
Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel: Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee, held in Committee Room 6, County Hall, on Thursday, 24 November 2022 at 14:00.

Present

John Gili-Ross
Cllr D Dadds
Cllr L McWilliams

Representing

Independent Member (Chairman)
Basildon Borough Council (Vice-Chairman)
Tendring District Council

Also present

Emma Hunter	Democratic Services Officer
Graham Hughes Detective Superintendent	Senior Democratic Services Officer Essex Police
Scott Cannon Deputy Chief Constable Andy Prophet	Essex Police
Roger Hirst Pippa Brent-Isherwood	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Darren Horsman	Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

1. The membership of the Sub-Committee was noted.
2. An apology was received from Cllr I Shead.
3. Councillor Lynda McWilliams declared a Code Interest as her son was currently a serving police officer and her granddaughter was currently a serving special constable. Councillor McWilliams participated fully in the meeting.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee revised Terms of Reference

The Sub-Committee received report EISC/02/22 from Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

The Sub-Committee had a short discussion regarding the value of substitutes, and it was

Resolved

To seek nominations for substitutions for the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel: Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee NOTED the revised Terms of Reference and Procedure Rules for the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

4. Monitoring of Behaviours Within the Essex Police Service

The Sub-Committee received report EISC/03/22 from Roger Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

At its meeting on 22 March 2022, the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel's Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee considered a report on the process of recruitment and vetting of police officers in Essex. Following consideration of that report, the Sub-Committee requested this further report on how the behaviours of police officers and staff are monitored once they enter the force.

Since the request was made, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) had published a report relating to vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service. The report received by the Sub-Committee therefore also set out an initial commentary of the position in Essex in respect of the issues identified nationally, along with the next steps in terms of responding to the findings locally.

In response to questions from Members the following points were made:

- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMIC) were scheduled to perform an inspection of Essex Police the week commencing 28 November 2022. It was noted that HMIC set criteria for cases which they will consider during the inspection to ensure they captured a representative picture of the organisation. Essex Police had selected cases based on these criteria to be put forward for inspection.
- Within Essex Police, there was a robust use of suspensions and restrictions in order to maintain public confidence. At the time of the meeting, there were approximately 20 officers under suspension and 43 operating on restricted duties. On average, investigations into these cases took 6 – 9 months to carry out.
- The restrictions in place on an officer were determined on a case by case basis, and the force aimed to ensure they would still make a valuable contribution to the organisation whilst maintaining the trust of the public. These restrictions were determined by the Head of the Professional Standards Department. Unison and the Police Federation could put forward evidence to support a change in these restrictions. The restrictions were under regular review and were adjusted as required.

- Professional standards were taught to new officers, staff, and special constables throughout their training.
- It was noted that when an officer or member of staff transferred into Essex Police from another force they were always vetted as though they were joining the force for the first time. Vetting included anti-corruption checks and intelligence checks.
- A system named 'Envelope' could be used by officers and staff to report incidents anonymously to the Professional Standards Department. There were ongoing challenges in ensuring confidence in the anonymity of this system, as well as encouraging members of small teams to report incidents. It was noted that all reports were risk assessed to ensure a positive outcome whilst retaining anonymity.
- The College of Policing's national sift had been adopted by Essex Police and formed part of the recruitment process.
- Everyone who left Essex Police was offered an exit interview and there was analysis carried out to determine why people chose to leave. The Professional Standards Department also viewed this data to consider if factors such as discrimination had played a role in a person's choice to leave. It was noted that anyone leaving could chose to have an interview with their line manager or someone else, such as an individual from human resources.

RESOLVED:

That members of the Sub-Committee noted the report and that the report generated from the HMIC inspection be considered at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The date and time of the next meeting was to be arranged for March 2023.

6. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business. The meeting closed at 15:31pm.