

Report title: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report 2021/22	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Report author: Sophie Campion, Secretary to the Panel	
Date: 23 June 2022	For: Noting and Consideration
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County Divisions affected: 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 2021/22 municipal year.

2. Recommendation

1. That the Panel receive and note the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Annual Report for 2021/22.
2. That the Panel review the Forward Work Plan and identify any other business it would like to consider.

3. Background

- 3.1 In July 2012 a shadow Panel was formed, with the Essex Police and Crime Panel subsequently being established in 2013 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 Service, 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 plus two independent co-opted members. The two co-opted independent members were appointed by the Panel at its meeting on the 4 June 2020, from the 1 August 2020 for a term of four years until 2024.

At its Annual meeting in June 2021, the Panel agreed to co-opt an additional three members in order to better achieve political balance. The proposal was submitted to the Home Office in August 2021 and in December 2021 approval to co-opt was received from the Home Office. This increased the Panel membership to the maximum of 20.

The membership of the Panel for 2021/22 following the additional co-options was as below from December 2021:

Membership

Councillor A Baggott
Councillor F Ricci
Councillor K Barber
Councillor G Isaacs
Councillor J Lager
Councillor B Oxford
Councillor P Stalker
Councillor R Playle
Councillor M Garnett
Councillor M Heard
Councillor A Williams
Councillor I Shead
Councillor L McWilliams
Councillor G Collins
Councillor M Sutton
John Gili-Ross
Sheila Murphy
Councillor J Deakin
Councillor A McGurran
Councillor L Scordis

Representing

Basildon Borough Council
Braintree District Council
Brentwood Borough Council
Castle Point Borough Council
Chelmsford City Council
Colchester Borough Council
Epping Forest District Council
Essex County Council
Harlow District Council
Maldon District Council
Rochford District Council
Southend Borough Council
Tendring District Council
Thurrock Council
Uttlesford District Council
Independent Member
Independent Member
Co-opted Member for Balanced Appointment
Co-opted Member for Balanced Appointment
Co-opted Member for Balanced Appointment

At the Panel's Annual Meeting in June 2021 John Gili-Ross was appointed as the first Independent Co-opted Chairman of the Essex Police Fire & Crime Panel.

Cllr Godfrey Isaacs was appointed as Vice Chairman of the Essex Police Fire & Crime Panel at its Annual meeting.

John Gili-Ross is also Chair of the National Police Fire and Crime Panel

A change in Panel membership also took place in December 2021 with the appointment of Councillor M Sutton to represent Uttlesford District Council to replace Councillor C Day.

- 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 2021/22

- 4.1 During 2021/22, the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel held five 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
- 4.2 The Work Programme for 2021/22 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 Chairman, questions relevant to the business of the Panel.
- 4.4 In June 2021, the Panel considered the Commissioner's proposed re-appointment of the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The Panel was satisfied that the DPFCC had demonstrated that they met the professional competence to carry out the role effectively and subsequently confirmed the re-appointment.
- 4.5 The Panel was invited by the Commissioner to establish a Working Group to feed into the establishment of their new Police and Crime Plan for 2021-24. A Working Group was set up with eleven members of the Panel. A series of three informal meetings of the Group were held with the purpose of understanding the process of development and consider early versions of the Police and Crime Plan and priorities, with an opportunity for the Group to feed into the direction and approach at an early stage. The final version of the Police and Crime Plan was then considered and endorsed by the full Panel at its meeting in October 2021.
- 4.6 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. At its October 2021 meeting the Panel considered and endorsed the Annual Report of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Also at the October meeting, the Panel considered and agreed the Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report and Statement of Assurance.

- 4.7 In October 2021, the Panel considered the Commissioner's proposed appointment for the Chief Fire Officer. The Panel questioned the candidate regarding their professional competence and subsequently confirmed the appointment.
- 4.8 The Panel received its annual report on Complaints at its meeting in December 2021, reporting that four complaints against the PFCC had been received during the period 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021. One complaint was taken through the Panel's complaints process for resolution by the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee did not uphold the complaint. A second complaint related to delays in the handling of a review by the Commissioner of the outcome of professional complaint against the police. This complaint was discontinued following a period for local settlement. The other two complaints have since been taken through the panel's complaints procedure for resolution by the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee did not uphold either complaint but made recommendations for informal resolution in relation to some matters that were accepted by the Commissioner.
- 4.9 In October the Panel received a Quarter 2 update report on Essex Police's progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan (as extended for 2020/21), based on data and other information to the end of September 2021. The Panel asked a number of questions relating to issues arising from the report and related to progress against the priorities. The Panel made a number of suggestions for consideration by the Commissioner and the report was then noted.
- 4.10 In February 2022, the Panel considered the Commissioner's proposed designation of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Chief Finance (Section 151) Officer. The Panel questioned the candidate regarding their professional competence to take on the role and subsequently confirmed the designation.
- 4.11 In line with its statutory responsibility, the Panel formally considered the Commissioner's precept proposal at its meeting on 3 February 2022 and the Panel endorsed the Commissioner's proposals to set the Band D Fire and Rescue element of the Council Tax for 2022-23 at an increase of £1.44 per year (1.95%); and set the Band D Police element of the Council Tax for 2022-23 at an increase of £9.99 per year (4.79%). In carrying out this responsibility, a Working Group of five members of the Panel was established which met three times in October 2021, November 2021 and January 2022. The purpose of the Working Group was to gain a more in depth understanding of the key issues and assumptions in setting the budget and reviewing the budget updates and the Medium Term Financial Strategies for both Essex Police and the Essex Fire and Rescue.
- 4.12 In March 2022 the Panel received a Quarter 2 update report on the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's (ECFRS's) progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan 2019 – 2024 and the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024, based on data and other information for the period July 2021 to September 2021. The Panel sought clarification on a number of issues raised in the report including; false alarms, malicious calls, attendance times and availability and recruitment and diversity in the workforce. The Panel noted the report.
- 4.13 In October the Panel agreed to add an item to its Forward Work Plan to receive a report in relation to the Commissioner's responsibilities for complaint handling and in particular the backlog of complaint reviews. In March 2022 the Panel received a

