Tony Durcan	Harlow District Council

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Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report of the Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and it was noted that

1. The membership of the committee was unchanged since the last meeting;
2. Councillor Sam Kane, Epping Forest District Council and Councillor Tony Durcan, Harlow District Council had sent their apologies. There were no substitutions;
3. Councillor's Ann Holland, John Jowers, Wendy Schmitt and Kerry Smith declared an interest as former members of the Essex Fire Authority. Councillor Ann Holland also declared an interest due to her son being a police officer; Councillor Lynda McWilliams declared this as an interest also. Councillor Penny Channer declared an interest as a Cabinet Member Deputy to the Children and Families portfolio holder at Essex County Council. Councillor Kerry Smith also declared an interest as the Chairman of the Housing and Community Committee of Basildon

[Signature] 12/4/2018

officers. Essex has a force that has ambitions for the future. The investment will give a sustainable policing model and there is a need to ensure there is rigour and an infrastructure to deliver that model to meet the changing face of crime. The investment will also need to be directed into recruitment, technology and vetting. The Commissioner stated there is a commitment from him and the Chief Constable that dedicate much of these additional resources into front-line policing. The force needs to become more reflective of our changing communities and this investment will enable that also.

In response to questions from the Panel the Commissioner, Chief Constable, Mr Garbett and Ms Hancock stated:

- It is vital that district communities, and third-sector organisations feed into the local policing plans as they are put together. The Commissioner committed to provide a breakdown by district to be presented at a future Panel meeting after the end of this financial year
- The additional officers will be working over 14 districts across five shifts in community teams and on crime prevention. There will be around 113 of the 150 additional officers deployed into local communities
- Borough/City/District Councils are integral in community safety partnerships so they will also be involved in discussions moving forward on the development of district policing plans. However, there will be no 'formal' consultation on this
- Profiling suggests that road teams and dog units are well resourced, but that more resources need to be directed into cyber-crime and digital capabilities
- Improvements in sickness absence by looking at shift patterns will continue to be prioritised
- The distribution of mobile police stations will be looked at – concern was raised by Councillor Redsell with regard to the withdrawal of the mobile station in Thurrock
- The imaginative work with schools on crime prevention shall continue
- Essex Police is investing in cloud technologies and modernising the infrastructure. Work is ongoing with the Home Office on this and this is reflected in the 10% of overall technology investment to Microsoft
- The consultation of the precept was used as a piece of evidence for the proposal to increase the precept. Essex is a net contributor to central government; therefore, for Essex residents to see the benefit of additional funding all the precept will be spent in the county
- The direction of travel is to ensure joint-partnership working between the police force, fire and rescue service and local authorities. Discussions will take place with local authorities regarding ongoing crime prevention work. It is recognised the great work the fire and rescue service has done on community safety in schools and a team has been established at Essex Police to undertake similar work – 160,000 schoolchildren have been seen in the last academic year

Al Flowers.

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The Proposed Fire and Rescue Service Precept for 2018/19

Roger Hirst and Charles Garbett were joined by Adam Eckley, Chief Fire Officer for the item.

The Commissioner outlined the proposal to increase the precept by 1.95%, an increase of £1.35 per year on a Band D property.

In response to questions from the Panel the Commissioner stated:

- He would study the Hackett Report into the Grenfell Tower incident on detail. The budget set for 2018/19 is in line with previous budgets with any changes only in delivery. There have been no changes in the light of the Hackett Report. However, if necessary, a longer-term strategy will be developed. The Fire and Rescue budget is robust and has reserves to cover medium-term need
- He committed to work with relevant Cabinet Members in all Essex Local Authorities with regard to the Hackett Report
- Contact has already been made with Chief Executives, which will be repeated, because, as yet, the offer of matched-funding has not been universally taken up – this contact will also be sent to the Leaders of each Authority. An assessment has been made on all high-rise properties in the county

Charles Garbett informed the Panel that all service plans will be looked at, and a presentation to the Panel at a future meeting will be given, to enable the Panel to have a greater appreciation of the dynamics involved in establishing the budget. He reiterated that the Fire and Rescue Service budget is robust but that there are challenges due to the reduction in the central government grant.

Adam Eckley stated the budget reflects the work done since 2014/15 and the 18,000 respondents to the public consultation in 2015/16 which suggested a 2% increase in the precept.

Councillor Redsell, whilst supporting the precept increase, reminded the Panel of the COMAH sites in Castle Point and Thurrock. In response Adam Eckley reminded the Panel that there has been a 45% fall in operational activity with community safety work increasing, which has been recognised nationwide as an exemplar – leading to the Service being the national awarding body for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards for national Fire and Rescue Services. COMAH sites emergencies are planned for and there is an assurance that the Service will get to every call-out with arrival at 90% of call-outs within 15 minutes; with life-threatening call-out arrivals being within 10 minutes.

The Chairman proposed to the Panel that the increase in the precept by 1.95% be approved; this was seconded by Councillor Isaacs. This proposal was unanimously carried.

The Commissioner thanked the Panel and paid tribute to Adam Eckley for his service within Essex Fire and Rescue.

Joanne Turton introduced herself to the Panel and informed the Panel of her 30 years of public service, latterly as Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council. She had been privileged to have been in roles where the key focus has been on change management and transformation, as well as delivering services in new ways with greater efficiency. She explained that while she had no direct experience of environment factors prior to being appointed Director of Environment at Lancashire County Council, nevertheless, even though she wasn't a technical expert, she was able to demonstrate clear leadership skills in relation to change and transformation and she was a success in the role. Once appointed as Chief Executive of Lancashire, she brought together what was a disparate organisation into one that came together and worked with a wide range of partners and the political leadership to turn things around. She made tough decisions on budgets and resources. She stated these experiences would be brought with her to the Essex Fire and Rescue Service.

In response to questions from the Panel Joanne Turton stated:

- She would deliver a vision for the Service that is tangible and would allow individuals to see their role within that vision; working with all staff to develop this through engagement
- She would listen to the ideas of those delivering the service on how there might be improvements and how this would benefit them
- She was genuinely excited by the challenge of the role when she saw it advertised as change and transformation are her passion and she was attracted by the complete public respect the fire service has and thought the role would be immensely satisfying
- She recognised she would have to balance the priorities of working with restricted budgets whilst still delivering services using a different model and options. She would be bringing a different network than those who traditionally work for the fire service with a wider public service view, as well as a political dimension from her public service experience
- With regard to the independent reviews of the Service (Lucas Report), Joanne stated the reports were clear in what needed to change and she was, therefore, delighted to see the work that has already been done in response to the reports. The proactive response to the reports was one of the things that had attracted her to the role
- She has been impressed by the *Essex Vision* and the buy-in to it and how it provides a great opportunity for joint partnership working
- In relation to the Trade Unions, she recognised that there are significant issues in working effectively with the trade unions. In the past, she has dealt with the unions with respect and in a positive way with trust and honesty. She wished to pay tribute to Adam Eckley and the Office of the PFCC for the way they have worked closely with the unions within the Service which has seen an improved relationship – and gives a great platform to build upon. It is important to have open dialogue and she would have conversations early if she were to be confirmed in the role to build upon the trust and respect