

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WEST ESSEX AREA FORUM HELD AT
THE ADULT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ONGAR, ON 14 September 2010**

Membership

*** Present**

Essex County Council

* E Webster (Chairman)	* J Knapman
B Aspinell	* G McEwen
* S Barker	* V Metcalfe
* R Chambers	* G Mitchinson
L Dangerfield	Dr A Naylor
* M Garnett	* C Pond
R Gooding	* J Roberts
A Jackson	S Walsh
* E Johnson	* J Whitehouse
D Kendall	

Brentwood Borough Council (2)

Louise McKinlay	- Leader
Joanna Killian	- Chief Executive

**Epping Forest District Council
(2)**

Diana Collins	- Leader
Peter Haywood	- Chief Executive
* David Eyles	-
* Jim Nolan	-

Harlow District Council (2)

Andrew Johnson	- Leader
Malcolm Morley	- Chief Executive

Uttlesford District Council (2)

Jim Ketteridge	- Leader
John Mitchell	- Chief Executive

Local Councils (3)

Peter Baggott	- E.A.L.C (Brentwood)
Jason Salter	- E.A.L.C (Epping Forest)
* David Aldridge	- Great Dunmow Town Council
* Cllr Y Maguire	- Kelvedon Hatch Parish Council
* Joan Bowerman	- Matching Parish Council
* Colin Endermy	- Doddinghurst Parish Council

**Hospitals & Primary Care Trusts
(4)**

Catherine O'Connell	- West Essex Primary Care Trust
Darren Leech	- Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, Harlow

Police (2)

* Chief Superintendent Simon Williams	- West Division, Essex Police
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Supterintendent Luke Collison * Chief Inspector Alyson Wilson | <p>Headquarters, Essex Police
Uttlesford District</p> |
| Fire (1) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * David Johnson, Chief Fire Officer * Cllr A Hedley * Station Commander John Sherrington | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Essex Fire & Rescue Service - Chairman of the Fire Authority - Harlow, Essex Fire & Rescue Service |
| Councils for Voluntary Service (4) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jackie Sully Jacqui Foile Eric Hicks Mary Ford | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rainbow Services, Harlow - Voluntary Action Epping Forest - CVS Uttlesford - Brentwood CVS |
| LINKs (2) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> J Carr * J Harkus * G Swain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LINKs - LINKs - LINKs |

Also Present

(from the attendance book – and as there described)

D Linnell, Loughton Residents Association, Nicoli Thompson, ECC, Ellie Sapsed, ECC.

Officers Attending in Support

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samantha Ball Vivien Door Yvette Wetton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Committee Assistant - Committee Officer - Area Coordinator |
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42. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Forum and members of the public to this Emergency Services meeting.

43. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Essex County Councillors C Riley, Deputy Cabinet Member for Localism, A Naylor, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing, S Walsh, T Chapman, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, T Sargent, Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

Chief Constable, Jim Barker-McCardle, Cllr L McKinlay, Leader of Brentwood Borough Council, Cllr David Kendall, Leader of the Opposition, Brentwood Borough Council, David Forkin Area Highways Manager, Peter Massie Acting Area Highways Manager, Darren Leech, Executive Director of Delivery, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Cllr Sheila Jackman, Ongar Town Council, Sue Sumner, Chief Officer, CVS Uttlesford, Cllr Mrs Collins, Leader, Epping Forest DC, Derek Macnab, Acting Chief Executive, Epping Forest DC, Jacqui Foile,

Voluntary Action Epping Forest, John Mitchell, Chief Executive Uttlesford District Council, Aimi Middlehurst, Parish Clerk, Ingatestone & Fryerning Parish Council, Jason Salter EALC, John Carr, Links, Peter Baggott, EALC Brentwood.

44. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

45. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the West Essex Area Forum held on 15 June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to Cllr Pond being marked as present.

46. Emergency Services

i) Fire Authority

The Forum received a presentation AFW/17/10, from Councillor A Hedley Chairman of the Fire Authority and David Johnson, Chief Fire Officer, highlighting the achievements for the last year and how the financial cut backs would affect the service.

Councillor Hedley gave background information on the Chief Fire Officer and informed the Forum that there had been an industrial dispute for 14 months. Considerable investment had been made in front line equipment and a move to a new crewing model.

David Johnson, Chief Fire Officer, informed the Forum that the basic concept of delivery of the service had not changed but technology had improved. Essex was the fifth largest county in Britain, with 51 Fire Stations with a £76 million budget. The Service attends over 35,000 emergencies a year, approximately half were false alarms. The Service fits over 20,000 smoke detectors and had a variety of community schemes for example, FireBreak works with disengaged young people, 'vicar in a van' works to engage the church community, Fire Smart and RTC schemes.

