

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ESSEX POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON 28 MAY 2015**

Present:

### **Councillor**

Tony Hedley  
Graham Butland  
Godfrey Isaacs  
Bob Shepherd  
Tim Young  
Gary Waller  
John Jowers  
Stephen Savage  
Jo McPherson  
Lynda McWilliams

### **Representing**

Basildon Borough Council  
Braintree District Council  
Castle Point Borough Council  
Chelmsford City Council  
Colchester Borough Council  
Epping Forest District Council  
Essex County Council (Chairman)  
Maldon District Council  
Rochford District Council  
Tendring District Council

Kay Odysseos

Independent Member

Apologies for Absence:

### **Councillor**

John Newberry  
Mike Danvers  
Penny Channer with  
Stephen Savage as  
her substitute  
Mike Assenheim  
Jim Gordon

### **Representing**

Brentwood Borough Council  
Harlow District Council  
Maldon District Council  
  
Southend Borough Council  
Uttlesford District Council

John Gili-Ross

Independent Member

The following officers were in attendance throughout the meeting:

Jane Gardner, Head of Commissioning Growing Essex Communities  
Colin Ismay, Council and Member Support Manager, Essex County Council,  
Secretary to the Panel  
Fiona Lancaster, Committee Officer, Essex County Council

Nick Alston, the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, and Lindsay Whitehouse, Deputy Commissioner, were in attendance throughout supported by the following officers:  
Susannah Hancock, Chief Executive  
Charles Garbett, Treasurer  
Carly Fry - Assistant Director for Performance and Scrutiny

## **1. Election of Chairman**

It having been moved by Councillor Butland and seconded by Councillor Shepherd it was

### **Resolved:**

That Councillor J Jowers be elected Chairman for the 2015/16 municipal year.

## **2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

It having been moved by Councillor Isaacs and seconded by Councillor McWilliams, it was

### **Resolved:**

That Councillor J McPherson be elected Vice-Chairman for the 2015/16 municipal year.

## **3. Apologies for Absence and Notices of Substitution**

The Chairman informed the members that Councillor Jim Gordon had recently been appointed as the representative for Uttlesford District Council.

## **4. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **5. Declarations of Interest**

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

## **6. Questions to the Chairman from Members of the Public**

There were no questions.

The Chairman informed the Panel that the meeting was being recorded by a member of the local BBC news channel.

## **7. Actions arising from the last meeting**

The Panel received report EPCP/05/15 by the Secretary to the Panel highlighting the matters raised during the previous meeting that required further action and indicating the action taken.

The Commissioner confirmed that he had passed on Councillor Mackrory's concerns about drug-related activity to the District Commander for Chelmsford.

The Commissioner indicated that he would provide a further report regarding officers on restricted duties later in the meeting.

## **8. Membership**

The Panel received report EPCP/06/15 by the Secretary to the Panel reviewing the membership of the Panel.

The Panel agreed that no decision would be taken at this stage as the impact on the membership of the May council elections was not yet clear.

Councillor Young reported that Dominic Graham (Liberal Democrat) had now been appointed as his Colchester Borough Council substitute on the Panel.

## **9. Report from the Police and Crime Commissioner: Finance update**

The Panel considered report EPCP/07/15 by the Commissioner's Treasurer to the Commissioner's Office which provided the Panel with:

- i) a financial summary of the provisional 2014/15 revenue and capital outturn; and
- ii) a commentary on the progress to date in delivering the 2015/16 capital investment plans.

The provisional budget overspend was £2.1m after allowing for carry forwards and transfers to specific earmarked reserves. The provisional capital outturn position on an accruals basis was £6.985m which was lower than the June 2014 forecast by £3,013m.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion.

- The Commissioner explained that the budget overspend was mainly due to the two major investigations into the murders of James Attfield and Nahid Almanea in Colchester, and as a result of an unsuccessful request for a special Government grant to fund these unplanned costs.
- Members noted that the Community Safety Grants had been rationalised into one fund.
- The Commissioner reported that the Force was significantly reducing its expenditure, with £9m having been taken out of the Chief Constable's budget, but that it was becoming more challenging to do this without noticeable reductions in services for residents. The key challenge is how to engage the entire Essex Force with the Estates Strategy and new ways of working.
- The Treasurer explained that a minimum level of reserves will continue to be maintained at £10m to ensure there are sufficient funds available to meet requirements.
- The Commissioner explained that if the cap on the precept cannot be removed there will be no alternative but to cut staff numbers and services, and to plan for more regionalisation. He indicated that, in his view, a referendum such as that being held in Bedfordshire would be highly expensive and unlikely to be successful in seeking support from residents to a significant increase in the police precept.
- The Panel indicated that in relation to Community Grant Funding, it would be helpful to see a more outcomes based report showing examples of

successes and failures, value for money, and the impact of commissioning. The Deputy Commissioner undertook to circulate a report reviewing the New Initiatives Fund, now retitled the Community Safety Development Fund (CSDF), which shows what has been delivered.

- The Commissioner reported that there was an historic relationship in respect of using Essex Legal Services on a range of matters, but his Office was tendering for alternative legal advice to ensure best value for money.

## **10. Child Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation**

The Panel considered report EPCP/08/15 by the Commissioner providing an update on some of the work carried out by Essex Police with regard to child abuse and specifically child sexual exploitation as well as with an update on the work of the Commissioner in these areas both with Essex Police and wider partners. The Commissioner asked Carly Fry, Assistant Director of Performance and Scrutiny and the author of the report, to assist him in dealing with any questions.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion.

