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**Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Monday, 13 November 2017****Present:**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Kerry Smith	Basildon Borough Council
Graham Butland	Braintree District Council
Godfrey Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Mike Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
Sam Kane	Epping Forest District Council
John Jowers	Essex County Council (Chairman)
Tony Durcan	Harlow District Council
June Lumley	Rochford District Council
Lynda McWilliams	Tendring District Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member
Kay Odysseos	Independent Member

**Apologies for Absence**

Wendy Schmitt (Vice-Chairman) with Braintree District Council

Graham Butland as her substitute

Bob Shepherd Chelmsford City Council

Penny Channer Maldon District Council

Mike Webb with Rochford District Council

June Lumley as his substitute

Ann Holland Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Joycelyn Redsell Thurrock Council

**1 Apologies for Absence and Notices of Substitution**

The apologies as outlined above were noted.

**2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4 Questions to the Chairman from Members of the Public**

There were none.

**5 Revised Membership of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel**

The Committee **noted** the revised membership as set out on the front cover of the agenda.

Following some discussion it was unanimously agreed to reappoint the Independent Members of the Panel for a further 12 months; and there should then be an open and transparent process of review.

**6 Update on the joint governance of Police and Fire & Rescue Services in Essex**

The Commissioner provided an update on the progress which had been made since the joint governance arrangements had come into force on 1 October 2017.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- The joint governance arrangements have all completed and the statutory instruments and consequential orders are in place. The new constitution and governance functions are active; and the new Performance and Resources scrutiny committee has met for the first time. A stage one implementation plan is in process of being agreed
- Savings in the region of £20-£23m have been identified through the Local Business Case and individual business cases will be developed and being presented over the next few months
- There is to be a strategic workshop involving senior management of the Police Force and the Fire & Rescue Service, as well as the OPFCC in early January 2018
- A strategic fire and rescue plan will be developed and will link directly to the integrated risk management plan of the Fire & Rescue Service
- Operational leadership and decision making is delegated to the Chief Fire Officer through the scheme of delegation; whereas finance and strategy will remain the responsibilities of the OPFCC. As employer, the Commissioner is able to call-in operational decisions of the Fire & Rescue service which he cannot do with the Police Force
- The current Chief Fire Officer has served notice of his intention to retire at the end of the financial year; although there is some level of flexibility if required. The job advertisement for the new Chief Fire Officer closed on the day of this meeting and there has been significant interest in the post. There is great confidence that a high calibre new CFO will be found. The recruitment process has been clear that the post is not just open to fire officers but also to leaders outside of Fire and Rescue. This is linked to the need for the new appointment to also take forward the significant programme of cultural change programme linked to the Lucas Report, Essex Advisory Panel and Sir Ken Knight's subsequent findings and recommendations. Within ECFRS there needs to be further cultural change, a clear, transparent and equitable performance

management programme; a fit-for-purpose learning and development offer; and renewed complaints and grievance procedures. Following a question from Councillor Butland regarding the potential appointment of someone without operational fire and rescue expertise, The Commissioner stated he wanted to attract the best person to the role of Chief Fire Officer and did not want this restricted to a current Chief or Deputy Fire Officer; however he did express he would be surprised if the appointee did not have some relevant experience around fire and rescue. The role will also be, effectively, Chief Executive of the Fire & Rescue Service. The proposed appointment will be brought to the Panel for ratification

- Further dialogue has taken place with the Deputy Chief Executive of the East of England Ambulance Service in order that police and fire can work more closely with the ambulance service. The ambulance service is now attending the Essex Strategic Collaboration Governance Board which is very positive. Following a question from Councillor Durcan, the Commissioner confirmed the discussions have been preliminary only about things the services can do in collaboration; as they are done in some other counties. The Commissioner confirmed that there is in no way any intention to break up the East of England Ambulance Service or separate it from the NHS; but reiterated that the service could potentially work together more closely with the Police and Fire & Rescue services
- Following a question from Cllr Smith, the Commissioner confirmed that all fire unions and staff representative bodies will be engaged in conversations about the agenda and papers for the new Fire and Rescue Strategic Board. By involving all the unions at an early stage with good dialogue is of great benefit, the Commissioner stated

The Panel unanimously approved each of the seven recommendations from the private meeting of the Panel on 14 September (EPCP/18/17) but agreed to keep recommendations two-seven under review. It was confirmed under recommendation six that the vast majority of the Home Office grant will be used to support the work of the Panel. The allowance would be a nominal amount and would be similar to the allowance other PCPs pay.

With regard to the terms of reference it was agreed to amend paragraph 2.4.1 and remove the word Commissioner for the sake of clarity of the appointed positions.