28 of the 51 Fire Stations were positioned in the optimum locations, closest to the highest number of fires and emergencies. The Service deals with six per cent more Road Traffic Accidents than fires. The crucial time to rescue people was between 8 to 11 minutes of the initial telephone call. In the last year the Service attended 886 false alarms in the West Area. The environmental issues have changed due to the economic downturn; the extra housing Essex would have built will no longer take place. A one per cent increase in the temperature could increase grass and arable fires from 28 to 58 per cent which would affect rural communities. .

The terrorism act in America on 11 September 2001 changed the way the emergency services deal with the risk of terrorism. High volume pumps,

pumping 27,000 litres of water per minute were used in urban rescue and decontamination equipment was available if required. There was now a higher focus on the national response to terrorism.

£1 million had been invested in anti terrorism planning for possible major disruption to the transport network. One Fire Service Van which caught fire last year closed parts of the A12 for a day. Essex County Council Emergency Planning Service was now run by the Fire Service. There was contingency planning in place regarding the possibility of 20,000 displaced people in the county due to massive flooding. Changes to the pattern of rain fall could bring more flooding as the drains struggle to cope with the high rain fall. Coastal flooding may also be a problem.

The Fire Service currently receives 45 per cent of its funding from the Government with 55 per cent from Essex County Council. 70 per cent of the funding was used for salaries. The Fire Service was currently looking at figures of 15 to 20 per cent of its budget to be cut. It would be a challenging year managing vacancies to deliver the service with less funding.

During the discussions the following points were made:

- A public consultation document on the review over a 15 to 20 year period to move more Fire Stations to optimum positions or change their designation from Whole Time to Retained. The Consultation was available from the Fire Service website;
- The Fire Service maintains the hydrants that Water Boards install;
- The Fire Service works with the Police when arson was suspected although it was very difficult to link arson to an individual. The Fire Service looks for trends with fires working closely with the District or Borough but not normally with Parish Councils;
- A Retained Officer could work up to 120 hours per week and was allowed 5 minutes to arrive at the Fire Station. Retained Fire Officers have an agreement with their main employer to allow them to attend incidents. The Retained Fire Officer needs to work and live within five minutes of the Retained Fire Station and maintain a high level of fitness.
- Retained Fire Stations were very cost effective at £120,000 per year whereas, Whole Time Fire Stations cost £1.2 million a year to run;
- Ongar Fire Station was now retained and had high performance;
- There was a pilot at Tiptree Fire Station where the Police have a work place from the Fire Station rather than having two separate buildings in a rural area. The Fire Service would also like to share buildings with the Ambulance Service.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hedley and David Johnson for their interesting and informative presentation.

ii) Police Authority

The Forum received presentations from Councillor R Chambers Chairman of the Police Authority, Superintendent Luke Collison, Headquarters, Chief

Superintendent Simon Williams, Western Division, AFW/18/10, and Chief Inspector Alyson Wilson, Uttlesford District, AFW/19/10, on an update of activity over the last year; how the financial cut backs would affect the service; any cross border work; including priority crimes for each district.

Chief Superintendent Simon Williams, Western Division updated the Forum on the activities of the Western Division which covers Brentwood, Epping Forest and Harlow districts. There were over 260,000 people living within the division which contains six Police Stations. The Division bordered with Hertfordshire and London and was diverse with both rural and urban areas. The Western Division had achieved its third year fall in crime rates and had a 33 per cent detection rate. Although crime had increased from last year, burglaries have decreased by 142 less than last year. There had been an increase in street robbery mainly due to school children taking mobile phones from other children, resulting in more young people in custody. Plain clothed PCs in Harlow worked on an operation buying stolen goods, 20 people were arrested with five charges of burglary.

Minute 46, Emergency Services

Brentwood was an affluent district next to a deprived area. There was a joint operation between Essex Police and the Metropolitan Police who stopped 55 vehicles and seized four vehicles and made four arrests. When high profile operations were undertaken the crime level dropped in that area. There was more robbery linked to the Central Underground stations like Epping Forest and Loughton. Knife Arches were deployed at train and bus stations linked to the Central line, the public were then invited to walk through them. Police Officers also use vibrating gloves on stop and search as these could detect metal on a person's clothing or body.

Chief Inspector Alyson Wilson, Central Division updated the Forum on the activities in the Uttlesford District. Uttlesford District bordered with Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. The District was mainly rural therefore Special Constables were useful in keeping crime down. It was a low crime area of 12.9 per cent against 1000 residents. All crime in the District had been reduced by 2.2 per cent. The Division had a cross border operation with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Police Services to reduce the theft of metal. An operation took place where 300 vehicles were stopped in one month which resulted in good outcomes and arrests.

In some areas there was almost 100 per cent Neighbourhood Watch coverage, which was a big asset when facing economic cuts in the Service. The main targets in rural areas were insecure premises which do not have burglar alarms. ASBOs have reduced as the Police have been working with young people through the Youth Team and Schools Officers. Face book had been used successfully to communicate to young people. Operation Moonscape had engaged with young people and problem families, this targeted work had made a difference.

