

ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



MEETING

AGENDA ITEM

Cultural Review Sub-Group

(Principal Officers Human
Resources Committee)

5

MEETING DATE

REPORT NUMBER

10 December 2015

EFA/109/15

SUBJECT

**Proposed governance arrangements to be adopted for
Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire & Rescue Service's
Culture Change Programme**

REPORT BY

Acting Chief Fire Officer – Adam Eckley

PRESENTED BY

Acting Chief Fire Officer – Adam Eckley

SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee with a proposal for the governance arrangements to be adopted for the Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's culture change programme. In doing so, this paper seeks agreement for both the proposed governance model and a set of Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Panel which support the proposed governance arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee are asked to:

1. Consider the contents of **Appendix A** which provides a proposal from the Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel for the governance arrangements to be adopted for the Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's culture change programme.
2. Agree to adopt the three dimensional model set out in **Appendix A** as the governance arrangements to be adopted for the Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's culture change programme.
3. Consider the contents of **Appendix B** which provides a set of Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Panel which supports the proposed governance arrangements.

4. Agree the Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Panel set out in **Appendix B** which support the proposed governance arrangements.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 7th October 2015 Essex Fire Authority accepted, in full, the 35 recommendations made within the report of the Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (conducted by Irene Lucas CBE). The report itself was received by the Authority on 2nd September 2015.

The key recommendation made within the report was that:

'An external Expert Advisory Panel with a range of skills and backgrounds, and accountable to the FRA, should be appointed as soon as possible to provide strategic advice to the organisation for the next 24 months. The Panel will comprise senior people, experienced in addressing challenging organisations who will provide strategic advice to the FRA and senior officers on the leadership and change now needed'.

In addition to accepting the recommendations a number of other resolutions were reached at the 7th October meeting, amongst which was that Essex Fire Authority:

4. Accepts the recommendations made by Irene Lucas for the core membership of the external Expert Advisory Panel.
5. Agrees that authority is delegated to the Principal Officer Human Resources Committee of the Essex Fire Authority to act upon the advice of the Chairman of the external Expert Advisory Panel to appoint the following:
 - Appropriate experts in their field on an ad-hoc basis as and when required.
 - Logistical support as required to support the work of the external Expert Advisory Panel.
6. Agrees to establish a small group of EFA Members drawn from the Principal Officer Human Resources Committee who will provide the governance oversight and scrutiny to the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS.
8. Agrees that authority is delegated to the Principal Officer Human Resources Committee of the Essex Fire Authority to act upon the advice of the Chairman of the external Expert Advisory Panel for the discharge of executive powers to address two specific recommendations, namely:
 - Recommendation 11 – 'An external organisational development expert on the panel, with support from all trade unions and staff representatives needs to lead a review of the organisation's hierarchical structure to remove management layers, redesign roles away from rank and improve spans of control from the current 1.7 FTE per manager.
 - Recommendation 19 – 'To address the perceived inconsistency and unfairness, all disciplinary action should be overseen by a sub-group of the Expert Advisory Panel (subject to statutory constraints) over the next 24 months. Any intimidation against

individuals, and/or inappropriate use of equipment or property needs to be considered by the Expert Advisory Panel taking advice from representatives of Essex Police. The subgroup will have a specific role in ensuring elected Members are aware of matters without cutting across the existing process. This approach will take effect in respect of all new cases.

Upon reading the Lucas report what is clear is that there is not too much detail in the Report in relation to what was foreseen when making this recommendation. Therefore, in the eight weeks that have elapsed since the meeting of Essex Fire Authority on 7th October, the Acting Chief Fire Officer and members of the Strategic Management Board have met with members of the Expert Advisory Panel on numerous occasions and progressed discussions with the Chair of the Expert Advisory Panel and new members of the Expert Advisory Panel on the relationship that should exist between Essex Fire Authority, the Service Management team and the Expert Advisory Panel.

As a result of these discussions the Chairman on the Expert Advisory Panel, Steve McGuirk, CBE, has set out in **Appendix A**, a proposal for the governance arrangements to be adopted for the Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's culture change programme.

In addition, and in support of the discussions around the proposed governance model, a set of Terms of Reference have been defined for Expert Advisory Panel which have been drafted to support the existing governance arrangements for the Authority's 2020 Programme.

Members of the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee are asked to consider the contents of **Appendices A and B** and then subsequently to adopt the three dimensional model set out in **Appendix A** as the governance arrangements to be adopted for the Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's culture change programme, **and** to agree the Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Panel set out in **Appendix B** which support the proposed governance arrangements.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Failure to effectively address the issues identified within the Independent Review of Culture present significant risk to the Service and the Essex Fire Authority not least as the report suggests that without significant change our employees and the communities they serve may be at risk.

The information set out in Appendix A supports the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs over a 24 month period for the Expert Advisory Panel to support this work are estimated to total £400k. Around £100k of this is expected to fall in the current financial year.

This information has previously been presented to Members at the meeting of Essex Fire Authority held on 7th October 2015 when it was resolved that Essex Fire Authority

9. Agrees to set aside a budget of up to £400k over the next 24 months to fund the processes required to support the implement the recommendations of the report.

This report presents the progress that has been reported by the Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel and does not alter the financial implications already presented.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Failure to effectively address the issues identified within the Independent Review of Culture present significant risk to the Service and the Essex Fire Authority not least as the report suggests that without significant change our employees and the communities they serve may be at risk.

The recommendations set out in this report support the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS and therefore serve to lessen any potential litigation presented by the risks identified within the Independent Review of Culture.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Failure to implement the action plan and address the associated recommendations could result in the Service failing to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The recommendations set out in this report support the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
List of appendices attached to this paper: Appendix A – Progress Report by the Expert Advisory Panel	
List of background documents (not attached): Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, EFA/081/15, EFA/082/15, EFA/096/15, EFA/097/15, EFA/098/15 and EFA/099/15.	
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