

<b>Report title:</b> Balanced Appointment Objective	
<b>Report to:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
<b>Report author:</b> Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 20 July 2023	<b>For:</b> Decision
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To review the composition of the Panel following the appointment of members by the constituent councils for the municipal year 2023-24.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Schedule 6 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 sets out the composition of the Panel, which includes the ‘balanced appointment objective’.

*31. (5) The “balanced appointment objective” referred to in this paragraph is the objective that local authority members of a police and crime panel (when taken together)—*

*(a) represent all parts of the relevant police area;*

*(b) represent the political make-up of—*

*(i) the relevant local authority, or*

*(ii) the relevant local authorities (when taken together)*

*(c) have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the police and crime panel to discharge its functions effectively.*

- 2.2 The Panel is also under a duty to ensure it has the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to effectively discharge its functions in relation to fire and rescue.

## 3. Membership and Political Balance

- 3.1 In 2022 the Panel noted the appointments made by the constituent councils and established that the political composition did not reflect the overall political composition of the fifteen constituent councils. It was determined that, based on the political balance at that time, the inclusion of one additional Labour Member and one additional Liberal Democrat member would achieve this.

- 3.2 Accordingly the Panel sought permission from the Home Office to use two places on the Panel reserved for this purpose to co-opt for one year, as had been the practice previously. A response was subsequently received from the Home Office confirming that the Panel was able to make this adjustment each year, as required, without further formal application to the Minister.
- 3.3 The Panel therefore considered a report at its meeting in September 2022 and appointed Cllr Aidan McGurran representing the Labour Group and Cllr Jude Deakin representing the Liberal Democrat Group.
- 3.4 The composition of the Panel has again been reviewed following the May 2023 elections which were held at fourteen of the fifteen councils and then the party membership of the Panel members nominated by each of the fifteen councils for the 2023-24 municipal year. The number of seats in each political group across the fifteen local authorities is as follows:

Conservative	326
Labour	98
Liberal Democrat	105
Others/Ind	171

- 3.5 Nominations to the Panel for the 2023/24 municipal year mean that the composition of the Panel's 15 local authority appointed members is:

Conservative	7
Labour	1
Liberal Democrat	3
Others/Ind	4

- 3.6 To better achieve political balance based on the political make-up of the local authorities, the composition of the Panel would need to include a further:

Labour	1
Conservative	1

This would give an overall balance of Conservative 8, Liberal Democrat 3, Labour 2, Others/Ind 4 meaning that no party has overall control of the councillor seats on the Panel, which similarly reflects the overall composition of Essex councils.

- 3.7 It is therefore proposed that:

- Officers will request nominations from Essex Labour Group and the Essex Conservative Group be invited to put forward nominations to fill these posts.
- A further report to the Panel be made as soon as this action has been completed in order that the Members identified can be appointed.

- 3.8 The current co-optees will remain in place until the new nominations are in place, given that the Panel has approved the current composition of the co-

opted political members. This will also give the political parties the opportunity to decide who their nominees are annually, the same right extended to the local authorities.

### **Skills and experience of the Panel**

- 3.9 There are nine new members of the Panel, although one of those has previously been a member of the Panel. Tailored training will be offered to the new members of the Panel to ensure that they develop the knowledge and skills to effectively undertake the functions of the Panel, both relating to police and fire.
- 3.10 A skills analysis of the members of the Panel is currently being undertaken. Training and development will be offered where there is found to be any gaps in skills or knowledge to ensure that the Panel is fulfilling its duty.

### **4. Co-opted independent members**

- 4.1 The two co-opted independent members were appointed by the Panel at a meeting on the 4 June 2020, from the 1 August 2020 for a term of four years until 2024. Whilst not included when considering the political balance of the Panel, these members contribute to the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the Panel to discharge its functions effectively. It is expected that a recruitment exercise will be undertaken in early 2024 to identify the members for appointment from 1 August 2024.

### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 Officers to request one nomination each from the Essex Labour Group and the Essex Conservative Group.
- 5.2 A further report to the Panel be made as soon as these nominations have been received so the nominees identified can be co-opted to the Panel.