Councillor Chambers informed the Forum that the Police Service would be facing £45 – 50 million savings over the next 4 to 5 years. It would be challenging to provide a better Police Service for the 21st century.

During the discussions the following points were made:

- The Wheelie Bin incidents in Harlow have been logged as theft;
- That Neighbourhood Action Panels would continue in the future as a slimmer Police Force would need the information that these Panels provided;
- The Police work with Districts and Borough Councils but not normally with Parish Councils, Parishes would like to be included in any communications/information gathering;
- PCSOs have been good in raising the Police Force profile but there would be redundancies unless Parish Councils could fully fund these posts. All PCSOs were trained to the same high level;
- Essex Police were working with Kent to reduce backroom staff and have identified £8.5 million cuts, Essex and Kent could save £25 million in the long term;
- There was no rise in homophobic crimes, or by migration groups, the rise in crimes was mainly due to young people stealing mobile phones;
- Members suggested that PCSOs should not attend the whole Parish meetings to make better use of their time.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Chambers, Simon Williams and Alyson Wilson for their interesting and informative presentation.

ii) **Crime and Disorder Reduction**

The Forum **Agreed** to defer the presentation, AFW/20/10, from Ellie Sapsed, Crime and Disorder Reduction Officer on Essex County Council activity in West Essex to reduce crime and disorder and to invite her to the next meeting.

47. Items for Report

The Forum noted the content of the following report:

Bunting, Banners and Seasonal Decorations Policy report (AWF/21/10) from Yvette Wetton. Yvette Wetton updated the Forum on this issue further work would take place. The application form would be available soon.

48. Future Programme of Work

The Forum received and noted the Forward Work Plan AFW/22/10.

Community Care had been added to the Forward Work Plan.

49. Public Questions

It was agreed at the meeting to include the information that David Linnell had requested on the following questions regarding Community Care in the minutes. Pauline Holroyd, Senior Operational Manager (South), Access, Assessment & Care Management gave the following written response.

What was the average current wait in the Epping Forest area between the first contact to Social Services by a disabled person requiring the following:

- home adaptations such as shower installation or handrails?

Handrails were minor adaptations and service users were assessed and equipment provided by Social Care. Many of these adaptations were assessed and provided by the Rapid Response Technicians (RRT) following referral from Social Care Direct. RRT have a target time of four days to complete this work and were meeting these targets in most instances.

Showers and more major adaptations were provided through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) administered by the District Councils. Assessment and recommendations were completed by Occupational Therapy practitioners the process takes approximately 9 months. Essex was currently addressing these delays across the County and expects to complete outstanding assessments over the course of the next few months. All cases waiting for assessment were prioritised and assistance in the form of equipment or personal care was provided to meet needs where appropriate until an adaptation could be completed. Urgent need was addressed promptly by staff although it was acknowledged that any unmet need could be distressing to our service users.

- a disabled parking space and the completion of assessment of their needs following a home visit, and start of works?

Assessment for Disabled Parking Bays takes approximately seven months unless there was a critical need. Parking Bays were provided by Highways with this process taking several months following the assessment by Social Care. Some assessments were completed by Social Care Direct and forwarded direct to Highways and therefore were not subject to a delay in Social Care. The process for recommendation for Parking Bays was currently under review.

- What were the target waiting times for such work and, if these were not being met, what were the County Council's plans to improve their performance?

The target for completed assessments for all new referrals was 28 days. Urgent and high priority issues were meeting this target and case priority was adjusted where a change of circumstance indicated this was appropriate. Most of the service users waiting for Occupational Therapy intervention have received a telephone assessment by Social Care Direct or a face to face assessment and some low level

intervention such as provision of equipment through the Rapid Response Technician Service. Urgent and high priority needs were identified through these interventions and addressed but where there remains a need for Occupational Therapy intervention there could be a delay.

The County Council was currently conducting a review of Occupational Therapy (OT); Officers would be updating the Community Wellbeing Older People Policy and Scrutiny committee on progress. The review began in July 2010. The County was reviewing all OT processes and implementing changes and improvements to reduce delays to improve customer service. The delays have principally arisen because of high staff vacancies and continuing high demand for services. The West locality plan was addressing the recruitment issues with a view to securing staff and improving the starting times following interview. We were working on initiatives to clear the waiting lists this year. The introduction of a mobile assessment service for bathing lifts had significantly reduced waiting times and attention was now being directed towards batching work to assist DFG authorities and to improve the times for assessments for showers and other low level adaptations. Essex was introducing lean processes where possible to improve the throughput of work.

The County Council was not complacent about the delays experienced by our service users and was determined to improve the assessment times and reduce the lists. We would also be addressing how we could maintain the reduction in the waiting times.

50. Dates of Future Meetings

The date of the next meeting was noted as Tuesday 16th November 2010, 10 am at the Adult Community College, Ongar.

51. Urgent Business

There being no further business, the Chairman expressed her thanks to members of the Forum and others for their attendance. The meeting closed at 11.50 pm.

Chairman