Paragraph 3.4 highlighted the issue, discussed under item 4, of the independent members of the panel. It was suggested a clause may be missing and, it was agreed, any constitutional changes be undertaken outside of the meeting. It was agreed the constitution is a working iterative document and any proposed changes can be brought to meetings of the Panel. On this basis, the constitution was unanimously agreed.

**7 Police Technology including an update on Athena and the Emergency Services Network**

The Committee considered report EPCP/19/17 by the Essex Police Director of Support Services, providing an update on police technology, including the Athena case management system launched in 2015 and the Emergency Services Network. The Commissioner stated he would provide more detail on finance, functionality and timelines than that provided in the presented report.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- The functionality of Athena is cutting-edge and communicates between different police forces. However, stability is an issue as it is so powerful with consequent delays and crashes
- The first three forces to trial the system were Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. Following the trial the system needed to be stabilised before further roll-out; and there will be nine forces in total using it. The Commissioner had been involved in discussion the CEO of the software designer and a consultancy company with regard to further improvements prior to the further roll-out in July 2017; and improvements are still being made with the next version of the system will be 5.1 which will link the upgrades to the Police National Computer
- West Mercia and Warwickshire forces went live on 3 October and this was a smooth, successful and well-resourced roll-out, which has had positive feedback. The remainder of the roll-out will be in May 2018 when the Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire/Hertfordshire consortium goes live; and finally in September 2018 with the Kent force going live when all the contracted functionality will be available. The order of roll-out was agreed when the contract commenced. The reason Kent is last to go live is due to backwards conversion, which took some time to develop
- In relation to finance the original contract cost of £31.4m are the same; Essex picks up 21.5% of the total. Additional commissioned projects have been met by Home Office funding rather than out of the contract costs. There have been incremental charges across the nine forces totalling £360,000. The Commissioner assured the Panel that appropriate programme directorship is in place at the developers and that no penalties have been negotiated with the developers taken on the incremental costs of further development
- Following a question from Councillor Durcan regarding the approximate cost of £6m to the people of Essex over a 10 year period, the Commissioner responded that in terms of IT transformation projects it is not an overly large money as the people of Essex get the value of the linked case management systems, and modernising the force. The system has, so far, allowed officers to spend an additional 20 minutes of their shifts on patrol – and it is hoped that this will increase to an hour in the future
- Following a question from Kay Odyseos on efficiencies, the Commissioner stated that since the introduction of mobile Athena

there has been positive feedback which has led to time efficiencies. It is difficult to ascertain, at present, whether this is hardware or software led

- The Commissioner stated he would provide Councillor Kane with information on the victim support service with regard to timescales and the interface with district community safety liaison teams
- With regard to the Emergency Services Network, the Commissioner reported the benefits will be around £1m per day over the current contract. These savings take into account medium-term financial planning. The roll-out has been pushed back but the completion date remains the same, resultantly the OPFCC is quantifying the impact on the Essex Police budget if the start date is deferred and consequent budgetary implications. The roll-out of the Emergency Services Network was not considered as part of the joint governance arrangements as the Fire & Rescue service does not use the system to the same level of the police force

The Panel thanked Mr Hirst for the report and requested an update in May 2018.

## 8

### **The Annual Report from the 2016/17 Review**

The Panel considered report EPCP/20/17 by the

The Commissioner highlighted the report was a summary of achievements in the past year 2016/17 related to the priorities in the police and crime plan. The report should be read in conjunction with the Police and Crime Plan Performance Report (ECPC/21/17). The report relates to the time prior to the Fire & Rescue Service transition.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- Essex is still the most tightly funded police service per resident in England and Wales
- Recruitment of Special Constables is making progress
- Reporting of Domestic Abuse is going up and, consequently, this does impact on the solving of cases. However, reporting going up is very encouraging; as such a footnote should be included on the performance data on the report
- There has been a step change in public engagement
- Community hubs have been identified by the HMIC as best-practice nationally
- Following a question from Councillor Butland, the Commissioner thanked him for his feedback on page 75 of the report and resolved to improve how performance against priorities is highlighted. Councillor Butland suggested a RAG rating may make the reporting clearer
- Road safety has been explored in Performance and Resources Scrutiny meetings. The OPFCC works closely with other agencies on road safety including the County Council and voluntary

organisations, such as Speedwatch. Driver improvement courses have been found to be better in terms of speed awareness than the imposition of penalty points. John Gili-Ross stated that bikesafe courses are extremely good also and requested information on how many people had been on the courses; and whether there were any plans to stop funding these? The Commissioner conformed there were no such plans.

- Kay Odysseos suggested a look at the tone of the document as, in her opinion, it is, in part, difficult to ascertain whether the differences have been made by the Commissioner or the police force

Councillor Smith left the meeting at 4.05 p.m.

The Panel thanked the Commissioner and noted the draft report. The Report must be reviewed by the panel prior to publication. A revised version, reflecting the feedback will be circulated to the panel outside of the meeting prior to publication. .

