

<b>Report title:</b> Balanced Appointment Objective	
<b>Report to:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
<b>Report author:</b> Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 23 June 2022	<b>For:</b> Decision
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To review the composition of the Panel following the appointment of members by the constituent councils for the municipal year 2022-23.

## 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 In 2021 the Panel noted the appointments made by the constituent councils and noted that the political composition did not reflect the overall political composition of the fifteen constituent councils. It was determined that, at that time, the inclusion of two additional Labour Members and one additional Liberal Democrat member would achieve this. Accordingly the Panel sought permission from the Home Office to use the three places on the Panel reserved for this purpose to co-opt for one year. Unfortunately delays at the

Home Office meant that permission was not given until December 2021 and the co-opted members did not attend their first meeting until February 2022.

- 3.2 The composition of the Panel has been reviewed following the May 2022 elections which were held with respect to nine of the fifteen councils and also in the party membership of the Panel members nominated by each of the fifteen councils for the 2022-23 municipal year. The number of seats in each political group across the fifteen local authorities is as follows:

Conservative	353
Labour	80
Liberal Democrat	92
Others/Ind	174

- 3.3 Nominations to the Panel for the 2022/23 municipal year mean that the composition of the Panel's 15 local authority appointed members is:

Conservative	9
Labour	1
Liberal Democrat	1
Others/Ind	4

- 3.3 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:

Labour	1
Liberal Democrat	1

- 3.4 It is therefore proposed that :

- The Panel seeks permission from the Home Secretary to co-opt one Labour and one Liberal Democrat member for a further year.
- The Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Groups be invited to put forward nominations to fill these posts
- A further report to the Panel be made as soon as these actions have been completed.

- 3.5 The current co-optees have only been in the role for four months and will remain in place until the new nominations are in place, given that the Home Secretary has approved the current composition of the co-opted political members and has not approved the proposed revised composition. This will also give the political parties the opportunity to decide who their nominees are annually, the same right extended to the local authorities.

### **Skills and experience of the Panel**

- 3.6 There are three new members of the Panel, although one has previously been a member of the Panel. Tailored training will be offered to the new members of the Panel to ensure that they develop the knowledge and skills to effectively undertake the functions of the Panel, both relating to police and fire.

#### **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 applies to the Home Secretary for permission to co-opt one Labour Member and one Liberal Democrat Member for one year.
- 5.2 The Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Groups each be invited to put forward suitable nominations to fill these posts in the event that permission is granted.
- 5.3 That a report be brought back to the Panel as soon as we have heard from the Home Secretary.