report on the commissioner's activities relating to complaint handling during 2021. The Panel sought clarification on a number of issues and noted the report.

- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 The Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee met twice in 2021/22, to consider items including, diversity in Police recruitment, Police recruitment and vetting and a confidential matter within its remit.
- 4.16 Informal Panel pre-meetings were held throughout the year with a focus primarily on scoping the key lines of enquiry and areas of interest 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.
- 4.17 The Panel was provided with two tailored induction and training sessions during the year, one in September 2021 following the changes in membership at the Annual meeting and another in January 2022 following the appointment of the three additional co-opted members and a change in membership. These provided an opportunity to understand the framework within which the panels operate, their core functions and working arrangements and to discuss best practice. The sessions were open to new and returning members to attend to develop their skills and knowledge to undertake the functions of the Panel.
- 4.18 Panel members and the support officers 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.
- 4.19 The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the support officers attended the National Conference for Police (Fire) and Crime Panels. The conference included a key-note address from Dr Rick Muir, Director of Police Foundation on the Strategic Review of Policing and a number of breakout sessions on issues of good practice and panel development.
- 4.20 The Chairman and PFCC held 1:1 monthly meetings during the year with the OPFCC CEO and the Panel's Support Officer in attendance. These sessions being used to discuss local and national PFCP/PFCC developments that may influence the work or engagement of the Essex Panel.
- 4.21 The Panel responds to relevant consultations issued by the Home Office, LGA or other relevant bodies. During the year the following EPFCP consultation responses were submitted:
 - PCC Review Part 2 Sept 2021 – Home Office
 - Giving Police & Crime Commissioners General Power of Competence October 2021 – Home Office

- The Policing Protocol Order 2011 Consultation – Home Office via the LGA May 2022

4.22 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 9 December 2021 and will receive the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Budget Outturn Report 2021/22 at its annual meeting in June 2022.

4.23 On 9 June 2022 the Panel held a feedback and reflection session, reviewing its work over the past year. Outcomes from that session included:

- Consideration to be given to wider Panel activities, such as visits, to give a greater understanding and insight to particular aspects of the Police and Fire Service provision, to support the work of the Panel.
- Consideration to be given to establishing Working Groups to focus on specific issues agreed by the Panel.
- To arrange induction training and guidance for new Panel Members.
- To ensure that any requests by the Panel for further information or action are monitored.

5.0 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2022/3

5.1 The schedule of Panel meetings for 2022/23 are set out below:-

- 21 July 2022
- 29 September 2022
- 8 December 2022
- February 2023 – to be agreed

5.2 The work programme for 2022/23 is set out below:

Provisional Date	Topic Title	Lead Contact	Purpose and Target Outcomes
21 July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECFRS End of Year Performance Report 	OPFCC	Statutory Duty to review the Fire and Rescue Plan and monitor performance
29 September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECFRS Annual Report and Statement of Assurance • PFCC Annual Report • Budget Scene-Setting 	OPFCC OPFCC OPFCC	Statutory Duty to review the Annual Report and Statement of Assurance Statutory Duty to review the Annual Report Invitation to the Panel to feed into the Budget-Setting Process

8 December 2022	• Police and Crime Plan Performance Measures – Quarter 2	OPFCC	Statutory Duty to review the Police and Crime Plan and monitor performance
	• Fire and Rescue Plan Quarterly Performance Update	OPFCC	Statutory Duty to review the Fire and Rescue Plan and monitor performance
	• Budget Update	OPFCC	
February 2023	• Proposed Fire Precept	OPFCC	Statutory Duty to review the proposed precepts
	• Proposed Police Precept	OPFCC	
TBC	• A review of the Panel's Complaints Procedure	TBC	As agreed at the Panel's meeting on 9 December 2021
	• A review of the issues relating to E-Scooters		As agreed at the Panel's meeting on 22 March 2022

The Panel may wish to review its activities in 2021/22 and make recommendations on the work programme for 2022/23. 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.).