



Essex Fire Authority

Report to the Constituent Authorities of the meeting on 7 September 2016

The items reported below are the main issues considered by Essex Fire Authority at its meeting on 7 September 2016. Full details of all the matters considered, together with the minutes of the meetings, can be viewed on the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service website, www.essex-fire.gov.uk.

1. Change in Membership of Essex Fire Authority

The Authority has welcomed Councillor Jamie Huntman (UKIP) to membership as a representative of Essex County Council, in place of Councillor Jude Deakin (Liberal Democrat). This has arisen due to a change in political balance at Essex County Council following a recent by-election.

The political make-up of the Authority is now as set out below:

Conservative	14
Labour	4
Liberal Democrat	2
UKIP	2
Green	1
Non-aligned	1
Independent	1
Total	25

The Authority has noted the impact of Councillor Huntman's appointment on the membership of its committees, and made changes accordingly. It has also noted the appointment of Councillor Alan Bayley (Essex County Council) as the UKIP Group Spokesman, for which he will receive a Special Responsibility Allowance under the Authority's Members' Allowances Scheme.

2. Options for Change Implementation Plan

At its meeting on 8 June 2016, the Authority approved a programme of change for the future direction of the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex. This related to changes to the operational response model, but also incorporated broader changes to the delivery of Prevention and Protection services and to support and enabling functions.

The Authority has now supported the implementation plan for delivering all aspects of the change programme, developed taking into account the views of stakeholders, including staff and their representatives (with whom engagement will continue to form a key strand of all future work).

3. Essex Fire Authority Corporate Strategy 2016 - 2020

The Authority has approved the Essex Fire Authority Strategy 2016 – 2020: Leading the Way to a Safer Essex.

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out in detail the Service's operating context, strategic themes and the key activities to be undertaken between 2016 and 2020. The document will now go through a final design phase prior to publication, and a shorter version summarising the key points will also be produced, for distribution at the same time.

The Authority was pleased to note the key part played by employees in developing the values statements and the 'Strategy on a Page'.

4. Efficiency Plan and 2020 Programme

The Authority has noted and approved a number of measures relating to the overall plan for delivery of change for the period until March 2020.

Efficiency Plan

The Government has offered fire and rescue authorities a four-year funding settlement for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20, conditional on formal acceptance by the Authority and submission of a robust efficiency plan. This represents a clear commitment by the Government to provide minimum allocations for each year of the spending review period, should authorities choose to accept the offer.

The Authority has agreed to accept the offer of a four-year finance settlement, and has approved the associated efficiency plan, designed to meet the specified criteria, noting that progress reports on delivery will be published annually. It has delegated authority to the Finance Director and Treasurer to submit the plan to the Government.

2020 Programme

Following the Authority's approval of the 2020 Programme in April 2015, significant progress has been made towards achieving its four aims, which are as follows:

- The development of an Integrated Risk Management Plan, to include a new response mode based on informed response standards;
- The establishment of an engagement strategy to include formal consultation requirements as well as an effective stakeholder communication strategy;
- To establish a number of options for change, for presentation and approval of the Authority; and
- The development of a Service Strategy for the period 2016 to 2020 to include the options for organisational redesign approved by the Authority.

The Authority has noted the arrangements in place to support delivery of the Programme, including establishment of a 2020 Programme Advisory Board, and

has approved the appointment of its Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Group Spokespersons as its representatives on the Board. Finally, it has noted the ongoing activities within the 2020 Programme.

5. Partnership Agreement between Essex Fire Authority and Essex County Council on the delivery of the Emergency Management function

Since 2010, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) has worked in partnership with Essex County Council (ECC) to deliver that Council's emergency management responsibilities. A formal partnership agreement was signed in December 2011 for a period of five years, expiring on 1st January 2017. The budget for the service is provided directly by ECC and managed by ECFRS.

From early this year, discussions have been taking place regarding the possibility of wider collaboration across a range of Category 1 Responders (those identified as having the responsibility of planning, responding and undertaking the recovery to a major incident) within Essex. These include all Essex upper and lower tier authorities, Essex Police, the East of England Ambulance Service and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Essex Fire Authority has agreed to support further work on the options for collaboration, including the possible creation of an Essex Resilience Team for the provision of Essex Civil Protection and Emergency Management, with a view to replacing the existing arrangements. In the meantime, the Authority has agreed to realign the current Partnership Agreement with ECC to the financial year, and to extend it initially for a further three months until 31st March 2017, and then for a further year until 31st March 2018. Finally, the Authority has agreed to amend the existing Partnership Agreement to reflect changes to the current delivery mechanism, including minor revisions to simplify and update the document, and the development of a three-year rolling Business Plan and work programmes.