**9 Police and Crime Plan Performance Report**

This had been dealt with alongside agenda item 8, with the report EPCP/21/17 noted.

**10 The Police and Crime Commissioner Decision Report**

The decisions on EPCP/22/17 were noted.

**11 The Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to update the Panel on On-going issues**

The Commissioner updated the Panel on national police funding as he is the national lead on the Association of Police and Crime Commissioner's on funding. He explained all forces are tightly funded with limited earmarked reserves. In April the APCC pulled together evidence of the stretch and strain on resources. The conclusion of this was that the APCC and NPCC assess that policing is able to respond to the very significant future demand and threat levels. Some forces, however, are struggling more than others.

The APCC has met the Home Office Minister, Nick Hurd MP and put an argument to him that the stretch comes from new types of crime, such as internet-based crime, with more monies required to combat serious crime and counter-terrorism measures, which increases the demand on police time. In total an extra £440m has been requested for 2018/19 for policing in England and Wales; with an additional £845m in 2019/20. It is recognised that the 1% pay-cap is no longer sustainable and around half of these requested monies is to deal with inflationary pressures. There may be some information in the Budget in November, but more is likely in the funding round announcement in December.

The Chairman of the Panel raised failings in the police 101 number which has seen 30 minutes wait, and his consequent concern that people will use

999.

## 12 Precept Planning

The Commissioner thanked the Panel for the initial feedback received on the draft survey EPCP/23/17.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- Since the survey went live the responses indicate, so far, that the public is willing to pay more for extra policing
- Most PCCs have undertaken a similar survey as it is good practice so to do. It also assists in any submissions to government
- Following a question from Councillor Isaacs regarding the public wish for police officers to be deployed on the beat; and how any extra officers would be monitored, the Commissioner responded that an additional 41 officers had been deployed in Essex – half of these in specialist areas. The Commissioner continued if there is more freedom in the precept he would spell out, by district, how many extra officers there would be to allow local monitoring of this
- Raising of the precept of funding from central government is still taxation and as such a clear message will be delivered by the Commissioner on what will be delivered by any increase in the precept

Councillor Isaacs stated there is little sight of visible policing unless one is at an airport, port or major shopping centre. He stated the public would be willing to pay more but they want to see the streets policed and the public will need to be convinced that this will be done,

Councillor Lilley supported the request for extra funding from central government. He stated he had sent the Commissioner's questionnaire to his local parish council which has seen a rise in crime, as has Colchester generally. Therefore, he raised his concern that any rise in the precept will not coincide with an increase in visible policing. However, he recognised the changing nature of crime.

Councillor Durcan stated people see a safer society if they see somebody in uniform.

In response to Councillor's Durcan, Isaacs and Lilley, the Commissioner stated that visible policing has not decreased in the county.

Councillor Butland stated public perception have changed and they would be, in the main, willing to pay more. However, he warned the Commissioner against 'pandering to populism' with police on the beat being a 1950s concept. He stated he would rather see child abuse, domestic abuse and internet crime tackled. The public would prefer better and more effective use of available resource to tackle the main areas of crime.

Councillor McWilliams left the meeting at 4.30 p.m.

The Chairman wished the Commissioner well with the survey and requested a report be brought back to the Panel with the complete findings. He stated he was impressed the survey includes proportionality of any precept increase by Council Tax banding.

**13 Report from the Regional Police and Crime Panels Workshop of 30 September 2017**

The original agenda item was somewhat out of date, given the change in the meeting date; therefore, the Chairman gave the Panel a report from the National Police and Crime Panel Conference held on Monday, 6 November. He reported there was an excellent geographical spread of delegates drawn from Panels and support officers. There was agreement that a steering group be established to set-up a special interest group within the LGA for a national body for Police and Crime Panels – and that John Gili-Ross will be on this steering group. A break-out session was held at the Conference which Essex led on police and fire collaboration. It was clear, from this session that not many other Panels are taking this road at present; however, Northamptonshire will likely shortly be confirmed as the next Police, Fire and Crime Panel. Overall it was a very good conference.

**14 Forward Look**

The Panel considered report EPCP/24/17 by the Secretary to the Panel concerning the planning of the Panel's business. The meeting on 7 December would also include a presentation from the Chief Constable on policing demand in the county; and a report on the 9 November meeting of the Ethics and Integrity sub-Committee.

**15 Date of Next Meeting**

The Panel **noted** that the next public meeting would take place on Thursday, 7 December 2017, in Committee Room 1, County Hall. It was agreed to amend the start time to 2.00 p.m., and that this would be preceded by a private pre-meeting starting at 1.15 pm.

With no urgent business or exempt urgent business the meeting closed at 4.55 p.m.

**Chairman**