

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESSEX POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD
AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON THURSDAY 26 MAY 2016**

Present:

Councillor

Wendy Schmitt
Godfrey Isaacs
Mike Lilley
Gary Waller
John Jowers
Tony Durcan
Penny Channer
Jim Gordon
Kay Odysseos

Representing

Braintree District Council
Castle Point Borough Council
Colchester Borough Council
Epping Forest District Council
Essex County Council (Chairman)
Harlow District Council
Maldon District Council
Uttlesford District Council
Independent Member

Apologies for Absence

Tony Hedley	Basildon Borough Council
Bob Shepherd and his substitute Ian Wright	Chelmsford City Council
Mark Flewitt	Southend Borough Council
Carlo Guglielmi and his substitute Lynda McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Jane Potheary	Thurrock Borough Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member

County Councillor Michael Mackrory, and Maldon District Councillor Stephen Savage, were also in attendance.

The following officers were in attendance throughout the meeting:

Anna Hook, Commissioning Support Manager
Colin Ismay, Council and Member Support Manager, Essex County Council,
Secretary to the Panel
Fiona Lancaster, Committee Officer, Essex County Council

Roger Hirst, the newly-elected Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, was in attendance throughout and supported by the following officers:

Susannah Hancock, Chief Executive
Charles Garbett, Treasurer

1. Election of Chairman

It having been moved by Councillor Durcan and seconded by Councillor Isaacs it was

Resolved:

That Councillor John Jowers be elected Chairman for the 2016/17 municipal year.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

The Panel agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded Panel members to declare any specific interests as appropriate throughout the meeting.

5. Questions to the Chairman from Members of the Public

From Councillor Michael Mackrory

Councillor Mackrory asked for comments on whether the new Commissioner would review the decision made not to re-locate a new Essex Police Headquarters alongside the Fire Authority at Kelvedon Park, and he sought more details on local integration implementation plans.

The Chairman responded that these questions would be addressed as part of item 8 (Report from the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst) on the agenda.

6. Membership

Following on from the District Elections in May, there had been a number of recent changes to the Panel's membership. The Panel agreed that the Secretary to the Panel would provide a membership report to the next meeting once all the appointments had been made.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Lilley to his first meeting as a Member of the Panel.

7. Report from the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman welcomed the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst, to the meeting.

The Commissioner circulated a copy of his report on *Policy Implications from Manifesto Commitments* and presented a summary of the key issues. The Panel noted that the report had also been shared with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, the Chief Constable and senior Police Officers and that feedback was welcomed. A copy of the report would also be made publicly available on the Commissioner's website.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion.

- The Commissioner reported that he wanted to see greater visibility of police in communities, but that this did not necessarily imply more “bobbies on the beat” as the media had interpreted it during the recent election campaign.
- There was a disturbing increase in all types of serious violent crime incidents and in the number of fatal road traffic accidents across the County.
- The Panel noted that the Commissioner intended to prepare and submit a business case regarding the proposed expansion of his role to include the responsibility for Essex Fire Services. The business case would be ready by December 2016 with legislation expected to receive royal assent in April 2017.
- The Commissioner would be continuing to challenge the Home Office for a fairer national funding formula, and encourage Essex Police to consider ways in which further efficiencies could be found beyond 2021.
- The Commissioner was strongly considering a joint Police and Fire Headquarters at Kelvedon Park and work was underway to scope the proposal. Economies achieved from not proceeding with a separate site in Chelmsford would be invested in service improvements. The decision to close police stations would not be reversed due to the lack of front counter demand and accessibility, although the Commissioner acknowledged that this had damaged the public’s perception of the Force. He would also be looking to see more joint use of facilities.
- New Community policing teams were now being formed and the Chief Constable was aware of the damaging effect that the withdrawal of visible policing was having on levels of petty crime and anti-social behaviour. The Panel noted that the Chief Constable had committed to spend a significant amount of any additional funding on community policing, and that local lower level crimes would be attended to and focused on.
- The Panel noted the Commissioner’s intention to more than double the number of Special Constables across Essex from 287 to around 600 in the next year, and that this had been budgeted for. The retention of Specials in Essex had been poor and lessons needed to be learned from other forces, such as West Yorkshire, where they had doubled their numbers and retained them. Recruits needed to feel valued and to be well managed.
- The HMIC PEEL inspection for Essex had shown that more focus on Safeguarding issues was required, and for the Force to move to one that “prevents rather than contains”. The Panel was reassured that the Commissioner would be closely monitoring this area for improvement.

- The Commissioner explained that he intended to be as visible as possible and would continue to attend public meetings and Joint Challenge meetings with the Chief Constable. He reported that he would like to appoint a Deputy Commissioner to help increase the level of engagement with the community.
- Better data on crimes, which then leads to a better analysis of who is offending, was needed.
- More focus was needed on responding appropriately to incidents involving individuals with mental health issues. The Panel noted that around 25 cases of this type were dealt with across Essex in any one day. Better partnership working with Health Services would help address the ongoing challenge.
- Members reaffirmed their interest and involvement with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), and looked forward to hearing more about the Commissioner's plans for the relationships between these and the police at a future meeting.
- The Panel indicated that it looked forward to seeing what role and powers it would have in the future. The Commissioner commented that he would like to see the Panel more involved with his work, and was in favour of having working groups so that the Members could have an opportunity to debate and input into issues at an earlier stage.
- There were huge challenges ahead for the new Commissioner, which included the resourcing of priorities.

The new Commissioner was thanked for his attendance and helpful presentation on his election manifesto commitments.

8. Forward Look

The Panel agreed that the Secretary to the Panel and Susannah Hancock, Chief Executive, should prepare a Forward Look on its behalf. The Secretary to the Panel would also contact members to seek volunteers for future working groups around Police crime plan development, Fire and Police collaboration, and performance and finance.

9. Update on On-going Issues

There was nothing further to report at this stage.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The Panel noted that the next meeting would take place at 2.30 pm on **Monday 25 July 2016**, in Committee Room 1, County Hall, and that this would be preceded by a private pre-meeting starting at 1.45 pm.

The Panel also noted that a Confirmatory Hearing date may be needed before the next scheduled meeting in July.

Chairman
25 July 2016