

# Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report 2019/20

Reference number: EPFCP/19/20

<b>Report title:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report 2019/20	
<b>Report to:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
<b>Report author:</b> Victoria Freeman, Secretary to the Panel	
<b>Date:</b> 23 July 2020	<b>For:</b> Noting
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## 1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel's (the Panel) activities during the 2019/20 municipal year.

## 2. Recommendation

That the Panel receive and note the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report for 2019/20.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Essex Police and Crime Panel was established in July 2012 in compliance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and following the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner for Essex (Fire and Rescue Authority) Order 2017, the Panel became known as the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.
- 3.2 The Panel maintains a 'check and balance' on the performance of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) in regard to his strategic actions and decisions. The Panel plays a vital role in holding the PFCC to account and support him in the effective exercise of his duties.
- 3.3 The key functions of the Panel are to:
  - a) review the draft Police and Crime Plan and the Fire and Rescue Plan and any proposed changes to them;
  - b) review the Annual Report and the Fire and Rescue Statement;
  - c) review of the proposed senior appointments of:
    - i) the Deputy PFCC,
    - ii) the PFCC's Chief Executive,
    - iii) the PFCC's Chief Finance Officers;
    - iv) the Chief Constable; and
    - v) the Chief Fire Officer.

- d) suspend the PFCC in specific circumstances;
- e) appoint an acting PFCC in specific circumstances;
- f) review the precept which the PFCC is proposing to issue for both the Police and the Fire and Rescue, for each financial year with the power to veto the precept;
- g) deal with certain complaints against the PFCC or Deputy PFCC.

3.4 The Panel comprises fifteen elected members of local authorities across Essex working alongside two independent co-opted members.

The membership of the Panel for 2019/20 was as below:

Councillor A McGurran	Basildon Borough Council
Councillor W Schmitt	Braintree District Council (Chairman)
Councillor C Hossack	Brentwood Borough Council
Councillor G Isaacs	Castle Point Borough Council
Councillor J Lager	Chelmsford City Council
Councillor M Lilley	Colchester Borough Council
Councillor N Bedford	Epping Forest District Council
Councillor M Maddocks	Essex County Council (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor F Mason	Harlow District Council
Councillor M Helm	Maldon District Council
Councillor M Webb	Rochford District Council
Councillor I Shead	Southend Borough Council
Councillor L McWilliams	Tendring District Council
Councillor J Redsell	Thurrock Council
Councillor C Day	Uttlesford District Council
John Gili-Ross	Independent Member
Kay Odysseos	Independent Member

3.5 Officer support to the Panel is provided by the host authority, Essex County Council, on behalf of all the Essex Local Authorities. The costs incurred in supporting the Police, Fire and Crime Panel are funded from a Home Office grant made available for this purpose.

#### **4. Panel Activities in 2019/20**

- 4.1 During 2019/20, the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel held six formal Panel meetings. Details of the formal meetings and the agendas and papers for these meetings are available online at: [https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Committees/tabid/161/ctl/ViewCMIS\\_CommitteeDetails/mid/679/id/127/Default.aspx](https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Committees/tabid/161/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/679/id/127/Default.aspx)
- 4.2 The Work Programme for 2019/20 clearly reflected the Panel's statutory functions and responsibilities, and the Commissioners' priorities (as defined in his Police and Crime Plan).
- 4.3 The Panel received a regular report from the Commissioner on the financial and strategic decisions he had taken and updates on any ongoing issues at each meeting. The Panel also received an update from the Chair of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels as a standing item and continued the

practice of allowing members of the public to ask of the Chair, questions relevant to the business of the Panel.

- 4.4 On the 23 May 2019, the Panel agreed Part II of the revised constitution and a scheme of allowances for Members. Part I of the Constitution (the Panel arrangements) had been adopted by the fifteen Essex local authorities following consultation prior to the meeting.
- 4.5 At the request of the Panel, in May 2019 a report was received that provided an update on the growth in Police Officer establishment following the precept increase for the 2018/19 financial year, and which outlined delivery against plans.
- 4.6 At its meeting on the 24 October, the Panel reviewed the Complaints procedure which was adopted in 2016 and agreed to adopt a revised policy and procedures, further agreeing that an annual report be brought to the Panel on complaints. During 2019/20 there were no complaints received about the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner, compared with five complaints received in 2018/19 which were dealt with by or on behalf of the Monitoring Officer after consulting with the Chairman of the Panel. The Panel is due to receive its first report on Annual Complaints at its meeting in October 2020.
- 4.7 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Panel has a statutory duty to hold a public meeting to consider the contents of the Commissioner's Annual Report and respond formally to it. The Panel considered and approved the Annual Report at its October meeting and made recommendations for inclusion in the next edition.
- 4.8 In December 2019, the Panel considered the Commissioner's proposed appointment for the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Chief Finance and Section 151 Officer. The Panel questioned the candidate regarding their professional competence and subsequently confirmed the appointment.
- 4.9 In line with its statutory responsibility, the Panel formally considered the Commissioner's precept proposal at its meeting on 6 February 2020 and the Panel endorsed the Commissioner's proposals to set the Band D Police element of the Council Tax for 2010-21 at an increase of £5.67 a year (2.94%); and an increase of £1.44 a year (1.99%) for the Fire and Rescue element. In carrying out this responsibility, the Panel attended a budget workshop delivered by the Acting Chief Finance Officer on the 5 December 2020, followed by a further workshop on the 6 January 2020 where Members reviewed the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Income and Funding Considerations for 2020-21 and the 2020/21 Budget Setting Information.
- 4.10 In July 2019, the Panel considered and agreed the process for Appointing Independent Members and agreed the extension of appointment for the current Independent Members until 31 July 2020. The process for appointing two Independent Members from the 1 August 2020 commenced in March 2020. There were fifty-three expressions of interest in applying for the position. An Appointments Sub-Committee met remotely during April and May, during which they shortlisted and interviewed suitable candidates. The Panel agreed the subsequent recommendation of the Sub-Committee at their meeting in June 2020.