6. Police and Crime Commissioner – invitation to attend meetings of Essex Fire Authority

Since March of this year, an Emergency Services Collaboration Strategic Governance Board has been established to provide the necessary oversight of the development of the business case and to develop further the activities that should be considered within a collaboration programme between Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. The Board is chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex (Roger Hirst) and attended by the Chief Constable, the Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Acting Chief Fire Officer and Chairman of Essex Fire Authority, Councillor Anthony Hedley.

In the light of discussion at a recent Board meeting concerning the relationship between the Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Authority has agreed to formalise the existing arrangement, whereby the Police and Crime Commissioner attends meetings of the Authority and views the meeting from the public gallery. A formal invitation has been extended to Mr Hirst, in his capacity as Chairman of the Emergency Collaboration Strategic Governance Board, to

attend all future meetings of Essex Fire Authority and the Policy and Strategy Committee. It is intended that, in this way, any debate by the Authority or the Committee can be informed by the perspective of the Commissioner and the work of the Board.

7. Sir Ken Knight Independent Cultural Review Progress Report Findings

The Authority has received a report by Sir Ken Knight on his conclusions and findings in respect of progress against the recommendations made by Irene Lucas CBE as part of her 2015 review into organisational culture at Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

One of the recommendations made by Irene Lucas was that a short review of progress should be undertaken approximately six months after the original publication. The Authority engaged Sir Ken Knight to undertake this work over a period of two days at the end of July 2016.

In summary, Sir Ken is satisfied that Essex Fire Authority (the Authority) and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) have taken, and are continuing to take, appropriate early actions to deliver against the Lucas Review recommendations. Appropriate consideration has been given to the fundamental issues and the Authority is on track to deliver against the recommendations in a timely manner. However, while good progress has been made in respect of laying groundwork and foundations, there is still some way to go to build on this work and embed change throughout the Authority and Service.

The work of the Expert Advisory Panel (the Panel) has been crucial in supporting all stakeholders and it is vital that the Panel remains in place to continue to provide support and appropriate challenge that will embed the necessary sustainable improvement.

Whilst the Authority and Service have demonstrated sufficient progress to suggest a degree of earned autonomy; the Lucas Review recommendation that the Panel remain in place for 2 years from September 2015 remains valid, given the complex and challenging nature of the issues that remain.

Sir Ken has fully endorsed the next steps set out by the Fire Authority, the Service and the Expert Advisory Panel and has also added additional recommendations following his review.

In Sir Ken's view there remains significant scope for the lessons to be learned from the work that the Authority and the Service have undertaken to address organisational culture to be shared more widely with other fire and rescue services.

Sir Ken states that the underlying issues of inappropriate behaviour identified in the Lucas report are entirely unacceptable in any fire and rescue service and, whilst it is not appropriate to deflect either the Authority or the Service from its challenge of cultural change in Essex, he believes it is now timely for the Home Office to publish the review carried out by Adrian Thomas in August 2014 as

outlined in the speech given in May 2016 by the former Home Secretary, Theresa May, as a platform to share the learning for cultural change in all fire and rescue services.

Sir Ken highlights some specific areas of uncertainty which remain and are undoubtedly hindering some of the necessary progress, particularly in relation to ongoing historical employment issues. He states that, whilst it can be tempting to demand immediate resolution of these matters, it is important that due process is allowed to continue in order to ensure that all matters are dealt with fairly; particularly given their complex nature. For this reason it is necessary for a progress review to be completed during the autumn of 2016 to seek an update on resolution of historical employment issues.

In conclusion, Sir Ken states that a good start has been made with regard to the transformation programme embarked upon in response to the Lucas Review. However, continued involvement and scrutiny by the Authority of the changes remains necessary. In his view, there is still much to be done to deliver a modern and flexible fire and rescue service with common values and norms, which are embraced by the whole workforce so that the service is able to deliver its full potential to the community of Essex.

The Authority has welcomed Sir Ken Knight's findings and is encouraged that, with continued work, the organisation can become one with well-respected staff at all levels, professional and fit to face the challenges ahead. It has noted Sir Ken's endorsement of the next steps proposed by Essex Fire Authority, Essex Fire and Rescue Service and the Expert Advisory Panel, as set out in his report. Finally, the Authority has agreed to accept and implement Sir Ken's recommendations for further action.

**Councillor Anthony Hedley
Chairman**