

<b>Report title:</b> Balanced Appointment Objective	
<b>Report to:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
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<b>Date:</b> 17 June 2021	<b>For:</b> Consideration
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To note that the nominations to the panel made by the constituent councils mean that the composition of the panel does not comply with the statutory 'balanced appointment objective' and agree the steps necessary to achieve it.

## 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 The Panel is invited to consider the following information setting out that the balanced appointment objective is not being fully met.
- 3.2 Representing all parts of the relevant police and fire and rescue area. Each of the 15 Local Authorities (District/Borough/City/County and Unitary Councils) of Essex has appointed a Member to the Panel. **Accordingly, this element of the balanced appointment objective has been achieved.**

3.3 Representing the political make-up of the relevant local authorities (when taken together)

The number of seats in each political group across the county is as follows:

Conservative - 369

Labour - 79

Liberal Democrat – 80

Independent / Others (including Residents for Uttlesford) – 165

The composition of the Panel's 15 local authority appointed members is:

11 Conservative

0 Labour

1 Liberal Democrat

3 Independent / Others

3.3.1 For the Panel's political balance to reflect the political balance across the county with its current membership of 15 politically appointed individuals, it would need to be comprised as:

8 Conservative

2 Labour

2 Liberal Democrat

3 Independent / Others

Nominations to the Panel are made by the constituent local authorities, and Essex County Council has no authority to require nominations to come from particular political groups. It may naturally be expected that the majority groups within local authorities will appoint from their own membership, and indeed this has been the case.

**Accordingly, this element of the balanced appointment objective has not been achieved.**

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

2 Labour

1 Liberal Democrat

Within the Panel's Constitution (Part 1 – Composition of the Panel 2.6) there is provision for up to three additional nominations to be invited to positions for co-opted members to seek to achieve the balanced appointment objective. The Panel determine how this should be achieved subject to approval by the Secretary of State.

3.4 Have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the police and crime panel to discharge its functions effectively.

Seven of the Panel members are returning members who have previously served on the Panel and have the necessary experience, skills and knowledge

to discharge the functions of the panel effectively. Should returning members identify any gaps in their skills or knowledge, training can be made available in order to assist them.

Tailored training is being offered to the eight new members of the Panel to ensure that they develop the knowledge and skills to effectively undertake the functions of the Panel.

**Accordingly, this element of the balanced appointment objective has been partially achieved, with steps already in place to ensure it is fully achieved.**

3.5 Having the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the panel to discharge its functions effectively including in relation to fire and rescue

Seven of the Panel members are returning members who have previously served on the Panel and have the necessary experience, skills and knowledge to discharge the fire and rescue functions of the panel effectively. As referenced above, training to further reinforce this position can be made available if necessary.

Tailored training is being offered to the eight new members of the Panel to ensure that they develop the knowledge and skills to effectively undertake the functions of the Panel.

**Accordingly, this element of the balanced appointment objective has been partially achieved, with steps already in place to ensure it is fully achieved.**

**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.

**5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 The Panel is asked to agree to achieve the balanced panel objective by inviting minority political parties to put forward nominations as follows:
- (a) The Labour Party – two members
  - (b) The Liberal Democrat Party - one member
- 5.2 That the proposal is submitted to the Home Office for confirmation and that subject to the agreement of the Home Office, the nominations received are reported to the next meeting of the panel.