- The number of cases being dealt with by each officer within the Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAIT) had increased due to the impact of further reporting of historic cases. The Panel acknowledged that it was difficult to make number comparisons as some cases were more complex than others. Supervision was the key to driving improvements in this area.
- The Assistant Director of Performance and Scrutiny undertook to check and report back to the Panel on whether the terms of reference for the SET Strategic Board had now been agreed upon.
- The Panel was reassured that the Commissioner's Office was monitoring the CSE referral pathways to ensure improvement plans were in place, and the Chief Executive undertook to check the timescales with regard to Operation Maple.
- In response to a request for a more detailed breakdown on reported child offences, the Commissioner explained that he was committed to collating a more detailed analysis so that bespoke interventions can be delivered.
- The partners across Essex continue to show a willingness to work together. In addition, the Commissioner mentioned that he is meeting with Essex School Governors to talk about Hidden Harm, and he continues to engage with the Youth Forum.
- The Panel noted that 'neglected' children were captured in the health and social care sector.
- Members expressed concern regarding recent high profile child abuse scandals. The Commissioner indicated that he was increasingly confident

that the arrangements being put in place with a newly trained Essex Police team will help prevent such instances happening in Essex.

The Panel welcomed the report.

## **11. Estates Review**

The Panel considered report EPCP/09/15 by the Commissioner's Head of Estates Services, providing an update on the Estates strategy and progress to date.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion.

- The Commissioner introduced James Greenway, the Essex Police Head of Estates Services, and explained that James came from a commercial sector background and was using this experience to help deliver a more cost-effective and efficient Estate for Essex Police.
- Members noted the findings of the work carried out by Mouchel Consulting in 2014, which demonstrated that Essex Police Headquarters was the biggest estate expense to the Force.
- It was envisaged that at the end of the five-year estate strategy process, a minimum of £2m in savings could be achieved each year.
- Custody suites were the most expensive facility to build.
- The Panel expressed some disquiet about the intended level of consultation within the County and the potential threat of judicial review if there was a failure to consult appropriately. The Commissioner undertook to review the planned consultation and engagement process and welcomed the offer from Councillor Hedley to talk to the Fire Service in connection with this matter.
- The Commissioner offered to provide the Panel with an informal briefing on the estate strategy to enable Members to input into the consultation process. The Panel welcomed the offer.
- Members highlighted the benefits of involving local residents with disposal plans, citing the example of West Mersea police station now being developed into a new GP surgery, following a community asset purchase.
- Members acknowledged that the presence of police stations provided reassurance to the public, regardless of the actual benefits. They also noted that less than 1% of police stations were currently vacant, and that there are barriers preventing the speeding up of the disposal process.
- The Commissioner welcomed the advice that estate disposals and new 'hub' plans need to be linked in with local authority development plans.

## 12. Athena/ESMCP (Airwave) Update

The Panel considered report EPCP/10/15 by the Commissioner providing an update on the implementation of the Athena and Airwave programmes.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion.

- The Commissioner reported on the main issues of concern with the roll out of Athena, including the problems with the network after the initial launch, the difficulty with the interface with the Home Office identity and Access Management (IAM) portal, and the ongoing challenges with its operational usage in Custody. Members noted that a patching exercise was planned to address many of the issues identified.
- Members noted that £7m of funding had been secured for the next stage of project development, and that Warwickshire and West Mercia forces intended to adopt the Athena programme.
- A review of the commercial arrangements with Northgate Public Services had been carried out, and plans were underway to determine a new system of governance to manage the programme, taking into account the additional forces coming on board.
- The new Airwave radio system was due to be rolled out in Essex in February 2017. The suppliers have stated they cannot deliver an 18 month lead in, so the Home Office Programme Board is now considering the options to deliver the service. Members noted the continued high level of risk associated with the programme. The Commissioner undertook to provide a further update on 'Airwave' at a future meeting.

## 13. Hidden Harm Annex to Police and Crime Plan

The Panel noted report EPCP/11/15 by the Chief Executive of the Commissioner's Office explaining the background and context for the new *Hidden Harm annex* to the Police and Crime Plan.

The Panel welcomed the addition.

## 14. Forward Look

The Panel considered report EPCP/12/15 by the Secretary to the Panel concerning the planning of the Panel's business.

The Panel agreed the business proposed for the scheduled October and November 2015 meetings. The Chairman indicated that it would be helpful if the Commissioner's Office could provide detailed figures regarding Part-Night Lighting when the Panel reviews this item in October. The Panel also indicated that it would welcome the attendance of the Chief Constable at its October meeting.

Panel Members **agreed** that an informal meeting would be held at 14:00 on Thursday 17 September 2015 to discuss future items of business.

#### **15. Date of Next Meeting**

The Panel noted that the next formal meeting would take place at 14:30 on Thursday 29 October 2015, in Committee Room 1, County Hall, and that this would be preceded by a private pre-meeting starting at 13:45.

#### **16. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

##### **Resolved:**

That, having reached the view that the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **17. Update on On-going Issues**

(Exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 - information relating to any individual or which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual).

The Commissioner provided the Panel with more information on the rigours of the process, current numbers, and the implications of officers and civilian staff on restricted duties. He also explained the role of the Commissioner's Office in respect of evaluating the findings of Operation Maple.

Chairman  
29 October 2015