- 4.11 The Panel has taken the opportunity to examine decisions which the Commissioner has made during the year. This has involved the inclusion of an item on each Panel agenda to list decisions which have been published by the Commissioner. The Panel has taken the opportunity to satisfy itself that the Commissioner's actions/decisions are contributing to the effective achievement of his Plan.
- 4.12 The Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee met once in 2019/20, during which they received, and discussed in depth, a report on the progress made on the Continuous Culture Change Strategy; and information on the arrangements of the Ethics and Integrity Framework within the Commissioner's office. The Sub-Committee was scheduled to meet in April 2020 to consider the Development of the National Fire Standards Board, but the meeting was cancelled due to prioritisation required in relation to Covid-19.
- 4.13 In addition to the formal Panel meetings, the Panel held a number of informal workshops with invitations sent to both main and substitute members of the Panel. Workshops have a specific theme or topic and, where appropriate, representatives are invited to present information that enables Panel members to increase their knowledge and understanding of a key subject matter. In October 2019, a themed workshop was held on the topic of Trucam, which was facilitated by two officers from Essex Police. A workshop on Data Analytics was due to be held in March/April 2020, however this was postponed due to Covid-19.
- 4.14 Informal Panel briefings are also held which focus primarily on scoping the key focus areas for the upcoming Panel meeting, briefing members on the subject matter to assist in their preparation, and highlighting any key points to bring to the attention of the PFCC's Office prior to the meeting.
- 4.15 Throughout the year, a working group have met to make recommendations on the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020/24. The final Plan will be presented to the Panel for approval in July 2020.
- 4.16 Panel members and the support officer have also attended national and regional conferences and network meetings. These have provided an opportunity to share best practice with other Panels and to increase knowledge and understanding of key issues and developments.
- 4.17 The Chairman, two Panel members and the support officers attended the National Conference for Police (Fire) and Crime Panels. The conference included key-note addresses on exploring key issues on how Panels might provide challenge to and support their Commissioner and a variety of interactive workshops focusing on good practice and Panel development.
- 4.18 The Panel has monitored the Host Authority's expenditure against the Home Office grant awarded to support the Panel's activities. The Panel received a half year monitoring report at its meeting on the 13 January 2020 and will receive the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Budget Outturn Report 2019/20 at its meeting in July 2020.

## 5.0 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2020/21

5.1 The schedule of Panel meetings for 2020/21 are set out below:-

- 4 June 2020
- 23 July 2020
- 22 October 2020
- 10 December 2020
- 4 February 2021

5.2 The work programme for 2020/21 is set out below:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Business</b>
4 June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Essex Police Performance Report</li><li>• Extension of the Police and Crime Plan 2016-20</li><li>• Response to Covid-19 Pandemic</li><li>• PFCC Decisions Report</li><li>• Appointment of Independent Members to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel</li></ul>
23 July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report</li><li>• Fire Service Performance Measures</li><li>• Essex PFCP Budget Outturn Report 2019/20</li><li>• Overview of Integrated Risk Management Plan</li><li>• Budget Setting Process</li><li>• PFCC Decisions Report</li></ul>
22 October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures</li><li>• Fire Service Performance Measures</li><li>• Police and Crime Budget Scene Setting</li><li>• Fire and Rescue Service Budget Scene Setting</li><li>• PFCC Decisions Report</li><li>• Annual Report and the Fire and Rescue Statement</li><li>• Report on Annual Complaints</li></ul>
10 December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures</li><li>• Fire Service Performance Measures</li><li>• Essex PFCP 2020/21 Budget (Half-year Outturn)</li><li>• PFCC Decisions Report</li></ul>
4 February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proposed Police Precept for 2021-22</li><li>• Proposed Essex Fire and Rescue Service Precept for 2021-22</li></ul>

The Panel may wish to review its activities in 2019/20 and make recommendations on the work programme for 2020/21. In practical terms, the programme should incorporate all of those responsibilities which the Panel is obliged to fulfil (e.g. consideration of the Commissioner's Annual Report, precept proposal, scrutiny of decision making/action etc.).